

Luther's confession was made possible because his secular rulers were persuaded that he should receive a hearing before being condemned. In late 1520 the Emperor and Luther's prince, Duke Frederick, began negotiations to provide a hearing for Luther in German lands, possibly at the Diet (the parliamentary meeting of the Estates) to be held in Worms in the Spring of 1521. On March 29 Luther received the summons to appear before the Diet in Worms. He left Wittenberg on about April 2.

Luther had a very sober view of what might happen in Worms. In a letter written to George Spalatin (Duke Frederick's secretary), dated December 29, 1520, Luther wrote (AE 48.188-190),

If *God* does not want to preserve me, then my head is of slight importance compared with Christ, who was put to death in greatest ignominy—a stumbling block to all and the ruin of many. No one's danger, no one's safety can be considered here. We must rather take care that we do not expose the gospel (which we have finally begun to promote) to the derision of the godless and thus give our enemies a reason for boasting over us because we do not dare confess what we have taught and are afraid to shed our blood for it. May the merciful Christ prevent such cowardice on our part and such boasting on their part. Amen.

Of course it has come about that the kings and rulers of the earth would gather and rage with the nations and peoples against God and His Christ. Yet the Spirit teaches in that same Psalm [2] that those who trust in God will be blessed; and not only this, but also that the Lord will laugh and deride those who don't. Certainly it is not up to us to decide whether my life, or for that matter my death, will bring greater or less danger for the gospel and the public welfare. You know that God's truth is a rock of stumbling set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel [Is. 8:14; Lk 2:34]. . .

Now you have my judgment and opinion on this matter. You may expect everything of me except flight and recanting. I do not want to escape, much less recant; may the Lord Jesus strengthen me in this. I could do neither without endangering piety and the salvation of many.

FUTURE DATES

March 12-13: Powder River Winter Youth Retreat, Buffalo
May 6-8: Wyoming District Convention, Casper
June 17-19: Family Retreat, Uinta County
June 25-27: Fathers and Sons, Fort Robinson
July 20-22: Homeschool Conference, Casper Mountain

THE NEXT ROUNDUP

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations around March 20 (April 2021 issue).



Wyoming District Round-Up

March 2021

District Website: www.wylcms.org

“Here I Stand” on the Word in My Community

“...REMEMBERING YOU IN MY PRAYERS...” (Eph. 1:16)

For **Rev. Vernon Boehlke** (emeritus, Riverton), as he continues treatments for cancer.

For **Rev. Ralph Jaeger** (emeritus, Laramie), health

For **Jennifer Wittrock** (wife of emeritus Rev. Michael Wittrock), diagnosed with cancer.

PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS

St. Paul's, Sidney is being served by **Rev. Allen Strawn (St. Paul's, Bridgeport)** during the vacancy. The congregation is holding discussions with **Salem, Gurley** and **St. Paul's, Potter (Rev. Ted Bourret)** about forming a multi-point parish.

Rev. Travis Sherman (Grace, Gordon) is serving **Grace, Merri-man, NE** (Nebraska District) while it considers its future.

St. John's, Lovell: Rev. Jacob Benson will be installed on March 14 at 4:00 PM.

Immanuel, Alliance (Rev. Richard Mueller): Rev. Shaun Daugherty has accepted the divine call as assistant pastor and is being installed February 28 at 4:00 PM.

Here I Stand: God's Word in My Community

Here I stand on God's Word in my community! This month we ask, What is the relationship between my household and my community? How do I live as a Christian husband or wife, father or mother, son or daughter, or worker in my community? And what duties does God give to my household that He has not given to the civil community or government?

Let's take the last question first. We confess that God is the source and giver of marriage and family—the household with all its duties. These are not products of evolution, nor of human will and choice, nor of government edicts. In fact, God established marriage and the authority of parents first, and only afterwards gave government out of the authority of the parents. We

teach in the Large Catechism, “For all other authority is derived and developed out of the authority of parents” (LC I.141). Furthermore, “Through civil rulers, as through our own parents, God gives us food, house and home, protection and security, and He preserves us through them” (LC 1.150).

God teaches us that He has originally given to marriage and household the duty to bear and rear children. He commands parents to “bring up their children in the education and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). He gives the household the duty to be a school for wholesome knowledge and useful skills for the service of others. He places in the household the duty to supply the members of the household with food and medicine. He orders fathers and heads of households to instruct all members of the household in God’s Word and to lead them in prayer. Both church and civil community may help and support the household in these duties, but neither of them should dare to usurp these prerogatives or take them away. No government law or program has first rights in these matters.

Take an example from the Lutheran Reformation: The Roman Catholic church made it illegal for pastors to get married. This unjust law was enforced in the civil community, the church, and the household. But the Lutherans responded first with Holy Scriptures and then with natural law. God instituted marriage in Genesis 1 and 2, gave it as a gift to all men, commanded that it be used both for the procreation of children and for a defense against lust, and blessed it with great promises. It is also evident from nature and observation that the lifelong conjugal union of a man and a woman is a design written into nature itself, that it is best for the man and woman, children, the community, and for humanity in general. The conclusion? Let pastors marry. Neither church law nor civil government has the authority to pass laws that contradict the Scriptures and the divine law written into nature itself.

So how do we confess the truths of marriage and household in our community? How do we live as Christian householders in a civil culture that is hostile to the Christian faith? This is, of course, the daily question of every Christian. But here are a few observations from God’s Word.

First, to Christians and Christian households, Jesus says, “You all are the salt of the earth. . . You all are the light of the world. . . Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:13–16). Let your Christian good works begin at home. Go to church as a family. Read God’s Word and pray together as a household. Be loving and faithful to husband and wife, children and parents. Parents, be the teachers of your children, or give them Lutheran teachers to help you raise them to be pious and virtuous Lutheran adults.

St. Paul teaches us in Titus 2:1–10 that we honor and adorn the doctrine of our Savior by how we conduct our lives in our households. He tells Pastor Titus, “But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. **Older men** are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. **Older women** likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the **young women** to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be reviled. Likewise, urge the **younger men** to be self-controlled. Show **yourself** in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. **Bondservants** are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.”

What we confess to our communities by our family life is Christ Himself. Paul continues, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works” (Titus 2:11–14).

REFORMATION 500: Summoned to Worms

In April and May we will be remembering the 500th anniversary of Luther’s faithful confession before Emperor Charles V at Worms, Germany. It is a remarkable thing that an obscure professor of the Old Testament at a recently founded German university should be brought from posting 95 Theses for academic debate in the Fall of 1517 to standing before the great ruler of Western Europe in the Spring of 1521. History records these events as the actions of men. We recognize the working of God on behalf of His church.

In these three and half years, Luther was not only accused of false doctrine and divisiveness in the church, but he was caught up in the political intrigues of the papacy and imperial government. During this time he was studying, teaching, writing, debating, and maturing in his understanding of Scriptures and the errors of the Roman church. Also, the young Charles V became emperor during this time (1519) and spent the following years establishing his throne. The “heretical” Wittenberg monk was his German problem.

Luther’s faced the formal condemnation of both church and state when he was threatened with excommunication and outlawry in 1520 in the papal bull *Exsurge Domine*. As we heard, Luther burned the bull and books of canon law in December 1520. His excommunication was made official with a papal bull published January 3, 1521. But would the rulers enforce the excommunication by making Luther an outlaw and punishing him?