

Sunday, January 26th 2025

Third Sunday after the Epiphany



Mailing Address:

**Epiphany Lutheran Church
489 Agnes
Suite 112, Box 117
Bastrop, TX 78602**

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(on the SDA campus)
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WELCOME TO EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH!

“How lovely is Your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!” (Psalm 84:1) We are thankful that God has brought you here with us this morning to hear His Word and receive His gifts! You’ll find everything you need for the worship service in this bulletin and in *Lutheran Service Book*, our hymnal. If you have any questions about our worship service, our congregation, or what we believe, please ask our pastor or any of our members.

OUR COMMUNION POLICY:

The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod believes the biblical teaching that in communion we receive the true body and blood of Jesus Christ with the bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins. If you are a baptized Christian who has been instructed in the biblical teaching of communion, and if you agree with our confession of faith, please feel free to commune with us. If you have any questions, please speak with our pastor.

SERVANTS DURING WORSHIP THIS MORNING:

Pastor – Rev. E. B. Holschuh
Musician – Leann McClain
Lay Reader – Alison Parker
Assisting Elder – Dave Sager
Usher – Dave Layland
Acolyte – Calvin Monroe

AS WE PREPARE FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING:

The Lord Is Manifested as Our Savior through the Preaching of the Gospel

When Jesus opens His mouth to preach, gracious words flow from His lips. The Scriptures are, indeed, fulfilled in your hearing (Luke 4:21–22). For Christ was anointed by the Spirit of the Lord “*to proclaim good news to the poor,*” “*to proclaim liberty to the captives*” and “*to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor*” (Luke 4:18–19). By this proclamation, Christ releases His people from captivity and gathers them to Himself in His Church. So it was when the Lord released His people from Babylon and returned them to Jerusalem. “*Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people,*” sanctified the whole congregation by the reading and preaching of the Law (Neh. 8:8–9). As the people then were urged to “*eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready*” (Neh. 8:10), so are you anointed by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ to share in His feast and to serve the fellow members of His Body with His good gifts, “*giving greater honor to the part that lacked it*” (1 Cor. 12:12, 24).

DIVINE SERVICE
SETTING FOUR

Prelude

Selected Music

Welcome and Greeting

Pastor

Announcements

Opening Hymn

“Lord, Open Now My Heart to Hear”

LSB 908

(stand)

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

The sign of the cross ✠ may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Matthew 28:19b; [18:20]

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C **who made heaven and earth.**

Psalms 124:8

P If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

C **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.** *Ps. 130:3-4*

P Since we are gathered to hear God’s Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

[Luke 18:13]

C **Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

[John 20:19-23]

SERVICE OF THE WORD

Introit

Psalm 102:18-22

- P** Let this be recorded for a generation to come,
so that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord:
- C** **that he looked down from his holy height;
from heaven the Lord looked at the earth,**
- P** to hear the groans of the prisoners,
to set free those who were doomed to die,
- C** **that they may declare in Zion the name of the Lord,
and in Jerusalem his praise,**
- P** when peoples gather together,
and kingdoms, to worship the Lord.
- C** *Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.*

Kyrie

Mark 10:47



C Lord, have mer - cy; Christ, have mer - cy; Lord, have mer - cy.

Gloria in Excelsis

Luke 2:14; John 1:29



- C** 1 To God on high be glo - ry And peace to all the earth;
2 To You, O sole - be - got - ten, The Fa - ther's Son, we pray;
3 For You a - lone are ho - ly; You on - ly are the Lord.



Good-will from God in heav - en Pro-claimed at Je-sus' birth!
 O Lamb of God, our Sav - ior, You take our sins a - way.
 For - ev - er and for - ev - er, Be wor-shiped and a - dored;



We praise and bless You, Fa - ther; Your ho - ly name, we sing—
 Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus; Re - ceive our heart - felt cry,
 You with the Ho - ly Spir - it A - lone are Lord Most High,



Our thanks for Your great glo - ry, Lord God, our heav'n-ly King.
 Where You in pow'r are seat-ed At God's right hand on high—
 In God the Fa - ther's glo - ry. "A - men!" our glad re - ply.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

2 Timothy 4:22

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and stretch forth the hand of Your majesty to heal and defend us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

(sit)

¹All the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the Lord had commanded Israel. ²So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. ³And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. . . .

