

Every Sunday Communion

Adult Education Hour Class

Fall 2022

Participants in this class are enabled to:

1. Come with an open mind.
2. Ask Pastor Eichers questions either in class or privately if he or she disagrees with something he teaches.
3. Encourage members who have complaints or concerns to talk to Pastor Eichers directly.
4. Prayerfully consider what practices Christ may be calling Faith Lutheran to engage regarding communion frequency.
5. Invite friends and family to attend this class.
6. Watch the Youtube videos if you had to miss a class.

Pastor Eichers promises that:

1. He will approach teaching this topic with an open mind.
2. He firmly believes that every member of Faith Lutheran sincerely wants what's best for the well-being of this congregation, even if we may have differing opinions as to what that might look like.
3. This is an exploratory class. He will not force a practice on the church that the congregation does not agree is right for them.
4. Even though this may discuss advanced topics, he will try his best to present the material in an approachable and interesting manner.

Learning Objectives:

1. To review the nature and benefits of the Lord's Supper as taught in the Bible and the Small Catechism.
2. To be familiar with practices of the Lord's Supper in the Bible and throughout Church history.
3. To be aware of some of the challenges and abuses to the Lord's Supper throughout church history.
4. To unpack what self-examination is and why we practice closed communion.
5. To discuss common objections to every Sunday Communion

Schedule:

September 11Class 1: Introduction

A Pastor's Quest
Out of the Mouths of Babes and Infants
A Lay of the Land

September 18*Break: Guest Presenter Rev. Dr. Mark Schuler*

September 25Class 2: What is Communion?

The Words of Institution
What does Luther Say?
Big Trouble in Little Corinth

Benefits of the Lord's Supper

October 2 Class 3: Every Sunday Communion in the Bible

Old Testament Antecedents
Communion in the Book of Acts
Communion and Corinth?
Revelation and Jesus for Dinner?

October 9 Class 4: Communion throughout History: The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly

Who cares about Church History? I want to read the Bible!
Tracing Every Sunday Communion

October 16 *Break: Voters' Assembly*

October 23 Class 5: Having the Closed Communion Conversation

Self-Examination
Why we exclude some from Communion
The vertical and horizontal aspects of Communion
How to talk about it with a friend

October 30 Class 6: Answering Objections & Conclusion

Bibliography

- Just, Arthur A. Jr. *Heaven on Earth: The Gifts of Christ in the Divine Service*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2008.
- Luther, Martin. *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2017.
- Maschke, Timothy. *Gathered Guests: A Guide to Worship in the Lutheran Church*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2003.
- McCain, Paul Timothy., ed. *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions: A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord*. Translated by W. H. T. Dau and F. Bente. 2nd ed. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2006.
- Wieting, Kenneth W. *The Blessings of Weekly Communion*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2006.

Why Every Sunday Communion?

The Holy Spirit has called me through Faith Lutheran Church & Student Center to serve as a minister of Word and Sacrament in this place. The two tools pastors have to serve their flock are Christ's Word and the Sacraments—every other talent God has given me is in service to these. By observing communion weekly, I am amplifying my ministry by giving my flock more opportunities to be strengthened through the very body and blood of the Good Shepherd.

The Question:

In a living room in 1986: "Pastor, if the Lord's Supper is everything that Scripture and the catechism say it is, why don't we have the opportunity to receive it when we come for worship each week?"

Contemporary Witness

2017 Synodical Luther's Small Catechism: "Christ has not specified a particular timetable but invites us to come often to this Sacrament on account of the gifts He bestows here and our own great need. In the New Testament, the Sacrament was a regular and major feature of congregational worship, not an occasional extra (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20, 33). This practice continued in the church, and in Reformation times our church celebrated the Sacrament "every Lord's Day and on other festivals" (Ap XXIV 1)."

Mueller, Norbert H, and George Kraus. *Pastoral Theology*. St. Louis, MO:

Concordia Pub. House, 1990, pg. 97. "...the Lord's Supper should be offered each Lord's Day who hunger for Christ's body and blood and who are prepared to receive it. The fact that some of those present do not wish to receive should not prevent others from receiving."

