

Vestments in the Lutheran Church

By Pastor Nathaniel Jensen

And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.

Exodus 28:2

When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments.

2 Timothy 4:13

I would like to extend a most heartfelt thank you to the saints at KELC for the Christmas gift of a gold chasuble. Your thoughtfulness and generosity were so deeply touching! I would further like to use this as an opportunity to talk a little about the use of chasubles and vestments in the church.

For many raised in the Lutheran Church, vestments (what the pastor wears during Divine Service) are simply part of the church's worship. In most other Protestant traditions pastors simply wear business casual or street clothes. However, in the Lutheran Church, "the usual public ceremonies are observed, the series of lessons, of prayers, vestments, and other such things" (Ap XXIV 1). The Reformation retained

everything in the church that does not violate the Word of God. The Reformers also considered the usual public ceremonies useful for teaching: "For ceremonies are needed for this reason alone, that the uneducated be taught what they need to know about Christ" (AC XXIV 1).

So what do vestments teach us? The first thing vestments teach us is that the Divine Service is something special, something unique, something different. When people attend a wedding or a funeral, they (ought to) wear clothing suitable for the occasion. It would be disrespectful to wear gym clothes to a wedding or loud colors to a funeral. How much more so for those participating in the ceremony of such an event! A bride's wedding is such a special occasion she wears a dress that she can only wear on that one day. Most don't think twice about these conventions, until it comes

to church. That the pastor wears something special during the Divine Service indicates immediately that something unique is going on here. We are not just coming together for a weekly social gathering. At church, the Lord comes to us in His Word and in His Sacraments. It is only appropriate that we, especially the pastor, dress for the occasion.

Perhaps more importantly, the pastor "vests" before Divine Service to indicate he is acting in an office. That is, the pastor is filling a specific role during the Divine Service. He is being used as the mouthpiece and the hands of God, as an ambassador



of God in the congregation. Vestments serve as a kind of uniform. They cover the pastor as a reminder to himself and to the congregation that he is not speaking his own opinion or by his own authority. Rather, the pastor is speaking during the Divine Service “in the stead and by the command” of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the

Confessions, the Lutheran Church retained the usual customs of the medieval church, including the usual vestments.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the historic vestments of the church were outlawed in some places and fell into disuse in others. Instead of the usual vestments, both

was seen as too costly of a garment, or had too many associations in people’s minds with the Roman Catholic Church. Yet we are reminded that as Lutherans, we are unashamed to stand in continuity with the Western Church all the way through the Middle Ages and Reformation.

And again as our Confessions remind us, ceremonies are useful for teaching. So what specifically might the use of chasubles have to teach us? The chasuble is worn only by the “celebrant,” the pastor who is “celebrating” Holy Communion, that is, pronouncing Christ’s Words of Institution over the bread and wine to make them His very Body and Blood. The chasuble, then, further reminds both the pastor and the people, that like the priests of the Old Testament who were commanded to be clothed in holy garments to handle the holy things of God in the holy place, the celebrant is consecrating the bread and wine where our Lord comes to us with His holy Body and Blood. And so, it is only appropriate that he dress for the occasion.

The chasuble also shows the color of the liturgical day or season. During Advent and Lent you see violet. During Epiphany and Trinity the color is green. The Christmas and Easter seasons are white. Pentecost, Reformation, and saints’ days are red. Gold is worn on Christmas Day and Easter Day to highlight the importance of these two most holy days in our liturgical calendar, when we celebrate the birth and the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! The only two colors left are rose (or pink) for Gaudete Sunday (in Advent) and Laetare Sunday (in Lent) and black for Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. More on the liturgical colors later.



same reason pastors wear a “uniform” throughout the week, just as a soldier, policeman, judge, cashier, and many other employees wear uniforms. The pastor is speaking and acting according to the office into which he was placed. Vestments during the Divine Service remind us of this office of Christ—the office of preaching and administering the Sacraments.

I would like to address one vestment in particular because many in the Lutheran church are not familiar with it: the chasuble. That’s the large poncho looking garment you see at every Communion service at KELC. The origins of the chasuble go back to late-Roman cloaks. The cloak mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:13 (see above) may very well have been a liturgical garment. The chasuble was worn over an alb (the white robe), cincture (the rope belt), and a stole (the long scarf-like cloth) throughout the middle ages and retained in Lutheran churches for hundreds of years after the Reformation. As we saw from our

Protestant clergy and Jewish rabbis would wear the official “white collar” garb of the day, leaving the historic vestments to the Roman Catholic Church. The Lutheran pastors who immigrated from Germany to the United States in the 19th century and formed the Missouri Synod would most often wear a Thalar (black gown) with “preaching tabs” (*Beffchen*, in German). Many pastors in our German partner church, the SELK, still wear this outfit when celebrating Divine Service.

