

Augsburg Confession Study – Part 1 of 2

Based on the Augsburg Confession Quotes and Prayers for the 2016 Lutherans in Africa Calendar

Introduction:

The Augsburg Confession (AC) is one of ten documents in “The Book of Concord,” a.k.a. “The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.” These are the ten documents: (1) The Apostles’ Creed, (2) Nicene Creed, (3) Athanasian Creed, (4) AC (Melanchthon, 1530), (5) Apology (or defense) of the AC (Melanchthon, 1531), (6) Smalcald Articles (Luther, 1537), (7) Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (Melanchthon, 1537), (8) Small Catechism (Luther, 1529), (9) Large Catechism (Luther, 1529), (10) Formula of Concord (many Lutheran Theologians, 1577).

Some Historical Background:

In 1521 the Holy Roman emperor, Charles V, outlawed Martin Luther and his teaching at the imperial Diet of Worms and ordered the suppression of all attempts to reform the church in his lands according to Luther’s program for reformation. Throughout the 1520s princes and cities intent on introducing that program jockeyed for political position with imperial and Roman Catholic forces within the assemblies (diets) of the empire, at Nuremberg (1522, 1523) and Speyer (1526, 1529)....

Charles wanted to marshal support for his war against Turkish imperial forces, which had laid siege to Vienna in 1529; he was in conflict with France, and he wanted to consolidate his own power within Germany at the expense of the relatively independent territorial princes. The emperor also was concerned about the life of the church and interested in promoting a moral and institutional reform. At the same time he despised the doctrinal reformation Luther had set in motion. Therefore, after negotiations with Pope Clement VII in Bologna in January 1530, he called for the Lutheran princes and cities to explain their religious program before an imperial diet, which he called for late spring in the city of Augsburg. In preparation for this diet Elector John of Saxony commissioned his theologians, led by Luther and Melanchthon, to prepare working papers on the issues that had led to reform in the Saxon and other territorial churches influenced by Luther’s teaching....

Because [Luther] had been declared an outlaw by the emperor in 1521, he dared not travel to Augsburg, where he would certainly have been arrested and perhaps executed by Charles’s forces. Instead, Melanchthon headed the Saxon theologians who went to the diet [at Augsburg in 1530]....

Melanchthon recognized that the Lutherans would have to do more than address the issues of reform. They would also have to demonstrate their own orthodoxy and catholicity. Therefore, he constructed a confession [The Augsburg Confession]... to show that the theology taught in Wittenberg remained true to the catholic tradition, both by stating the biblical truth and by condemning false teachings also rejected by Roman Catholic opponents....

After several weeks of intensive negotiations with representatives of the Roman Catholic princes and bishops as well as the emperor, seven Lutheran princes and two municipal governments subscribed [endorsed] Melanchthon’s “Confession” and presented it to the emperor and the assembled princes and representatives of imperial cities in the diet on 25 June 1530. Chancellor Christian Beyer of Elector John’s government read the German text to the diet, and his voice carried its words into the street outside. In accord with the imperial instructions, Melanchthon had also prepared a Latin version of the Confession that was handed over to Charles at the same time.

Further negotiations followed. At the same time, Roman Catholic theologians commissioned by the emperor formulated a “Confutation” [denial] of this Confession. By accepting this document the

emperor rejected the Lutheran claim to legitimacy, and at the end of the diet he commanded the Lutheran governments to return to the Roman obedience by 15 April 1531, or face suppression.¹

1. January:

- a. **Quote: Concerning God:** "...there is one divine essence which is named God and truly is God. But there are three persons in the same one essence [Gen. 1:26; Mt. 28:19; John 1:1], equally powerful [Is. 45:22], equally eternal [Ps. 90:2]: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. All three are one divine essence, eternal, undivided, unending, of immeasurable power, wisdom, and goodness, the creator and preserver of all visible and invisible things [John 1:3; Col. 1:16]." Augsburg Confession, Article 1, Paragraphs 2-3
- i. ^{ESV} **Genesis 1:26** Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."
 - ii. ^{ESV} **Matthew 28:19** "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."
 - iii. ^{ESV} **John 1:1** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
 - iv. ^{ESV} **Isaiah 45:22** "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other."
 - v. ^{ESV} **Psalms 90:2** "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."
 - vi. ^{ESV} **John 1:3** "All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - vii. ^{ESV} **Colossians 1:16** "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things were created through him and for him."
- b. **Prayer:** Please pray that the people living on the continent of Africa, through the organization of Lutherans in Africa, would know that the one true God is the Father who created, the Son who redeemed, and the Holy Spirit who sanctifies.

2. February:

- a. **Quote: Concerning Original Sin:** "...since the fall of Adam [Gen. 3:1-7], all human beings...are conceived and born in sin [Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12]. This means that from birth they are full of evil lust and inclination and cannot by nature possess true fear of God and true faith in God [1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1; Rom. 8:7]. Moreover, this same innate disease and original sin is truly sin and condemns to God's eternal wrath [Mt. 25:46] all who are not in turn born anew through baptism and the Holy Spirit [Tit. 3:5-7]." Augsburg Confession, Article 2, Paragraphs 1-2
- i. ^{ESV} **Genesis 3:1-7** "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'"² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die."⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."⁶ So when

¹ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). *The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (pp. 27–29). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.”

