



St. Paul's Monthly Messenger

January, 2026

Pastor's Notes:

What is the most important thing for confirmands to learn?

Confirmation as a practice has happened on and off in the Lutheran church throughout the centuries. The practice has changed many times in many places. Early Lutherans in the time of the reformation abandoned the rite of confirmation, as it has no Biblical foundation. The Roman church considered confirmation a sacrament. In the Augsburg Confession, Philip Melancthon, a close associate of Martin Luther, writes,

“[the Lutheran churches] teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them. Wherefore we must so use the Sacraments that faith be added to believe the promises which are offered and set forth through the Sacraments.” (AC XIII.2-3)

If sacraments are the signs of the will of God toward us, and the rite of confirmation is not a sign given by God, then how can it be a sacrament? It can't. Melancthon says explicitly in the Apology to the Augsburg Confession that confirmation is not a sacrament, and should be distinguished from real sacraments like baptism and the Lord's Supper:

Confirmation and Extreme Unction are rites received from the Fathers which not even the Church requires as necessary to salvation, because they do not have God's command. Therefore it is not useless to distinguish these rites from the former, which have God's express command and a clear promise of grace. (Ap XIII.6)

Therefore, the rite of confirmation is a tradition of the church which consists of a public profession of faith. The rite can be used or not used, modified or left the same, without sin – although it is unwise to change traditions of the church for no reason. The value of confirmation is not in the rite itself as a confession of faith, but in the teaching that leads to it. This teaching is called catechesis, like the word catechism.

Catechesis, or teaching the faith to those who are young or new to the faith, is an essential part of the church's task:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Moses commanded that all the people of the Old Testament church learn the words of scripture and teach it to those who were new. In catechesis we do this by summarizing scripture into its essential parts in a way that is easy for those who are young or new in the faith to understand.

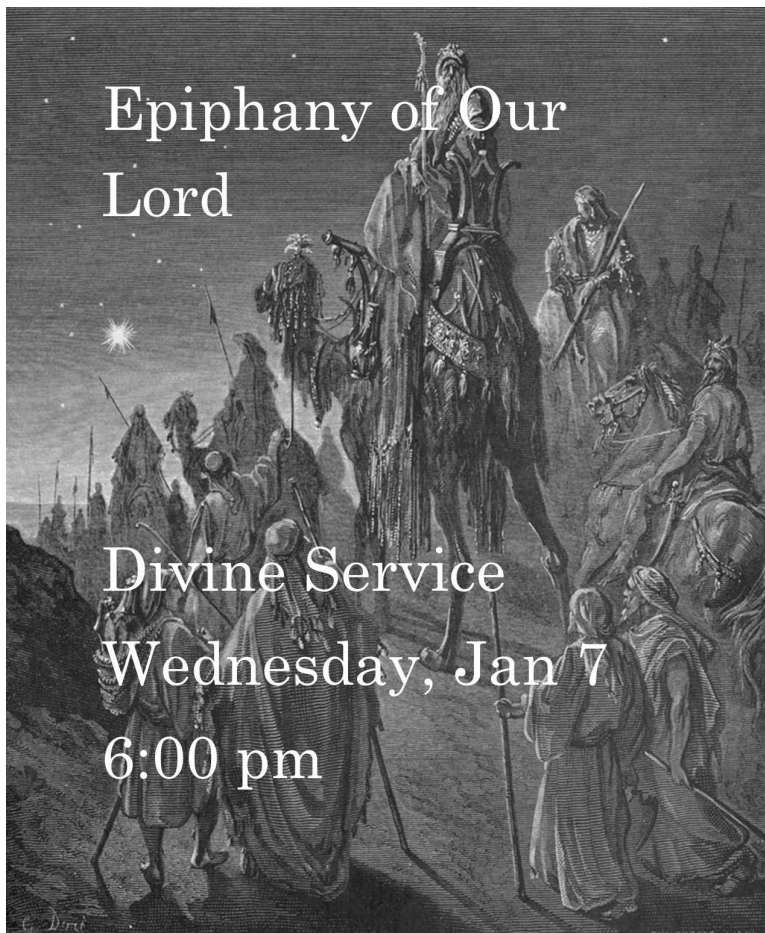
At St. Paul's, the elders and I make sure all children memorize Luther's Small Catechism and all adults understand it. This is because Luther describes well what the scriptures say about what God expects from us (10 Commandments), what God has done for us (Creed), and how we respond to God (Lord's Prayer). This is a basic form of law and gospel, that they see their sin and need for a savior. It is fulfilling the command of Deuteronomy 6, to know the scriptures in a basic way. For those who are going to receive the Sacrament of the Altar for the first time, the elders and I make sure they know Luther's Christian Questions and their Answers. By these the person confesses that he is a sinner, knows his Savior, and what the Lord's Supper is and what it is for.

