

# ST. PETER COMMUNICATOR

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## Letter From the President

### Dead Men Don't Decide for Jesus *by Matthew C. Harrison*

As a young man in high school, I became involved in a local chapter of an evangelical Christian organization for athletes. It was positive and urged athletes to commit to Christ, avoid drugs and alcohol, and be a good influence on teammates. I was also attending my LCMS church consistently but did not realize I was being led into a view of Christianity quite different from what I'd been taught in my LCMS congregation. College football followed, and I continued the course as I got involved in an evangelical group of Christians in college. I was beginning to have thoughts of leaving my Lutheran church. I was asked to speak during the Bible class hour at my LCMS congregation and told the assembly, "God has done everything He could for you. Now it's up to you to decide for Christ." I had come to believe that after becoming serious about Christ, it was my job as a victorious person who had largely put sin behind me to disciple others to make the right choice for Jesus too. Baptism, Confession and Absolution, and the Lord's Supper played no real role in my thinking.

After some time, I began to realize more and more that something was off. The religion of the Law produces either arrogance (I made the right choice and am living holy, and so things are going great for me! Why don't you choose the same?), hypocrisy or despair. The Gospel-less "gospel" of my choice began to crush me. I realized I was living a lie. And it's not in the Bible. The Law always accuses. And even if my hands, feet and mouth were doing right (they often were not), my mind was full of sin and evil.

"Midweek school" at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Sioux City, Iowa, forced us to memorize and recite the catechism every Wednesday evening. I inevitably looked at the text at the last minute and limped through the recitation in front of a parent. But for some reason, one part of the catechism stuck with me: the Third Article, Explanation. "Answer: I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true." Notice God is doing all the verbs. It's all Gospel.

I realized what I'd learned in the catechism is just what the Bible teaches. "I believe ... that I cannot believe." If the "choice" for Christ is mine, it's based upon something in me. But what Jesus said to His apostles holds for us too: "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (John 15:16). My faith in Christ, my eternal life, my Christian life from beginning to end is *His* doing. Paul repeatedly calls coming to faith a resurrection. Dead men don't decide. It's all gift.

*But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ ... For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:4-5, 8-10)*

Later I was confronted and comforted by the Formula of Concord with this truth that no one “decides for Christ.” All of our pastors and workers and congregations are sworn to uphold this truth, and the Formula teaches it wonderfully.

Consider especially the affirmative theses:

## FORMULA OF CONCORD

### Epitome, Article II: Free Will

*The will of mankind is found in four different states: (1) before the fall; (2) since the fall; (3) after regeneration; and (4) after the resurrection of the body. The chief question in this article is only about the will and ability of mankind in the second state. That is, what powers in spiritual matters does a person have after the fall of our first parents and before regeneration? Can a person by his own powers — prior to and before his regeneration by God’s Spirit — get ready and prepare himself for God’s grace? Can a person accept <and apprehend> or reject the grace offered through the Holy Spirit in the Word and holy <divinely instituted> Sacraments?*

## AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENTS

The Pure Teaching about This Article, according to God’s Word

*1. This is our teaching, faith, and confession on this subject: in spiritual matters the understanding and reason of mankind are <completely> blind and by their own powers understand nothing, as it is written in 1 Corinthians 2:14, “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”*

*2. Likewise, we believe, teach, and confess that the unregenerate will of mankind is not only turned away from God, but also has become God’s enemy. So it only has an inclination and desire for that which is evil and contrary to God, as it is written in Genesis 8:21, “the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” Romans 8:7 says, “The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.” Just as a dead body cannot raise itself to bodily, earthly life, so a person who by sin is spiritually dead cannot raise himself to spiritual life. For it is written in Ephesians 2:5, “even when we were dead in our trespasses, [He] made us alive together with Christ.” And 2 Corinthians 3:5 says, “Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God.”*

