

THE MEANS OF GRACE

God's Tool Box

1. What causes us to be saved?

A. In the margin, write the words from each of the following verses which mean the same as "saved".

a. Eph. 2:4-5
and Eph. 1:7
How are we saved?

b. Eph. 2:4, 8 also Rom. 3:24
What does this mean?

B. Salvation comes from God.

2 Tim. 1:9 also Rom. 3:20-21, Eph. 2:8-9
What is not the reason we are saved?

Rom. 3:21-24 also Isa. 43:25, Rom. 5:1-2
Where does this salvation come from?

If someone died and left an inheritance in your name in the bank, what causes it to be yours? If you did not know or believe they did this, and never withdrew the money, would you receive any happiness or benefit from it? Whose death gives you the inheritance of eternal salvation? How do you receive the benefit from it?

We are saved only by grace, which is an undeserved gift from God. (Grace is always God's attitude toward us, not a quality or ability in people.) The single reason for God's attitude of grace is Jesus, who lived, died and rose in our place. (There is nothing in mankind or any individual that is a cause or condition.)

2. How do we receive the gift of God's grace?

A. There is only one way to receive God's grace.

a. Rom. 3:22 also Rom. 1:17; 3:28; 4:21-24; 5:1-2;
How does God's righteousness become ours?

B. The cause and reason is not within us.

a. Eph. 2:8-9 also 1 Cor. 12:3; Phlp. 2:13
Where does faith come from?

John 1:12-13

Where does faith not come from?

C. We are by nature isolated from God.

a. Psalm 51:5 also Gen. 5:5; 8:21; John 3:6
What are we like from our beginning?

b. What are we like before we have faith?

2 Cor. 4:4

also 1 Cor. 2:14

Eph. 2:1

also Rom. 7:18

Rom. 8:7

also Gen. 8:21; Eph. 2:3; Gal. 5:17

When a ball is lying on the floor, can the floor throw it up to your hand? If you throw the ball at the floor, can it return the ball to you? Where is the energy to do this, in the floor or in the ball?

If the "ball is in our court" in our relationship with God, can we start a relationship with him? When God first sends his grace and love to us, what makes us able to respond?

We receive the gifts of God's grace only through faith, that is, believing his promises. (If we do not believe, his words are still true, but we receive no benefit.) Faith itself is completely a gift of God, not a result of any human understanding or effort. This is because all humans are naturally born spiritually blind – unable to know what is right. spiritually dead – unable to do what is right. enemies of God – not desiring to do what is right.

3. How does God cause us to have faith?

A. God causes faith.

a. 1 Cor. 2:14 also 1 Cor. 12:3
What makes us able to accept what comes from God?

b. Rom. 1:16 also Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Thes. 2:13-14
What does God use to cause faith?

c. Acts 7:51 also Hosea 13:9; Matt 23:37
If those on whom God works to not have faith, what is the reason?

What causes a sailboat to move through the water? If the boat dropped an anchor what would happen? Does this mean what moved the boat has stopped?

When we are moved toward God, what causes this to happen? Can we keep this from happening? Does this mean that God stops working on us?

The Holy Spirit brings us to faith, not by God's direct irresistible power, but through the Gospel as a "Means of Grace", which effectively causes faith but can be resisted by a person's choice. (When we have faith it is entirely to God's credit and by his action. When we do not have faith it is entirely our own fault and by our action.)

4. What are God's tools, the "means of grace"?

A. God works with tools.

a. 2 Thess. 2:13-14

God saves us through
(v. 13)...

...
(v. 14) ...

b. Rom. 10:17 also John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 1:23
How does the Gospel come to us to cause faith?

c. Eph. 5:26
What does God also use together with his word
to work on us?

Acts 2:38 [829] When does this happen?

d. 1 Cor. 11:23-24
What does God also use together with his word
to work on us?

1 Cor. 10:16 [830] When does this happen?

Some medicines have an active ingredient, like aspirin, which helps those who are sick, but which can be hard for some people to take. Added ingredients can help the active ingredient to work at a certain time, be easier to swallow, etc. What is the active ingredient in the sacraments? What are the added ingredients?

The two tools which God uses to work faith in our hearts so that we receive the gifts of grace are: the Gospel found in God's written and spoken word (the primary means), and the word of God used together with visible elements in the sacraments, Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

5. What is included in the sacraments?

A. Sacraments include God's word.

a. When are these words of God spoken?
Matt 28:19

Matt. 26:26-28

b. What does God's word say to do and who is included?
Matt. 26:27

Matt. 28:19

c. What does God's word say will happen?
Matt 26:28

Acts 2:38 [829]

B. Sacraments include a visible element used according to God's word.

a. Acts. 8:36
What must be used with the word in Baptism?

b. 1 Cor. 10:16 [830]

What is used with the word in Communion?

If you want to come to church, you could walk all by yourself or use a vehicle like a bicycle or car. Why might you want to do this? If you did, could someone who wanted to know where you were see if you were at church or not?

The material element in a sacrament is like a vehicle for God's word. The important thing is that God's word comes, but the vehicle helps to carry it.

Are sacraments an extra way to be saved without faith or an extra way to cause faith?

What is the benefit of having a quick way to cause faith, as in baptism of infants?

What is the benefit of having a way to make it evident that faith (which we cannot see) is in the heart of someone through baptism?

What is the benefit of having a sure way of giving forgiveness, as in Holy Communion?

The sacraments include...

Words of God himself which are spoken,
A command in God's word that all Christians do it,
A promise in God's word that they give His grace,
A material element used as God's word instructs.

REMEMBER FOR LIFE

Holy Baptism Part 3

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith

which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three:

“He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying.” [Titus 3:5–8]

Eph. 2:8-9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

THE NATURE OF BAPTISM

Washing Away Sin

1. What is Holy Baptism?

- A. The Greek word “baptize” means “wash”
- Mark 7:4 [832]
What Jewish tradition was used for ceremonial purifying?
 - Mark 1:8 also Matt 3:11, Acts 8:36
What is used for this washing?
- B. Holy Baptism is more than water.
- Mark 1:8 also Matt 3:11, Acts 1:5, 2:16-18
What else is poured out on us in Holy Baptism?
 - Eph. 5:26 & 1 Cor. 6:11 also Heb. 10:22
What is used with the water in Holy Baptism?
 - Acts 2:38 also above, Ps. 51:2, John 3:5-6, Acts 22:16
What does Christian Baptism do?
- C. God’s word does the work.
- Matt. 28:19 [833] also 1 Cor. 6:11, Acts 2:38
What word of God is used in Holy Baptism?
 - Eph. 5:25-26 also Matt 3:11
Who is it that washes us in Holy Baptism?

