

# **The Lutheran Day School:** **Its Theological Foundation and Practice**



**Rev. Peter C. Bender**

1994

Re-published in 2020

for the 25th anniversary of the Academy

**Peace Lutheran Church and Academy**

W240 N6145 Maple Ave.

Sussex, Wisconsin 53089

## Abbreviations of References

AC	The Augsburg Confession.
BC	<i>The Book of Concord</i> . Edited by Theodore Tappert. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959. (German translation cited.)
FCSD	The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord.
LC	The Large Catechism of Dr. Luther.
LW	<i>Luther's Works</i> , American Edition. Vols. 1-30 edited by Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-86. Vols. 31-55 edited by Helmut Lehmann. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955-86.
SA	The Smalcald Articles.
SC	The Small Catechism of Dr. Luther.
Sermons	<i>Sermons of Martin Luther</i> . Edited by John Nicholas Lenker. Vol. II: <i>Sermon on Confession</i> . Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1907.

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## **Preface**

The purpose of this essay is to give the basic theological foundation for a Lutheran day school and the educational philosophy that governs its operation.

This essay was prepared in 1994 by Rev. Peter C. Bender. It was presented as part of a larger report to the members of Peace Lutheran Church, Sussex, Wisconsin. Because of the great interest shown in our work by pastors and day-school teachers throughout The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and The Lutheran Church—Canada, in 1996 the Concordia Catechetical Academy revised and edited the original report for general distribution to a wider audience. This publication includes the “Theological Foundation,” “Doctrine in Practice,” and “Academic Plan” sections of the 1994 report, along with a postscript which outlines the action taken by our congregation on the basis of this report.

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# Introduction

*“Andrew, do you know the Apostles’ Creed?”*

*“Yes!”*

*“How does it go?”*

*“I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord ...”*

*“Is it true?”*

*“Yes!”*

*“Where did it come from?”*

*“God’s Word!”*

*“You’re right! That’s why we confess it.”*

Everything that the church does she does on the basis of her confession of faith, or she is not acting as church. One can never divorce the church’s theology from her practice. Indeed, the church’s theology takes on concrete form in the day-to-day life of the church. Theology is, first and foremost, practical. Confession of faith must always govern the life of the church, or the church will become indistinguishable from the world around her. How she prays, the content and form of her liturgy, the administration of Christ’s sacraments, caring for the sick, ministering to orphans and widows, and every other activity in which she is engaged is an expression of her confession. Wrongly or rightly, and for better or for worse, what a congregation does is a reflection of what she believes.

As Lutherans, we are pledged to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions for all doctrine and practice. The Lutheran Confessions give voice to what we most assuredly believe is the pure teaching of the Word of God. Our church life is formed and ordered by the Lutheran Confessions because they are a correct exposition of Holy Scripture. Unless our confession of faith is lived out in the day-to-day life of the church, it will become irrelevant, and some other confession of faith will replace it. There is no such thing as a church without a confession. Every church confesses something in what she does and says, even though she may deny that she has any confession or creed at all. Actions flow from what is believed, and belief always determines actions.

We must understand that when we confess, “I believe ...,” we are not confessing “our opinion”; we are confessing the very faith which the Holy Spirit revealed to us in the Word of God. Such a confession is “alive” so to speak, with the heart and soul of the living God Himself. When the Holy Spirit calls us to faith in Christ, He calls us to faith in the very Word of the Father, in order that His Word might become our own word. This is what happened to Peter when he confessed his faith in Jesus: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” These were Peter’s own words, but they were the Word of the Father first. This was Peter’s own confession, but it was not private or a matter of personal opinion. Indeed, of Peter’s confession Jesus declared, “Upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:16-18). The confession of faith that is born of the Word of God rings with clarity and conviction, and it governs what Christ’s church does and says. As the Apostle Paul declared,

Since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak (2 Corinthians 4:13).

Therefore, if we confess ourselves to be Lutheran, we must not be “Lutheran” in name only, giving mere lip service to our confessions, but must confess this faith in everything that we do and the way that we do it. We must have a passion for the things that we believe, or we should not claim to believe them at all. If our confession is from the Word of God, which we believe it is, then we should not be afraid to stand upon that confession and govern the life of the church by it. For, unless the work of the church is governed by our confession, it is no longer the work of the church, even though it may appear to be a fine and glorious work in the eyes of man.

The operation of a Christian day school is an enormous undertaking. It requires great resources of energy, time, and money. It is not enough, however, to simply ask the questions, “How much will it cost?” and “Can we afford it?” The first questions we must ask are “What is a Lutheran day school?” and “What is its purpose?” and “What business does the church have in operating a school?” We will not be able to answer these questions, nor will we have the proper theological foundation upon which to build a school, unless we are clear on what the church and her ministry is according to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. Our confession of faith regarding these matters must be clearly articulated and understood, or the answers to questions regarding temporal financing, building needs, and the academic curriculum will be irrelevant at best, or unfaithful to our confession at worst.

# The Theological Foundation

## I. The Church and Her Ministry – “The Spiritual Kingdom”

*“Andrew, can you tell me what the church is?”*

*“Yes, the church is where I go to hear the Word of Jesus.”*

*“Who belongs to the church, Andrew?”*

*“People who believe in Jesus.”*

*“What did Jesus do for them?”*

*“He died for their sins.”*

*“And what do we receive from Jesus when we go to church?”*

*“We receive His forgiveness.”*

What is the church? “Thank God, a seven-year-old child knows what the church is, namely, holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd” (SA XII, BC, p. 315). Luther’s answer is so simple, yet so profound. The doctrine of the church and her ministry is not so difficult that a child cannot understand it. Indeed, if a child cannot understand it, then it is probably not the biblical doctrine. A child will not distinguish between an “invisible” and a “visible” church. A child knows only *one* church. Just ask a child who’s been baptized and taught the faith.

### ***“Hidden” and “Concrete” Realities***

Andrew understands what the church is. It consists of believers in Christ who hear the Word of their Shepherd and receive from Him the forgiveness of sins. Andrew understands the church to be a “place,” but if you were to press him about what really constitutes the church, he would not say “a building of brick and mortar,” but a place where the Word of God is preached, where people are baptized, where the Lord’s Supper is received, and where people confess their sins and receive God’s forgiveness. That’s what the church is! Andrew is right! It has both a “hidden” component: faith and the Holy Spirit in the hearts of people; and a “concrete” component: the external Word of the Gospel in preaching, Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and Holy Absolution.

Perhaps a better question would be, “*Where* is the church to be found?” Answer: “The church is to be found wherever the Word of Christ is taught in its purity and the sacraments are administered according to Christ’s institution” (see AC VII). *Internal* faith in Christ lives from the *external* Gospel and sacraments that are preached and administered. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Faith is created and bestowed by the Holy Spirit through the oral Word and tangible sacraments of Christ. When this faith is created and God’s forgiveness is received, we respond with thanksgiving, prayer, and lives of love toward our neighbor. But it is the Word of Christ that makes the church what it is. Without the Word and sacraments of Christ, there is no faith and, therefore, no church. It is as simple as that. This is what Jesus was talking about when He said,



My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand (John 10:27-28).

Christ established the Office of the Ministry, called the *Predigtamt* (or “the Preaching Office,” AC V), in order that sinners might “hear His voice” and be brought to faith in Him for the forgiveness of sins.

### ***The “Preaching Office” in the New Testament***

There are many passages from the New Testament that speak about this office. In these passages, the authority of a minister is *never* separated from the Word he is called to preach or the sacraments he is called to administer. Indeed, the minister has no authority except the authority which Christ gave him *in* the Word preached and the sacraments administered.

To the apostolic ministers He gave His authority and mandate to be His public mouthpieces in the world:

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20).

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations. (Luke 24:46-47).

Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained (John 20:21-23).

He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me (Matthew 10:40).

Every one of these passages was spoken by Jesus to the apostles, the first to occupy the Office of the Ministry instituted by Christ, but they also apply directly to the church’s ministers today. All of these passages speak of the ministry from various vantage points, but they all share a common emphasis on the oral Word and external sacraments of Christ.