*3. God the Holy Spirit, however, does not bring about conversion without means. For this purpose He uses the preaching and hearing of God’s Word, as it is written in Romans 1:16, the Gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.” Also Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” It is God’s will that His Word should be heard and that a person’s ears should not be closed (Psalm 95:8). With this Word the Holy Spirit is present and opens hearts, so that people (like Lydia in Acts 16:14) pay attention to it and are converted only through the Holy Spirit’s grace and power, who alone does the work of converting a person. For without His grace, and if He does not grant the increase, our willing and running, our planting, sowing, and watering (1 Corinthians 3:5–7) — are all nothing. As Christ says <in John 15:5>, “apart from Me you can do nothing.” With these brief words the Spirit denies free will its powers and ascribes everything to God’s grace, in order that no one may boast before God (1 Corinthians 1:29; [2 Corinthians 12:5; Jeremiah 9:23]). (EP II 1–6)*

I encourage you to read the rest of the article. It’s the Gospel. It’s full of comfort. It’s true. Before we are converted, we have no free will in spiritual matters. We are dead. The Spirit does what we cannot; He makes us alive, gives us faith in Christ and keep us in the one true faith. Thanks be to God. “No one will snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:28).

–Pastor Harrison

(From the December 2022 issue of [The Lutheran Witness](#) magazine)



## LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION

**Christmas Brunch:** Our Christmas Brunch was such an enjoyable time! Thanks to everyone who came and donated all the good food for the potluck. A sincere thanks to the ladies who got everything ready for the day and did all the clean-up. We were blessed to have a Thrivent grant to provide most of our supplies and ingredients. We also enjoyed the word games and the gift drawings! Thanks to Bonnie Teinert for all her creative talents and dedication in making most of the decorations and gifts for the drawings.

**Gifts from the Heart:** It's time again for our annual **Souper Bowl Sunday** gathering of food items for the Bread of Life food pantry in Chilton. This food pantry serves all of Calumet County, but especially Chilton and Hilbert as there are no other food pantries in those towns. Many people donate prior to Thanksgiving and Christmas, but after Christmas there is a significant need for this kind of support. Not only are families recuperating from the expenses of the holidays, but bills for heating and light are high in the winter. We urge everyone to share non-perishable food and pantry items as they are able during the month of January. The ingathering bin will be in place near the LWML bulletin board and we will continue to gather supplies until Super Bowl Sunday. Please be generous and share your blessings.

**Bible Study and Planning:** Bible study will resume in January on the second Tuesday at 1:00. We use the Bible studies from the Quarterly, which every woman of the congregation receives quarterly, and then make plans for whatever events are scheduled in the near future. We would love to have more input from our members and look forward to having all ladies join us. Remember: all women of LCMS are members of Women in Mission, formerly known as LWML (Lutheran Women's Missionary League). Women in Mission at St. Peter is a merger of the former Ladies Aid and LWML.

**Mite Offerings:** South Wisconsin LWML is a little over ¼ of the way through our biennium. Of the \$205,000 we pledged for mites at our June convention, we have paid just over \$55,000 to our top grant recipients. Check out our website, [lwml-swd.org](http://lwml-swd.org), for more detailed information and to see which grants will be funded next! We are always amazed at how the Lord blesses our mites as we strive to share God's Word with the world. Our mite box is always available to you to drop in your donations. Look for it in the Narthex near our bulletin board. Sometimes, on **Fellowship Sunday** (the second Sunday of each month) we bring it into the Fellowship Hall. This is also a reminder to join us for coffee or juice and some type of snack after Worship on each second Sunday.

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## Mission Matters

**Camp LuWiSoMo:** This may seem like an odd time of the year to be thinking about camping! But do you even know that South Wisconsin District of LCMS has a campground located in Wild Rose? It's a lovely lakeside property with a dorm, cabins, and campsites as well as a reasonably new dining hall and meeting room space which is also used as a retreat center. Right now the camp has access to matching funds up to \$20,000 from two separate donors. This is a rare opportunity to triple your money for a wonderful gem in our district. The match is available until January 15, 2023.

