/ NOVEMBER 2026

DISTRICT NEWS

INDIANA

Leaning into our strengths

THE THREE ESTATES

Rev. Dr. D. Richard Stuckwisch
District President

Another one of the great strengths of our historic Lutheran theology is the doctrine of the three estates (sometimes described as the three hierarchies). Although not as well known as the familiar doctrine of the two kingdoms, an understanding of the three estates was even more fundamental and significant in Dr. Luther's approach to the Holy Scriptures, to the Christian faith and life, and to his robust emphasis on the Christian's vocations and stations on earth.

I first became aware of Dr. Luther's theology of the three estates during my first year at seminary, when I was assigned to read his "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper" (1528). The final section of that treatise is a relatively succinct and straightforward confession of his faith, at the heart of which he offers a summary assertion about the three estates (or hierarchies):

- **The church** (the office of priest)
- **The home and family** (the estate of marriage)
- **The civil government**

(LUTHER'S WORKS AE 37, 364)

The same ideas are foundational to the Table of Duties in the Small Catechism, and they are also present throughout his discussion of the Ten Commandments in the Large Catechism.

Prior to Luther, the three estates were understood as a division of people into three distinct and separate hierarchies, comprising the clergy, the nobility, and the commoners. An individual was viewed as belonging to one or another of these three societal orders, each estate fulfilling its own place and purpose in relation to the whole — the clergy praying, the nobility ruling and protecting, and the commoners working to serve and support the clergy and nobility.

See **MESSAGE**, page 8

CTSFW/Steve Blakey

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), held the opening service of its 181st academic year on Sept. 8. Rev. Dr. Jon S. Bruss, CTSFW president, preached and Rev. Dr. D. Richard Stuckwisch, district president, installed Rev. Jeff Proctor as an advancement officer and Rev. Roger Peters as assistant professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions.

CTSFW also welcomed 57 new residential pastoral students and six new residential deaconess students (pictured above) — its largest class since 2009 — to campus for their first day of classes.

Pictured at right are, from left, Revs. Proctor, Bruss and Peters.

Rev. Doug Griebenaw was installed as associate pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Martinsville, on Sept. 12. Pastor Griebenaw had previously served as a mission advocate for KFUO radio for more than four years. Pictured are, from left, (front) Revs. Nathan Janssen (Prince of Peace senior pastor), Doug Griebenaw, Dr. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Garry Wickert; (back) Dennis Fangmeyer, Chris Truelsen and Jacob Hercamp.

Rev. Shawn Davis was installed as pastor of Praise Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, on Sept. 10. Pictured are, from left (front) Revs. David Griebel, Bob Bruckner, Shawn Davis, Dr. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Dan Sheafer, Chad Van Meter; (back) Jacob Koehler, Dr. Joe Gudel, Dennis McFadden, Adam Nieting, Dr. Dennis Goff and Karl Frincke.

St. Peter Lutheran Church and School, North Judson, annually celebrates a third-grade Bible blessing. With their parents by their side, students receive their new Bibles and hear a special blessing spoken over them by their parents. This year, the ceremony was held at the beginning of chapel service on Aug. 12 and included the whole St. Peter school family. Leading the blessing is Rev. Daniel Speckhard, St. Peter pastor. What a wonderful reminder that God's Word is a gift we carry with us, learn from and treasure as we grow in faith! God be praised!

Corrine Burmeister was commissioned and installed as director of Christian education of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Louisville, Ky., on Aug. 30.

She is pictured with, from left, Rev. Dr. Mark Whitsett (emeritus), who served as Corrine's internship supervisor; Rev. Dr. D. Richard Stuckwisch, district president; and Rev. David Grasch, Our Savior pastor.

Zion Lutheran Church, Columbia City, celebrated its 160th anniversary on Aug. 23. It is also the 180th anniversary of the preaching station that led to the formation of the congregation.

Rev. Dr. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Indiana District president, served as both preacher and celebrant for the worship service and gave a special presentation during Bible study. Praise God for 160 years of God's faithfulness to the people of Zion Lutheran Church!

Pictured are Rev. David Whan (left), Zion pastor, and Pastor Stuckwisch.

For our good, always

Nathan Wingfield
District Executive for Christian Education

Having recently celebrated the Reformation, we are reminded that all theology is Christology. Everything we believe, teach and confess centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Christ himself confirms this very truth in St. Luke's account of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, as He "interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." So too should the education we provide our children today point to Christ. This has always been the way of the church.