How is Holy Baptism, instituted by Jesus, different from what John the Baptist was doing?

Some say to be truly baptized, one must be totally immersed in water. What would you say about this?

Some see Baptism as something we should do to show we are committed to faith in Jesus. What would you say about this?

“Baptism” means washing with water (dipping, pouring, sprinkling, etc.). Holy Baptism is washing that removes sin and makes one holy.

When Christians wash with water, using the words of God’s name, Father Son and Holy Spirit, God himself is working to wash away sins.

2. Who should be baptized?

- A. God’s command includes everybody.
- Matt. 28:19[833] also Acts 2:38
Whom does Jesus say should be baptized?
 - Acts 16:33 also Acts 10:47-48, 16:15
Who was baptized?
- B. God’s promise includes all, especially children.

- Acts 2:38 [835]
Who is included in this command and promise?
- Psal. 51:5 also John 3:5-6
Why do little babies need to be saved?
- What is the only way to be saved?
Eph. 2:8
John 3:5-6 [841] also Gal. 3:26
- Rom. 10:17 also Eph. 6:4
What causes faith?
- Matt 18:6 [843]
and Luke 18:15-17[840] also Mark 10:13-15
Who can believe in God and be in his kingdom?

Would you wait until a child could understand and make choices before you would feed it? ...bathe it? ...vaccinate it? ...baptize it? Why or why not? How old do you think babies are when they can tell if the one holding them is their mother or not? Can God give a children this age the knowledge that he is their father?

Some say children are innocent and don’t need to be saved until they reach an age when they are accountable for themselves. What would the Bible say about this?

God commands that all people who intend to be Christians should be baptized, including children. God promises that Holy Baptism gives forgiveness and new life to all, including children, because...

- they are included in his commands and promises.
- they need to have faith to be saved.
- they can believe in God.
- this is the one way God has given us for his word to bring them to faith.

3. When should people be baptized?

- A. Adults are baptized when they have faith.
- Acts 16:30-33 also Acts 8:35-38
What did Paul do before baptizing? (v. 32)
 - Acts 2:41[836] also Acts 16:14-15
Who was baptized?
- B. Babies are baptized as soon as possible.
- Acts 16:33 also Acts 8:36, 22:16
When was this family baptized?
 - Matt. 28:20[833] also Eph. 6:4
What did Jesus say to do along with Baptism?

c. What would baptism “sponsors” do?
Matt. 18:16 [844]

Col. 1:9 also Col. 1:10-11

Eph. 6:4

*Do you know when you were baptized? Where?
By Whom? Who are your sponsors?*

*When do you become a child of God and part of
his church? What does catechism instruction and
confirmation have to do with baptism?*

*Where is baptism usually done? Why do you think
this is? Who usually does the baptism? Why do you
think this is?*

*If someone needed to be baptized right away in an
emergency, could you do it? What would you need
to do? (see Lutheran Worship, pg. 312)*

Adults are baptized when they have been taught
the meaning of faith.

Children are baptized as soon as possible and then
are taught the faith. Sponsors customarily witness
the baptism to speak for the child and remind the
child of it, pray for the child, and help in Christian
training, especially if parents are absent. So
sponsors need to know and believe the same faith.

REMEMBER FOR LIFE

Holy Baptism Part 1

What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water,
but it is the water included in God’s command
and combined with God’s word.

Which is that word of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of
Matthew: “Therefore go and make disciples of all
nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” [Matt.
28:19]

Acts 2:38-39

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized,
every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ
for the forgiveness of your sins.
And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
The promise is for you and your children
and for all who are far off—
for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

THE BLESSINGS OF BAPTISM

God Pours It On

1. What are the benefits of Baptism?

- A. Through Baptism we receive God's gifts.
- Acts 2:38 also John 3:5, 1 Cor. 6:11,
What do we receive in Baptism? Titus 3:5
 - Eph. 2:8 also 1 Cor. 6:11
What does God, the Spirit, give us?
 - Acts 2:38 [846] also Acts 22:16, Eph. 5:25-27
What do we receive in Baptism, through faith?
 - Titus 3:5-7 [855] also Mk. 16:16, Rom. 6:23,
What is the end result of Baptism? 1 Pt. 3:21
- B. Through Baptism we are set free.
- What does God free us from?
Rom. 6:3, 5 [848] also John 3:5, Col. 2:12-13
Titus 3:5
and Heb. 2:14-15 also Col. 1:13-14
(v. 14)
 - What does Baptism make us part of instead?
Gal.3:26-27 also Rom. 8:15-17

1 Cor. 12:13 also Acts 2:41

If something is hanging from a chain, what would happen if one of the links of the chain were broken? The blessings of baptism are like links in a chain, with one connected to another. What would happen to a person if they rejected one of the blessings of Baptism? Would they continue to have the others?

Through Holy Baptism, we get the Holy Spirit, who works to cause faith, through which we receive forgiveness of sins, so that we have eternal salvation because we have been rescued from death and the devil and given membership in God's family, the church.

2. How does Baptism give these benefits?

- A. The benefits are given by God.
- 1 Pet. 3:21[852] also Gal. 3:26-27, Titus 3:4-6
Where does Baptism's power to save come from?
 - 1 Pet. 1:23 also Eph. 5:25-27
Through what does God cause new birth?
- B. The benefits received through faith.

- Mark 16:16 [856] also Rom. 5:1-2, Gal. 3:26,
Who receives the benefits of baptism? Col 2:12

What would happen to someone who was baptized but no longer believed?

- Luke 23:39-43 also John 3:36
What happens to those who have faith but die without Baptism?
(v. 43)
- Acts 2:41 also Acts 8:36-37, 22:16
What does God want those who have faith without baptism to do?

Baptism is like a check which gives us God's priceless blessings.

A check is written not in thin air but on paper. What are the words of Baptism put together with?

A check includes the amount that is given.

What is given in Holy Baptism?

A check includes the signature of the person giving it. What name is included as the giver in Baptism?

A check gives the name of the person receiving it.

