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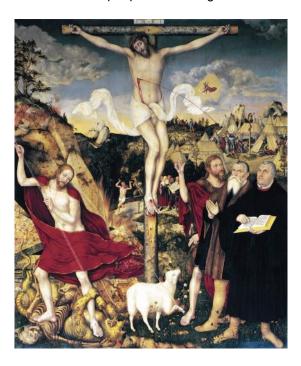
Reformation History #8: The Cardinal Doctrine by Pastor Glenn Huebel

Part of a year-long series on Reformation history and theology, from November 2016—October 2017, in commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.

The Lutheran Confession in Augsburg (1530) brought into clear focus the main issue of debate between the Lutherans and Roman Catholics. Article IV of the Augsburg Confession states:

Also they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for 2] Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. 3] This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.

This article is one of the shortest of the Augsburg Confession, a clear and simple statement of the Gospel itself. It was <u>rejected</u> by the Roman Catholic opponents on two grounds. First, they rejected the denial that people obtain forgiveness by their own merits. Second, they condemned the affirmation that people obtain forgiveness and



are justified through faith alone in Christ. This is an astonishing denial of the Gospel of Christ. In the *Apology*, the Lutheran Confessors appealed to the Emperor to understand the centrality of the issue at hand: "But in this controversy, the chief topic of Christian doctrine is treated. When it is understood correctly, it illumines and amplifies Christ's honor. It brings necessary and most abundant consolation to devout consciences. Therefore, we ask His Imperial Majesty to hear us with patience in matters of such importance." (Apology, Article IV, paragraph 1)

It is important for people to understand the significance of the difference between Lutherans and Roman Catholics in the doctrine of justification. Many today assume that Lutherans and Roman Catholics are quite similar because we share some of the early traditions of the Church. In reality we are further from the Roman Church than any Protestant Church today, including those who cast away all ancient traditions. We (Romans and Lutherans) are at two ends of the spectrum in confession of the Gospel, and all other denominations are somewhere in the middle. The distinction between us could not be made more clearly than the fourth article of the Augsburg Confession and the Roman Catholic Confutation.

By condemning the Lutheran assertion that we are <u>not</u> justified by our own strength, merits or works, the Roman Church affirms that our works contribute to our justification and salvation. In other words, our works have meritorious value before God and contribute to the righteousness needed to enter into God's presence. This is not surprising since the whole religious system of Rome during the Middle Ages was based upon keeping traditions and ceremonies, and various "doctrines of men." The meritorious value of these ceremonies even became a lucrative business for the Church. Removing

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That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. —John 20:31

merit for these works would destroy the incentive for doing them and collapse the whole system of merits. Lutherans, on the other hand, recognize that giving meritorious value to our works diminishes Christ and His work. Lutherans flatly reject any meritorious value of our works, whether before or after faith. The "works" that we do before faith are not good works at all, for "without Christ we can do nothing." Augustine calls them "glittering vices." The works that we perform after faith are the fruits of faith. We don't do them to gain favor with God. We do them spontaneously in love because we know we have His favor and forgiveness in Christ. Lutheran way of saying this is: "We are not saved because we do good works. We do good works because we are saved." The Bible is quite clear that works do not contribute anything to our justification or salvation. St. Paul writes, "For we maintain that a man is saved by faith apart from the works of the law" (Rom 3:28). Paul emphatically excludes works in Rom 4 where he writes: "For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith." (Rom 4:13)

By condemning the Lutheran assertion that God imputes to the believer the righteousness of Christ, the Roman Catholic Church denies

that Christ lived a perfect life as our substitute and that He made complete satisfaction for the sins of the world. The Roman Church teaches that Christ's work is necessary for our salvation, but not sufficient in and of itself. They teach that God infuses grace into the heart of the sinner which gives him the power to overcome sin and do good works. The works empowered by this grace are meritorious before God. Through infused grace the believer can merit the favor of God through works. If his works are not sufficient to merit heaven, the believer will, at death, enter an intermediate stage called purgatory, where his remaining sins are purged and atoned for through sufferings. They call this concept of infused, justification. They define justify to mean "make righteous." Lutherans, on the other hand, confess from Scripture that justification is God's verdict upon the sinner, not a process that happens in the sinner's heart. Lutherans define justify as "declare righteous." There is a huge difference between these two The Roman Catholic definitions. Church poisons the Gospel with law. Lutherans believe that the Gospel is offer of the free aift of riahteousness and eternal life through Jesus Christ.

