



Northern Illinois District
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

President's Commentary Winter 2025

I'm really curious what life will be like when you read this. As I write these words, we are a just few days away from Election Day. Right now, it is easy to be cynical, not just about the election results, but about how our nation will deal with the results. Our nation is deeply divided.

As Christians, we are people of prayer, humility, and discernment. It's so comforting that the Kingdom of Jesus is not of this world (John 18:36). His reign is eternal and, in the midst of division, He is our peace! Friend, He is your peace and strength. **"Thy Kingdom Come, Lord Jesus."**

In the Church, we recognize the division caused by sin, our sin! It divided Adam and Eve from God, and it divided Adam and Eve from each other. Even Creation groans (Romans 8:22). The effects are present in your life, family, congregation, and mine. Neither you nor I are innocent bystanders. Only Jesus can and has reconciled us to God and to each other by the sacrifice of Himself. We are not hopeless, but hope-filled, with the living hope in the risen and reigning Christ! The dead are made alive, the wounded are healed, and sins are forgiven!

Yet, there is a cost to this life of discipleship. Jesus says, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26) That sounds drastic, doesn't it? Divisive? Jesus calls us to love Him first and most! **He has a holy order to our love and relationships.**

There is a division which comes as we make the good confession based on the Word of God. There is true teaching and false teaching. True teaching is faithfulness to the Word. In a discussion of the Lord's Supper, the Apostle Paul was inspired to write, "In the first place, when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent, I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show **which of you have God's approval.**" (I Corinthians 11:18,19) What teaching has God's approval? That which conforms to His Word and from that Word we do not add or subtract. (Revelation 22:18,19)

We are committed to true teaching, and we strive for, and work toward, unity constantly. That is a beautiful place for us as Confessional Lutherans in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and in the Northern Illinois District. Doctrine and practice in our life together, go together.

We have a rich tradition in our Church. We are part of a bigger story. Yet, there is a tension in our Lutheran Confessions for us to consider, "For this reason the churches are not to condemn one another because of differences in ceremonies when in



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Christian freedom one has fewer or more than the other, as long as these churches are otherwise united in teaching and in all the articles of the faith as well as in the proper use of the holy sacraments.” (Formula of Concord Solid Declaration Article X paragraph 31, Kolb Wengert) This is an important topic as we live together in Jesus’ Church and in the LCMS.

A few places I have recently seen **“Co-Workers for the Kingdom of God”**...

- the Lay Leadership Summit at Walther Christian Academy in Melrose Park - singing, learning, care, and engagement in the Word.
- the Lutheran Educator Conference at Concordia University Chicago - Worship and Word, prayer, relationships, and professional development!
- the NID Retired Worker Gathering - retired Teachers, Deaconesses, Principals, Directors of Christian Education, and Pastors gathered for food, fellowship, singing, conversation, Word, and even singing “Happy Birthday” together for a 90th celebration.

“Where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit to create, call, and gather the Christian church, apart from which no one can come to the Lord Christ.” (Large Catechism) **Among us, Christ is preached and received in the Sacraments for our salvation!** The world needs Christ, you need Christ, and I need Christ! Our Triune God is at work today!

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President

LCMS Northern Illinois District