Consider the words of Deuteronomy 6. Moses speaks to the people the commandments — the statutes and rules — that the Lord gave him. The people were to teach diligently about the works of God, the one who brought them out of slavery in Egypt with great signs and wonders. They were to do this "for our good always" (v. 24). So today the cross should be ever before our eyes; the wounds on Christ's hands a sure sign of His victory over death and the grave; and His blood poured out for us a cover on the doorposts of our hearts, a sure sign that death will pass us over.

Verse 20 and following offers a subtle catechetical insight for us to ponder. The children ask, "What is the meaning…", similar to the common refrain in Luther's catechism. The answer to the question is always found in the Word and works of God. Contrast the response of Eve to the serpent with the responses of Christ during His temptation. The catechumen must be taught to use the Scriptures and use them to the fullest, for apart from God's Word

there is only death. This is not only a matter of theology, but in all aspects of life, all knowledge and wisdom must be sought in Christ, the Word made flesh.

Thanks be to God that He has revealed Himself to us in the fullness of Christ Jesus. Thanks be to God that Christ has suffered and died for us that we might live. Thanks be to God that He has given His Word to be preached and taught throughout all generations. Surely, all this has been done for our good always.

What a wonderful morning of worship, learning and fellowship at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, on Sept. 12 as 60 educators gathered for **The Lutheran Schools Partnership 2026 Fall Early Childhood Worship and Workshop**. Attendees were blessed to welcome keynote speaker Tracie Douglas, an early childhood instructional coach and assistant director of early childhood programs for Big Shoulders Fund. Tracie encouraged the educators to stay rooted in Christ as they build meaningful connections, strengthen communication, grow young readers and create rich opportunities for children to learn through play. Together, the educators celebrated the joy of nurturing young learners, fostering gratitude and sharing the love of Jesus in their classrooms each day!

These recent graduates have been commissioned and installed as teachers in some of our Indiana District Lutheran schools. What a blessing to our schools! Please keep them and all of our teachers in your prayers.

Wyneken Memorial Lutheran School, Decatur
Alexa Melcher Courtney Butcher

Lutheran High School of Indianapolis
Alicia Dirr Drew Bradley

Our Shepherd Lutheran School, Avon
Anna Maxon Meghan Forgey

Central Lutheran School, New Haven
Eli Frank Erika Johnson

Concordia Lutheran, Fort Wayne
High School **Elementary School**
Jordan Meier Leah Kamman

Bethlehem Lutheran School, Ossian
Anastasia Loest

Zion Lutheran School, New Palestine
Hannah Weaver

St. John Lutheran School, Kendallville
Jamie Riley

White Creek Lutheran School, Columbus
Owen Ballard

RSO Spotlight

The Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society for the Chinese (ELMSC) has been an LCMS Recognized Service Organization since 2019. It supports the establishment and strengthening of Chinese confessional Lutheran churches worldwide, in part through theological education and resource development.

Each year ELMSC hosts a Chinese-language seminar at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. There were 24 adults and children who attended the seminar, held June 5–8. ELMSC also translates into Chinese and publishes confessional Lutheran books, including Hermann Sasse's "Here We Stand" and C.F.W. Walther's "Pastoral Theology." One current project will make essays on the Lutheran liturgy available in Chinese, including a few essays written by Rev. Dr. D. Richard Stuckwisch.

To learn more about the ELMSC, and find hundreds of free Lutheran Chinese resources available in text, audio and video format, visit **lutheranchinese.org**.

Pictured are attendees of the seminar at CTSFW. Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Boyle (in back, fourth from right) presented on the second article of the Creed from Luther's Small Catechism.

PRAYER LIST

WEEK OF NOV. 1
Circuit 12 – Indianapolis Northeast
- Christ, Noblesville
- Cornerstone, Carmel
- Epiphany, Westfield
- Holy Cross, Indianapolis
- Journey, Fishers
- Lord of Life, Westfield
- Trinity, Indianapolis
- Zion, New Palestine

RSO: Lutheran Social Services of Indiana, Fort Wayne
LCMS DISTRICT: Atlantic

WEEK OF NOV. 8
Circuit 13 – Indianapolis Center
- Ascension, Beech Grove
- Calvary, Indianapolis
- Concordia, Greenwood
- Emmaus, Indianapolis
- Faith, Greenfield
- First Timothy, Indianapolis
- Our Savior. Indianapolis
- St. John, Indianapolis
- St. Mark, Shelbyville
- St. Paul's, Indianapolis
- St. Peter's, Indianapolis

RSO: Lutheran Special Education Ministries
LCMS DISTRICT: California-Nevada-Hawaii