- ii. ^{ESV} **Psalm 51:5** “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”
- iii. ^{ESV} **Romans 5:12** “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men [*How do we know that?*] because all sinned...”
- iv. ^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 2:14** “The natural [*non-spiritual*] person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”
- v. ^{ESV} **Ephesians 2:1** “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins.”
- vi. ^{ESV} **Romans 8:7** “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.”
- vii. ^{ESV} **Matthew 25:46** “And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”
- viii. ^{ESV} **Titus 3:5-7** “He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

b. **Prayer:** Please pray that everyone in Africa would fully understand our lost and helpless state apart from Christ; then, by the Holy Spirit, who is the Lord and giver of life, may many be born anew by the Spirit through the water and the Word of Holy Baptism.

3. March:

a. **Quote: Concerning the Son of God:** He “became a human being [**John 1:1, 14**], born of the pure Virgin Mary [**Mt. 1:18-25**]... He is true God and true human being who truly ‘was born, suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried’ in order both to be a sacrifice not only for original sin but also for all other sins [**1 Peter 3:18**] and to conciliate God’s wrath [**1 John 2:2**].” Augsburg Confession, Article 3, Paragraphs 1-3

- i. ^{ESV} **John 1:1, 14** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...”
- ii. ^{ESV} **Matthew 1:18-25** “Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.”
- iii. ^{ESV} **1 Peter 3:18** “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God...”

- iv. ^{ESV} **1 John 2:2** "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."
 - b. **Prayer:** Please pray that the Lord will use Rev. James May and Lutherans in Africa to help many know that Jesus is truly the Son of God in human flesh who lived perfectly, suffered horribly, and died sacrificially to be our all-sufficient Savior, removing original sin and all other sins as well.
4. April:
- a. **Quote: Justification:** Since "we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God through our merit, work, or satisfactions [Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:15-16], ...we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God out of grace for Christ's sake through faith when we believe that Christ has suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us [Eph. 2:8-9; Col. 1:21-23; 1 John 5:11-13]." Augsburg Confession, Article 4, Paragraphs 1-2
 - i. ^{ESV} **Romans 3:20** "For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin."
 - ii. ^{ESV} **Galatians 2:15-16** "We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified."
 - iii. ^{ESV} **Ephesians 2:8-9** "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."
 - iv. ^{ESV} **Colossians 1:21-23** "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven..."
 - v. ^{ESV} **1 John 5:11-13** "And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life."
 - b. **Prayer:** Please pray that everyone in Africa would hear God's Word, reject the false teaching of our goodness for salvation, and, by grace through faith, embrace Jesus, the Christ as the one and only Savior for all people of all time (Acts 4:12).

Augsburg Confession Study – Part 2 of 2

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5. May:

- a. **Quote: Concerning the Office of Preaching:** “To obtain [saving] faith God instituted the office of preaching [Rom. 10:13-15], giving the gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when he wills, in those who hear the gospel [John 3:5-8; Rom. 10:17].” Augsburg Confession, Article 5, Paragraphs 1-3
- i. ^{ESV} **Romans 10:13-15** “...everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’”
 - ii. ^{ESV} **John 3:5-8** “Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”
 - iii. ^{ESV} **Romans 10:17** “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”
- b. **Prayer:** Please pray – since God has chosen to work through the Gospel and the Sacraments, by the Holy Spirit, to produce faith – that Lutherans in Africa would always rightly handle God’s Word of Truth and many ears, minds, and hearts would gladly receive and eternally benefit.

6. June:

- a. **Quote: Concerning the New Obedience:** God’s Word teaches that saving “faith should yield good fruit and good works and that a person must do such good works as God has commanded for God’s sake but not place trust in them as if thereby to earn grace before God [Luke 3:8; James 1:22; 2:14-17; Rom. 3:28].” Augsburg Confession, Article 6, Paragraphs 1-2
- i. ^{ESV} **Luke 3:8** “Bear fruits in keeping with repentance....”
 - ii. ^{ESV} **James 1:22** “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”
 - iii. ^{ESV} **James 2:14-17** “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? [It’s no good!] Can that faith save him? [No!] ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? [It’s no good!] ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”
 - iv. ^{ESV} **Romans 3:28** “...we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.”
- b. **Prayer:** Please pray that the Lord would use Rev. James May and all who serve with him through Lutherans in Africa to help many understand the proper distinction between faith and works: faith being God’s gift to us by which we embrace Jesus alone as our Savior and works being our loving response to God and our neighbor.