A highly publicized document called "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" was agreed to in 1999 by the Roman Catholic Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation. This has led many to believe that the Lutheran and Roman Catholic positions on Justification have finally been reconciled. Despite the hoopla surrounding this accomplishment, no real agreement was reached. The division was simply hidden under carefully crafted ambiguous language. If the Roman Church believed the Lutheran position on justification they would immediately abandon the doctrine of purgatory. The doctrines iustification and purgatory are mutually exclusive because iustification immediately and completely clothes the believer in Christ's righteousness. There are no sins or guilt left to purge.

The doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ is the cardinal doctrine of Christianity. It is the doctrine upon which the Church stands or falls. All other doctrines of our Confession lead to or follow from this one. No one who compromises or denies this article of faith can be rightly called a Lutheran.

The Augsburg Confession, together with all the other of our confessional statements, may be found at https://www.lcms.org/lutheranconfessions.

Summer Chess Camp 2017



- Open to students entering 3rd— 12th grades in the fall of 2017.
- Meets at MLCA, July 10—14, from 1:00pm—4:00pm
- · Cost is \$25 per participant

Individualized and group instruction will include: Basic Rules, Basic Checkmate Patterns, Tactics, Strategy, Openings, Middlegame, Endgame, Grandmaster Videos, and more!

The Friday session will conclude with a 6 round championship tournament, with trophies for top finishers. All participants will receive Knight or Rook certificate in recognition of course completion, as well as a chess book and a T-shirt.

Our main instructor is Rev. Tom Chryst, who ranks in the top 5% of rated Texas tournament players. He has over 20 years experience playing and coaching young people in the "Game of Kings."

Online registration is now open! Go to the blog on the MLCA website, www.mlcatexas.org, to find all the information you will need to register and pay. For more information, contact Pastor Chryst at tomchryst@yahoo.com

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Roles and Goals for the Church by Pastor Tom Chryst

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Eph. 4:11-16)

In this passage from Ephesians 4, Paul lays out some "roles and goals" for the Christian congregation at Ephesus. These may also serve as a model for any Christian congregation.

In light of some recent discussions about Messiah's own mission, I'd like to add some comments to the mix in the next several months. What follows will be a series of articles, based on this passage. I'll focus on these key ideas inspired by the Holy Spirit and set forth through St. Paul to the Ephesians:

Different gifts and roles
Unity of Faith
Knowledge of the Son of God
Mature Manhood
Speaking Truth in Love
Grow in every way

Speaking the Truth in Love



One of the harder things to learn, for the Christian, is to speak the truth in love. It is something that comes with practice and maturity in the faith. But it is a Christ-like thing, as he himself so often shows us the pattern. What does it mean to "speak the truth in love"? Perhaps we can define this idea by contrasting it with two common ways we falls short: Lacking in love, or speaking something else but the truth.

Speaking the Truth, but Not in Love.

"Well it's true!" "The truth hurts!" "Sorry, not sorry." We have all sorts of expressions to give us cover when we wish to speak the truth, but not in love. A harsh word, though true, can cut and destroy our neighbor. A blunt, unvarnished truth - spoken in a spirit of vengeance or spite - is no credit to the speaker. Here we may indeed use the truth as a weapon. Instead, Proverbs 15:1 teaches, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." James warns us to bridle the tongue, which is like a "wild beast" and a flame of fire.

The fact that something is true does not give us license to speak it anywhere, to anyone. Consider, "is it my place to say such-and-such?" and "Will my words, true as they may be, help the person?" Are you saying this truth with self-serving motivations? Are you speaking truth to make yourself feel better (or the other person worse)? Will this be helpful, or hurtful? In short, "where's the love?"