In the mid-20th century, there was a kind of “liturgical revival” in the Lutheran Church, with a push to return to the traditional vestments in use during the medieval, Reformation, and post-Reformation eras until the Enlightenment. The alb, cincture, and stole, all made a comeback. That’s what you would most likely see when visiting a Missouri Synod parish in the United States today. For whatever reason, though, the chasuble has taken more time to catch on. Perhaps it



PRO DEO ET PATRIA

“For God and Country”

—The motto of the U.S. Army Chaplaincy,
since July 29th, 1775

The following letter from the Army Chief of Chaplains was sent to every U.S. Army Chaplain as an inspirational example of selfless service.

—Chaplain Ray Ayers

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the heroic ministry and sacrifice of the “Four Chaplains” aboard the US Army Transport *Dorchester*. It was shortly after midnight on 3 February 1943, when the *Dorchester* was torpedoed by a German submarine in the Labrador Sea near Greenland. The ship sank just 20 minutes later.

The story is familiar to many of us, but I commend a reading of Dr. Steven T. Collis’ *THE IMMORTALS* (2021), which details both the fearlessness and faithfulness of the Four Chaplains. Dr. Collis, Chaplain (Colonel) Bob Nay, and I will be discussing the legacy of the Four Chaplains at a National Archives event in Washington, DC, on 1 February, at 1900 EST. You can view the event at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Q6hy_uwkd8.

The *Dorchester* was carrying 904 men to join the Allied forces fighting World War II in the European theater. 675 of those men drowned or died of hypothermia in the Labrador Sea’s frigid waters. This death toll has been called the worst single loss for an American World War II convoy.

Among the men lost were Chaplain George L. Fox, who was Methodist; Chaplain Alexander D. Goode, who was Jewish; Chaplain Clark V. Poling, who was Dutch Reformed; and Chaplain John P. Washington, who was Roman Catholic. All of them were just First Lieutenants

deploying to their first assignments; but all of them were committed to the sacred call of serving together in our Army’s culturally diverse and religiously pluralistic context. Despite their differences, the Four Chaplains were united in their desire to provide comfort, care, and calm to their shipmates on the *Dorchester*, amidst the chaos and panic that ensued after the torpedoes struck.

The Four Chaplains put People First, as everyone else abandoned the ship. When the supply of life jackets for those going overboard was exhausted, the Chaplains removed their own and gave them to others. It is important to note that Chaplain Fox and Chaplain Poling did not remove their life jackets in search of fellow Protestants. They simply handed their life jackets to the nearest Soldiers. Neither did Chaplain Goode seek to save a fellow Jew, nor did Chaplain Washington search for a drowning Catholic. These Four Chaplains drew no such religious distinctions in that moment; and none of them paused to inquire about anything else that distinguished those in need. “It was the finest thing I have seen or hope to see this side of heaven,” said John Ladd, a survivor who witnessed the selfless act.

Having given away their life jackets, fully understanding the consequences, these

very different Chaplains, holding very different faith tenets, joined arms on the deck of the ship as it sank. In the moments that followed, each Chaplain could be heard praying in his own way, and they collectively encouraged those around them to keep fighting for their lives.

As we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the courageous ministry and sacrifice of the Four Chaplains, let us also take time to reflect on both the privilege and the demands we face in our own calling to leadership and ministry in the Army. The inspiring example of the Four Chaplains rightly captures the spirit that empowers our mission success as members of today’s Army Chaplain Corps – collegial, full of care, and spiritually courageous. Our devotion to this sacred service must never falter.

Please know how truly grateful I am for all you do for our Army’s Soldiers, Civilians, and Family members, as you continue the legacy of the Four Chaplains today, in your own creative and inspirational ministry and service to all the members of the Army Family in your care.

As we “Care for the Soul of the Army” in 2023, may the legacy of the Four Chaplains inspire our efforts and serve as an example for each of us to follow.

For God and Country – Live the Call!

Chaplain (Major General) Thomas L. Solhjem
Chief of Chaplains

“Caring for the SOUL of the Army”
Invest in PEOPLE,
Connect them in Spirit,
and Cultivate
COMMUNITY!