If you're not familiar with Camp LuWiSoMo, let me share a couple of phrases from their website:

Welcome to Camp LuWiSoMo, on the shores of beautiful Round Lake, just 5 miles east of Wild Rose, Wisconsin. We are a Registered Service Organization of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, providing a beautiful and peaceful environment to enjoy God's creation and grow in your faith and relationship with Jesus Christ. We're blessed with 380 acres in which to relax, recharge, walk, camp, swim, worship, grow in faith, spend time together as a family, friends, small group or congregation, enjoy a campfire, or just be. Our Retreat Center is available year-

round. Enjoy our quiet campground during the summer and early fall. LuWiSoMo is dedicated to providing faith-growing opportunities for people of all ages in a Christ-centered outdoor ministry setting.

Check out their website to find out more about this hidden treasure in our district, and consider making a donation during this match period or perhaps scheduling a vacation, attending a particular gathering, or sponsoring a camper. [luwisomo.org](http://luwisomo.org)



### Happy Birthday

#### January

- 7 Ron Ott Jr.
- 8 Dan Bergelin  
Brian Price
- 10 Chad Roehrig
- 21 Elliana Mueller
- 22 Jenny Peters
- 26 Amanda Pompa
- 29 Ellen Niemann

As the new year begins, we will start our new Gifts from the Heart Project. We will be collecting items for the Bread of Life Food Pantry in Chilton.

Please check out the list below for items that you can donate to help our neighbors in Calumet County.

## Items needed for Bread of Life Food Pantry

### Food Items...

- Boxed Meals (Hamburger Helper...)
- Canned Meals (Spaghetti O's...)
- Canned soups and stews
- Rice & Pasta
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Peanut Butter
- Canned tuna/chicken

### Baking supplies...

- Flour, sugar, salt
- Baking soda/powder
- Cake/muffin/bread/pancake mixes

### Hygiene Items...

- Body Wash
- Shampoo/Conditioner
- Razors/shaving cream
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste/toothbrushes
- Mouth wash
- Body lotion
- Liquid dish soap
- Liquid laundry detergent

## *Our Response to His Love*

	12-11	12-7	12-4	11-30	11-27	11-24	11-20
General Fund	\$2809	\$314	\$3308	\$152	\$2136	\$567	\$775
Memorial -Diane Schroeder							\$275
Aluminum Cans	\$146						
Totals	\$2955	\$314	\$3308	\$152	\$2136	\$567	\$1050



# Jesus, Our New Adam

By Adam Hensley

What does it mean to be human? All religions and cultures have asked and answered this question, whether through explicit religious teaching or reflected in the laws, stories, ideologies or values embedded in the culture.

The Bible, however, does not point Christians to this world for the answer, but rather to the Triune God. Only in the Christian faith do we see true humanity by looking at our God. Uniquely, God in Christ redeems and renews humanity — Adam’s fallen race — by assuming it: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). To understand a Christian anthropology, our understanding of man, we look to God in Christ. He is the new Adam to whom the old Adam, and indeed the whole Old Testament (John 5:39), points.

Christians are at the same time saints and sinners. They are by nature children of Adam along with all human beings. But united with Christ through Baptism, they receive His righteousness and the calling of all God’s holy children. Baptism “indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever” (SC, Baptism).

Discovering all the Bible teaches about who we are in Christ belongs to the lifelong task of listening to God’s Word and studying and praying the catechism. Here we will just consider the broader biblical picture of Christ as the new Adam and what it means for us.

**St. Paul calls the first Adam a *type*** — or pattern — of Christ (Rom. 5:14). The term “type” derives from the Greek word for the impression that a stamp or seal leaves behind in wax. Just as a waxen imprint bears the image of the stamp that produced it, Adam bears the stamp of Christ, the God-Man “who was to come” and who “is the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15), since Christ is God incarnate.

Like all biblical types, Adam foreshadows Christ and is both like and unlike his greater successor, Jesus, just as a shadow both differs from and yet resembles the object that casts it.

Unlike Jesus, Adam fell into sin and rebellion against God, becoming the head of a corrupt and moribund human race under the judgment of death. The first dust-bound Adam brought the reign of sin and death to humanity by his primal disobedience. By contrast, Christ was perfectly righteous and obedient unto death and brought justifying grace (Rom. 5:12–14, 19; Phil. 2:8). Adam and his race live in darkness (Rom. 1:21; Isaiah 42:7), but no darkness exists in Christ in whom we see “the radiance of the glory of God” in human flesh (Heb. 1:3; see also 1 John 1:5).