WEEK OF NOV. 15
Circuit 14 – Indianapolis Southwest
- Christ, Brownsburg
- Christ the King, Mooresville
- Holy Cross, Crawfordsville
- Immanuel Evangelical, Terre Haute
- Living Christ, Plainfield
- Our Shepherd, Avon
- Peace, Greencastle
- Prince of Peace, Martinsville

RSO: Phil's Friends, Crown Point
LCMS DISTRICT: Central Illinois

WEEK OF NOV. 22
Circuit 15 – Columbus
- Faith, Bloomington
- Faith, Columbus
- Good Shepherd, Franklin
- Grace, Columbus
- Shepherd of the Hills, Morgantown
- St. John's-White Creek, Columbus
- St. Paul's, Jonesville
- St. Peter-Waymansville, Columbus
- St. Peter's, Columbus
- Trinity, Ellettsville
- University, Bloomington

RSO: Rebuilding the Breach Ministries, Crown Point
LCMS DISTRICT: Eastern

WEEK OF NOV. 29
Circuit 16 – Seymour
- Emanuel-Dudleytown, Seymour
- Holy Cross, Scottsburg
- Immanuel, Seymour
- Lord of Life, North Vernon

LCMS/Frank Kohn

- Peace, Seymour
- Redeemer, Seymour
- Zion, Seymour

RSO: Siberian Lutheran Mission Society, Fort Wayne
LCMS DISTRICT: English

News to share?

Submissions must be turned in by the 15th of the month (for example, articles/photos for the January issue are due Nov. 15). Send them to lweditor@in.lcms.org

Anniversaries *(50 and over)*

Calvary, Indianapolis
Charles and Kathleen Klasing, 73, Nov. 21

Concordia, Louisville
Larry and Sandra Seltz, 66, Nov. 7

Cornerstone, Carmel
Steve and Marty Franke, 55, Nov. 6
Bob and Chris Turk, 56, Nov. 7
Mike and Carol Selking, 52, Nov. 9
Del and Jane Knecht, 54, Nov. 19
Tom and Lee Lavin, 50, Nov. 20
Jan and Daniel Matthews, 50, Nov. 20
Roger and Jan Tomes, 56, Nov. 20
Dick and Sue Freeman, 52, Nov. 23
Tim and Carole Halcomb, 63, Nov. 23
Duke and Cindy Koelsch, 53, Nov. 24

Epiphany, Westfield
Ted and Marilyn Mesh, 60, Sept. 3
Gene and Jackie Schroeder, 62, Sept. 5

Grace, Muncie
Rev. Bruce and Joan Nathan, 51, Nov. 23
Glenn and Catherine Branscome, 52, Nov. 24

Heritage, Valparaiso
Don and Janell Hitzeman, 58, Nov. 23

Redeemer, Seymour
James and Katrina Miller, 56, Nov. 21

Shepherd of the Hills, Georgetown
Paul and Donna Eisert, 66, Nov. 26

St. James, Lafayette
David and Carol "Kelly" Ranalli, 54, Nov. 15
Leslie and Carol Ricks, 66, Nov. 26

St. James, Marion
Ralph and Beverly Prichett, 70, Nov. 14

St. John, Lanesville
Robert and Kitty Baumgart, 52, Nov. 1

St. John-Bingen, Decatur
Eugene and Sylvia Berning, 64, Nov. 24

St. Michael, Fort Wayne
Ron and Kendra Nieman, 60, Nov. 5
Amos and Karen Werling, 60, Nov. 5
Alan and Cynthia Claus, 61, Nov. 14
Roger and Nancy Panning, 59, Nov. 18
Roy and Peggy Mackey, 70, Nov. 22

St. Peter, North Judson
Kenneth and Linda Redlin, 55, Nov. 6

St. Peter's, Brownstown
Tom and Linda Hallow, 55, Nov. 27
Barry and Linda Melloncamp, 56, Nov. 28

Trinity, Crown Point
Joanne and Robert Stephen, 52, Nov. 2
Janet and Fred Rosenwinkel, 54, Nov. 11
Judith and Robert Richards, 63, Nov. 16
Pamela and Kevin Vana, 52, Nov. 29

Trinity-Darmstadt, Evansville
David and Eileen Kahre, 58, Sept. 7

Zion-Friedheim, Decatur
Dale and Mary Gallmeyer, 53, Nov. 30

Birthdays *(90 and over)*

Calvary, Indianapolis
Olive Hinkley, 94, Nov. 6

Christ, Woodburn
Everett Schurg, 89, Nov. 27

Concordia, Louisville
Carol Rosendaul, 92, Nov. 18

Cornerstone, Carmel
Donald Moffatt, 94, Nov. 1
Maryellyn Gemmer, 91, Nov. 14
Ruth Trepanier, 90, Nov. 23

