

Orbiting Christ: Belonging, Believing, Behaving

A free, online conference on adult faith formation

Breakout Session Topics & Times

Tuesday, June 1: Belonging through *Community & Liturgy* (2:45 – 5:00 pm CDT)

From Font to Feast: The “whens,” “whys,” and “hows” of beginning the process



“Why do you do what you do?” That’s a question any Lutheran who brings a visitor to the Divine Service is sure to hear. It might even be a question you’ve asked yourself! It’s one that I couldn’t answer early on and when asked would only be answered with, “Because that’s the way it’s always been.” The Divine Service is formative for us as Christians and helps to shape our identity as Lutherans. Come and listen to the “whens,” “whys,” and “hows” of reclaiming this confession through the catechumenate process I’ve developed.

Leader: Rev. John M. Bussman, Senior Pastor at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Cullman, Alabama, also blogs for Gottesdienst: The Journal of Lutheran Liturgy.

Presiding with grace

Pastoring during the pandemic has confirmed that the Divine Service is fundamentally an embodied activity. Christ is present in his body for us. The Body of Christ is bodily present to receive Christ’s gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation. And the pastor is bodily present to serve them by communicating the gifts of God to those who are present. The reality of our physicality in service of one another invites us to consider the ways in which we communicate with our bodies, especially when we are preaching the Gospel and presiding at the Supper. This session will open up this conversation, engaging in the challenges and opportunities before pastors who preside at the Divine Service. We’ll look at some practices that we might take up in an effort to bring our verbal and non-verbal communication in closer alignment with our theology of worship.



Leader: Rev. James Wetzstein (University Pastor) has been leading worship and training students in worship at Valparaiso University for 18 years. A PhD Candidate at the University of Notre Dame in Liturgical Studies, his research interests focus on the role of the visual arts in theological formation.

Hospitality as the on-ramp to community



We live in a world where most folks feel alone and unloved. Our recent troubles – political, racial, economic, cultural, and pandemic – have left many feeling even more shattered. But why would anybody imagine that the Church has a solution that satisfies body, mind, and spirit? Hospitality is an on-ramp to the Community which has the Christological gifts to heal.

Leader: Rev. Dr. Scott Bruzek, Senior Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Wheaton, Illinois, has served at St. John for over two decades, fostering an ethos of hospitality shared by the pastoral staff and congregational members.

Recognizing ritual and its power in everyday life

To be human is to engage in ritual, which are actions that are repeated, communal, and symbolic. Whether done daily or annually, whether done with family or a stadium of strangers, rituals provide consolation and security, act as “glue” that bind us together, and communicate truths and values that cannot easily be verbalized. Recognizing the ubiquity of ritual and its power to convey deep meaning can inform our understanding of its value in the adult catechumenate.

Leader: Dr. Rhoda Schuler, Professor Emerita, Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota, taught undergraduates the fundamental structure and power of rituals in interdisciplinary courses.



Wednesday, June 2: Believing through *Teaching & Preaching* (12:00 – 2:15 pm CDT)

A learning-centered approach to adult education



Every educator wants to create dynamic, high-quality learning experiences for their students. There is frequently one flaw preventing deeper engagement in the learning process: most lessons are designed with a focus on the teacher. Discover the benefits of learning-centered education, how learning-centered approaches can transform adult education in the church, and practical ways you can incorporate these concepts in adult faith formation.

Leader: Dr. Heath Lewis serves as Assistant Professor of Christian Education & Leadership and DCE Program Director at Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Preaching and the catechumenate: An integrated approach

Catechesis happens everywhere. The preacher has a unique opportunity to catechize from the pulpit so that catechumens, candidates, neophytes and those seasoned in the faith may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. This session will explore ways in which a pastor may embrace this opportunity and help "connect the dots" for people as they appreciate the gifts of the Church.

Leader: Rev. Dr. Dien Ashley Taylor, Pastor at Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, The Bronx, New York, champions the integration of liturgy, teaching, and preaching especially as they relate to catechesis since "everything teaches."



