

12 April 2006
Holy Week

Dear Brother in Office,

Grace to you and peace in the name of our great High Priest, Christ Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith! For He is the very Paschal Lamb, which was offered for us, that we may have life everlasting.

We are writing to you, as brother pastors, concerning those members of your flock who are registered to attend the Higher Things Lutheran Youth Conference, *The Feast*, in Colorado Springs this summer. Because we recognize and respect the oversight and responsibility that you have been given for their pastoral care, we regard it as important for you to be aware of the pastoral care that will be provided at *The Feast*, especially in connection with the administration of the Lord's Holy Sacrament of the Altar.



the **Feast**
A Higher Things Youth Conference - 2006

Worship has been fundamental at the Higher Things conferences, and that will certainly be true in the case of *The Feast*. Each day will be sanctified by the Word of God and prayer, as we are gathered for Matins and Vespers and Evening Prayer, and for Compline in the dorms each night before lights out. In addition to these daily prayer offices, the conference will open and close with the Divine Service of the Holy Communion. On Tuesday afternoon, the Reverend Robert Schaibley, pastor of Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran Church, Colorado Springs, will welcome us to the fellowship of the Lord's Table with his preaching of the Holy Gospel and faithful administration of the Sacrament. The Reverend Peter Bender, pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Sussex, Wisconsin, will be catechizing the conference in the Sacrament of the Altar throughout the week, and then delivering the gifts of the Gospel-Word and Sacrament in the Divine Service on Friday afternoon. Indeed, the entire conference will be geared toward a profound appreciation for this Sacrament, and a worthy reception of the same through repentant faith in Christ.

In order to ensure the integrity of the administration of the Sacrament, including a sincere concern for the spiritual well-being of all those who attend *The Feast*, conference registrants have been verified to be communicant members of congregations in fellowship with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The blessing and consent of each registrant's pastor have been sought in that very connection, as you will already be aware. Any exceptional circumstances will be addressed by the undersigned; but it is understood that all communicants have been baptized in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, catechized in the chief parts of the Christian faith and life, and share the public confession of the evangelical Lutheran Church. What is more, the entire structure of the conference—involving daily prayer as described, and daily catechesis in the Word of God through a variety of plenary, in-depth, and sectional presentations—is designed to immerse conference attendees in the Law and the Gospel, unto repentance and faith in Christ, by the gracious working of the Spirit through the Word that is proclaimed, taught and confessed.

Each of the dorms will have a Lutheran pastor designated as the "dorm chaplain," who will assist in the praying of Compline at the end of the day. He will also be on hand to provide counsel and assistance in the event of any difficulties pertaining to the Christian faith and life of those who are staying in the dorm, especially in the case of groups that do not have their own pastor with them at the conference.

Other than Compline in the dorms each night, all of the services will be taking place in the beautiful and reverent college chapel, which will be reserved for worship-related purposes during the conference. The Divine Service on Tuesday afternoon will follow the familiar order of *The Lutheran Hymnal*, p. 15 (beginning with the rites of preparation). Opportunity will be offered, in the chapel, on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, for Individual Confession and Absolution. Those attending the conference will be encouraged to seek this means of grace and forgiveness from their own pastors, whether during the conference (where possible) and/or back home. You will be most welcome to use the chapel for this purpose, in order to serve your own members. In order to accommodate those who may not have that opportunity, there will also be pastors on hand, including the undersigned, to hear individual confessions and to grant the Holy Absolution of Christ. The Divine Service on Friday afternoon will be preceded by the service of corporate confession that morning; it will then begin with the processional hymn and follow the order of "Divine Service II" from *Lutheran Worship*. The conference hymn for *The Feast* will be Dr. Luther's magnificent Easter hymn, "Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands," which will be introduced with the help of choirs, taught and sung throughout the week.

As you can ascertain from the above, we intend to provide responsible pastoral care for everyone who attends *The Feast*, specifically through catechesis in the Word of God and a faithful stewardship of His sacred means of grace. Of course, our confidence is not in ourselves, nor in our good intentions, but in our Lord Jesus Christ, in His Word and Holy Spirit. Because we desire to serve and support you in the pastoral care of your members who attend the conference, we sincerely request your prayers on behalf of our efforts. We also welcome any questions or concerns that you may want to ask or share with us.

By the grace of God, in the surety of His Word, your youth (and their adult chaperones!) should return home, and to your congregation, with a greater understanding, appreciation, and hunger for the Lord's Supper. Truly, that is our hope and prayer. To the praise and glory of the Holy Triune God!

Your fellow servants in Christ,

The Reverend Dr. D. Richard Stuckwisch
Pastor of Emmaus Lutheran Church, South Bend, Indiana
Conference Chaplain for *The Feast*

The Reverend Peter Bender
Pastor of Peace Lutheran Church, Sussex, Wisconsin
Catechist and Celebrant of *The Feast*

The Reverend Robert Schaibley
Pastor of Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran Church, Colorado Springs, Colorado
Catechist and Celebrant of *The Feast*

Higher Things
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