



2017–18 Circuit Winkel Bible Studies

What Makes a Pastor?

Series Schedule

September 2017

A Practical Disposition of the Soul

Rev. Dr. Harold Senkbeil, executive director for Spiritual Care, DOXOLOGY: The Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel

October 2017

The Precious Nature of the Call

Rev. Bryan Wolfmuehler, Hope, Aurora, Colo.

November 2017

Preaching the Word: It's Still All About Jesus

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, Zion, Mayer, Minn.

December 2017

Giving Out the Gifts: Baptism and Catechesis

Rev. Mark Barz, Crown of Life, San Antonio, Texas

January 2018

Giving Out the Gifts: Christ's Gifts in His Supper

Rev. Matthew Wurm, Mount Calvary, Brookings, S.D.

February 2018

The Privilege of Pastoral Care

Rev. Brady Finnem, Messiah, Sartell, Minn.

March 2018

God's Gift of Marriage

Rev. Timothy Pauls, Good Shepherd, Boise, Idaho

April 2018

Loving Enough to Discipline

Rev. David Fleming, Our Savior, Grand Rapids, Mich.

May 2018

Leading in a Godly Manner: Working with Your People for the Sake of Christ's Mission

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, Zion, Mayer, Minn.

Circuit Winkel Bible Studies

Circuit Winkel Bible Studies, published by the LCMS Praesidium and Council of Presidents, are prepared for pastors to use during their monthly circuit meetings. The Bible studies are designed to help pastors grow in the Word of God and to strengthen relationships within circuits.

The Bible studies are funded by an annual grant of \$200 from each LCMS district. Questions and comments may be directed to the series general editor, the Rev. Mark W. Love.

For the period from September 2017 to May 2018, we review various aspects of pastoral care and practice, with our studies of the sacred Scriptures organized around topics drawn from C.F.W. Walther's *American-Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, a new translation of which has recently become available from Concordia Publishing House. We thank the executive director for Spiritual Care at DOXOLOGY: The Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel, and seven of the DOXOLOGY Collegium Fellows, for preparing this year's studies.

Introduction: What Makes a Pastor?

How does one become a pastor? Of course, there is the call of God, first in the sense that a man is moved by the Spirit to prepare for the ministry. This is followed by some form of training and examination through which the church assures itself that the man is "able to teach" and possessing of the character necessary to be a pastor (e.g., 1 Tim. 3:1–7). There follows the specific call of God to a particular ministry, a call mediated through the congregation(s). Essentially, this call of God through a congregation makes the man a pastor. The wider church recognizes and publicly confirms this call through the Rite of Ordination, whereby the man is pledged to the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions and consecrated to the ministry by the Word of God and prayer. This is the necessary doctrinal and scriptural answer.

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Ordination and installation of a man into the pastoral office is just the beginning. What follows brings a necessary question: How does a man grow into the office of pastor? Writing in the mid-19th century, C.F.W. Walther, in his *American-Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, called pastoral theology a “God-given, practical disposition of the soul, acquired by certain means, by which a minister is equipped to perform all the tasks that come to him” (Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, *American-Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, David W. Loy, ed., Christian Tiewes, tr., Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 2017). It is a “disposition” — not simply facts that one knows, but a quality of the soul. It is “practical,” that is, a way of thinking and acting, the goal of which is leading lost sinners to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and caring for the faithful. As such, it is a gift of the Holy Spirit given by means of the Word of God in the school of experience: prayer, meditation on the Word, as well as testing, tension, struggle, temptations overcome by the Spirit’s power in the Word, and even temptations lost in sin and forgiven through confession and absolution. As the pastor learns and grows throughout his ministry, we pray not only that his confidence in the promises of God increases, but also that his people grow in their confidence in his ministry because they have learned to hear in his voice the voice of their Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus.

Even though his *Pastoral Theology* was written 145 years ago, Walther’s reflections on the pastoral ministry are quite timeless and often instructive for us today. Some of the issues are different, superficially at least, but the biblical issues remain the same. People continue to be sinners, and they live in need of forgiveness and salvation in Christ. Pastors are divinely appointed to apply God’s saving Word of Law and Gospel that the Spirit might lead some to repentance and faith, to living as the baptized saints of God. You, dear pastor, will want to purchase the book from Concordia Publishing House yourself, if you have not done so already, to facilitate your full participation in these discussions.

We have asked a veteran pastor, the Rev. Dr. Harold Senkbeil, executive director for Spiritual Care at DOXOLOGY: The Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel, and seven of the DOXOLOGY Collegium Fellows, to lead us into the meat of Walther’s pastoral reflections. The nine studies they have prepared are arranged topically, following in general the chapters of Walther’s book. May their work with you be blessed by God so that together we grow pastorally “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen” (2 Peter 3:18).

We thank the DOXOLOGY Collegium Fellows for their work on our behalf and commend to you DOXOLOGY as an important source of support and counsel for the pastors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

+ Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller Jr.
First Vice-President
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