Epiphany, Westfield
Marcia Kehlbeck, 94, Sept. 23
Heritage, Valparaiso
Karen Silhavy, 91, Nov. 2

Peace, Berne
Wilmer Bultemeier, 98, Nov. 18

St. John, Lanesville
Zelma Higginbotham, 91, Nov. 29

St. John, Vincennes
Anna Cockerham, 101, Nov. 30

St. John-Bingen, Decatur
Ardina Lepper, 92, Nov. 2
Carole Sheehan, 92, Nov. 16

St. John-Farmers Retreat, Dillsboro
Ralph Luke, 90, Nov. 17

St. Michael, Fort Wayne
Martha Seidel, 92, Nov. 7
Annie Eckrich, 91, Nov. 24

St. Peter, North Judson
Ben Sakaguchi, 90, Nov. 11
Marcella Nielsen, 95, Nov. 27

Trinity, Crown Point
Mardi Kalember, 95, Nov. 8
Willard Schuffert, 92, Nov. 21

Trinity-Decatur Road, Fort Wayne
Marjorie Poor, 93, Nov. 2
Joan Bleke, 93, Nov. 23

Stewardship

Getty Images

THANKFUL

Ken Schilf
Emmanuel,
Fort Wayne

As Thanksgiving is just around the corner, it's easy for us to think of the usual blessings like family, health, provisions and church community. These are certainly things we should be thankful for. However, let's not forget the one thing that is the foundation of them all — the cross!

This Thanksgiving, let's give thanks for a Savior who paid the full price for our souls without hesitation. He didn't ask for a discount on damaged goods or request a refund because we failed. He knew the cost and paid it in full.

Jesus was the answer. He gave us what we could never earn, a place in heaven with Him. In Him, we find a worth that no job title, bank account, relationship, reputation or social media account could ever secure.

So this Thanksgiving, let's be thankful for more than just our possessions. Let's be thankful for the grace that is within us — a grace that cost Jesus His life. After all, while a $5 slushie might not be worth the price, your soul was and always will be worth the cross. Sing this Thanksgiving hymn, "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come" **(LSB 892).**

(This was inspired by an article in *The Stand*, published by the American Family Association.)

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Although Luther uses recognizably similar terminology, his theological and practical understanding of the three estates is quite different. He does not view them as mutually exclusive social constructs, but as divinely ordained aspects of God's good creation, belonging to His own creative designs and intentions. Furthermore, rather than being divided into one estate or another, all people have a place in each of the estates, everyone called to his own position(s) within the spheres of the church, home and government.

It is particularly significant for Luther that these estates are established and governed by God's Word, as evident especially in Luther's pastoral catechesis on the Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth commandments in the Large Catechism. There he teaches that husband and wife, father and mother, the government, and daily life are all sanctified by the Word of God, and it is on that basis that we should view our neighbors and our own place on earth.

For Luther, the three estates are fundamental to the way that God has created man and situated him within the whole of creation. Every human being is created and called to live before God (*coram Deo*) in a relationship of faith and love, and is therefore called into the estate of the church (whether that call is embraced in faith or rejected in unbelief). In this respect, the estate of the church has the primacy and priority among the three, as well as an eternal permanence to be realized in the Resurrection at the last.

In the meantime, human beings are created to live in community with each other, beginning within the sphere of the home

LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

and family. Beyond this starting point, as the human family grows and increases on the earth (from Adam and Eve in the garden, and from Noah and his family following the Flood), there is also the estate or sphere of government — an extension of the headship and authority of a father in the home. This third estate is all the more necessary as a consequence of the fall into sin.

So it is that every human being has his own callings and stations within each of these three estates, living and working under the authority of some neighbors, and having authority over (and responsibility for) other neighbors:

- A husband has headship and authority over his wife;
- A father and mother have authority over their own children;
- A pastor has spiritual authority over those entrusted to his care;
- A teacher has authority over his students; and
- The civil government has authority over its citizens.

Every authority derives from the Author and Giver of life, who has ordered all things according to His good and gracious will for the benefit of His church. Recognizing that good ordering of life and all of creation by the God who loves us — and living within the three estates according to His Word — is an exercise of faith and love that strengthens our homes and families, our communities and nation, and our congregations.