Although a minister today is not an apostle, since he is not an eye-witness of the resurrection of Jesus nor an “ear-witness” of everything that Jesus said and taught, he is nonetheless an apostolic minister, for there is *no* ministerial authority or promise of Christ’s grace and forgiveness apart from the apostolic sacraments and Word. A minister has no independent authority whatsoever. As the Father sent the Son, so the Son sent the apostles, so the apostles sent out ministers of the Word. Ministers of the Word continue to be *sent out* in the church today, according to apostolic mandate, that we might continue to receive “the Word of the Father” who is “full of grace and truth” (John 1:1, 14). There is only *one* Word that has been given to the church and only *one* office of the ministry commissioned to proclaim it—the preaching office. The same apostolic Word and sacraments are the authority of every minister of the Gospel, or he is not a minister of Christ’s church.

The preaching office is given in order that the saving treasures of Christ's death and resurrection might be distributed to sinners through Word and sacrament. The purpose of this ministry is simple: to bring sinners to faith in Christ and keep them in this faith. That's it! To be sure, evidence of faith in Christ will be seen in the many "fruits of faith" and "works of love" in the lives of Christians and Christian congregations, but such fruits are only the evidence of faith. They do not create or sustain it. Good works of love and service to our neighbor, which flow from faith, must be clearly distinguished from the ministry of the Gospel which brought them forth. Such works are not part of the ministry, but rather are *evidence* that the ministry of the Word and sacraments is at work and being received by the people.

### ***The Christian Congregation in the New Testament***

The proclamation of the Gospel of Christ is unique to the church and can be heard nowhere else but in the church. This is why the Apostle Paul declares:

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes (Romans 1:16).

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.... For ... it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe (1 Corinthians 1:18, 21).

When I came to you ... I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:1a, 2).

A beautiful picture of the church and her ministry is seen in the book of Acts. On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles, the Apostle Peter preached his first sermon on the death and resurrection of Christ in which he called the people to repent of their sins and believe the Gospel. "Then those who gladly received his word," writes St. Luke, "were baptized .... And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:41-42). This passage describes "the church" as the community of believers who are gathered together around "the pulpit of Apostolic Preaching" and "the Altar of the Lord's body and blood." "The apostles' doctrine" is the oral preaching of the Gospel, and "the breaking of bread" is the concrete Supper of Our Lord. Through these, faith continues to be nurtured and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Continuing in these is central to the life of the church and every believer in Christ. "Fellowship" and "prayers" are the outward manifestations of those hidden realities of faith and the Holy Spirit which are given through the Gospel and sacraments. This is such a helpful description of the church, because it shows us *what* the church is (believers who receive the Word) and *where* the church is to be found (where the Gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered).

## ***The Church and Her Ministry in the Lutheran Confessions***

Our Lutheran Confessions confess this same faith, laying out clearly the relationship between saving faith and the preaching office:

It is also taught among us that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us (AC IV; BC, p. 30).

To obtain such faith, God instituted the preaching office to give Gospel and Sacraments. Through these, as through means, He gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where He pleases, in those who hear the Gospel (AC V; Marquart translation, *The Church: Her Ministry, Fellowship, and Governance*, p. 101).

The Augsburg Confession also tells us *what* the church is and *where* she is to be found:

It is also taught among us that one holy Christian church will be and remain forever. This is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel (AC VII; BC, p. 32).

To study the church and her ministry is really to study Christ and His saving Gospel. The ministry of Christ in the church is really the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who calls, gathers, enlightens, and keeps us in the one true faith (SC, Third Article). This is the comforting teaching that is confessed by Luther in the Large Catechism:

[The Holy Spirit] preaches to us and brings us to Christ. Neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe in him and take him as our Lord, unless these were first offered to us and bestowed on our hearts through the preaching of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit. The work is finished and completed, Christ has acquired and won the treasure for us by his sufferings, death, and resurrection, etc. But if the work remained hidden and no one knew of it, it would have been all in vain, all lost. In order that this treasure might not be buried but put to use and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to be published and proclaimed, in which he has given the Holy Spirit to offer and apply to us this treasure of salvation (LC, Third Article; BC, p. 415).

## ***“The Spiritual Kingdom” and “The Secular Kingdom” — Helpful Terms***

The “spiritual kingdom” is a term which Luther used to distinguish the church and her ministry, by which God reigns in people's hearts through the Gospel and faith, from the “secular kingdom” and estates, by which God rules the outer man through the law. As we have seen, in the spiritual kingdom God is concerned about the heart of man, repentance, faith in Christ, and the bestowal of His gifts of salvation. This “kingdom comes” by Gospel and sacraments. In the secular kingdom God rules believer and unbeliever alike, through the force of law and the various estates of government, marriage, and family which God has established. This kingdom is concerned with the external man and the living of life in the

world that God created. These two kingdoms must be carefully distinguished in any discussion of a Lutheran day school.

The spiritual kingdom is dealt with in the Small Catechism particularly in the explanations to the Third Article of the Creed; the First, Second, and Third Petitions of the Lord's Prayer; and the Chief Parts on Baptism, Confession and the Office of the Keys, and the Sacrament of the Altar. On the other hand, the secular kingdom is dealt with in the Small Catechism particularly in the Table of Duties, under the headings "Of Civil Government," "Of Citizens," "To Husbands," "To Wives," "To Parents," "To Children," "To Workers of All Kinds," "To Employers and Supervisors," "To Youth," "To Widows," and "To Everyone." It is to the secular kingdom, and how God governs and rules the whole world through these offices and estates, that we now turn our attention.

## II. The World and God's Rule of Law in Society – “The Secular Kingdom”

*“Andrew, who made the world?”*

*“God!”*

*“Who does God use to rule the world?”*

*“People in the government.”*

*“Who are some of our rulers?”*

*“The president of the United States, the governor, the Congress ...”*

*“Do all the people in government believe in God?”*

*“No!”*

*“But does God still use them to rule His world?”*

*“Yes!”*

*“What is the government's job?”*

*“To make sure people obey the laws.”*

*“Who gave the government that job?”*

*“God.”*

Andrew is describing “the secular kingdom” to a T. He has a very good understanding of the world in which he lives. He knows that God made the world and rules it through the secular government, even though the secular government might be filled with unbelievers and wicked people. He knows, also, that God wants us to obey the government, even if rulers don't believe in God, because God commanded it. If there were no earthly governments, authorities, or the force of law in the land, the world would be even worse than it is. The estates and authorities in the secular kingdom became necessary in God's world because of man's sin. One of the functions of law is to “curb” the gross outbreaks of evil by punishing lawbreakers and protecting and rewarding those who keep it. In this way, societies enjoy peace. Where there is an absence of government, law, and authority, sinful man runs wild. We may not always be pleased with our government. Indeed, our government may be filled with many unbelieving, wicked, and unscrupulous characters, but it would be far worse in our world without it.

This is why the Table of Duties includes sections entitled “Of Civil Government” and “Of Citizens.” These passages from the book of Romans describe not the spiritual kingdom, but the secular:

**Of Civil Government:** Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer (Romans 13:1-4 NIV).

**Of Citizens:** It is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone

what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor (Romans 13:5-7 NIV).

### ***Secular Authority Is Rooted in the Authority of Father and Mother***

*"Say, Andrew, who made families?"*

*"God!"*

*"And who does God use to rule in the family?"*

*"The father and mother."*

*"Do all fathers and mothers believe in Jesus?"*

*"No."*

*"But does God still want children to obey their fathers and mothers?"*

*"Yes!"*

*"What is mom and dad's job?"*

*"To take care of us, to feed us, to teach us things...."*

*"Do you know which commandment tells us to honor and obey our parents and other authorities?"*

*"The Fourth Commandment: 'Honor your father and your mother.'"*

Andrew is confessing a very important thing. The authority of all secular estates in the secular kingdom can ultimately be traced back to the authority that God has given to father and mother. These two estates are the building blocks of God's secular kingdom. This authority in the secular kingdom comes from the Fourth Commandment: "Honor your father and your mother." Authority in the secular estates is none other than the authority of God Himself in whose place parents and rulers act. Concerning the Fourth Commandment, the Small Catechism reminds us, "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" (SC, Fourth Commandment).