A.L. Barry. *What About the Sacrament of the Altar (1990s)* We receive the Lord's Supper often because of how much we need what the Lord gives in His Supper. We dare never make a law about how often an individual "should" or "must" receive the Lord's Supper. But this is a separate question from how frequently Holy Communion is offered in our congregations. Our Lutheran Confessions make it clear that the Lord's Supper is offered every Lord's Day and on other days when there are communicants present (AC XXIV.34 and Ap. XXIV.1).

In saying this, our Confessions are merely reflecting the truth of Sacred Scriptures, which place the Lord's Supper at the center of worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20, 33), not as an appendage or an occasional extra. It is for this reason that our Synod has repeatedly encouraged our congregations to provide the opportunity for communicants who so desire to receive the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day.

Synod Convention 1995 To Encourage Every Sunday Communion RESOLUTION 2-08A

Overture 2-51 (CW, pp. 149-50)

Whereas, The opportunity to receive the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day was a reality cherished by Luther and set forth clearly with high esteem by our Lutheran Confessions (Article XXIV of the Augsburg Confession and of the Apology); and

Whereas, Our Synod's 1983 CTCR document on the Lord's Supper (p. 28) and our Synod's 1986 translation of Luther's Catechism both remind us that the Scriptures place the Lord's Supper at the center of worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20,33), and not as an appendage or an occasional extra; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention encourage its pastors and congregations to study the scriptural, confessional, and historical witness to every Sunday communion with a view to recovering the opportunity for receiving the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day. (Action: Adopted (4)).

Preliminary Concerns

Risk of Becoming Rote

- ∞ Is underappreciation for the Lord's Gifts a God problem or an "us" problem?
- ∞ Weekly Communion services doesn't mean weekly communion participation
- ∞ What is the right frequency? Was this a discussion people were having at a church with monthly communion?
- ∞ Self-examination is important, there are resources for this. E.g. Confession and Absolution, LSB pg. 290-292; Christian Questions with Their Answers LSB pg. 329; Bender's Ten Commandment Self-Examination Questions. (See handouts)

Number of Helpers Preparing and Serving Communion

- ∞ "If you build it, they will come."

Too Catholic

- ∞ What do all the bubbles on the screen have in common?

Would Make Service too Long

- ∞ What can we do to shorten the service?
- ∞ Matthew 26:40 "And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour?"

Not Enough Variety in Orders of Service

- ∞ The Divine service has room for variety.
- ∞ We could start a midweek morning prayer service.
- ∞ Uniformity helps us learn Scripture by heart.

Not a Lutheran Practice

Apology XXIV 1 "At the outset it is again necessary, by way of preface, to point out that we do not abolish the Mass but religiously retain and defend it. Among us the Mass is celebrated every Lord's day and on other festivals, when the sacrament is made available to those who wish to partake of it, after they have been examined and absolved. We also keep traditional liturgical forms, such as the order of readings, prayers, vestments, and other similar things."

Less Easy to Invite Guests

- ∞ Who are the primary beneficiaries of weekly worship?
- ∞ "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19–20, ESV)
- ∞ ""Teaching them to observe all things" is essential to the salvation of souls" "Church Fellowship and Telling the Good News about Jesus" – Carl C. Fickenscher II July 17, 2001

A Layperson Couldn't Lead the Service

- ∞ Keep an Eye on the **A**'s in the LSB, lay people are qualified to lead many parts of the Divine Service. (**P** designates pastor). An **A** can be a lay assistant.
- ∞ In churches with weekly communion, an elder or other church leader is qualified to lead a non-communion service. Exceptions like those can be made to every Sunday communion.
- ∞ If we did start a midweek prayer service, a layperson could lead that service occasionally or a majority of times.

Going Forward

Be Bereans

"The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so." — Acts 17:10–11

Trust, but Verify

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.” (Hebrews 13:17, ESV)

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16–22, ESV)

A Map to Guide us

“Navigate from 1301 31st Place South to 1407 Main Street in the most efficient way possible.”

- ∞ What kind of guiding information will help you pick a route from my house to church?



The Bible is the only source and norm of our teaching and practice. We trust the Confessions as a faithful exposition and exhibition of what the Bible teaches. Church history can help us understand how Christians in previous centuries understood the Bible, but every historical practice needs to be examined in light of Scriptures.