The one-year lectionary: A guide for the catechumenate

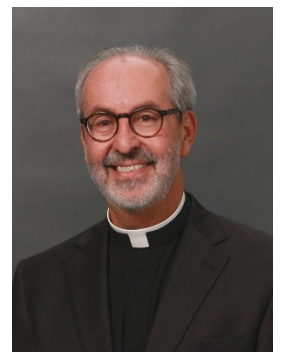


The Catechumenate represents a necessary paradigm shift in teaching the Biblical faith. Rather than learning a set body of knowledge through a few classes, the focus is on the formation of a believer for a lifetime. The repetition of the one-year lectionary immerses the people of our Biblically illiterate culture in the Word of God and the saving work of Christ. Although the readings of the lectionary form the foundation for the instruction of the catechumens, the catechism and liturgy are also incorporated so that the newly baptized and/or confirmed can take their stand on Christ and His promises in this culture of white water change..

Leader: Rev. Timothy Drogemuehler, Senior Pastor at Living Faith Lutheran Church, Cumming, Georgia, views the world divided into two groups: those baptized and those yet to be baptized. He serves Jesus with the desire to be the vessel that draws the yet-to-be into the group of those who are baptized.

The Gospels, the catechumenate, and the three-year lectionary

The evangelists wrote their Gospels as continuous narratives to tell the story of Jesus and advance the mission of the church. The audience for the Gospels were catechumens preparing for baptism and the baptized. The reading of the Gospels was continuous so that catechumens and baptized could be formed and nurtured by the story of Jesus as the evangelists intended that story to be told. The Gospels are books of the church, written for the church, to be used by the church in its proclamation of the Gospel to the unbaptized and the baptized. The community that receives the Gospels is a catechetical and eucharistic body that already in the first century had a method for making Christians. That method originated in Christ's own ministry, then was continued by the apostles. This method later became known as the catechumenate. The three-year lectionary was created to return to the way the evangelists intended their Gospels to be heard for the revitalized catechumenate in the 20th century.



Leader: Rev. Dr. Arthur Just, Professor of Exegetical Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, was chair of the Lectionary Committee in the development of *Lutheran Service Book*.

Thursday, June 3: Behaving through *Witness & Service* (12:00 – 2:15 pm CDT)



Lay involvement in the adult faith formation process: A panel discussion

Lay involvement by active members of a congregation can enrich the adult catechumenate process. Lay people from two congregations will share their experiences in a variety of leadership roles.

Moderator: Rev. Danny Eggold, Grace Lutheran Church, West Lafayette, Indiana

Panelists

Don Langenbeck, Living Faith, Cumming, Georgia, serves as the lay catechist for Living Faith's adult catechumenate. **Mary & Derek Baars**, St. John, Wheaton, Illinois, attended the Adult Catechumenate and joined St. John in 2013. They continue to attend to begin new relationships with the catechumens, refresh themselves in the basics of the faith that enfold all the body of Christ, and provide a quiet demonstration of how this community grows in faith and love together in order to serve the surrounding community.

The Church IS you! Shifting from a membership to a discipleship mindset



In voluntary, consumerist American society Christians have been formed to think that church membership is focused on fulfilling their felt needs. But the church is not a voluntary club, but the living body of Christ. Individually as parts of that body we corporately are the church. Faith formation shapes a congregation to live not as members but as disciples focused on birthing and mentoring others to live among them as disciples.

Leader: Rev. Dr. Kent Bureson, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, has spent the last two decades exploring how liturgy and ritual shape the church to be the church.

Walk with me: The role of sponsors in adult faith formation



Many people mistakenly think that their faith journey is lonely and that they go out on their own to be disciples. Sponsors, however, provide the partnering and mentoring that assist catechumens and candidates ask, seek, and knock as they pursue the Kingdom of God. This session will explore how that can work.

Leaders: Dcs. Raquel A. Rojas and Ms. Carol T. Sandblom (Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, The Bronx, New York) together bring over six decades of experience in the faith formation of adults in the most diverse city in the United States of America.



Lay involvement for a family-friendly Easter vigil

Too often the Easter Vigil is too late and too long for the young and old. For more than a decade Rhoda Schuler has organized a family-friendly vigil that encourages lay involvement across generations in many and various ways in order to draw people of all ages into the salvation history of the Bible. Come to see and hear what, how, and why she does this work.

Leader: Dr. Rhoda Schuler (Professor Emerita, Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota) also serves as pro bono liturgist at her congregation, Jehovah Lutheran Church in St. Paul.