⁵And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. ⁶And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. . . .

⁸They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

⁹And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law. ¹⁰Then he said to them, “Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle Reading

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹If all were a

single member, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²²On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, ²⁵that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

(stand)

Alleluia and Verse



C Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



C These things are writ - ten that you may be - lieve that



Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God.

John 20:31



C Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Holy Gospel Reading

Luke 4:16-30

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the fourth chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹⁶[Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. ¹⁷And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me

to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,

to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

²⁰And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹And he began to say to them, **“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”** ²²And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” ²³And he said to them, **“Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Physician, heal yourself.’ What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.”** ²⁴And he said, **“Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. ²⁵But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, ²⁶and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”** ²⁸When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. ²⁹And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. ³⁰But passing through their midst, he went away.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

(sit)

Hymn of the Day *“O Christ, Our True and Only Light”*

LSB 839

Sermon

One Body, Many Members

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

(stand)

Nicene Creed

C **I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and
the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,**

who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life ✝ of the world to come. Amen.

Passing of the Peace

When Jesus himself appeared to the disciples after his resurrection, he greeted them by saying, “Peace be with you” (Luke 24:36; John 20:19, 26) – and so we do likewise.

(sit)

Prayer of the Church

P Lord, in Your mercy
C hear our prayer.

Offering

Usher

Please sign the attendance books as they are passed.

If you would like to transition to making your regular tithe or offering online, you may do so at <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZKYH/home>



SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

For those unfamiliar with our congregation’s practice regarding the Lord’s Supper, please refer to “Our Communion Policy” located at the beginning of the bulletin.

(stand)

Preface

P The Lord be with you.
C And also with you.

2 Timothy 4:22

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

[Colossians 3:1]

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

[Psalm 136]

P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus

Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;



Heav'n and earth with full ac-claim shout the glo-ry of Your name.



Sing ho - san-na in the high-est, sing ho-san - na to the Lord;



Tru - ly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

Prayer of Thanksgiving

- P** Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. By His death, He has redeemed us from bondage to sin and death, and by His resurrection, He has delivered us into new life in Him.

Grant us to keep the Feast in sincerity and truth, faithfully eating His body given into death and drinking His life's blood poured out for our salvation until we pass through death to the promised land of life eternal.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13

C **Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

The Words of Our Lord

*Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24
Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25*

- P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My **✠** body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

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

Pax Domini

John 20:19

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

Agnus Dei

John 1:29



C 1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,



You take the sin of the world a - way;
You take the sin of the world a - way;



O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,



Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

(sit)

Distribution Hymn

“The Gifts Christ Freely Gives”

LSB 602

(stand)

Nunc Dimittis

Luke 2:29-32

1 O Lord, now let Your ser - vant De -
2 All glo - ry to the Fa - ther, All
part in heav'n - ly peace, For I have seen the
glo - ry to the Son, All glo - ry to the
glo - ry Of Your re - deem - ing grace:
Spir - it, For - ev - er Three in One;
A light to lead the Gen - tiles Un -
For as in the be - gin - ning, Is
to Your ho - ly hill, The glo - ry of Your
now, shall ev - er be, God's tri - une name re -
peo - ple, Your cho - sen Is - ra - el.
sound - ing Through all e - ter - ni - ty.

Post-Communion Collect

P Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Benedicamus and Benediction

P Let us bless the Lord.

[Psalm 103:1]

C Thanks be to God.

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26

C Amen.

(sit)

Closing Hymn

“O God of God, O Light of Light”

LSB 810

P Go in Peace!

C Serve the Lord!

Postlude

Selected Music

Initial and ongoing funding for Epiphany Lutheran Church has been received through a grant made possible by the Roy D. and Ingaborg G. Randolph Memorial Endowment Fund.