Catechesis and examination is not just for the young and the new. The Augsburg Confession states, "[In the Lutheran churches] it is not usual to give the body of the Lord, except to them that have been previously examined and absolved" (AC X.1). It is good to be examined when you first take the Lord's Supper, but what about later? Every Christian should use Luther's Christian Questions and their Answers for regular examining of yourself before you take the Lord's Supper, as St. Paul says,

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (1 Corinthians 11:27-29)

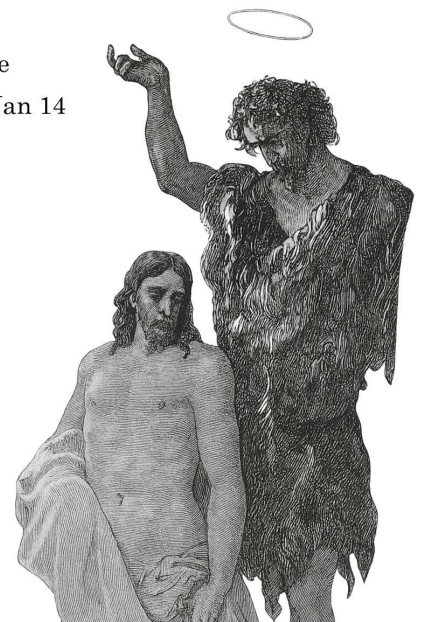
Luther's Christian Questions and their Answers is one way to examine yourself that is readily available to you – in the both the hymnal and your catechism (no matter how old your catechism might be!). I recommend that we all use this resource more to bring to mind the catechesis that we have learned and the benefit in the Lord's Supper that we weekly receive.

What is the most important thing for confirmands to learn? That confirmation as a rite is the least important thing. Confirmands should learn to be regularly devoted to the Word of God their whole life by reading the Bible and the catechism. They should regularly examine themselves. They should regularly be confessing their sins and being absolved. Without this, there is no benefit in confirmation. +



The Baptism of
Our Lord

Divine Service
Wednesday, Jan 14
6:00 pm



NEWS AND NOTES

Lunch with Pastor: The next Lunch with Pastor will be held on Tuesday, January 13 at 11 am at George's Restaurant in Lockport.

Manna: Order forms are available on Sunday, January 4, orders with payment are due on January 11 and orders can be picked up on January 18.

January Mission Offering: Coalition Life – pro-life sidewalk counseling at abortion clinics in Flossmoor and Chicago, as well as Southern Illinois, Missouri and Kansas. See more at coalitionlife.com.

Flower Chart: The new flower chart for 2026 is available. The cost will be \$70 per Sunday.

Sons of Solomon – men's prayer and devotion group will meet at George's Restaurant on Saturday, January 24, at 8 am.

Family Lunch – Our next family lunch will be Sunday, January 11, at Noon. In preparation for February, we will talk about St. Valentine and be making valentines for shut-ins

Book of Concord – Book of Concord study will meet Sunday, January 25, at 6 pm..





Happy Baptismal Birthday

Oliver Over	January 1
Paul Thomas	January 1
Robert Richmond	January 2
Jeanette Luzbetak	January 4
Isaac Zavala	January 6
Jack Kantelberg	January 7
Greg Miller	January 8
Allan Luzbetak	January 10
Judy Wiedmeyer	January 10
Evelyn Barmann	January 11
Ryan Bellas	January 12
Mark Wolfrum	January 12
Charlyne Milligan	January 13
Benjamin Rohder	January 13
Courtney Richmond	January 16
Maura Fox	January 24
William Martin	January 27
Lisa Polinski	January 27
Ron Barmann	January 29
Harold Sager	January 31
Lauren Wojciechowski	January 31

Michael Polinski	January 1
Henry Antonetti	January 3
Yesenia Sanchez-Land	January 7
Megan Panka	January 8
Nathaniel Land	January 12
Sophia Land	January 12
Rebecca Chaney	January 13
Timothy Fox	January 13
Hunter Rahn	January 18
Evelyn Barmann	January 21
Isabella Barmann	January 21
Jack Kantelberg	January 31



January 1, 2001	Christopher & Lisa Misiurewicz
January 16, 1971	Glenn & Barbara Ferrentino
January 24, 1969	Carl & Sandy Michaelsen



January, 2026 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lockport

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SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>4 Second Sunday after Christmas 9 am Divine Worship 10:15 am Fellowship 10:40 am Adult bible class/Sunday School</p>	<p>5 8 am Morning Prayer 7 pm Elders meeting</p>	<p>6 8 am Morning Prayer</p>	<p>7 Epiphany 8 am Morning Prayer 8:30 am Pvt. Conf./Abs. 6 pm Divine Service</p>	<p>1 NEW YEAR'S DAY OFFICE CLOSED</p>	2	3
<p>Manna order forms are available</p>						
<p>11 First Sunday after Epiphany 9 am Divine Worship 10:15 am Fellowship 10:40 am Adult bible class/Sunday School Noon Family Lunch</p>	<p>12 8 am Morning Prayer</p>	<p>13 8 am Morning Prayer 11 am Lunch with Pastor 7 pm Church council meeting</p>	<p>14 Baptism of our Lord 8 am Morning Prayer 8:30 am Pvt. Conf./Abs. 6 pm Divine Service</p>	<p>15 8 am Morning Prayer</p>	16	17 9 am Long Range Planning Meeting
<p>Manna orders w/payment are due</p>						
<p>18 Feast of the Confession of St. Peter 9 am Divine Worship 10:15 am Fellowship 10:40 am Adult bible class/Sunday School</p>	<p>19 8 am Morning Prayer</p>	<p>20 8 am Morning Prayer</p>	<p>21 8 am Morning Prayer 8:30 am Pvt. Conf./Abs.</p>	<p>22 8 am Morning Prayer</p>	23	24 8 am Sons of Solomon At George's Restaurant
<p>Manna orders ready for pickup</p>						
<p>25 Transfiguration of our Lord 9 am Divine Worship 10:15 am Fellowship 10:40 am Adult bible class/Sunday School 6 pm Book of Concord</p>	<p>26 8 am Morning Prayer</p>	<p>27 Pastors' Retreat @ St. John, Wheaton</p>	<p>28 11 am NICL</p>	29	30	31



Pastor with the boys of the acolyte corps on Christmas Eve

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

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