

Confessions of a Lutheran: Reformation *REMIX*

Virginia Synod Faith Formation - Fall 2021

Playlist 2: Adorned by the Word

Track 1: Adorned by the Word Video by Dr. Vince Everer

Watch [here](#). (You can also stream directly from the website.)

Study Questions:

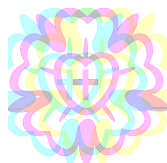
- Had you heard the term “means of grace” before this lecture? Does understanding this term change how you think about preaching and the sacraments?
- How should the belief that God meets us through the sacraments shape our celebration and use of the sacraments? Whom should we invite to the waters and the table? How should we accompany them from the waters and the table?
- How would you describe your own vocation? Do you have one or many? Is your job your vocation?
- What things are all Christians called to do in the world as people “adorned by the Word”?

Foundational Reading:

- Luther, “Smalcald Articles,” III.4, “Concerning the Gospel.” (See p. 319 in the [Kolb/Wengert](#) edition.)
- Luther’s discussion of baptism and the Lord’s Supper in the Large Catechism. (See pp. 456-76 in the [Kolb/Wengert](#) edition.)

For deeper study, you may wish to read:

- ELCA, The Use of the Means of Grace:
https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/The_Use_Of_The_Means_Of_Grace.pdf. This is especially useful for group study.



Track 2: Ephesians 2.4-10 NRSV

But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which God loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come God might show the immeasurable riches of God’s grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Track 3: Reflection by Mark Warner (Muhlenberg, Harrisonburg)

I was immediately engaged with Dr. Evener’s lesson, “Adorned by the Word”. The title itself captured my attention and desire to discover what gifts would be present in his words.

As a Christian, fairly new to the Lutheran denomination, I always want to learn more about what it means to be a Lutheran. And WOW, I’m learning a lot!

I was fascinated by how he described sacraments and their role in our faith. I must say though, that at the mention of the word “sacrament”, I was immediately transported back to my childhood in Ogden, Utah. Confirmation class. We learned this definition for a sacrament: “The outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.” In fact, it was my Mom who taught the class. She must have done a great job, since I still remember the definition today. Oh, my Dad was an Episcopal Priest.

It wasn’t until I became a Lutheran that my life was truly adorned by the word – GRACE. One word. Hmm. What was at one time in my life merely the last Word in a definition I HAD to memorize, has now become one of the most important words in my spiritual vocabulary.

When my wife and I started attending Muhlenberg Lutheran Church in Harrisonburg, VA, that word GRACE was omnipresent. I heard it from the pulpit, I heard it from the lay ministers, and I heard it from my fellow congregants. But what was so interesting was that it wasn't an "ordinary" word. As Dr. Evener said, when "adorned by the word" the ordinary becomes extraordinary. Oh my, the word grace has indeed become extraordinary in my life.

What I appreciate so much about Dr. Evener's teaching, is that he shares that Lutheranism is less about ourselves and more about community. How are we using our vocation, and I would add, all aspects of our lives, to adorn the lives of others. When we truly live the word, we do add beauty, meaning, validation, and comfort to the lives of others.