Scripture is very clear on many things. However, it's not written as an instruction manual.

Many times we have to use general principles to set a specific course.

Come Along for the Ride

- ∞ This is not the only right way to do things.
- ∞ Scripture does not demand we have communion every week.
- ∞ Predecessors did not do it wrong.
- ∞ **Come along for the ride and explore a new route.**

THE CATECHISM IN DETAIL

The First Commandment

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

How Christians Should Be Taught to Confess from the First Commandment

My God is that which I love, trust, and fear most in my life. I expect my comfort, good, and delight from my God.

Have I loved, trusted, or feared other things or people more than I love, trust, and fear God? Have I committed idolatry by seeking comfort, good, and delight from my own efforts rather than from God?

Do I look to God my heavenly Father for all love, good, and joy? Is everything measured for me by what pleases me?

In all things am I self-centered and selfish?

Do I see my worry and fretting as sin against trusting God? On what things does my attention focus?

Do I complain about the troubles, people, work, and suffering God lays on me?

Do I love the things God gives more than I love Him? And do I cling to what God takes away, even though He gives me Himself?

The Second Commandment

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

How Christians Should Be Taught to Confess from the Second Commandment

My God has placed His name upon me in Holy Baptism and made me His dearly beloved child through my dear Lord Jesus Christ. In His name He has revealed Himself to me as the God of love that I might worship Him.

Do I curse? Have I cursed?

Do I use God's name cheaply for oaths that are frivolous or false?

Do I stand up and swear by God's name when it is for the truth of the Gospel or the benefit of my neighbor in need?

Do I pray with fervor in times of trouble? Am I bored and indifferent in prayer?

Is it so that I cannot speak about God truly because I am bored with God's Word and neglect the study of the catechism and doctrine?

Is my heart and life in the praise of God in worship? Am I mouthing things while my heart is far away?

The Third Commandment **Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

How Christians Should Be Taught to Confess from the Third Commandment

My God has given Me His Word that I might know Him and believe in Him. His Word makes me holy. It gives me eternal life and rest from all my enemies.

Do I strive to make the day of rest holy? Do I care about holy living?

Do I use the Word of God and prayer to make my time, work, study, and life holy day by day? Am I lazy and bored with the Word of God? Have I any fear of God over this neglect?

Do I honor the Word of God highly by eagerly hearing it preached at the times that are appointed? Do I gladly learn it by heart and live in it? Do I despise the Word of God by neglect, paying no attention to it when it is preached, taught, or read?

Do I love my fellow Christians by being present with them in the divine liturgy to sustain them? Am I quick to make excuses for neglecting the divine liturgy because of what someone else has said or done, or to do other things I like more?

Do I complain about the worship, the pastor, or other people in the congregation? Do I learn the Word of God gladly so that I may teach it to others?

Is my life-sealed with the name of God in Baptism—characterized by thanksgiving and praise?

The Fourth Commandment **Honor your father and your mother.**

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

How Christians Should Be Taught to Confess from the Fourth Commandment

Has the fear and love of God shaped my honor and obedience to parents and others in authority over me?

Have I trusted God to bless me and make my life good when I submit to the authority of parents and those over me, or have I been angry with them, rebelling, fighting against them because I was afraid I was not getting what I had a right to get?

Have I been insolent, sullen, and disrespectful to my parents, teachers, employers, or authorities over me?

Have I been on good behavior when they are present and mocking them when they are absent?

Have I helped those who carry responsibilities of governing? Do I pray for parents, leaders of

the nations, schools, and church? Do I grumble about work given me to do?

The Fifth Commandment **You shall not murder.**

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need

How Christians Should Be Taught to Confess from the Fifth Commandment

My God has given me and all people life. Our life is holy because God created us in His image to receive what He gives and to reflect His love to one another.

Have I treated my neighbor's body and life as gifts of God to him?

Have I injured my neighbor with violent actions, hitting and beating my neighbor, spoken debasing and insulting words, using foul or dirty words to describe my neighbor, or murdered him with thoughts of anger, contempt, and hatred? Have I injured my neighbor by ridicule, by neglecting to feed or clothe him, withholding compassion and comfort from him?

Have I avoided giving help to my neighbor, avoiding involvement with him in his difficulty?