To be sure, not everyone accepts or believes in the Ten Commandments, but that does not set aside the fact that it is God who has given order to human society and assigned government its place. The Law of God is written in man's heart, even if man does not believe in Him. For example, all people know instinctively that murder, adultery, stealing, and lying are wrong.

Man is still a creature of the God who is good, even though man has gone bad. Throughout the history of civilization, man has affirmed basic morality and the necessity for government to maintain it. Where there has been an absence of law, order, and moral values, the society soon crumbles. Where law and order have been maintained and fundamental moral values (like the sanctity of human life, fidelity in marriage and family, respect for private property, integrity, honesty, and character) have been upheld and promoted, societies have flourished. This might be called God's "natural law" which He has built into His creation.

The force of law is as crucial to human existence and the maintenance of morality within families as it is within society. Andrew is taught right and wrong by his father and mother. They teach him by their words, their example, and the rules they lay down in the home. If Andrew disobeys them, he is punished and loses some of the privileges of family life. If Andrew obeys them, he enjoys the benefits and value of living in the family. The same can be said of life in society. If Andrew grows up and breaks the laws of

the land, he is punished and loses privileges associated with being a citizen. On the other hand, if he keeps the law, he can enjoy a peaceful life.

One can begin to see that the maintenance of law and order in society really stems from the basic authority of father and mother in the home. As life in the home goes, so goes life in society. If our homes are not a place where children are taught to honor their father and mother, then government will find its task nearly impossible.

### ***Father and Mother: The Highest Offices in the Secular Kingdom***

It goes without saying that the authority of father and mother encompasses every aspect of child rearing, from feeding, clothing, and protecting the children, to teaching them what is right and wrong and how to live in society. All authority in the secular kingdom can ultimately be traced back to the authority of parents. This fact cannot be overemphasized. The family is the foundation of society, and the authority of father and mother is the source of authority for all earthly estates. It is this point which Luther emphasizes at great length in his explanation to the Fourth Commandment in the Large Catechism:

To fatherhood and motherhood God has given the special distinction, above all estates that are beneath it, that he commands us not simply to love our parents but also to honor them. With respect to brothers, sisters, and neighbors in general he commands nothing higher than that we love them. Thus he distinguishes father and mother above all other persons on earth, and places them next to himself....

Young people must therefore be taught to revere their parents as God's representatives, and to remember that, however lowly, poor, feeble, and eccentric they may be, they are their own father and mother, given them by God. They are not to be deprived of their honor because of their ways or their failings. Therefore, we are not to think of their persons, whatever they are, but of the will of God, who has created and ordained them to be our parents....

For the love of God, therefore, let us at last teach our young people to banish all other things from sight and give first place to this commandment. If they wish to serve God with truly good works, they must do what is pleasing to their fathers and mothers, or to those who have parental authority over them.... If God's Word and will are placed first and observed, nothing ought to be considered more important than the will and word of our parents, provided that these, too, are subordinated to obedience toward God and are not set into opposition to the preceding commandments....

For God has exalted this estate of parents above all others; indeed, he has appointed it to be his representative on earth....

In connection with this commandment there is more to be said about the various kinds of obedience due to our superiors, persons whose duty it is to command and to govern.

**Out of the authority of parents all other authority is derived and developed**

[emphasis added]. Where a father is unable by himself to bring up his child, he calls upon a schoolmaster to teach him; if he is too weak, he enlists the help of his friends and neighbors; if he passes away, he confers and delegates his authority and responsibility to others appointed for the purpose....

**Thus all who are called masters stand in the place of parents and derive from them their power and authority to govern** [emphasis added]. In the Scriptures they are all called fathers because in their responsibility they act in the capacity of fathers and ought to have fatherly hearts toward their people (LC; BC, p. 379ff).

Having distinguished between the spiritual and secular kingdoms, it is now necessary to ask the question, "Where does the Christian belong?" The answer is simple. The Christian belongs in both kingdoms. But this answer must be explained and applied.



### III. The Christian – Where Does He Belong?

*“Andrew, do you believe that you are a sinner?”*

*“Yes.”*

*“How do you know that you are a sinner?”*

*“From the Ten Commandments.”*

*“What do you deserve from God because of your sins?”*

*“His punishment and damnation.”*

*“Do you hope to be saved from your sins?”*

*“Yes!”*

*“Who do you believe in to save you?”*

*“Jesus!”*

*“What did Jesus do for you that you trust in Him?”*

*“He died for me on the cross for my forgiveness.”*

*“Can you save yourself?”*

*“No! Only Jesus can save us from our sins.”*

*“Should you still love your neighbor and follow the Ten Commandments?”*

*“Yes!”*

*“Why?”*

*“Because God said so, and He loves us, and we believe in Him.”*

*“Who is working in us when we love our neighbor and do good to him?”*

*“Jesus!”*

#### ***Vocation: Faith in Christ and Love to the Neighbor***

Andrew knows his relationship to God. He trusts in Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

But he also knows his relationship to his neighbor. He loves his neighbor because of his faith in Christ. He trusts in Christ for the forgiveness of sins, but he also lives for his neighbor's benefit so that God might do his neighbor good through him. He knows that God loved him enough to send His Son to die for him, and that God is also at work in him by faith to love and do good to his neighbor. He lives by faith in the Son of God who loved him, and yet it is not he who lives, but Christ who lives in him. It is a simple but profound understanding and way of life.

Before discussing the place of a Lutheran day school in particular, it is necessary to explain the Christian's place in the world. Because the Christian has been baptized into Christ and called to faith in Him for the forgiveness of sins, he has a “calling from God” in the world. What is that calling? It is the calling of faith and love: to believe in Christ for salvation and to love your neighbor as He has loved you. This “calling” is often referred to as “vocation” and is lived out in the very concrete earthly offices and relationships that God has given us, such as father, mother, husband, wife, children, worker, and employer.

Through the ministry of the Gospel we are brought to faith in Christ for salvation and continually nurtured in that faith. Faith receives the gifts of salvation which God gives through His Word preached

and His sacraments administered. But this faith in the Christian also bears the fruit of love toward the neighbor. God wishes to benefit others through us in the lives we live. That is what vocation is all about. These works of love certainly do not save us or earn God's favor, but rather show us to be the people of God who trust in Him for salvation and love our neighbors because He first loved us. We believe that the works of a Christian in his vocation are really the works of God.

This description of vocation is outlined in the Table of Duties. These passages tell us not what we do to earn God's salvation, but what He does in us for the benefit of others. God's love and grace is active in and through us by faith, in very concrete and earthy ways, for the benefit of others. None of us can boast about our vocation as if it were a work of our own doing or choosing, but we can boast in the Lord who has forgiven our sins and continually works His good in our lives for others. This is the proper understanding of the relationship between faith and good works.

The church and her ministry support the Christian in his vocation, for we have no true faith in Christ and love for the neighbor without the ministry of the Word. A Christian is in both kingdoms — he has been baptized and has received the gift of the Holy Spirit and faith which makes him a Christian, but he is also “in the world” which God created and through which God continues to rule by the law and various temporal offices and estates. In this world he lives with faith in God and love toward his neighbor.

### ***The Authority of Parents Extends beyond the Secular Kingdom***

*“Andrew, since Mom and Dad believe in Jesus, what special job has God given them?”*

*“To bring me to church, to tell me about Jesus, and teach me God's Word.”*

*“Do Mom and Dad love you?”*

*“Yes.”*

*“What is the most important thing that they do for you?”*

*“They tell me about God; they forgive me; they bring me to church.”*

Andrew knows very well that his parents do a lot more for him than punish him when he does wrong. He also knows that they love him unconditionally. He knows that, although he is punished when he disobeys, he also receives their forgiveness. He knows that the most important thing Mom and Dad do for him is to teach him the Word of God. They bring him to church, and the Word that they receive from Jesus in His preaching and teaching is a part of their life at home. The Word of God gives them faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and teaches them how to live in the vocations that God has given them.