ALEXANDER D. GOODE



GEORGE L. FOX



CLARK V. POLING



JOHN P. WASHINGTON

A Letter from the Mission Field
Pastor Christian Tiew

I write these words to you not from Hamburg but from Dubai—on the southern edge of Eurasia. How so? I received a call from the LCMS's Office of International Mission (OIM), inquiring whether I might be available to provide pastoral care to a lady in an emergency in Dubai. I explained that I would be able to break away from my in-person duties to my Iranian parishioners for about a week. Yet thanks to modern technology, I will still be able to hold my

regularly scheduled baptismal preparation class for my Iranians in Hamburg—over Zoom. In addition and in an answer to prayer, OIM suggested that Lula accompany me to Dubai—in case the lady needs help in any way that I might not be able to provide. And so, in this season of Epiphany, in which the Lord manifests His divine nature to us (turning water into wine, healing the centurion's servant long-distance)—He also



continues to work miracles in our lives even today—though your love and support, dear readers; through Mr. Gary Thies, the director of Mission Central back in the States, who takes such wonderful care of us missionaries; and through the super-professional staff of the LCMS' Office of

International Mission which keeps us missionaries connected to one another

and to the homeland, and provides "help from above." Thank you, dear Jesus, for the season of Epiphany, in which You reveal Your divinity in miracles—two thousand years ago and also today!



View of the Dubai skyline, with the spire of the Burj Kalifa, the world's tallest building



Elder's Corner

Insights, thoughts, and inspirational messages

Why do things happen? How do they happen? Who makes things happen? These tough questions are all too easily answered in one of two ways, either God makes them happen or we make them happen. One is a Christian Biblical worldview and the other is humanistic, but is there a middle ground? The answer is yes and no.

God is omniscient, in other words, God knows everything. This is clearly outlined in the Bible and the Book of Concord where you can find further explanation. However, the details of how we live in His creation and carry out his will are important to delineate. Martin Luther said in a sermon that God gives us milk through milkmaids. His statement is based on the doctrine of vocation that we hold so dear in the Lutheran church. Simply, vocation is how we operate.

To be a little more technical I'll dig a little into the doctrine of justification (AP Article IV), and the three uses of the law. The first use of the law is the fear of judgement which contains the "violent outbursts of sin". The second is like a mirror which shows us our faults. And the third is left for Christians, which tells us what not to do so that we can live Godly lives, and by the inverse

God's Plan for Us?

Titus 2:13-3:11

By Paul Hester

clearly show us what we should do. The third use of law is key to vocation and deals with our good work as Christians. The only way to produce good works is through baptismal regeneration followed by works (see Romans 3:20 and Ephesians 2:8-9). The three uses of the law give us a clear guide and point us directly toward what Jesus did for us. But how does that relate to vocation?

Through the two kinds of righteousness, Coram Deo, and Coram mundo we can get to the answer. Coram Deo or "before God" is known as imputed righteousness, it is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ because without God we can do nothing, we are dead in our sins for the wages of sin is death. We can't fulfil the law, it's impossible, this is what Jesus came down for, imputed righteousness which is solely salvific. God gives us the gift of forgiveness through baptism where we become heirs to his kingdom. This we

know for certain. This is often portrayed as vertical or coming from God versus Coram Mundo which is

righteousness before man and is portrayed as horizontal. This is where our good works come in. We do our works through Christ in his righteousness to spread the gospel. We don't do works for Him directly as he needs nothing. Acts 17:24-28 The good works we do show the world that we are Christian, and this nests with the third use of the law and falls square back onto the topic of vocation. Our vocation "is" Coram Mundo, it is how we interact with the world around us. Each of us has multiple vocations and the roles we play within the church (visitor, child, parent, parishioner, board member, elder...) are part of how we interact with both our church family and the world that the church is both part of and alien to. The vocations are what we do, they are our works in and on behalf of God's kingdom.

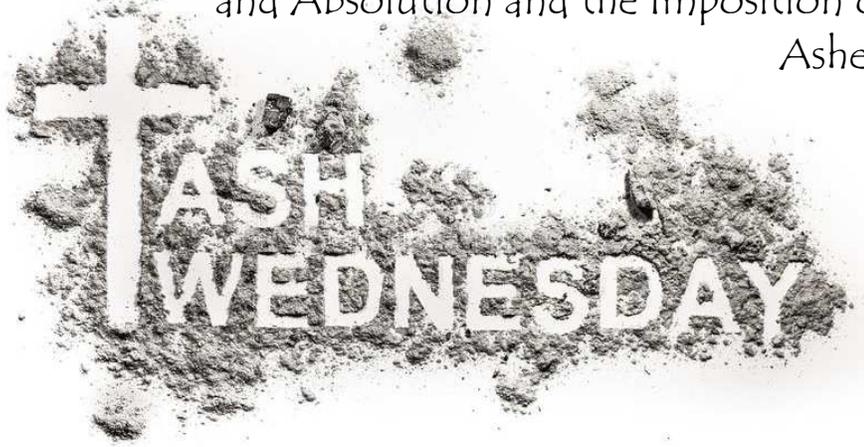
This can be antithetical to the statement "if God wills it" which is all too often a forerunner to apathy or the Muslim concept of In sha Allah. We must actively resist our human nature which necessarily falls into the trap of testing God by waiting for (sloth), or asking for, a miracle to happen. God has given us the gift of vocation to work on His behalf to build, grow, and maintain His kingdom by how we act within it. We are in constant prayer that the Lord would give us the strength to go above and beyond in all of our vocations. God gives us milk through milkmaids means that we must be active participants in doing God's work. God's plan is done through us.