Do I abuse my body with neglect of health care, excess of food, drink, tobacco, or drugs?

The Sixth Commandment **You shall not commit adultery.**

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

How Christians Should Be Taught to Confess from the Sixth Commandment

My God has given me the gift of sexuality that I might love and honor my spouse selflessly and for the procreation of children.

Have I used for my own pleasure my ears to hear stories to incite cravings of the body for one who is not my spouse, or my mouth to speak such words and stories?

Have I indulged my eyes with longing/or my sexual satisfaction from a man or a woman who is not my spouse?

Have I dishonored marriage by ridicule, divorce, or neglecting to encourage others to be faithful to their spouses in the fear of God?

Have I had sexual intercourse with a man or woman who is not my spouse?

Have I dishonored my spouse by neglecting to care for my spouse's body, mind, feelings, and needs, withdrawing faithfulness from my spouse?

Have I failed to trust God to bless us in our marriage, even in times of trouble?

Have I neglected to pray for my spouse, to attend the Divine Service together, and to live in the

fear and love of God in times of sexual temptation?

Have I engaged in homosexual thoughts, words, or deeds, or given support to homosexual activity?

The Seventh Commandment **You shall not steal.**

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

How Christians Should Be Taught to Confess from the Seventh Commandment

My God has given me my property and goods that I might serve my family and neighbor with His gifts.

Have I been lazy at work, doing poor work in school or at my job, or working hard only when the teacher or the boss is around?

Have I been stingy in paying my workers?

Have I been greedy, demanding best pay for poor work? Have I worked for myself rather than for Christ and for the benefit of my neighbor?

Have I cared for property in the neighborhood, school, or church so that it was improved?

Have I stolen from the office, school, or church, or stood silently while others took what was not theirs? Have I stolen information from another's work?

Have I wasted time, food, and money by my neglect?

Have I been stingy when it comes to giving to the Lord a generous portion as thank offering for all that He has given me?

Have I stolen from my neighbor by not helping him in time of need?

The Eighth Commandment:

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

How Christians Should Be Taught to Confess from the Eighth Commandment

My God has given me a good name and reputation that I might cover my neighbor's sins and shortcomings with mercy, in order to preserve his name and reputation in the community.

Have I told the truth in court or in school before authorities or before my parents when I knew the truth?

Have I been afraid to bear witness when I knew the truth and it was necessary to speak up against a wrongdoer or to speak for a victim?

Have I gossiped, delighting to tell others about the faults or mistakes of another, excusing myself especially by saying that I spoke only the truth?

Have I gone to others to make peace if I wronged them or they me, or to correct them if I knew of their wrong?

Have I flattered others, or put on a front to make them think of me differently from what is true?

Have I slanted stories to my benefit or deceived others by withholding some elements of their story?

Have I found ways gladly and willingly to explain in the best possible way those words or actions of others that hurt me?

Have I defended my neighbor when things said about my neighbor have made others think badly of him or her?

Have I learned to bear with the weaknesses and faults of others, covering their shame?

Have I been faithful in keeping the secrets of another's heart entrusted to me in confidence?

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

How Christians Should Be Taught to Confess from the Ninth Commandment

My God has given me everything that I need and all that is good for me.

*Have I longed for the honor, wealth, happy life, or what seemed the ease of the lives of others?
Has my life been full of craving for these things?*

Have I been stingy and self-indulgent with my money, trying to keep up with what others have?

Have I tried by claims of various rights to make the property of others my own, saying they don't really deserve it and I do?

Do I have to keep wishing for and dreaming about things I don't have before I can work with a diligent and glad heart?

Have I lived in grudging discontent with whatever God has given me, restless about what I do not have and neglecting thankful generosity with what I do have?

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

How Christians Should Be Taught to Confess from the Tenth Commandment

My God has given me Himself. He is my God. His will is good and gracious. In Him I am content.

Have I wanted my neighbor's spouse, his workers, or his property to be mine?

Have I tried to win the affections and loyalties of my neighbor's spouse or children or friends away from my neighbor to me?

Have I urged friends and spouses and workers to go back to their calling, holding their marriages, friendships, families, and work together?

Have I fostered discontent with the congregation, its pastor, or leaders, and failed to urge members to stay and do their duty in the divine liturgy, praying, giving and serving?