The explanation to the Fourth Commandment from the Large Catechism begins to teach us that the responsibilities of father and mother extend beyond their offices in the secular kingdom. Indeed, the Christian in general and the Christian parent in particular is a resident of both the spiritual and the secular kingdoms. Earthly government was established after the fall of man into sin. But the offices of husband and wife, father and mother, actually predate man's fall. The secular estates were established by God to maintain order and bridle sinful man, whereas the offices of husband, wife, father, and mother had no such function before sin. These offices were originally *gifts* of God's love at creation through which He intended His image of love to be displayed in the world. Love moved Him to create in the first place, that He might give of Himself to us. He intended His *loving* and *giving* nature to be reflected in us when He said, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28a).

These offices were not first offices of the law, but rather, offices of the Gospel. In other words, they were gifts of God's love, through which His love was to be given and received in the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. This work and responsibility of fathers and mothers existed *prior* to man's fall. In other words, they were to be teachers of God's Word to their children, even before sin entered into the world.

When man fell into sin, he lost the capacity to teach the Word of God to his children. He was spiritually dead and blind. But through the work of Christ and the ministry of the Gospel, the father and mother are restored to their rightful positions as teachers of the Word of God to their children. Therefore, in the spiritual kingdom, these offices take on dimensions that far surpass that of mere earthly caretakers; they become spiritual fathers and mothers as they bring their children to the new birth of water and the Word, and continue their catechization in the Christian faith.

This has profound implications for any Lutheran day school and the authority of day-school teachers. The authority of Lutheran day-school teachers to teach both academic subjects and religion comes from the Office of Parent, rather than from the Office of the Ministry. This is a reality that we have failed to understand in our church today and which rarely governs the understanding of the service performed by our Lutheran day schools. But it is a crucial point.

God gives children to fathers and mothers. He entrusts to them their care, nurture, development, and education. As such, parents act as God's representatives in the world (the secular kingdom). But they are also God's agents in the spiritual kingdom as they give to their children the Word which they themselves have received from the ministry of Christ. Christian fathers and mothers have the responsibility not only to feed, clothe, shelter, and teach their children to live in this world, but also to teach them the Word of God, catechize them in the Christian faith, and lead them to Christ and His ministry of Word and sacrament.

The Table of Duties reinforces for the Christian father and mother that their offices exist in both the spiritual and the secular kingdoms:

**To Parents:** Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4 NIV).

**To Children:** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" — which is the first commandment with a promise — "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3 NIV).

The rearing of children is the God-given responsibility of father and mother. There is a great push in our society, however, for the state and other agencies and individuals to take over this responsibility and remove parents from the equation entirely. The church must be aware of this influence upon her members. Because of this influence, parents are more and more willing to abdicate their responsibilities to others in every area of their children's upbringing. The key word here is "abdicate." It indicates the trend in our society to see parents as dispensable, or even a hindrance, to the raising of children. This philosophy, when taken to extremes, means that the only legitimate function of parents is to have kids and pay taxes, but the state feeds them, clothes them, counsels them, educates them, teaches them right and wrong, and of course, the church gives them religion. Totally missing from this picture is the biblical understanding that it is father and mother who are not only intimately and directly involved in this work, but are the ones

primarily responsible for it, even if others assist them. No one else has any authority over children, apart from the authority extended to them by father and mother. The church must be clear on this point. We must insist that parents assume the responsibilities of the office to which God has called them.

### ***How the Word of God Is Received by Children***

Creation itself and the giving of the Fourth Commandment teach us that access to children, even in the spiritual kingdom, is through their father and mother. For example, it is the Christian father and mother who must bring their children to Baptism and begin their instruction in the Word. They do this precisely because they themselves have been called to faith by the Gospel. They speak and act as spiritual housefathers and housemothers, passing on to their children the same saving Word which they themselves have received, in order that their children might learn to receive it and believe it too.

A minister may not break into the home of an unwilling parent and baptize the children and begin teaching them the Small Catechism under the guise that he is doing the work of God. By no means! His access to children is through their parents and the authority they extend to him, not only because they bring their children to be baptized and hear the public preaching, but because children, according to God's Word in creation, are under the authority and jurisdiction of their parents in all areas of their life and upbringing.

The primacy of parental influence upon children is reflected in the conclusion to the Ten Commandments, when God says, "The sin of the fathers is visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation ...." It is also the reason our Lord issues the severe warning, "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). As tragic as it is for children to have parents who will not teach them the Word of God or allow them to be taught, it cannot justify the minister or day-school teacher taking this responsibility from them.

The primary position of father and mother in passing on the Word of faith to their children cannot be overemphasized. The Word of God does not originate with us as individuals; we are dependent upon others outside of ourselves in order to receive it. This is God's way. Adam received the Word from God, Eve received the Word through Adam, and together they passed it on to their children. This is God's way in the Church and the Christian home in which creation and the offices of father and mother are restored by the Gospel to their rightful place, particularly in passing on the language of faith to children. The Word which father and mother have received from the preaching of the Gospel and their own catechization in the faith becomes a part of their conversation in the home as they catechize their children by word and example.

This is the way God's Word is passed on in the home and by all Christians as they go about their daily tasks in the vocations which God has given them. This is evangelism in the broadest and most biblical sense of the term. In this way, says Luther, "The Gospel must ring and echo without ceasing in every Christian's mouth. This is the way he has placed his holy Word into every corner of the world" (Sermons, p. 198). By this activity, the effect of the preaching of the public minister of the Gospel is multiplied in the witness and confession of all the people of God.

The Words of Jesus quoted in the baptismal liturgy, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not" (Mark 10:14 KJV), apply both to parents and ministers in their respective offices. Parents are

admonished not only to teach their children the Word of Jesus, but also to bring them to the Divine Service that He might lay His hands on them and bless them through His Word and sacraments. Pastors are admonished to receive these parents with their children as they preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments to them in the stead and by the command of Christ. In this way, everyone is restored and sanctified in his or her God-given calling.

## IV. A Lutheran School – Where Does it Belong?

*“Andrew, what did you do in school today?”*

“We went to the library and got books about farming, so we could write a report. Then we took our math and spelling test. In science, we did experiments to learn about solids, liquids, and gases. And gym was really fun. We played kickball, and our team won.”

*“What did you hear in chapel today?”*

“We heard the story of Joseph and his brothers.”

*“Tell me about the story.”*

“Well, Joseph’s brothers were jealous of him because he was their father’s favorite son. And so they wanted to kill him, but they sold him to some people instead. Then they took him to Egypt and all these bad things happened to him there, but he still believed in God. And one day, he became the prince of Egypt because he told Pharaoh about his dreams and how there was going to be a famine. So Pharaoh made him in charge of all the grain, so that they wouldn’t run out when the famine came. Then his brothers came to Egypt to buy food, but they didn’t recognize Joseph right away. When they did recognize Joseph, they thought that he might try to kill them. Instead, Joseph forgave his brothers and took care of them.”

*“Why did Joseph forgive his brothers?”*

“Because God forgave him.”

*“That’s a good story. Were there special prayers in chapel today?”*

“Yes, we prayed for Tommy’s mom. She’s got cancer.”

*“What hymn did you sing today?”*

“We sang, ‘Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice,’ and the seventh and eighth grades played part of it on handbells. It was really neat.”

Andrew’s response to the question, “What did you do in school today?” indicates that there were really two things going on in school: one had to do with the secular kingdom, and the other had to do with the spiritual kingdom. This is an important distinction. Like the Christian, the Lutheran day school is in both kingdoms. To the extent that a Lutheran day school teaches reading, writing, and arithmetic, it has nothing to do with the ministry of the church. On the other hand, to the extent that religion is taught, chapel services are conducted, and music is learned for the church’s worship, it is directly related to the ministry of the church. Understanding the two kingdoms and balancing them in the life of the school and the congregation is very important.