How is this part of Holy Baptism?

A valid check is genuinely valuable but is of no

benefit to a person until they endorse it. How does a

person receive the benefits given in Baptism?

The benefits of Holy baptism are made available by God's grace for Christ's sake, are offered to us in Baptism by God's word and are received entirely through faith. We hold on to the benefits of baptism only as long as we have the faith given in Baptism. Those who come to faith before Baptism are saved by that faith but should still be baptized as God commands and not consider it worthless.

3. What do we need in addition to baptism?

- A. God's gift in baptism is complete.
- Eph. 4:5 [858]
How many baptisms does one need to be a Christian?
 - Mark 1:8 also John 3:5, Acts 19:1-6,
What does Jesus' Baptism include? Titus 3:5
- B. What God gives in baptism needs to remain.
- Matt 28:20 also Deut 6:6-7
What also needs to be done for those who are baptized?
 - 2 Cor. 4:13 also Matt. 10:32
How will Christians show the faith given in

Baptism?

- c. What should one who has God's gifts from baptism continue to do?

Rev. 3:11 also John 8:31, Rev. 2:10

1 Cor 15:58

2 Pet. 1:5-11 (v. 5) also

John 15:5-8

Baptism is spiritual birth. How often is one person born?

A child cannot live without breathing. Can people have Christian life without the Holy Spirit in them? What would happen to a child if it was not fed?

A child is fed by others until it is old enough to feed itself. How are you fed spiritually?

Holy Baptism should only be done for a person once, and not treated as if it can be ineffective.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is part of Christian Baptism with water and the word and not something separate from or in addition to it.

Those who are baptized need to be taught the meaning of the faith they have received and affirm that they still hold this faith. This is the meaning of the Christian custom of confirmation.

Those who publicly confirm their faith express their intention to continue holding to that faith, growing in faith and Christian living and participating fully in the life of the church.

REMEMBER FOR LIFE

Holy Baptism Part 2

What benefits does Baptism give?

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are these words and promises of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." [Mark 16:16]

1 Peter 3:21

and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

WHAT BAPTISM INDICATES

Fresh Every Day

1. How does Baptism change daily life?

A. Baptism gives us different lives.

Rom. 6:1-7 also Eph. 4:22-24, Col. 2:11-12

a. What does baptism connect us to? (v. 3)

b. What does this do to our old self? (v. 6)

c. What does baptism also connect us to? (v. 5)

d. What does this give us? (v. 4)

e. What do we stop doing as a result? (v. 1-2)

Baptism is a one time event with a continuing result. It is something like a couple that gets married on one day but continues to be married every day after that. Whom do you have a relationship with that began in a one time Baptism but continues every day as you live in Baptism?

We continue to live in Baptism and have its benefits as our old sinful nature (flesh, old Adam, old man, sinful self) is continually put to death and a new holy self (new man, spiritual man) continues to come alive.

2. What happens to our old self?

A. Our old self is sinful.

a. What is our old self like?

Eph. 4:22 [867] also Rom 7:18-20

b. Rom. 8:7-8 also Gal. 5:17-20

What can our sinful self not do?

c. Psal. 51:5 also Gen. 8:21

Where does this part of us come from?

B. We need to be free from the old self.

a. Rom. 8:12-13 also Gal. 5:16-18

What must keep happening to the old self?

b. 2 Cor. 7:10 also Psal. 51:17

How should we feel about our sinfulness?

c. Psal. 51:4

What should we say about our sinfulness?

d. Rom. 6:12 also 1 Cor. 9:26-27

What should we do about our sinful desires?

Marriage changes the name and identity of the wife. You began life as a “sinner”. What new name and identity does God give you in Baptism? A wedding ring on a finger shows that a person is married. What might people see when they watch you that shows whom you belong to?

Our old sinful nature, which is inherited from Adam by our birth, always has evil desires and leads us to do wrong.

This sinful nature must repeatedly be drowned by turning away from sin, which includes contrition, which is being sorry for our wrongs, confessing our sinfulness to God, and deciding not to do wrong.

3. What happens with our new self?

A. Our new self is holy.

a. Rom. 8:9-11 also Gal. 5:25
Where does our new life come from?

b. Eph. 4:24 [871] also 2 Cor. 5:17

What is our new self like?

c. Rom. 7:22 also Gal. 5:22-23

What does the new self want to do?

d. 2 Cor. 5:14-15

What makes us want this?

B. Our new self is constantly renewed.

a. Acts 20:21

REMEMBER FOR LIFEHoly Baptism Part 4

What does such baptizing with water indicate?

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six:
“We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” [Rom. 6:4]

Colossians 3:1-2

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your heart on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above,
not on earthly things.

OFFICE OF THE KEYS

Forgiveness is For Giving

1. What power does God give the church?

- A. Jesus gives the "Office of the Keys".
- a. Matt 16:19
What do the keys Jesus gives unlock?
 - b. John 20:22-23 [894] also Luke 24:47
How are sins' chains unlocked and heaven opened? (v. 23)
- B. Jesus gives the keys to the church.
- a. Matt 18:17-20
Who can open or close heaven?
(v. 17)
(v. 20)
 - b. 2 Cor. 5:18-20 also 1 Pet 2:9
Who has this power to speak for God?
- C. The Church works with the means of grace.
- a. Luke 24:47 also Mark 16:15
How is forgiveness offered to people?
 - b. Acts 2:38 also Matt 28:19
How is forgiveness given to people?
 - c. Matt. 26:27-28 also 1 Cor. 11:24-25
How is forgiveness given to people?
 - d. 2 Cor. 2:10
Whom does the pastor speak for in announcing absolution?
 - e. Luke 17:3 also Matt 9:2
What can we do for others who sin?

What gives a policeman the right and power to stop some cars and let others go? What does he have power to do if people disregard him?

God gives certain powers to authorities such as parents, government, etc.. Does any authority beside the church have the power to forgive sins? What does the church not have authority to do?

When a business is an "authorized dealer" or has a franchise license, it can display special signs and distribute special brands of products. Christians are God's authorized dealers. What "marks of the church" do we have the right to use and distribute?

God has given the church the "Office of the Keys", which is the special power

to open or close heaven by giving or withholding forgiveness of sins.

God gives this power to the whole church congregation and individual believers.

The church forgives sins by the Means of Grace, including: preaching the Gospel,
Administering sacraments: Baptism & Communion,
Public absolution and individual forgiveness.