A shadow still shows the outline of the object that casts it, however, and Adam shows the outline of the new Adam to come, who would be the head of the new humanity. Sin has totally corrupted human nature, but the essence of humanity as God’s creation is still good. Therefore, Christ assumed human flesh not to condemn it but to redeem it.

**Adam also shows us the outline of Christ in positive ways.** Adam and Christ are, in their own ways, God’s firstborn of humanity. St. Luke traces Jesus’ genealogy through numerous “son ofs” back to Adam, “the son of God” (Luke 3:38). Luke tells us that Jesus — whom the locals supposed was Joseph’s son (Luke 3:23) — is the true and ultimate Son of God. Jesus, the Word made flesh, is the true and only firstborn Son of the Father (John 1:14).

Just as Adam is the firstborn of many mortal sons and daughters who return to dust (Gen. 3:19), so Jesus is the firstborn of the resurrection, the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20–22, 48–49). The only begotten Son of God is

the first of many “sons of God” to inherit the kingdom of God and receive a room in the Father’s house (John 14:1–4).

Furthermore, just as the first man received his wife from God in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:21–25), so the new Adam receives a Bride from God, His Father. Upon seeing his wife, Adam had said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,” and they were “one flesh” (Gen. 2:23–24). And as the Bible begins, so it ends: with a marriage. In Revelation, St. John records his vision of the “marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:9) and sees “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:2).

In Ephesians 5, St. Paul plumbs this profound mystery further. The mysterious one-flesh union of Adam and Eve applies first to Christ and His Bride, the church (Eph. 5:32), whose marriage provides the pattern for the marriage of Christian men and women, not the other way around (Eph. 5:24–25, 28). The divine marriage is the stamp; Christian marriages are the imprint as Christian husbands and wives strive to live in their married vocations.

Moreover, since Christ unites His Bride to Himself, Adam’s original joyful response finds its ultimate fulfillment; bound to her divine husband, the church is “bone of [Christ’s] bone, flesh of [His] flesh.” Within this divine marriage, Christ is the head and His Bride is His Body for which He cares as His own Body (Eph. 5:23, 28–29). And what’s true for the Body goes for its members. Though having different callings (1 Cor. 12:12–31), each member is united with Christ through his or her baptismal union with Him.

As her faithful and loving husband, Christ cleanses and sanctifies the church through His holy Word and life-giving Sacraments (Eph. 5:26). This happens in the Divine Service, where the church’s ministers represent Christ, the Son of the Father and husband of the church, and absolve, publicly teach and preach, and bless and preside at the Lord’s Supper, the foretaste of the marriage feast to come. Just so, Christ strengthens His Bride’s members in “body and soul to life eternal” as they receive His salutary gifts.

**To embrace our new, God-given humanity in Christ** means that the old Adam in us — our corrupted, sinful human nature — must die, and Christ, the new Adam, lives in us instead. Christ has done this for us by assuming our human flesh, dying, rising and uniting us to Himself in Baptism. United with Christ, our new head, we belong to a new Body, the church, which He nurtures, gives His own divine life and sanctifies as we also await the resurrection of our individual bodies — just as Christ is risen from the dead.

This Christmastide, we again rejoice that “the only-begotten Son of God ... came down from heaven ... and was made man” (Nicene Creed) for us.

*On my heart imprint Your image, Blessed  
Jesus, King of grace,*

*That life’s riches, cares, and pleasures  
Never may Your work erase;*

*Let the clear inscription be: Jesus,  
crucified for me,*

*Is my life, my hope’s foundation, And my  
glory and salvation! (LSB 422)*

*This article originally appeared in the [December 2022 issue](#) of *The Lutheran Witness*.*



**The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
LCMS Stewardship Ministry  
Newsletter article – January 2023**

**Your Past Does Not Define Your Future**

New Year's is a celebration of the past and the future. We take stock of the past with thanksgiving and sometimes even relief (that it's over), and we look to the future in hope and anticipation, and perhaps with some worry, for what it holds.