### ***Church and School Support Each Other***

The school serves and supports the church by the work it does in the secular kingdom. For example, the teaching of language—phonics, spelling, grammar, reading, and writing—is essential for all citizens if they are to function in society, but it is also an essential tool for the minister and catechist in teaching the faith of the Scriptures. The teaching of the English language is not the ministry of the church, but language is an essential tool of the minister in communicating the truths of God’s Word.

Similarly, by the authority of parents in the secular kingdom, discipline, order, and moral values are taught and maintained in the school. This is not the job of the minister, lest his office become one “of the law” (in the civil sense) rather than one “of the Gospel.” But the setting in which discipline and order is maintained ensures that the Word of God “will not be bound, but have free course” through the protection of parental authority, so that it can be “preached to the joy and edifying” of the children. In this sense, the day school provides the same benefits as the state, but on a smaller scale. We pray for and give honor to the state and our leaders, *for the sake of the church*, so that the church’s public ministry might not be hindered and we might lead “peaceful and quiet lives.” When the secular kingdom fails to do its work, the spiritual kingdom suffers, and the godless and wicked of the world do all in their power to prevent the public ministry of the Word from being heard in the world. In the same way, if parents do not provide the discipline of law in their children’s lives, their children will not be able to be taught the gracious message of the Gospel.

But just as the Lutheran day school supports the ministry of the church, so the church supports the work of the school. Wherever the ministry of Christ’s Gospel and sacraments are at work in the lives of the baptized people of God, there will be the fruits of faith. The secular kingdom concerns itself with the outer man. But the spiritual kingdom of Christ’s Gospel concerns itself with the inner man, faith, and the conversion of the sinner’s heart. This activity of the Holy Spirit, through the Gospel in the lives of Christians, creates a living and vibrant faith which manifests itself in the fruit of “good works.” The holy life, which flows from the faith of these little Christians, can only make the task of teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic easier. We cannot underestimate the influence of the sinful flesh upon the believer. The sinner constantly needs the law to control him. But the Gospel, on the other hand, creates a “new man” who does not need to be driven by the law, but freely and willingly does what is good. As Luther said:

Faith is a divine work in us that transforms us and begets us anew from God, kills the Old Adam, makes us entirely different people in heart, spirit, mind, and all our powers, and brings the Holy Spirit with it. Oh, faith is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, so that it is impossible for it not to be constantly doing what is good. Likewise, faith does not ask if good works are to be done, but before one can ask, faith has already done them and is constantly active.... Faith is a vital, deliberate trust in God’s grace, so certain that it would die a thousand times for it. And such confidence and knowledge of divine grace makes us joyous, mettlesome, and merry toward God and all creatures. This the Holy Spirit works by faith, and therefore without any coercion a man is willing and desirous to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything for the love of God and to his glory, who has been so gracious to him (FCSD IV; BC, p. 552f).

Since this faith is the outcome of the ministry of the Gospel in the lives of Christians, this faith can only assist the Lutheran day school in its work. The Lutheran day school provides an environment in which the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins is lived out in the daily lives of God’s people, and in which the Word of God permeates everything that is taught, including the secular subjects. The day school functions as another setting for the ministry of the Gospel to the members of the congregation and the surrounding community, through the services which are conducted, and the catechesis which takes place. Christian young people then go out into the community to live as Christian citizens in their God-given vocations. Through their lives of loving service to their neighbor they give witness to their faith in Christ. In the Lutheran school, like nowhere else, the Word of God, the language of faith, and the church’s daily life of prayer is passed on to the next generation of Christians. In this environment, Christian children learn how

to receive God's gifts in the Divine Service, how to pray, how to confess, and how to live where God has called them in the freedom of the forgiveness of sins, with faith in Christ and love to their neighbor.

### ***The Lutheran Minister — His Authority and Responsibility***

Before concluding the theological discussion on a Lutheran day school, more must be said about the office of minister and the office of day-school teacher. They are different offices, each with their respective place in a Lutheran school. In our day, far too many pastors are becoming "big business administrators" or "CEOs" and are neglecting their real work. When the pastor is in his study, he should be studying the Word of God, or praying, not filling out a purchase order for supplies, or meddling in the temporal affairs of the parish and day school. When the pastor is attending the meetings of congregational boards, or involved in the life of the day school, he should be teaching them the Word of God and making sure that nothing is done or taught which scandalizes the Gospel. He should not be looking over the shoulder of the day-school teachers and principal, insisting that temporal things be done his way. The pastor is not a carpenter, plumber, businessman, politician, elementary teacher, or principal, even though he may have abilities and expertise in these areas. He is the church's "pastor and teacher" of the Word of God (Ephesians 4:11) who has been called to be a "steward of the mysteries of God" (1 Corinthians 4:1).

The faithful Lutheran minister must resist everything which interferes with or detracts from his proper work. If he does not preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, judge doctrine, and absolve penitent sinners, who will? This is the call, or authority, he has been given by God. By human arrangement a minister might be given temporal authority over certain things, but by divine right his authority is limited to the ministry of the Word and sacraments. Even when he uses the law, he does so not to maintain order, but for the purpose of preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sins. This is what it means to be "an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5) — God's mouthpiece of forgiving grace.

The Gospel of the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake is what motivates Paul to speak in such strong terms to Timothy, who himself was a minister of the Word in charge of training other ministers:

I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

There are many, many things that ministers do in our day and age which have little or nothing to do with the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins. For the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the salvation of sinners, and the health of the church this must stop. If a minister's work does not center in the proclamation of God's grace for sinners, then it is not the work of the ministry. This is why the Apostle Paul encourages all ministers of the Gospel to be faithful in their calling. Concerning the ministry he writes, "Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:1-2). Can there be any greater or more profound "mysteries of God" than the sacramental treasures of the Gospel through which the Holy Spirit creates and sustains faith, and the saving benefits of Christ's death are bestowed upon believers? The



Office of the Ministry is a sacred trust and responsibility given to the men who occupy the office. They are not to abuse the office by taking upon themselves authority and responsibilities which they have not been given, nor are they to neglect the proper duties and authority that belong to the office by Christ's mandate.

The Augsburg Confession, relying totally on the New Testament and out of a deep concern for the saving Word of the Gospel, speaks of the only authority of Christ's ministers:

Our teachers assert that according to the Gospel the power of keys or the power of bishops is a power and command of God to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer and distribute the sacraments. For Christ sent out the apostles with this command, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:21-23).

This power of the keys or of bishops is used and exercised only by teaching and preaching the Word of God and by administering the sacraments (to many persons or to individuals, depending on one's calling). In this way are imparted not bodily but eternal things and gifts, namely, eternal righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. These gifts cannot be obtained except through the office of preaching and of administering the holy sacraments, for St. Paul says, "The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith." Inasmuch as the power of the church or of bishops bestows eternal gifts and is used and exercised only through the office of preaching, it does not interfere at all with government or temporal authority. Temporal authority is concerned with matters altogether different from the Gospel. Temporal power does not protect the soul, but with the sword and physical penalties it protects body and goods from the power of others.

Therefore, the two authorities, the spiritual and the temporal, are not to be mingled or confused, for the spiritual power has its commission to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. Hence it should not invade the function of the other ....

Thus our teachers distinguish the two authorities and the functions of the two powers, directing that both be held in honor as the highest gifts of God on earth.

In cases where bishops possess temporal authority, they possess it not as bishops by divine right, but by human ... right ... for the temporal administration .... Such authority has nothing at all to do with the office of the Gospel.

According to divine right, therefore, it is the office of the bishop to preach the Gospel, forgive sins, judge doctrine and condemn doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel, and exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose wicked conduct is manifest. All this is to be done not by human power but by God's Word alone (AC XXVIII; BC, p. 81ff).