2. Who's sins are forgiven?

- A. Forgiveness is for those who are penitent.
- a. Acts 3:19 [899] also Luke 17:3
What is needed so sins can be forgiven?
 - b. Acts 26:18 also Ezek. 18:30, Heb. 6:1
What must we turn away from?

What must we turn to ?
 - c. What goes along with turning away from sin?
2 Cor. 7:9-10 also 2 Cor. 7:11

Psal. 32:5 [900] also Luke 18:13

Psal. 51:17 [901]
 - d. Acts 20:21 also Acts 10:43
What is part of turning toward God?
- B. Forgiveness always produces change.
- a. Acts 26:20 also Matt 3:8, Jas. 2:26
What shows one has repented?
 - b. Luke 7:47 also Luke 19:7-10, 1 Jn. 2:3-4
What shows one has been forgiven?

If a child has something that is dangerous, you would help them by taking it away. Can you take it if they refuse to let it go?

God wants to take away our sin with his forgiveness. Does he take it away if we refuse to give up sinful ways and let go of them?

Our lives are like a river that flows from our past into our future. If you stop or divert a river with a dam, what will you see downstream?

Forgiveness is God's way of changing our lives by changing our past. How could taking away what you have done wrong in the past change what you do now or in the future?

Sins can be forgiven only for a person who repents, which is turning around and having a change of heart including contrition – being sorry for sin and turning from it.

faith – turning to Jesus with trust for forgiveness.

True repentance always results in a change of life including love and good deeds.

3. What must be done if sinners do not repent?

A. The church patiently works for repentance.

a. Matt 18:15 also Luke 17:3, Jas. 5:19-20
What must we do first if someone sins and does not repent?

Matt. 18:21-22 also Luke 17:4, 1 Thes. 5:14
How often are we to keep doing this?

b. Matt 18:16 also Deut 19:15
What must we do if they still do not repent?

c. Matt 18:17
What must we do if this is not effective?

d. 1 Cor. 5:2, 11, 13 also Matt 10:14, 18:17
What must we do if one still refuses to repent?

e. Why must we warn sinners?

1 Tim. 5:20 also Matt.
18:6, 1 Cor. 5:6

Lev. 19:17

B. Forgiveness is not given to those who reject it.

a. John 20:23 [894] also Matt. 7:6, 1 Jn. 1:10, 2:4
What must we tell one who will not repent?

b. 2 Thess. 3:14-15 also 1 Cor. 5:11
How are we to treat those who do not repent?

C. The goal is always forgiveness and renewal.

a. Eph. 4:2-3 [915] also 1 Thes.
5:14, Jude 2-3

What must be our attitude toward sinners?

b. James 5:19-20 also 1 Cor.
5:5, 2 Cor. 7:9-10, What is our
goal Heb. 12:5-11, Jude 2-3

when we warn sinners?

c. Gal. 6:1

What must we ourselves be careful of?

e. 2 Cor. 2:6-8 [923] also 2 Sam. 12:13,
Luke 15:11-32,

What do we do if a stubborn
Luke 17:3-4
sinner finally repents?

Church discipline is something like the discipline of a loving parent. What should a parent do if a child keeps on doing something dangerously wrong? How would this help the child? How could this help others in the family or community? What could happen if the parents did nothing?

If parents stopped loving the child, would they care what he or she did? Does church discipline help sinful people? How can it help others? What would happen if believers in the church did nothing when others in the church did wrong? Does church discipline show love for people or not?

When sinners do not repent, Christians must:

- First, personally, privately and repeatedly show them their sin and encourage repentance.

- Second, if necessary, go with one or two others to point out the sin and urge repentance.

- Third, if this is useless after repeated effort, take the matter to the church, which will together point out the sin and demand repentance.

- Fourth, if this fails, inform the person that the stubborn sin and unrepentance has separated them from God and his church.

This is called excommunication. This is necessary to show the seriousness of sin and to keep others from being led

into sin. The goal is always that the person repent and be saved.

Those who have been excommunicated are not promised forgiveness or included in the sacraments or personal absolution but are to be loved and encouraged to return and hear the Gospel.

Whenever sinners do repent they are to be immediately forgiven and included in the life of the church.

REMEMBER FOR LIFE

Office of the Keys (part a)

What is the Office of the Keys?

The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.

Where is this written?

This is what St. John the Evangelist writes in chapter twenty:

The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." [John 20:22-23]

Matt. 18:15-17a

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church;

CONFESSION II [LSCE page 227f]

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC MINISTRY

One For All

1. How does the church use the means of grace?

A. Christians use the means of grace individually.

a. How should each Christian use God's word with others?

Col 3:16

also 1 Pet. 2:9

Eph. 4:32

b. Acts 8:35-38

In what two ways did Philip use word and sacrament?

(v. 35)

(v. 38)

B. Christians use the means of grace as a group.

a. 1 Cor. 14:26, 29-33

How is the speaking done when the church is

together as a group?

(v. 31)

(v. 33)

b. Titus 1:5

also Eph.

4:11-12

What does every congregation need to have?

c. Whom do church leaders represent and speak for?

1 Cor. 4:1 [908]

also Luke

10:16

2 Cor. 2: 10 [909]

d. 1 Tim. 4:13-14

also 2 Tim.

2:4-5

What three things are the duty of ordained

church leaders in public (group) settings?

A church is like a choir or orchestra.

Who is...

- like the individual players of different instruments?

- like the accompanist who helps the others follow the director?

- like the director who decides on the music and shows the group what to do?

- like the audience which sits and listens?

Each Christian is a priest of God who speaks to him and for him and uses the means of grace as an individual.

When Christians gather as a group, publicly, special representatives in each congregation speak and act for God and for the church in using the means of grace.

2. How does the Bible describe Church leaders?

In the following verses, what are the church leaders called, and what do they do?

a. 1 Tim. 4:6 also 1 Cor. 4:1

b. 1 Tim. 5:17 also Acts 16:4, Titus 1:5

c. Heb. 13:17 also 1 Tim. 3:2, 5, Titus 1:7

d. 1 Pet. 5:2-3 also Eph. 4:11

*What things can you think of that a pastor does?
Which do you think are his most important duties?
Which do you think would be hardest or most enjoyable?*

The Bible calls congregation leaders **ministers** (servants) who distribute the means of grace, God's word and sacraments; **elders** (presbyters) who teach and train; **bishops** (overseers) who supervise the work; and **pastors** (shepherds) who lead and guide by words and example.