7. July:

- a. **Quote: Concerning the Church:** "...there must be and remain one holy, Christian church [1 Cor. 12:12-27]. It is the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached [1 Th. 2:4; 2 Tim. 4:2] and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel [1 Cor. 4:1; Luke 3:7]." Augsburg Confession, Article 7, Paragraph 1
- i. ^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 12:12-27** "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free-- and all were made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' ²² On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴ which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, ²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."
 - ii. ^{ESV} **1 Thessalonians 2:4** "...just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts."
 - iii. ^{ESV} **2 Timothy 4:2** "...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching."
 - iv. ^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 4:1** "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."
 - v. ^{ESV} **Luke 3:7** "He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?'"
- b. **Prayer:** Please pray that all who believe in Jesus for eternal life, both in Africa and throughout the world, would see their oneness with the Bible as our book, God as our Father, Jesus as our Savior, and the Holy Spirit as the one who has called us by the gospel, enlightened us with His gifts, and sanctified and keeps us in the one true faith.

8. August:

- a. **Quote: Concerning Baptism:** "...it is necessary, that grace is offered through [baptism], and that one should also baptize children [Mt. 28:19; Acts 2:38-39], who through such baptism are entrusted to God and become pleasing to him [Gal. 3:27]." Augsburg Confession, Article 9, Paragraphs 1-2
- i. ^{ESV} **Matthew 28:19** "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."

- ii. ^{ESV} **Acts 2:38** “And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”
 - iii. ^{ESV} **Galatians 3:27** “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”
- b. **Prayer:** Please pray that the Lord will use Lutherans in Africa to help many in Africa see God’s Truth about Baptism, that all children from the moment of conception are in need of its blessings and that God, by the Holy Spirit, is at work through baptism to unite children to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Rom. 6:3-4), clothe children in Christ (Gal. 3:27), and grant children His powerful washing of regeneration and renewal (Tit. 3:5).

9. September:

- a. **Quote: Concerning the Lord’s Supper:** The Bible teaches “that the true body and blood of Christ are truly present under the form of bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper and are distributed and received there [Mt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:16].” Augsburg Confession, Article 10, Paragraph 1
- i. ^{ESV} **Matthew 26:26-28** “Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”
 - ii. ^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 10:16** “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?”
- b. **Prayer:** Please pray that the Lord will use Lutherans in Africa to help many take God at His Word – believing all that is written, no less and no more. Then, regarding the Supper, that we are receiving bread and wine, but also the very body and blood of Jesus, for the forgiveness of our sins (1 Cor. 10:16; Matt. 26:26-28).

10. October:

- a. **Quote: Concerning Confession:** There are blessed reasons why “private absolution should be retained and not abolished [Ps. 32:1-5; 1 John 1:9]. However, it is not necessary to enumerate all misdeeds and sins, since it is not possible to do so.” Augsburg Confession, Article 11, Paragraph 1
- i. ^{ESV} **Psalms 32:1-5** “Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ² Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. ³ For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer (Selah). ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,’ and you forgave the iniquity of my sin (Selah).”
 - ii. ^{ESV} **1 John 1:9** “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
- b. **Prayer:** Please pray that many would understand these words of David and put them into practice, both on their own and, as needed, in conjunction with their pastors: “...when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night

your hand was heavy upon me... [Then, by Your grace,] I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,' and you forgave the iniquity of my sin" (Psalm 32:3-5 ESV).

11. November:

- a. **Quote: Concerning Repentance:** "...true repentance is nothing else than to have contrition and sorrow, or terror about sin [Mt. 5:4], and yet at the same time to believe in the gospel and absolution that sin is forgiven and grace is obtained through Christ [1 Peter 2:24; Acts 3:19]. Such faith, in turn, comforts the heart and puts it at peace [John 5:24]. Then improvement should also follow [2 Cor. 5:15; Eph. 2:10], and a person should refrain from sins [1 John 3:3]." Augsburg Confession, Article 12, Paragraphs 4-6
- i. ^{ESV} **Matthew 5:4** "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."
 - ii. ^{ESV} **1 Peter 2:24** "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."
 - iii. ^{ESV} **Acts 3:19-20** "Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord..."
 - iv. ^{ESV} **John 5:24** "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."
 - v. ^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 5:15** "...and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."
 - vi. ^{ESV} **Ephesians 2:10** "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."
 - vii. ^{ESV} **1 John 3:3** "And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure."
- b. **Prayer:** Please pray that all people would be brought to repentance and that all believers would live in continual repentance – being sorry for their sins and clinging to Christ alone as their only Savior; then, with great joy, may all believers seek to honor their Lord Jesus Christ.

12. December:

- a. **Quote: Concerning the Sacraments:** "...the sacraments are instituted not only to be signs by which people may recognize Christians outwardly, but also as signs and testimonies of God's will toward us in order thereby to awaken and strengthen our faith [Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 11:23-26]. That is why they also require faith and are rightly used when received in faith for the strengthening of faith." Augsburg Confession, Article 12, Paragraphs 1-2
- i. ^{ESV} **Galatians 3:27** "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - ii. ^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."
- b. **Prayer:** Please pray that the Lord will use Rev. James May and all who serve with him to help many understand and believe what the Bible teaches about the Sacraments, that God is at work through the Sacraments to show us His love, unite us to Christ, strengthen our faith, and assure us of His precious gift of forgiveness.