### ***The Lutheran Day School Teacher — Her Authority and Responsibility***

The Lutheran day-school teacher stands in the place of father and mother in the classroom. This is why the Lutheran day-school teacher is called upon to do so much, from teaching the physiology of frogs to praying the Apostles' Creed and morning prayer with her children. She may be an expert in phonics and the teaching of reading; at the same time she is called upon to discipline an unruly child and comfort another whose art project has just been ruined. The Lutheran day-school teacher serves in a solemn office, the responsibilities of which are as comprehensive as that of a Christian father and mother. The Lutheran day-school teacher serves in the stead and by the command of parents. This is her glory and her honor.

A Lutheran day-school teacher is not a minister of the Word. There has been a lot of confusion about this. When every church worker is thought of as a minister of the Word, soon the proper work of the ministry is lost in the shuffle and replaced with something else. Remember, the proper work of the ministry is the public preaching and teaching of the Gospel, the administration of the sacraments, judging doctrine, protecting the church from the intrusion of false doctrine, and remitting and retaining sins. Ministers must remember what their proper work is and stick to it. Lutheran day-school teachers should enjoy the freedom and high privilege they have been given to serve in the stead and by the command of parents. The authority extended to the Lutheran day-school teacher from parents includes not only the authority to teach math and science, but also the authority to teach religion and lead the children in prayers.

The day-school teacher is always functioning *in loco parentis*, that is, "in the place of parents," yet her office has the blessing, sanction, and approval of the church, for it was established by the church for the support of the people of God. A Lutheran day-school teacher serves in what has been called an *auxiliary* office in the church. An auxiliary office is one that is not commanded by the Lord and essential to the life of the church, like the office of the ministry, but one which the church is free to establish according to very real needs and circumstances.

A congregation which establishes a day school does so, not only to create a setting in which the ministry of the church might reach out into the community through public preaching and catechesis, but also out of Christian love and concern for her members who want to raise their children as God-fearing citizens. Both the secular and the spiritual kingdoms are involved. The formation of such a school by a congregation is a "real need and circumstance" which necessitates additional workers outside the office of the public ministry: experts in language arts, mathematics, music, elementary education, etc. This is a crucial need for the success of the school and is very important work, but it is not the ministry of the church.

Day-school teachers have a "Christian vocation" because of their faith in Christ, not because they differ from any other faithful Christian who works in some other secular field. Their faith in Christ is what makes their work a holy work and a godly calling. They have been entrusted with the sacred responsibility of assisting Christian parents in the education of their children. Their office is "auxiliary" in the church because it is alongside of and in support of the preaching office, not because it is unimportant.

There could be any number of auxiliary offices established within a single congregation to handle any number of temporal needs that may arise: deacons, deaconesses, directors of music, day-school teachers, secretaries, etc. Each of these offices is established because of a real need, so that the ministry of the Word is "not bound, but has free course and is preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people" (Collect on the Word).

This is not to demean the work of a Lutheran day-school teacher. It is, rather, to elevate it to its proper status. It is a true Christian vocation just like any other. The glory of this office comes from what the Large Catechism calls the “highest office” in creation: the office of father and mother. It must also be said that since the day-school teacher is not part of the office of the ministry, she is free to become an expert in her field of education. She is also a disciplinarian in the classroom, in a way the minister is not, using the law in the civil sense just as a parent would. The use of the law in this way is not the proper work of a minister of the Gospel *as minister*, but the work of someone who holds an office in the secular kingdom.

Just as love and sacrifice to the neighbor characterizes the life of every Christian in the particular vocation to which God has called him, so also the day-school teacher serves Christian parents and children in the same spirit of love and sacrifice. That is what Christian vocation and service is all about.

Confessional Lutheran theology has used the term “divine call” to speak of the authority of the office of the Holy Ministry. It is a “divine calling” because Christ has conferred upon its incumbents, through the church, the *authority* to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments (AC V, XIV, XXVIII). “Appointment” is a salutary term first used by the apostles in Acts 6 for the “appointment of deacons” to handle the church’s temporal affairs. The terms “divine call” and “solemn appointment” are helpful terms which enable us to distinguish between the one divinely established and mandated office of the ministry, and a multiplicity of auxiliary offices which may be established in the church to support the ministry or assist Christians in their God-given vocations.

Ministers must understand that they are not math or science teachers, even though they may have knowledge in these areas. They are ministers of the Gospel. They must give the school principal and day-school teachers the freedom to do what their offices call them to do, and tend to the business of being ministers of *the Word* for the saving benefit of the teachers, the school, and the congregation committed to their care.

### ***“What Does This Mean?”***

Thank God, a seven-year-old child knows what the church is, namely, holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd (SA XII; BC, p. 315).

*“Andrew, what do you believe about Jesus?”*

*“I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.”*

Why did Andrew know the answers to these questions? He’s only seven years old! The doctrine that Andrew confessed did not originate with him. It came from the Word of God. He has been baptized into Christ. His mother and father have brought him to the Divine Service since his birth. They have read Bible stories to him at home and brought him to Sunday School. They have taught him to pray the words of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer at mealtime and before bed. They have

given him work to do around the house. They have disciplined him when he needed it. They always forgave him when he confessed his sins. And their love for him was constant, in spite of his failings and shortcomings. All of this explains why Andrew could answer these questions. He is a Christian boy! He knows the Lord Jesus and His forgiveness, and he is on his way to being a faithful citizen and neighbor in the world that God has made.

The task of a Lutheran day school is simple, but profound: to support and assist Christian parents in their God-given responsibility of rearing and training their children to believe in Christ and to love their neighbor. This means that children learn both the Christian faith and how to live in the world which God created. It is the commitment of a truly biblical and Lutheran school to provide to Christian parents an environment that is faithful to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions which will support and complement them in their work. Children are God's gifts to us, and He has placed in our hands the responsibility for both their spiritual and temporal welfare. Let us not grow weary and lose heart.

Where and how to educate children is the responsibility of all parents. This is the real "school choice" that all parents must make. They have the responsibility to either teach their children entirely at home or to enlist others to assist them in this work. A Lutheran day school is not commanded by God in Holy Scripture. The Lutheran day-school teacher does not have a divinely mandated office in the church. The Lutheran day school is the free choice of a Christian congregation to support and assist their Christian parents in their God-given responsibilities of raising their children to live in both the spiritual and the secular kingdoms. The church *must* have "the marks of the church"—the ministry of the Gospel and sacraments. These *are* divinely mandated. But like the establishment of the diaconate in Acts 6, she is free in love to establish any number of auxiliary offices and agencies to support the ministry and assist her members in their God-given callings. In other words, the institution of the Lutheran day school, *per se*, is not mandated by God in Scripture, but the work that a day school does in the service and assistance of Christian parents is.

# Doctrine in Practice

## *Financing the School — Balancing the Budget in the Two Kingdoms*

The doctrine of the church and her ministry has made it clear that there is much that a Lutheran day school does which is not the ministry of the church. The teaching of reading, mathematics, science, etc., is not the ministry of preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments. The catechization of our children, the worship and prayer life of the school, and much of the music program *is* a part of the ministry of the church. The understanding that a Lutheran day school exists in *both* the spiritual and the secular kingdoms must be carefully balanced in the way that the school is financed. Some congregations “go broke” because they consider *everything* that a Lutheran day school does to be part of the ministry of the congregation. In many cases, congregational offerings are expected to pay for the entire enterprise. This is not good stewardship. Congregations who finance schools entirely out of their general treasury often give very little or nothing from their budget to the church’s mission work. This is unfortunate. At the same time, however, a congregation must understand that a day school is not unrelated to the church’s work or simply some other organization that is “renting space” at the church. A day school is an auxiliary of the congregation and must be “owned” and “operated” by the congregation. The financing of a Lutheran school must maintain a proper balance between the two kingdoms, utilizing a formula of direct congregational support, tuition, and outside funding.

## *The Solemn Appointment of Faculty*

All of our faculty are required to subscribe unconditionally to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God and the Small Catechism and the three ecumenical creeds as faithful expositions of the Word of God. In addition, the principal, or “headmaster,” of the school (as well as any called teachers) will be required to subscribe to the remaining confessions of the Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580.