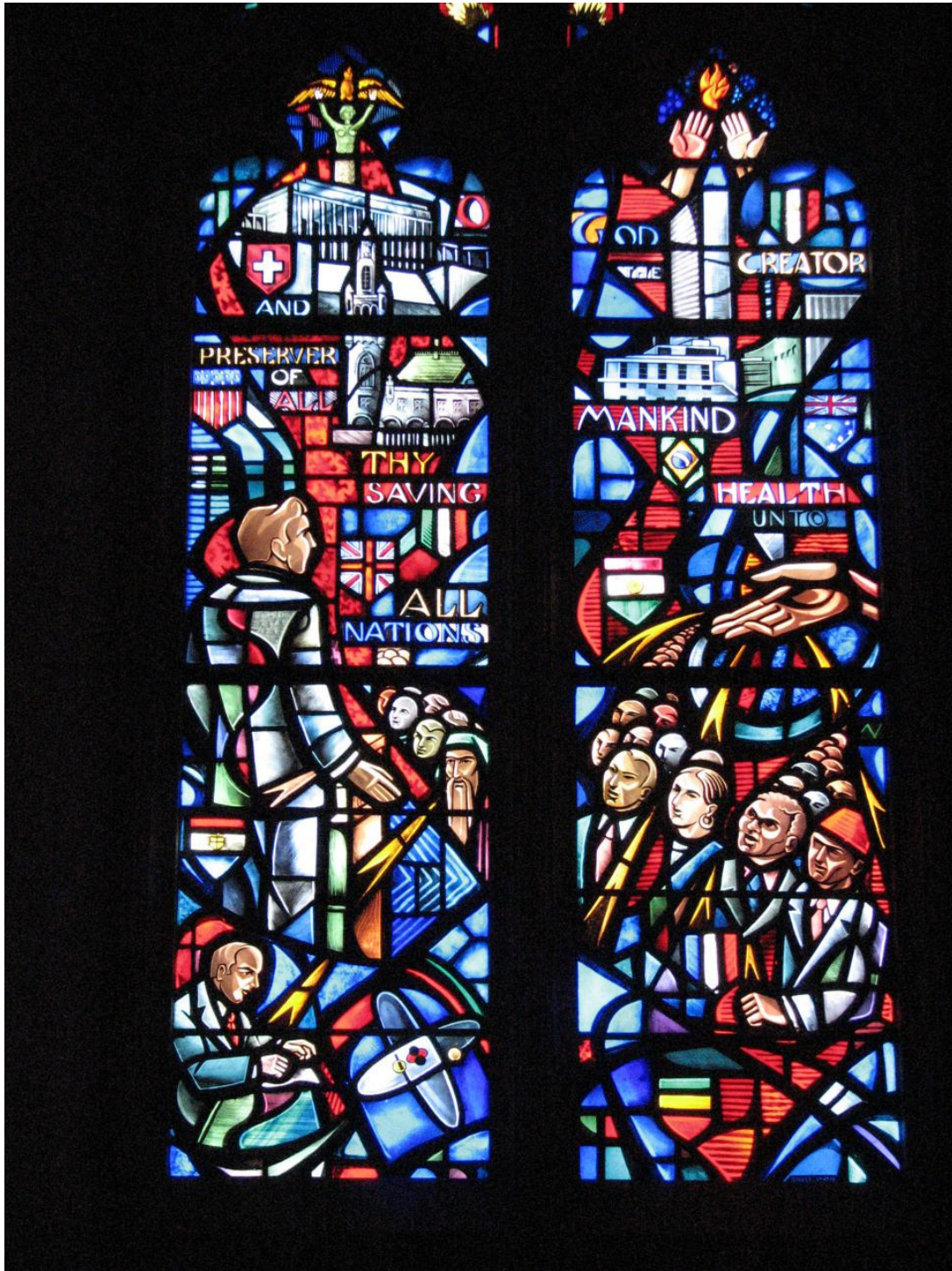
Our life treasury is abundantly full – because God adorned us with his Word. Now, our true vocation is to go out and to share God's gifts generously and grace-FULLy!

Track 4: Art



Because of Your Love I Am Free!, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=55231> [retrieved October 24, 2021]. Original source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mckln/4814377195/>. Attribution-NoDerivs 2.0 Generic

Track 4: Art Continued



Saving Grace to all Humankind (Washington National Cathedral)

Saving grace to all humankind, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=54882> [retrieved October 24, 2021]. Original source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/reabhecc/5422927891/>. Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Track 5: Music