A dairymaid can milk cows to the glory of God

~ Martin Luther

Wednesday, February 22nd at 7:00 PM
Divine Service with Corporate Confession
and Absolution and the Imposition of
Ashes.



Sundays at KELC

Divine Service

Sunday Mornings
8:30-9:30 AM

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Fellowship Time

Sunday Mornings
9:30-10:15 AM

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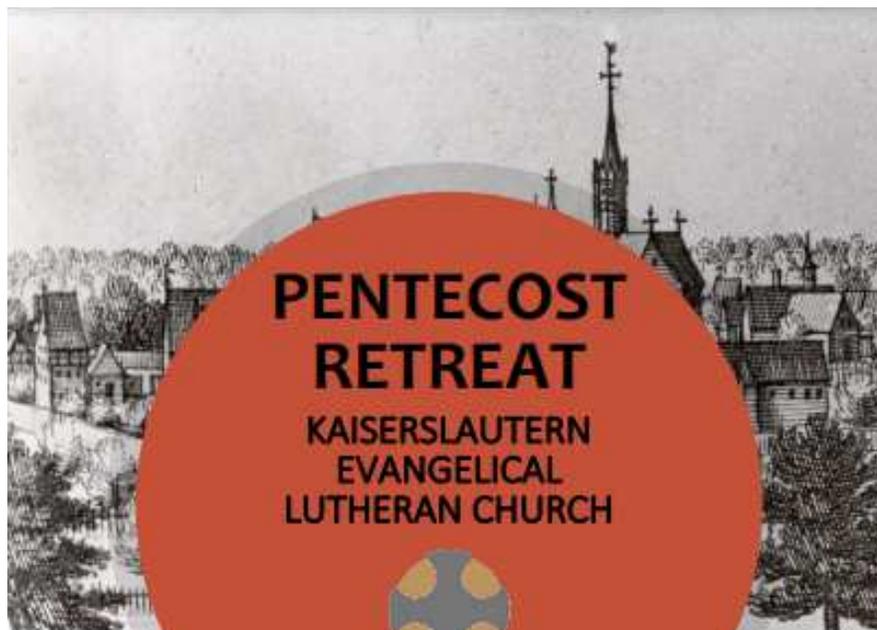
Sunday School & Bible Study

at Kirche Mittendrין
10:15-11:15 AM

—

Catechesis

St. Michael's Basement
11:30 AM-12:30 PM



PENTECOST RETREAT

KAISERSLAUTERN
EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH



KLOSTER LOCCUM

Loccum Abbey

May 26-29, 2023

For pricing and more information, send inquiries to:

Nathaniel.Jensen@lcms.org

Registration Deadline March 26

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK & MESSENGER

Kaiserslautern
Evangelical Lutheran
Church (KELC)

For news, worship sign-ups
and fellowship events.





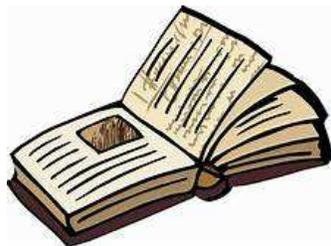
KELC volunteers will be serving dinner to the Ukrainian refugees on Friday, Feb. 10th, at Rhema Café, beginning at 5:30 PM.

We will also assist the children with crafts and cookie decorating. We hope to see you there!

If you are unable to attend but would still like to help, please consider donating cookies, individual chip bags, Capri Sun drinks, or craft supplies. Donations may be brought to church this Sunday or dropped off directly at Rhema Café.



CONFESSIONS STUDY



Thursday Nights
at 7:00 PM
Location: St. Michaelis

Please join us in praying for the important work of the Kaiserslautern Military Resiliency Center in Landstuhl, Germany.



January

&

February
Birthdays



January

8 Hannah Swenson
19 Jason Quadras
29 Christina Peterson

February

2 Jeff Peterson
3 Agatha Jensen
8 Max Krüger
20 Seth Worley