All candidates for faculty positions must pass a doctrinal examination given by the pastor before being considered by the Board of Education. All teachers in our school shall be faithful Lutherans who are or become members of our congregation. If candidates do not pass the doctrinal examination, they may not be appointed to faculty positions by the Board of Education. By the same token, it is the responsibility of the Board of Education to determine the academic and educational competence of candidates for faculty positions in the day school.

The Board of Education shall extend “solemn appointments” to faculty members. Those who are eligible to be on the Synod’s roster as “ministers of religion—commissioned” may also be “called” to their positions. It is fitting that the term “solemn appointment” be used instead of “divine call” because that term has been customarily used of prophets, apostles, and ministers who are “called by the Lord” into the preaching office of the Gospel and sacraments to speak on His behalf. “Solemn appointment” is a fitting term for teachers in a Lutheran day school, since they are representing the parents of the children they teach, rather than the minister of Word and sacrament. Their authority comes from father and mother and it is a sacred and public trust. Just as the parents of the congregation are taught by the minister, so also the day-school teachers who serve on the parents’ behalf receive their theological training from the pastor.

### ***Continuing Education in Lutheran Theology***

It is imperative that teachers in a Lutheran school not only have ongoing continuing education in the academic subjects they teach, but also ongoing education in Lutheran theology. The pastor oversees a program of ongoing theological education for the teachers of the school which includes daily prayer with the faculty and monthly studies in the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. It will be the responsibility of the principal, or “headmaster,” to oversee and coordinate ongoing education for the faculty in all other areas.

### ***Catechesis — The Main Thing***

Central to any Lutheran school is catechesis. Catechesis grows out of the Great Commission in which Jesus said:

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20).

Catechesis is much more than instruction in Christian doctrine. It is the very preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sins, which leads to and flows from Baptism. It is the art of applying Law and Gospel to the lives of sinners, of handing down the language of faith to the baptized, of teaching Christians to receive Christ’s gifts in true faith and to live in love toward their neighbors. All this and more is meant by the phrase, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”

The Christian’s “hidden” life of faith has very “concrete” realities and contours in this world. There is a real Word or language: the language of the Scriptures, of Law and Gospel, of repentance and faith, of liturgy and prayer, of catechism and creed. There is a real washing with water that creates Christians, bestows forgiveness, and has daily expression in the Christian’s life. There is a real Supper of bread and wine in which the baptized receive the saving body and blood of Christ. There is a real thing called the Christian life. It is lived in the real world by flesh-and-blood sinners who have been called to faith in Christ. In this life, Christians worship and confess, pray and suffer, transact business, marry, raise children, and build homes. They receive God’s gifts in the Divine Service, they live in love in the vocations to which God has called them, and they die in the certainty of salvation and eternal life in Christ.

The Christian faith and life is not about abstractions. It is about a real faith, which is fed and nurtured through real external Word and sacraments in real places of worship. It is lived out in the real world where there is real sin and real sorrow, but real forgiveness and consolation through the Gospel of our dear Lord Jesus Christ. This understanding will govern all religious instruction, worship, and prayer in the Lutheran school.

### ***The Divine Liturgy in the Life of the School***

The Divine Liturgy is central to the life of the school. It is full of many rich treasures, which nurture the young Christian’s faith for a lifetime. What is it all about? The introduction to the 1982 hymnal, *Lutheran Worship*, gives the answer to this question:

Our Lord speaks and we listen. His Word bestows what it says. Faith that is born from what is heard acknowledges the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise. Music is drawn into this thankfulness and praise, enlarging and elevating the adoration of our gracious giver God.

Saying back to him what he has said to us, we repeat what is most true and sure. Most true and sure is his name, which he put upon us with the water of our Baptism. We are his. This we acknowledge at the beginning of the Divine Service. Where his name is, there is he. Before him we acknowledge that we are sinners, and we plead for forgiveness. His forgiveness is given us, and we, freed and forgiven, acclaim him as our great and gracious God as we apply to ourselves the words he has used to make himself known to us.

The rhythm of our worship is from him to us, and then from us back to him. He gives his gifts, and together we receive and extol them. We build one another up as we speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Our Lord gives us his body to eat and his blood to drink. Finally his blessing moves us out into our calling, where his gifts have their fruition. How best to do this we may learn from his Word and from the way his Word has prompted his worship through the centuries. We are heirs of an astonishingly rich tradition. Each generation receives from those who went before and, in making that tradition of the Divine Service its own, adds what best may serve in its own day—the living heritage and something new (*Lutheran Worship*, Introduction, p. 6).

It is this rich and living legacy of liturgy, worship, and prayer which we wish to pass on to the next generation of Christians.

### ***Music — The Second Greatest Gift***

In the church's worship, music is the gift of God that has been put in the service of the Gospel in the church's worship life more than any other gift. The psalms of the Old Testament were all sung. The "spiritual songs" and "canticles" of the Old and New Testament were a part of the earliest liturgies. Jesus Himself sang in the upper room on the night in which He was betrayed. Concerning the gift of music, Luther ranks it second only to God's Word:

Music is a fair and lovely gift of God which has often wakened and moved me to the joy of preaching.... Next after theology I give to music the highest place and the greatest honor (*Here I Stand*, Mentor Books, 1959, p. 266-67).

In his preface to the Wittenberg Hymnal of 1524, Luther writes these words:

I would like to see all the arts, especially music, used in the service of Him who gave and made them. I therefore pray that every pious Christian would be pleased with this [the use of music in the service of the gospel] and lend his help if God has given him like or greater gifts. As it is, the world is too lax and indifferent about teaching and training the young for us to abet this trend. God grant us his grace. Amen. (LW, Vol. 53, p. 316.)

The teaching of the church's song must be central to any Lutheran day school as Luther directed. It serves the Gospel directly. In the introduction to *Lutheran Worship*, this is further explained:

In its hymnody each age of the church reflects what it returns to God for the great blessings it has received from him. Some of the Church's song is always derived from a previous era. The early Church developed its music from the psalmody of the synagog, to which it added the strophic hymns of Greek and Roman converts. When the liturgy became the sole property of the clergy, there arose a need for hymns in the language of the people. Thus there came into being the great body of Latin hymns introduced and promoted by Bishop Ambrose of Milan and his followers. In time these again became the property of the clergy and hierarchy. The Lutheran Reformation once more restored the Church's song to the people in their native tongue. From then on the Lutheran Church became known as the "singing Church" (*Lutheran Worship*, Introduction, p. 6).

### ***First Article Gifts — The Humanities, the Arts, the Sciences***

A Lutheran school will not be afraid to learn about and use the many gifts that God has given us in creation. The First Article of the Creed credits God with the creation of all that we are and have that is good. A Lutheran day school will explore and celebrate all the good gifts that God gives, particularly in the areas of literature, music, and art, as well as the sciences. Religion is not the only subject taught in a Lutheran school. A healthy view of God's gifts of creation is essential to a well-balanced education.

### ***The Headmaster***

The term "headmaster" fits well the description of a principal of a Lutheran school who is uniquely qualified to manage and oversee all the academic and temporal affairs of the day school. Just as the minister of the congregation has oversight over all religious instruction in the congregation and school (the spiritual kingdom), so the headmaster has oversight over the academic curriculum and temporal matters in the school (the secular kingdom).



# The Academic Plan

## *The Name: Peace Lutheran Academy*

The name “Peace” was given to our congregation when it was founded in the early 1960s. It is a word which is used throughout the Scriptures as a reference to the forgiveness of sins which was earned by Christ in His death and resurrection and which is distributed to us through Holy Absolution and the preaching of the Gospel. Our school retains this name because of its relationship to the church and her ministry. The name “Lutheran” means that we are a confessing Lutheran congregation which subscribes to the Lutheran Confessions as a faithful exposition of the Word of God. Our doctrine and practice are to be faithful to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions in everything that we do and say. This is true, not only of the church and her ministry in the strict sense, but also of the auxiliary agencies that the congregation operates. The word “academy” generally refers to “an association of scholars” or “a school for special instruction.” Because it is our desire to provide the very highest quality education in all academic subjects, as well as our specialization in theology and music, we have chosen to use the word “academy” in our name. This word tells our community that the education received in this place is unique and quite different from what other schools may offer.