3. How does one become a pastor?

A. Pastors are ordained through the church.

a. Acts 20:28 [907] also Heb. 5:1, 4
Who makes people "overseers" of the church?

b. 1 Tim. 4:14 also Titus 1:5
How did Timothy receive the gift of being a pastor?

B. Pastors are to be trained and mature.

a. 1 Tim. 3:2 also 1 Tim. 3:3-13
What are important qualities of a pastor?

b. Titus 1:9 also
Titus 1:6-8
What must a pastor have a good hold on?

C. Pastors are men who speak for the church.

- a. 1 Cor. 14:33-34 also 1 Cor. 14:35-36

Who is not to be the spokesman of the church in worship?

Where does this apply (v. 33)

- b. 1 Tim. 2:11-13

What are women not to do? (v. 12)

With whom was this first true? (v. 13)

- c. Eph. 5:22-23 also 1 Cor. 11:2-3

Who is responsible for the spiritual leadership of a family?

- d. Gal. 3:28 also Gal. 3:26-27, Eph. 4:4-8

There is no difference between people in their relationship to whom?

- e. Acts 18:26 also Acts 21:9

What will women still do as individuals?

No pastor is the same as another and one are perfect, but if you were to help your church pick a pastor, what abilities or qualities would you consider most important for your church?

Our church does not have women pastors or elders. What other jobs or duties in a congregation can be done by both men and women?

The leader of a church is chosen by God who calls him through the church which places him in office when it ordains him for the Holy Ministry.

Pastors and other church leaders must be mature and trained Christians who set good examples.

When the congregation acts as a group only men may serve as pastor, the official spokesman of the church, because at creation God put them in a position of responsibility for women.

Still, all Christians, both male and female have the same relationship with God and serve others with God's word as individuals.

4. Which positions of ministry are open to all?

A. Any mature and qualified Christian may participate in other functions often done by pastors which do not call for them to act as the spiritual authority over the adults of the congregation, as when pastors administer the means of grace as an official representative of the group.

- B. Professional church positions for those who are trained and commissioned ministers include:
- a. Teacher
 - b. Director of Christian Education
 - c. Deaconess
 - d. Director of Christian Outreach
 - e. Parish Assistant
 - f. Director of Parish Music
 - g. Director of Family Life Ministry

REMEMBER FOR LIFE

Office of the Keys (part b)

What do you believe according to these words?
 I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from the Christian congregation and absolve those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.

Luke 10:16

He who listens to you listens to me;
 he who rejects you rejects me;
 but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.

Ephesians 4:11-12

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Forgiveness is For Getting

1. Why do we need forgiveness?

A. We are sinful by nature.

a. Psal. 51:5 also Gen. 5:3, 8:21
When does our sinfulness start?b. Eph. 2:3
What is our original nature like?

B. We do sinful acts.

a. Matt. 15:19 also Matt. 7:17-18, Jas.
1:15
What comes from naturally sinful hearts?b. Rom. 3:23 also 2 Chr. 6:36, Psal.
14:3, Eccl. 7:20,
What does everyone do?
Rom. 3:12c. James 2:10
How sinful are we?d. James 4:17
What also is sin?

Here is the confession of sins found on page 158 of the hymnal, except that several phrases have been changed. Mark out those phrases that are wrong and remember what we truthfully say instead.

Most merciful God, we confess that we are really good by nature but have made some mistakes. We have sinned against you in some words and deeds, by what we have done wrong without trying to. But we have loved you a lot and have loved our neighbors as much as they love us. We justly deserve to be given another chance. For the sake of our good intentions, have mercy on us. Forgive us, excuse us and leave us alone, so that we may delight in doing our will and live in our own way to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

We need forgiveness because, as descendants of Adam we have all inherited a sinful nature which makes us guilty from our start. (original sin)
As a result of our sinful nature, we have all become guilty of sinful actions (actual sin) by doing what we should not (sins of commission) and not doing what we should (sins of omission).

2. What should we do when we know our sin?

A. We are made aware of our sin.

a. Rom. 2:14-15

What tells us we sin against God's law? (v. 15)

b. Rom. 3:20

also

Rom. 7:7

What also shows us our sin?

B. We need to repent.

a. Psal. 51:3-4 [875]

What must we admit is true.

b. Psal. 32:3, 5 [874]

also 1 Jn.

1:8-9

What must we do about our sin? (v. 5)

c. Prov. 28:13

also Heb. 10:26-27,

29, 1 John 3:6, 9

What goes along with sincere confession?

In the catechism, Luther suggests that we think about which sins we should confess in this way:

“Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments: Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome? Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm?”

What are some thoughts, words or actions you have done wrong that these words or the Ten Commandments make you think of?

What are some things these words or the Ten Commandments make you think of which you should have done but have not?

When we see our sinfulness we must confess our sins, that is agree that we are sinful, and want to stop sinning.

3. How do we need to confess?

A. We confess to God.

a. Luke 18:13-14

also Psal. 51:4-5

What must we confess, and to whom? (v. 13)

b. 1 John 1:8-9 [878]

also Psal 32:2, 5; 103:12,

What will God then do?

Luke 18:14

c. Psal. 19:12 [876]

also Prov. 16:2

What must we also ask God to forgive?

We learn of our sins and our need for forgiveness from our conscience (natural knowledge) and from God's law (revealed knowledge).

B. We confess to other people.

a. James 5:16 [882]

To whom else should we confess?

What can they do for us?

b. Matt 5:23-24 [880]

also Luke 15:21

What should we ask others to forgive?

c. Luke 17:3-4

also Lev. 19:17-18, 1 Cor. 13:5,

What must we do for others Eph. 4:31-32
who repent?

C. We confess to the pastor.

a. 2 Sam. 12:13

also Acts 5:3-4

What should we confess to our pastor?