- ["God Is"](#) The Outer Banks (2018)
- ["For Everyone Born \(A Place at the Table\)"](#) Written by Shirley Erena Murray (2004); Arranged by Adrian Marchuk; Additional Lyrics by Adrian Marchuk
- ["Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus"](#) Lyrics by: Louisa M. R. Stead (1882), Music by: William J. Kirkpatrick (1882)
- ["Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound"](#) ELW 779 Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt., sts. 1-4; anonymous, st. 5 / Music: W. Walker, Southern Harmony, 1835; arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1851-1921, alt.
- ["Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song"](#) ELW 808 Text: Les Petites Soeurs de Jésus and L'Arche Community; tr. Stephen Somerville, b. 1931 / Music: Les Petites Soeurs de Jésus and L'Arche Community

Track 6: Poetry

"Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus" Louisa M. R. Stead (1882)

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His Word:
Just to rest upon His promise,
And to know, "Thus saith the Lord!"
Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er;
Jesus, Jesus precious Jesus!
Oh, for grace to trust Him more!
Oh, how sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to trust His cleansing blood;
And in simple faith to plunge me
'Neath the healing, cleansing flood!
Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus
Just from sin and self to cease;
Just from Jesus simply taking
Life and res, and joy and peace.
I'm so glad I learned to trust Thee,
Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend;
And know that Thou art with me,
Wilt be with me to the end."

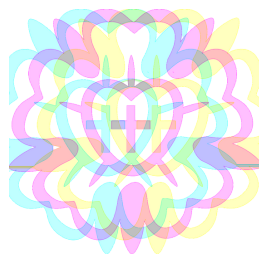
Track 6: Poetry Continued

“The Word Before Time” by Susan Palo Cherwien

(Palo Cherwien, Susan. “The Word Before Time.” Crossings: Meditations for Worship. ECS Publishing Group, 2003.)

Before the world was
Before the spoken word was
Before the world of words was
God was.
God spoke the unspoken Word –
with God from the other side of time –
Truthful, loving, beautiful, wise,
The Word, truthful,
sounded and
Light!
light and darkness.
Time was.
The Word, wise
played and
Sky!
Sky and World.
Space was.
Sun and Moon.
Sea and Land,
Plants and animals,
Matter was.

The Word, beautiful,
rang out across
the field of stars,
of secondary stars –
Grace upon grace.
The Word, loving,
sang out across
the newborn time,
across unfolding space,
Of humus formed human –
Grace upon grace.
Truth, wisdom, beauty, love.
Still the Word resounds,
forming us still –
like a great loving song,
forming us still.
Grace upon grace.



Track 7: Additional reading suggestions from the team

- Daniel Erlander, [A Lutheran Welcome to Jesus](#) (Erlander, Daniel. A Lutheran Welcome to Jesus. Augsburg Fortress, 2019.)
- From [A Formula for Parish Practice: Using the Formula of Concord in Congregations](#) (Wengert, Timothy J. A Formula for Parish Practice: Using the Formula of Concord in Congregations. Fortress Press, 2017)
 - From “Article Five: What God’s Word Does to You: Death (Law) and Resurrection (Gospel)”
 - “When you preach, comfort the people.” Timothy Wenger’s mother’s advice to him on the day of his ordination.
 - “The law and its accusation sound throughout our lives (and not mainly in church). Indeed, we are surrounded daily by the reality of sin, death and evil. Outside the proclamation of the Gospel (God’s free forgiveness, life and salvation in Christ), human beings can only try to master the law or, failing that, be crushed by it. All our ruses to deny our rebellion against God, the pervasiveness of sin, the reality of death, or our complicity in this world’s evil are simply symptoms of both our inability to fulfill the law and our addiction to sin. Preaching the law in the Christian community is not so much making people feel guilty as it is telling the truth about our human condition. The Gospel, on the other hand, tells the truth about God, that Jesus Christ – “the mirror of the Father’s heart,” as Luther calls him – saves and redeems us. Just as the law reveals sin and crushes the old creature, so the Gospel forgives sin and brings us to the new life of faith.” (page 77)