## *Catechesis*

Peace Lutheran Academy has as its central task faithful Lutheran catechesis. The entire catechetical program for all grades falls under the jurisdiction and oversight of the pastor of the congregation. Catechesis takes place in the academy’s worship and prayer life, music program, and daily integration of the faith into academic subjects. For this reason, the faculty receives ongoing instruction in Lutheran doctrine. “Religion” as an academic subject is replaced with daily prayers and with the upper grades receiving catechetical instruction by the pastor. Chapel for the entire school is the first thing of the day. The school day concludes with prayer in the classrooms. Chapel and classroom prayer includes Bible readings, the praying/singing of the Psalter, the singing of a hymn for the week, recitation of the week’s learn-by-heart verse and catechism, prayers, and catechesis.

Foremost in the process of catechesis is the involvement of parents in the catechization of their children. This requires the catechization of parents, so that they understand the Divine Service and the Church’s liturgy, how to teach their children to listen to the Word of God, how to pray the Catechism in the home, how to practice confession and absolution within the family, and what their vocation is in the world.

Listening to Bible stories, praying the Catechism and liturgy, and singing the hymns of the Church is a part of the daily life of the academy. Children learn the entire Catechism by heart by the end of the third grade. Children learn by heart a three-year cycle of important Bible passages and hymn verses. The pastor gives catechetical instruction to all the classes in the academy, beginning in the fourth grade. First communion is available to those children who have learned the six chief parts by heart and have been examined and absolved by the pastor. Confirmation marks the reception of the foundational catechetical classes. Examination of candidates for first communion and confirmation is conducted by the pastor in the presence of the parents. Children grow in the Christian faith and life through the integration of that faith into all the academic subjects of the academy. Children learn to evaluate the things they learn about the real world, our society, and culture on the basis of the Word of God and the Christian confession.

Children learn the faith by doing those things which will be a part of their Christian life as long as they live.

### ***The Music Program***

Music, and particularly the art of singing, is central to the church's worship life. Music, in the church's liturgy and hymnody, is a primary vehicle for carrying the Word of God and giving voice to the church's prayer. The primary reason music is taught in the school is for the sake of the church and the ministry of the Gospel. The music program for the academy and the congregation is seen as one integrated program for the congregation's worship life. This does not mean, however, that the children are not exposed to "secular" music in the academy. There are many opportunities to explore the vast musical treasures from outside the church. However, clear distinctions are made between music which is appropriate for the church's public worship and music which is not appropriate.

The main emphasis of the music program is the training of children to sing the Church's song and assist and lead in worship. In addition to singing in the classroom and at chapel, there are also choirs from the academy.

### ***The Teaching of Reading***

The ability to read is the most important skill for elementary children to have to ensure their academic growth and success in school. Our academy pledges itself to teaching phonics as the foundation for learning to read. Children are taught the basic building blocks of the English language, including proper spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure. Literacy is fostered in our students by grounding them in both the skills necessary to read and write the English language and the rich content of a classical curriculum.

### ***Foreign Language***

The Board of Education is committed to implementing a foreign language program in the academy. The study of foreign language always assists students in learning their native tongue better, and such study is indispensable in learning the art of communication and rhetoric.

### ***Forging a Partnership with Parents in Elementary Education and Lutheran Catechesis***

Peace Lutheran Academy exists for the purpose of assisting and supporting *Christian* parents in their God-given responsibilities of raising and rearing their children. Commitment to our Lutheran approach to education is imperative for all parents who would send their children to Peace Lutheran Academy. A thorough screening of parents takes place before their children are enrolled in the academy. When parents enroll a child in the academy, they are pledging their support of our confession of faith and promising to be involved and active with us in every facet of their child's education. If they cannot make this commitment, they should not attempt to send their children to our academy. Peace Lutheran Academy will not function as a surrogate parent for children whose parents are disinterested, unsupportive, or uncommitted to our educational philosophy, or what goes on in the church and school.

We live in a world in which the education of children is increasingly thought of as the responsibility and prerogative of the professional educator. This attitude is carrying over into other areas of child rearing. Parents are less and less considered the primary care givers for their children, as the world continues to promote the necessity of professional care givers for every area of a child's life.

Obviously, there is a need for professional teachers, counselors, doctors, etc. But we as Christians believe that these professionals operate under the authority and by the permission of parents. God gave children to their fathers and mothers, who are free to enlist the aid of teachers and doctors in the raising of their children, but the primary responsibility for these children belongs to the parents.

Our congregation has established Peace Lutheran Academy in order to support and assist Christian parents in this God-given responsibility. In addition to offering a high-quality elementary education with a unique specialization in music and the humanities, we are committed to the Christian faith as taught in the Word of God and confessed in the historic Confessions of the Lutheran Church. Parents who believe as we do will find an important ally in Peace Lutheran Academy and the education that we offer.

### ***An Education for All Children***

Peace Lutheran Academy offers a basic education in the core disciplines and humanities: reading, writing, mathematics, science, geography, history, literature, music, and art. We have high academic standards which seek to promote excellence and achievement from all our students, but we are *not* an elitist school only for the gifted and advanced learner. We believe that all children can learn, especially when challenged and motivated by specific knowledge, high expectations, exceptional teachers, and the discipline and support of parents. Our low student-to-teacher ratio makes Peace Lutheran Academy an ideal setting for children with varying degrees of ability.

***Peace Lutheran Academy is committed to:***

1. A world view which is God-centered, rather than man-centered.
2. Honor and respect for those in authority as representatives of God, and understanding the place of Law in the secular and spiritual kingdoms.
3. The centrality of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake in the life of a Christian and the church.
4. A partnership and involvement with parents in every area of their child's education and spiritual growth.
5. An education based in the core disciplines and humanities: reading, writing, mathematics, science, geography, history, literature, music, and art.
6. The teaching of language and foreign language, for learning the art of communication and rhetoric.
7. Academic standards which demand excellence and achievement.
8. The teaching of singing and music, in service to the church and for the prayer life of God's people.
9. Faithfully teaching the Word of God and passing on the language of our holy faith, so that the baptized learn how to receive God's gifts in the Divine Service, how to pray, how to confess, and how to live where God has called them to live with faith in Christ and love to the neighbor.
10. The centrality of the Divine Service and daily prayer according to the church's historic and confessional liturgy of Word and sacrament.

## **Postscript**

In February 1994, preliminary discussion meetings about starting a Lutheran day school were held in our congregation. After these meetings, the Board of Education appointed an “Ad Hoc Day School Committee” to explore the possibility of starting a day school and to present a detailed proposal to the Board of Education. The Ad Hoc Day School Committee met throughout the spring, summer, and fall of 1994. The committee presented its report to the Board of Education in December 1994, which included the “Theological Foundation” and “Doctrine in Practice” sections of this document as prepared by Pastor Bender. After reviewing the report, which also included a building and financial plan not included in this publication, the Board of Education made it available to the entire congregation. The theological section of this report was studied extensively during Sunday morning Bible classes in January of 1995. Open forums to discuss the remaining sections of the report were held for the congregation on Saturday, January 14, and Sunday, January 22, 1995. At these forums the Board of Education received very helpful and positive feedback.

On the basis of this report and the discussions that took place in the congregation throughout 1994 and January 1995, the Board of Education enthusiastically recommended to the congregation that Peace Lutheran Academy be established in September of 1995. On February 12, 1995, at a special voters’ meeting of Peace Lutheran Church, the proposal to establish Peace Lutheran Academy was unanimously approved by a vote of 43–0.

Preschool and kindergarten began in the fall of 1995. Grades 1-4 were added the following year. The school added one grade per year until, in spring of 2001, the first class of 8th-graders graduated from Peace Lutheran Academy.

**✠ Soli Deo Gloria! ✠**