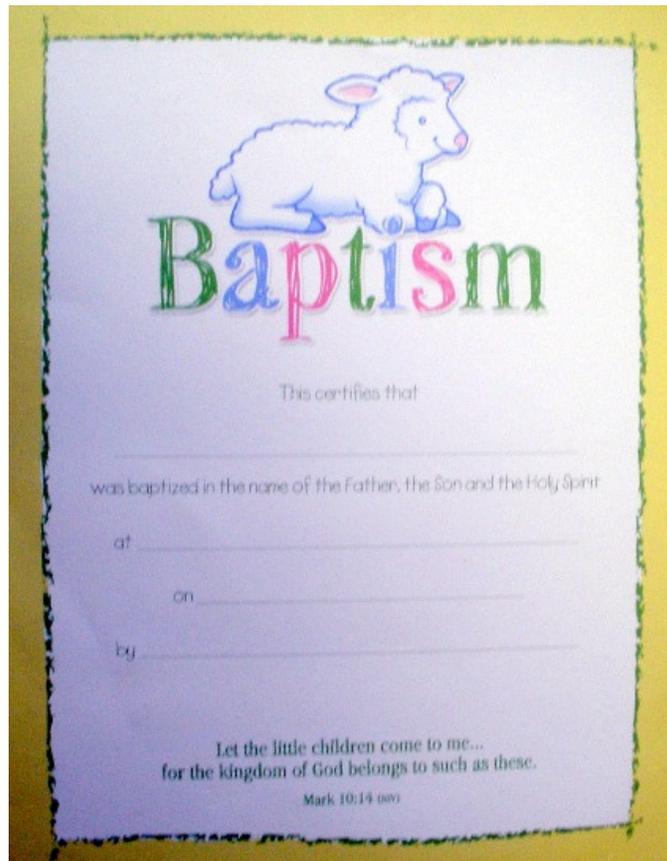


Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage just down the road! School has started, catechism classes are under way, and October will soon be here. Groups have also resumed: from the pastors of our area who have now had our first Winkel (a time of meeting including a Service of the Sacrament, devotions, and time for sharing each others' burdens) to Ladies' Aid to the LWML, who had their rally at Holy Cross this week.



This month, we will continue to learn about what Luther had to say on Baptism in his large catechism. Last month, I left off saying that any and all baptisms I do would really be baptized by God Himself, since they are done in His Name. Just as it is not the person doing the baptism that is important but the one in whose Name it is done, it is not the water in and of itself which is important, but it is “divine, heavenly, holy, and blessed water...by virtue of the Word (Book of Concord, p. 458).” “(A)s St. Augustine taught, ‘Accedat verbum ed elementum et fit sacramentum,’ which means that ‘when the Word is added to the element or the natural substance, it becomes a sacrament,’ that is, a holy, divine thing and sign (Book of Concord, p.458).”

Understanding that the water with the Word makes the water a most precious gift was Luther’s first goal. From there, Luther guides us to know for what purpose we have received baptism. He quotes our Lord Jesus Christ as saying “‘The one who believes and is baptized will be saved (Book of Concord, p.459).’” Out of this statement, we learn that the power of baptism is that it saves. But, as with the Sacrament of Holy Communion,

only those who believe will receive the benefits. Thanks be to God that our belief is not of our own doing, but is also a gift of God, so that even children and infants who have not yet had instruction may, through the working of the Holy Spirit, have this faith and receive the blessed benefits of life everlasting.

Now some may try to argue that believing is a work, but as Luther properly argues, it is not our work but God's that we be found believing. In this way it is not a work of ours which saves us, but the work of God—the very work He has begun in sending His Son to die for us on the cross, and has begun in each of us through putting His Holy Spirit in us. As the Scriptures say, what God has begun, I'm certain He will bring to completion in us—namely that we believe in His Son to our eternal life with Him, and that He will cleanse us and bring us with Him into the new heaven and new earth of Revelation.

Though times may get busy, always remember dear ones in Christ that you are in Christ to eternal life. What a joy and blessing this is—and what a joy and blessing it will be when I am able to perform my first baptism(s)! In Jesus' Name. Amen!

Your Brother in Christ,

Pastor Josh Frazee

Other News

Rev. Gregory Seltz, speaker of **The Lutheran Hour** radio program will speak and sing at a tri-circuit Lutheran Hour Rally at Immanuel, Sunday, December 8 (2-4 p.m.) under the theme, "Share the Light of Christmas. Local singers and musicians of various ages will be involved. A reception follows. Churches and LLL members from the Effingham, Shelby, and Altamont circuits are sponsoring this Advent Rally.