What will the pastor then say?

b. Psal. 38:4

also Psal. 38:18, 32:3, 51:3

What sins should we especially confess
to our pastor?

c. 2 Cor. 5:18-19

also Matt 18:18, Luke 10:16,

Who speaks to us through the pastor? John 20:23

d. Prov. 11:13 [888]

also 1 Tim. 3:1-2

What will the pastor do when we
tell him our sins?

e. Psal. 51:12

also Isa 40:1-2, Matt. 9:2, 1 Thes. 2:11-12

What does assurance of forgiveness
give us?*If you were sick, who would you go to? Would it be best to explain exactly how you feel or keep part of it secret? Would he or she try to make you get better or worse?**If you were in debt, who would you go to? Would it be best to explain exactly how much you need or keep part of it secret. Would he or she want you to have more money or less?**If you were in legal trouble, who would you go to? Would it be best to explain exactly what you are in trouble for or keep part of it secret? Would he or she try to get you in jail or free?**If you feel guilty for our sins, who would you go to? Would it be best to explain exactly what you feel guilty for or keep part of it secret? Would he try to make you feel more afraid of God or feel loved?*

We must confess to God all our sins, that we are completely sinful in nature and we sin in ways we do not even know. When we confess our sin to God, he removes them and fully forgives us.

We must confess to other people sins we have done against them and they are to sincerely forgive.

We may confess to our pastor the sins which especially bother us. When we confess to the pastor, he speaks for God in fully forgiving us (pronouncing absolution) so that we can be joyful, confident, and assured of complete forgiveness.

REMEMBER FOR LIFEConfession*What is Confession?*

Confession has two parts.

First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

What sins should we confess?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

Psalm 32:5

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"—and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR I [pg. 231f]

NATURE OF HOLY COMMUNION Do this in Remembrance

1. What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

- A. A sacrament includes God's word and elements.
- Matt. 26:26-29 also 1 Cor. 11:21, 23-25
What material elements does Jesus use?
(v. 26)
(v. 29)
 - Matt. 26:26-27 also Luke 22:19, Mark 14:22
What does Jesus say to do?
(v. 26)
(v. 27)
 - Matt. 26:28
What Does Jesus promise with this?
- B. This sacrament is different from Baptism.
- Matt 26:26 also 1 Cor. 10:21, Heb. 13:10
To whom is this sacrament offered?
 - Acts 2:42 [927] also Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 10:16
What is this special meal also called?
 - Acts 2:42 [927] also Matt 28:19-20
What are those who break bread in this way also devoted to?

Does it matter if we chose to use different elements to eat and drink than what Jesus used?

Does it matter if only the bread is given to those who receive the sacrament, and not the wine?

The Sacrament of the Altar, also called "Breaking of Bread" has God's word of command and promise connected with material elements of bread and wine.

Unlike Baptism, this sacrament is for those who already believe. For this reason it is offered to those who have been instructed and confirmed their faith.

2. Why is the sacrament called Communion?

- A. Jesus' body and blood unite with bread and wine.
- Mark 14:22-25 also 1 Cor. 10:16
What does Jesus say the bread is? (v. 22)

What does Jesus say is in the cup (v. 24)
 - 1 Cor. 11:27, 29 [934]
Who receives the body and blood of Jesus?
 - Eph. 4:10 also Acts 1:9-10, Eph. 3:20-21
Where can Jesus be now that he is ascended?

- B. We are united with others.
- Eph. 2:12-13 also Jer. 31:31-34,
What were we separated from Heb. 10:19-23
that Christ's blood unites us with?

- 1 Cor. 10:17 also Eph. 2:12-18
With whom are we united when we share Holy Communion together?

Which of these statements is most correct?

- The words of the pastor cause the bread and wine to change (transubstantiation) and become Jesus' body and blood instead, so that we should bow down to them as we would bow down to Jesus.*
- The bread and wine are symbols we use to represent Jesus body and blood and remind ourselves of him.*
- When the bread and wine are consecrated, Jesus' body and blood are present spiritually and are received only by those who believe it is Jesus' body and blood.*
- The elements of Holy Communion are still bread and wine but at the same time Jesus' words make them to be his body and blood, in with and under the bread and wine, which is received by all who eat and drink.*

In Holy Communion the bread and wine are joined together with Jesus' body and blood in a 'sacramental union'. We call this 'real presence' because the bread and wine remain what they are but at the same time they are also his body and blood in with and under the bread and wine. This means that everyone who eats and drinks the bread and wine also at the same time eats and drinks Jesus' body and blood.

In Holy Communion, forgiven sinners are rejoined with the Holy God.

In Holy Communion, those who eat and drink together are joined together with fellow believers.

3. Why is the sacrament called Lord's Supper?

- A. This is a special meal for believers.
- Mark 14:12 also Exod. 12, Matt 26:17-18,
What special occasion were Jesus Luke 22:7-16
and his disciples celebrating?
 - 1 Cor. 5:7 also John 1:29
What is Jesus like for us?
 - 1 Cor. 11:23 also Luke 22:20-21
When did Jesus celebrate this meal?

B. Jesus gives us himself.

- a. 1 Cor. 11:23-24 [929] also 1 Cor. 11:25-26
Who gives what we receive in this meal?

Whose words are always spoken in this meal?

- b. Matt 26:26-28 also Mark 14:22-23
What does Jesus say to do with his body and blood?

- c. 1 Cor. 11:24 [929] also Luke 22:19, Gal. 3:15
What must we always do in this meal?

In the Passover, each family sacrificed a lamb, without breaking any bones, and put the blood on their doorway so that death skipped over them in Egypt and they were freed from slavery. They ate this lamb by scooping up the meat in unleavened bread, and drank cups of wine to celebrate what God was doing for them. They repeated this meal regularly to remember what God had done. How is the Lord's Supper similar?

The Old Testament, or Old Covenant, emphasized the sacrifices and other things the people had to do to have forgiveness. How is Jesus' new covenant, the new testament in his blood, similar and how is it different?

The Lord's Supper is a special meal established by Jesus on the night he was betrayed, taking the place of the Old Testament Passover meal, with Jesus himself as the sacrificed lamb.

In the Lord's Supper Jesus himself gives us today his body and blood by means of his own words which are spoken (not by a pastor's power). He intends us to do just what he did in his meal with his disciples.

The Lord's Supper is given for us to eat and drink. The bread and wine are received by mouth in a natural way. The body and blood are received by mouth in a supernatural way.

4. Why is the sacrament called Eucharist?

A. Eucharist is giving thanks.

- a. Matt 26:26 [928] also Mk. 14:22-23, 1 Co. 10:16

What did Jesus do first when he took the bread?