The point is that New Year's celebrations remind us of who we are as opposed to who we would like to be, what we have done in comparison to what we want to do. It reminds us of our accomplishments, but mostly it reminds us of our failures. What we've lost. Who we've lost.

New Year's is our own version of Charles Dickens' classic, *A Christmas Carol*. And we all play Scrooge. We are visited by the ghosts of our pasts, presents and futures.

St. Paul writes: "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, 'He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for all your generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God" (2 Cor. 9:6–15).

St. Paul tells us that the Lord will both supply and increase what we need to give to the church for its work in the world. He tells us that this work God does in us will enrich and bless us in every way, and through this, will produce thanksgiving to God. With this in mind, here is some practical advice to help you take stock of your giving in years past and change what needs to be adjusted, improved, or done away with altogether.

First, attend the Divine Service to receive God's gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation. If you've

not been faithful in attending worship to hear the preaching of God's Word, to receive forgiveness and feast on the rich food of our Lord's body and blood for the eternal benefit of your body and soul, then repent and come to receive the gifts God freely gives. God doesn't want your money. He wants you — all of you (Matt. 22:20–22).

Second, pray for the Lord's help. Your right as a Christian is to speak with your Father, the King of all creation, freely through His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Go to the throne of grace and ask for strength and wisdom to follow His bidding faithfully (John 15:1–16).

Third, consider what the church is and what the church does. The church is a place of mercy. It inhales the mercy of the Father by the death, resurrection and ascension of His Son through the preaching of the Gospel and the Sacraments. It exhales this mercy in love toward neighbors. You are a member of the church, of God's family. Thus, you are not only a recipient of God's mercy, but a bearer of that mercy for the life of the world. You spread that mercy through the generous giving of your income to support the work of the church in the world, as the Israelites did in the Old Testament (Lev. 27:1–34).

Fourth, take stock of your current giving in light of the New Testament's teaching on supporting the work of the church. Are you giving of your first fruits, taking it out of your paycheck first, or does God get what's left over? Are you giving voluntarily and cheerfully? Are you giving proportionally and generously? The Old Testament required a tithe, or ten percent. The New Testament gives freedom to be generous, to give more for the Church's work. Are you relying on God's promise to provide and increase what you need to do His work? If your answer is no to any of these, repent. If God gave you His only Son, will He not provide for you all things, even physical things? Trust Him, His Word, and heed it.

So, don't let your past define your future. Rather, commit for the year a generous proportion of your income, which is God's gift to you for this body and life

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: [lcms.org/stewardship](https://lcms.org/stewardship)

# January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1 Circumcision and Name of Jesus</b> <i>White</i>  8:30 Divine Service  <b>New Year's Day</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>  7:00p Bible Study	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 Epiphany</b>  10:00 Bible Study @ <i>Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	<b>7</b>
<b>8 The Baptism of Our Lord</b> <i>White</i>  8:30 Divine Service (NC) Installation of Officers 9:30 Sunday School/Fellowship	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>  1:00p W.I.M. Meeting & Bible Study  7:00p Bible Study	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>  10:00 Bible Study @ <i>Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	<b>14</b>  9:00 Take Down Christmas Decorations
<b>15 Second Sunday after the Epiphany</b> <i>Green</i>  8:30 Divine Service 9:30 Sunday School	<b>16</b>  <b>M.L. King Day</b>	<b>17</b>  7:00p Bible Study	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>  10:00 Bible Study @ <i>Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	<b>21</b>
<b>22 Third Sunday after the Epiphany</b> <i>Green</i>  8:30 Divine Service (NC) Voters Meeting 9:30 Sunday School	<b>23</b>  Newsletter Articles Due	<b>24</b>  7:00p Bible Study	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>  10:00 Bible Study @ <i>Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	<b>28</b>
<b>29 Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany</b> <i>Green</i>  8:30 Divine Service 9:30 Sunday School	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>  7:00p Bible Study			<b>Altar Guild:</b>  Dan & Cindy Koffarnus	

Divine Services marked (NC) will not have Holy Communion