SERMON NOTES: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

One Body, Many Members

1. Not entirely unlike in many of our present day _____, the Corinthians had some fundamental _____ about spiritual _____.
 2. God has given a variety of _____ to individual Christians for the _____.
 3. Every _____ of the _____ of _____ has an important role to play—interdependently, not independently.
 4. When we become hostile, divisive, and cliquish about the Lord’s work, then the _____ in the Body of Christ, rather than our _____ for one another, _____ us.
 5. “_____” are those such as wisdom, knowledge, acquaintance with the Word, ability to explain it to others, ability to be a witness of one’s faith to another, etc.
 6. We can have honest _____ and still have _____, especially if we make it our priority to be in _____ with Christ.
-

PRAYERS AT EPIPHANY

PRAYER REQUESTS: Please share any prayer request on the Prayer Requests sheet as you enter on Sunday. You may also email a prayer request, as well as a request to become a part of Epiphany’s prayer chain, to secretary@epiphanybastrop.org.

Please continue to pray for...

- Andrew and Noel Schaff - missionaries in Taiwan
- Rosie Cabrera

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER?

The first step to becoming a member of our congregation is to speak with our pastor.

We believe, teach, and confess that we are all broken sinners in need of God's salvation, which He freely gives through His Word and Sacrament. Church is not a club for the sinless— it's a hospital for sinners!

You may become a member of Epiphany Lutheran Church by transferring your membership from a sister congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) or you may receive instruction from the pastor and become a communicant member of Epiphany and the LCMS through Adult Instruction Class or through a profession of faith.



Epiphany Lutheran Church has a podcast! Our ***Peace Be With You*** podcast is available on popular podcast apps, but you can always find it at peacebewithyou.podbean.com (or just scan the QR code).



Epiphany Events Calendar: Our congregation calendar is on our website (epiphanybastrop.org); to add an event, please email secretary@epiphanybastrop.org.

New Thursday 6pm Zoom Study begins on February 13! Join us for ***Hebrews – Timeless Truths***, a 13-week look at the entire (13 chapters) of the New Testament book of Hebrews. We'll look at the practical application of each chapter of Hebrews as we seek to understand more deeply the heart, will, intent and design of our Heavenly Father, the life, ministry and teachings of Jesus, and the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in our world today. Register: bit.ly/ELC-Hebrews

Make Every Day Count devotional gathering at Argent Court Assisted Living in Bastrop will meet next month on Tuesday at 3pm on the 4th and the 18th.

SISTERS OF THE LIGHT: Calling all women to join us on Tuesday, January 28th, 6pm at our SDA campus for a light dinner and time of fellowship. Let's learn more about each other, what God is doing in our lives, and how we can support one another. Please RSVP to Carole Holschuh by V/M or text: (817) 614-3916.

The First Annual Epiphany Lutheran Church Spend the Year in Scripture Challenge reading schedule through next Sunday:

- Day 27 - Mon 1/27: Exodus 30-31, Psalm 27
- Day 28 - Tue 1/28: Exodus 32-34, Psalm 28
- Day 29 - Wed 1/29: Exodus 35-40, Psalm 29
- Day 30 - Thu 1/30: Leviticus 1-4, Psalm 30
- Day 31 - Fri 1/31: Leviticus 5-7, Psalm 31
- Day 32 - Sat 2/1: Leviticus 8-10, Psalm 32
- Day 33 - Sun 2/2: Leviticus 11-13, Psalm 33



Lutheran Hour: Next Sunday, February 2nd – “Do the Things That Make for Unity” – Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler. Jesus crosses borders and even breaks down the barrier of death to do the things that make for unity: shared worship, shared mission, shared harvest. (John 4:9)

Hear The Lutheran Hour each Sunday on station KBUK-FM 104.9 at 7:00 a.m. or on station KANJ-FM 91.5 at 12:30 p.m. or go to lhm.org for a link to listen to the Lutheran Hour live. You can also listen to The Lutheran Hour on the local Austin station KLBJ (590 AM or 99.7 FM) at 7:00am on Sunday.

KFUO Radio, the broadcast voice of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, shares Christ for you anytime, anywhere on **KFUO.org** via worship services, Bible and theology studies, practical talk programs, and sacred music. Find programs on demand at kfu.org and wherever you get your podcasts! Find us on social: [@KFUOradio](https://www.facebook.com/KFUOradio) on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/KFUOradio), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/KFUOradio).