- b. 1 Cor. 11:26 [942]

What do we thankfully proclaim by celebrating this meal?

B. We remember what Jesus has completed.

a. 1 Cor. 11:24 [929] also Luke 22:19
What is it that reminds us of Jesus' death?

b. Heb. 10:14, 18 [940, 941] also
John 19:30; What never has to
Heb. 9:25-28, 10:10, 12
happen again now?

Roman Catholics teach that each time a priest consecrates this sacrament Jesus is resacrificed to provide more forgiveness for the person for whom the "Mass" is said. What errors are part of this teaching?

"Eucharist" means thanksgiving. As Jesus gave thanks in giving this meal, we, in receiving it, give thanks for his death, which gives us forgiveness. This is an act of worship in which celebrate what God has done as we proclaim and are reminded of Jesus death for us as the final sacrifice, which he has completed once and for all.

REMEMBER FOR LIFE

1 Cor. 10:16

Is not the cup of thanksgiving
for which we give thanks
a participation in the blood of Christ?
And is not the bread that we break
a participation in the body of Christ?

Nature of the Sacrament of the Altar

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

It is the true body and blood
of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine,
instituted by Christ Himself
for us Christians to eat and to drink.

Where is this written?

The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke,
and St. Paul write:

Our Lord Jesus Christ,
on the night when He was betrayed, took bread,
and when He had given thanks,
He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said:
"Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for
you.

This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR II [pg. 237f]
BENEFIT & POWER OF COMMUNION
For the Forgiveness of Sins

1. What does receiving this sacrament do for us?

- A. We are given evidence of Jesus' death.
 a. John 19:33-35
 What truth do we need to know and believe?
- b. 1 Cor. 11:26 [954] also Matt 26:38,
 What are the elements Luke 22:19-20
 of this sacrament showing and telling about?
- B. We are individually given God's promise.
 a. Matt 26:28 [945] also Rom. 4:25, Eph. 1:7,
 What does Jesus say Col. 1:22, 1 Pet. 11:18-19,
 his blood does for us? 1 John 1:7
- b. Matt 26:26-27 also Luke 22:19-20,
 Who receives this sacrament? 1 Cor. 11:24

In a courtroom trial, who's words show the jury what to believe? Would evidence, such as the weapon used or a picture of the damage make these words more convincing? What tells the jury know that the evidence is real?

What do the witnesses, such as John, tell us Jesus did? What evidence does this sacrament give us to help us believe this? Who's words cause us to we recognize and believe this evidence is real?

The actual body and blood of Jesus received in this sacrament are evidence to assure and remind us that Jesus has truly died.

The word of God in this sacrament offers, gives and guarantees the forgiveness won for us by Jesus' shedding his blood in death. These words are the main thing in the sacrament.

The individual receiving of this sacrament gives personal assurance of this forgiveness.

2. How do we benefit spiritually from what God gives?

- A. Spiritual blessings are received through faith.
 a. Luke 1:45 [955] also
 Luke 11:27-28,
 Who receives God's blessing? 1
 Cor. 10:3-5
- b. Rom. 1:17 also Rom. 3:22, 28;
 4:20-21; 5:1-2
 How is God's righteousness received?

B. We must believe what God says.

- a. 1 Cor. 11:29
 What happens if those who eat and drink do not believe it is Jesus' body?
- b. Heb. 4:2 also 1 Thess. 2:13
 What happens if those who hear the gospel message do not have faith?

If you were served a good meal, through what would you enjoy the nutrition of it? Through what would you enjoy the good flavor of it? Through what would you enjoy the appetizing appearance of it? Through what would you enjoy the aroma of it? When you take Holy Communion, through what do you receive the bread and wine? Through what do you receive the body and blood? Through what do you receive the forgiveness?

The spiritual benefits of this sacrament are received only through faith in the real presence of Jesus' body and blood and in the promise of God that we are forgiven.

3. What benefits are received through faith?

- A. Forgiveness saves life.
 a. Acts 13:38-39 also 1 John 1:9
 What does Jesus promise that is received through faith?
- b. Rom. 6:22-23 also John 3:16; 4:9; 5:24;
 What is the result Rom. 6:8-9; 8:10;
 of being free from sin? 1 Pet. 2:24
- B. God's love changes our lives.
 a. 2 Cor. 5:15
 What does Jesus death make us want to do?
- b. 1 John 4:19 also 1 John 4:7-11
 What does Jesus love make us do?
- C. Through faith we grow stronger.
 a. Rom. 4:20 also Mark 9:24
 What is strengthened when we believe God's promises?
- b. Gal. 2:20 also 2 Cor. 5:15, 1 John 3:5-6, 9
 What does faith make us able to do?

- What could eating a good meal do for you if you...*
- are a small, young child?
 - are doing weight lifting?
 - are thinking about hard problems?
 - are feeling worn out?
 - are a newborn baby?
 - are sick with a stomach problem?
- What could taking communion do for you if you...*
- feel guilty about your sin?
 - wonder if God really loves you?
 - have a hard time resisting temptation?
 - want to be more loving and kind?
 - are afraid of suffering or death?
 - don't understand what it is?
 - doubt that what the Bible says is true?
 - don't want to give up sinning?

Through faith in God's word we receive the forgiveness which His word promises.
 Through forgiveness we receive spiritual life and everlasting salvation.
 Assurance of forgiveness increases our love for God and desire to live for him.
 When we believe what God is doing for us, faith itself is strengthened and strengthened faith makes us able to serve and obey God better.

4. Why should we receive this Sacrament often?

- A. We have Christ's command and promise.
- a. 1 Cor. 11:25 also Acts 2:42
 What does Jesus expect us to keep doing?
 - b. Matt 26:28 [945] also Matt 11:28
 What does Jesus say this is good for?
- B. We need what God offers.
- a. We need help for what troubles within us?
 1 John 1:8-9

 Rom. 7:18 also John 15:5, Gal. 5:19-21
 - b. We need help for what troubles from outside?
 John 16:33

 1 Pet 5:8 also Eph. 6:12

At what times of the day do you eat? Why?
Who prepares the meal? Who calls you to eat?
What would happen if you didn't eat at that time?
What would happen if you didn't eat?

At what times is Communion available in your church? How often to people you know commune? Who offers this meal? Who invites you to it? What would happen if you didn't take it?

Christians receive the Lord's Supper often because Christ invites and commands us to receive it, promising forgiveness and strength through it, and because we constantly need the forgiveness and spiritual strength God gives us in it.

REMEMBER FOR LIFE

What is the benefit of this eating and drinking?
 These words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins," show us that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?
 Certainly not just eating and drinking do these things, but the words written here: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." These words, along with the bodily eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament. Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say: "forgiveness of sins."

2 Cor. 5:15
 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

1 Cor. 11:26
 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR III [pg. 241f]**RECEPTION OF COMMUNION****Given for You**1. What is necessary for rightly receiving Holy Communion?

- A. This sacrament must be received the right way.
- 1 Cor. 11:27-29
What should we do before taking Communion? (v. 28)

What could happen if we didn't do it rightly? (v. 27)
(v. 29)
 - 2 Cor. 13:5 [962] also Heb. 4:2
What are we looking to see in this examination?
- B. Right reception requires faith.
- 1 John 1:8-10 also Ps. 38:18, 1 Cor. 7:10-11
What must we believe about ourselves in order to be forgiven?
 - Heb. 10:26-27 also Heb. 10:29, 1 John 3:6, 9
What must we sincerely want in order to be forgiven?
 - 1 John 5:10-11 also Matt. 26:28, John 3:16-18, Rom 14:23, James 1:6-7
What must we believe about God to be forgiven? (v. 11)
 - 1 Cor. 11:24 & 29 also Luke 22:19-20, Heb. 10:29
What must we believe about this sacrament in order to be forgiven?
 - Mark 9:24 also Is. 42:3, John 6:27, Heb. 4:16
What should we do if our faith is weak?
- C. Deserving God's blessings is unnecessary.
- Philip. 3:12 also Gal. 2:16, Rom. 3:22-24
What can we not expect already?
 - 1 Tim. 4:8 [958] also Joel 2:12, Jonah 3:5, Matt. 6:16-18; 9:14
What may be helpful but not required?

When you take medicine for a sickness, it may have side effects. Strong medicine is available only by prescription after a person has been examined to determine that the medicine will help them and not hurt them.

Holy Communion is strong medicine. What is it intended to cure? What is looked for in the examination? What negative side effect could occur without this? What church ceremony is like getting a prescription?

Before receiving Holy Communion, we should first examine ourselves to see that we will receive it in a way that will benefit instead of in an unworthy way that would harm us.

Receiving Holy Communion in a beneficial way requires faith that...

- we are indeed sinners – along with the sincere desire to be forgiven and stop sinning.
- God will forgive all our sins because of Jesus death for us.
- Jesus' real body and blood are present in the sacrament.

Those with weak faith should not avoid Holy Communion but receive it so their faith grows stronger.

Because there is nothing we can do to deserve God's blessings, we are not required, before receiving Communion, to be perfectly without fault or make physical preparations such as fasting.

2. With whom can we not share Communion?

- A. Communion is not for those who will not benefit.
- 1 Cor. 11:28-29 also 2 Cor. 13:5, Heb. 10:29, 1 John 5:10
Should a person be given Holy Communion if they don't believe what it really is or if they are not able to examine themselves?
 - 1 Cor. 5:11, 13 [966] also Matt 18:15-17, Acts 3:19, 1 John 3:6, 9
What must we not do with those who refuse to give up sinning? (v. 11)
(v. 13)
 - Matt. 6:15 [968] also Matt 5:23-24, Mark 11:25
Who will not receive forgiveness from Holy Communion?
- B. Do not commune with those of different faiths.
- 1 Cor. 10:17 [970] also 2 Cor. 6:14
What does it mean when we share Holy Communion together with others?
 - 1 Cor. 1:10 also Acts 2:42, 1 John 4:1
What is important for real unity in the church?
 - 1 Cor. 11:17-19
What happens when we join with others in the church in spite of divisions? (v. 17)
 - Rom. 16:17 [972]
What must we do when others have false beliefs and teachings?

On a wheel, the closer the spokes are to the hub in the center, the closer they are to each other. When we draw closer to Christ by believing the truth and receiving his body and blood in Holy Communion, what happens between us and other believers?

If you are someone's friend, you may talk and do many things with them. If you loved them you would kiss and hug. But full intimacy is only for those who have committed themselves to complete and lasting union in Marriage.

When we are friends with other believers we will talk with them even if they do not fully agree with us. Because we love them, we will pray for them. But sharing Holy Communion together is the highest form of spiritual unity with Christ and our fellow believers. This is only for those who have made a commitment to complete and lasting unity, with agreement in the faith.

We must not give Holy Communion to:

- those who cannot examine themselves for repentance and faith (such as those who are not yet sufficiently taught or are not sufficiently aware of what is happening).
- those who do not believe in the real presence of Jesus' body and blood in this sacrament.
- those who do not repent, as shown by stubbornly continuing in sin, refusing to forgive or refusing to be reconciled with others.

We should not share Holy Communion together with those who are not honestly united as one in faith with us. (This Lutheran practice is called "close" or "closed" communion.)

3. Why should we be concerned who receives Holy Communion?

A. We are responsible for helping others.

a. John 20:22-23 also Matt 16:19, 1 Cor. 13:5
What are believers responsible for doing?

b. Look up Acts 20:28 also Heb 13:17, 1 Pet. 5:2
Who is made responsible in the church?

B. We are responsible for a clear witness.

a. 1 Pet. 4:8, 10-11 also Prov. 3:11, 1 Jn. 3:18
How should we treat others? (v. 8)

How should we use God's means 1 Cor. 11:2
of grace? (v. 10) Jer. 23:23

What should we speak? (v. 11) 1 Cor. 14:8

If you are given a plant or animal to take care of, will it make a difference what others do with it?

If you love a person, will it make a difference to you what others think or say about that person?

If you care about someone, will it make a difference to you if they eat or do things that are unhealthy?

If you love God, believe his word, and care about other believers, will it make a difference to you whether or not they also believe the truth about God?

God makes the church, especially pastors, responsible for the spiritual welfare of others. Out of love for God's word and his church, we must be careful that our witness to the truth is clear and uncompromising with both our words and actions.

REMEMBER FOR LIFE

Who receives this sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation

are certainly fine outward training.

But that person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words:

"Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."

But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, for the words "for you" require all hearts to believe.

1 Cor. 11:28-29

A man ought to examine himself

before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.

For anyone who eats and drinks

without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.