CHRIST FOR YOU this week on AM850 & KFUO.org: We continuing our study of Isaiah on Sharper Iron (weekdays at 8:00 a.m. CT), looking at chapters 30-34. On Thy Strong Word (weekdays at 11:00 a.m. CT), we are studying the book of Job. Join us as we pick up with chapter 7! Don't forget to tune in to Concord Matters (2/1 at 10 a.m. CT) as we discuss confessional subscription in the ELCA with Rev. Dr. Mark Granquist. Find your favorite programs on demand at kfu.org or on the KFUO Radio app!

RightNow Media: We're excited to share that Epiphany Lutheran Church now has unlimited access to **RightNow Media**—the world's largest streaming library of video Bible study resources. This extensive library has **more than 20,000 videos** that can be used as part of a group study or for personal devotions, and many series include **free discussion guides and handouts**. In addition to series on books of the Bible, RightNow Media has videos for everyone in the family on a variety of topics like marriage, parenting, personal finances, mental health, and more. There's even a **library just for kids with over 2,000 safe, entertaining videos**. RightNow Media has a free app that's available on all major streaming devices so you and your family can access content anywhere, anytime. For FREE access to RightNow Media, visit app.rightnowmedia.org/join/elcb or scan the QR code.



THIS WEEK AT EPIPHANY:

Sunday, January 26th

- 10:00am – Children's Sunday School (Fellowship Area)
- 10:00am – Adult Sunday School (Sanctuary)
- 11:00am – Fellowship / Coffee Time
- 11:30am – Worship Service with Communion

Thursday, January 30th

- 6:00pm – Zoom Study "*Nurturing Your Faith: Forgiveness!*"

Sunday, February 2nd

- 10:00am – Children's Sunday School (Fellowship Area)
- 10:00am – Adult Sunday School (Sanctuary)
- 11:00am – Fellowship / Coffee Time
- 11:30am – Worship Service with Communion

Answers to Sermon Notes:

1. Not entirely unlike in many of our present day **churches**, the Corinthians had some fundamental **misconceptions** about spiritual **gifts**.
2. God has given a variety of **gifts** to individual Christians for the **common good**.
3. Every **member** of the **Body of Christ** has an important role to play—interdependently, not independently.
4. When we become hostile, divisive, and clish about the Lord's work, then the **fractures** in the Body of Christ, rather than our **love** for one another, **define** us.
5. "**The higher gifts**" are those such as wisdom, knowledge, acquaintance with the Word, ability to explain it to others, ability to be a witness of one's faith to another, etc.
6. We can have honest **disagreements** and still have **unity**, especially if we make it our priority to be in **fellowship** with Christ.

3-minute



Seminary

Faith and the Lord's Supper

By Luther's time, many Christians believed that faith played no necessary role in the beneficial reception of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. God's Word, Luther insisted, works on its own power, without depending on human contribution or participation. But it works faith. God speaks for no other purpose than to bring fallen sinners into a relationship of trust and love with Him once again.

He hosts the Supper only so that He might draw back into His own family those who have become disoriented by trusting in false gods. Family means faith. The Supper cultivates trust in God. The Word of the Lord, with the bread-body and the wine-blood, does not work "magically" to place some charm or amulet upon the recipient. It engages us in conversation. It pronounces us dead as sinners and alive in Christ. It maintains and sustains the relationship a loving Father wants to have with his children. No magic—just the good relationship of parent and child together enjoying the meal the parent has paid for and prepared.

Faith does not make Christ's body and blood present in the Sacrament, any more than the infant's appetite makes the oatmeal present in the dish. God does create faith so that we may receive the benefits of the meal, however, just as the parent's love must move the child to open wide and receive—rather than spit out—the breakfast. In the Supper God calls on us to trust Him. We trust Him there for the forgiveness of our sins and the gift of new life. We trust the way He has chosen to act. Even if it seems out of the ordinary, this is one way that He has chosen to convey the promise of life to us. So unpretentiously He approaches us with the assurance of forgiveness and life.

Thus, faith leaps to His table. Faith knows that receiving Christ's body and blood sustains and uplifts and strengthens. Faith cannot walk away from this table without recognizing how good God is. He has not only given Himself into death that we might have life. He has shared that death and life with us. He has done so in several ways, also by coming to feed us with life itself. Believers cannot help but take deep delight in the love of such a Father.

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