Speaking in Love, but Not the Truth.

On the other hand, some might speak love with little truth. This is the person who is so afraid to offend another, that they say what people want to hear. There's no guiding truth to govern, no timeless principle which stands before us, only the fear that we will hurt or bother someone else with a certain statement of truth.

One danger here is that if we get far enough away from the truth, we may lose it, or stop believing it all together.

And another point to ponder is that what may seem loving isn't always what is most loving. There is such a thing as "tough love", and a time to speak words to people that we know they won't like and may not receive well.

Again, our vocation can be our guide. "Is it my place to say suchand-such to this person?" "Even though it may be a hard word, why is it important for me to say it?" "Am I truly speaking this truth for his or her benefit, and not my own?" And "What is the kindest, most loving way to say this? How would I want to be approached if the shoe were on the other foot?"

"Speaking the truth in love" is a way of life for the Christian. It goes to how we deal with each other in many different situations: In marriage, at a church meeting, with your pastor, your fellow parishioners, your children, the grocery store checker, even the guy who cuts you off in traffic.

The 8th Commandment

Luther understood this fine balance of speaking truth in love when it comes to our neighbor. He saw it, and taught it, in his "meaning of the meaning of the 8th commandment":

We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

Kindness (love) and truth meet in the faithful application of this commandment.

Speaking Up!

Another way to go wrong, when it comes to "speaking the truth in love" is to simply fail to speak when we ought to. For instance, failing to defend our neighbor's good name in

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the face of gossip (see above). Or failing to confess Christ but instead remaining silent for fear of rebuke or persecution. Sins of omission count just as much, and we are often as guilty for our silence as we are for saying the wrong thing, or saying it wrongly.

"Speaking the truth in love" is such a difficult task, such a fine line to walk, that we often fall to one side or another in sinful failure. And while we may grow and mature toward a more Christ-like pattern of speech, we will never get it perfect this side of heaven. But that doesn't mean we are without hope.

Christ Speaks Truth and Love to Us.

For Christ is not only our example of "speaking truth in love", he is also the one who speaks the greatest truth to us, with the deepest love. He speaks the Gospel! He speaks concerning himself, what he has done, what he continues to do for us. And he promises us a future in glory with himself. Every word from

Christ's mouth is true. And every word he speaks is for the benefit of his people.

Yes, he does speak the law at times, as do his faithful pastors today. And that law can feel rude or harsh or painful to bear – for indeed, "the letter kills". But this preparatory word of truth is spoken also in love – that we might be brought to repentance and faith, that the hard soil of our hearts would be tilled and ready for the seed f the Gospel to flourish!

For there is a truth and love we can

all truly love! Christ knows your failings. He knows you struggle with both truth and love, and with balancing the two. He knows you speak when you shouldn't, and are silent when you should speak. He knows break the you commandment, and every other commandment. And so he speaks a different word to you - a word of forgiveness, life

and salvation – the Gospel. The grace of God is shown when Christ died on the cross and the victory won when he rose from death. And the truth – and the love – of Christ, are now for you his redeemed.

So perhaps in all our dealings with each other, the best truth we can speak with the most love is to tell of Jesus, the Way the Truth and the Life himself, who loved us then, and loves us now, and will love us forever.



Sing a New Song.... by Kantor Vicki Main

Our July Hymn of the Month is From God Can Nothing Move Me – LSB 713. In addition to singing this hymn, it is well worth the time to simply read and 'digest' the seven stanzas. The text was written by **Ludwig Helmbold** who was known as a German poet, hymn-writer, and composer. (His writings have been closely compared to Martin Luther and his comtemporaries, although in age he belongs to a later generation.)

At age fifteen he went to the university in Erfurt and when he was eighteen, his native city of Mühlhausen made him headmaster of one of its schools. In time he returned to Erfurt, obtained a professorship, and for seventeen years was Dean of the Philosophical

Faculty. Later he went back to Mühlhausen once more and at the age of forty was made general superintendent of one of the schools answering directly to the bishop.

He was one of the principal poets of his day, and published a number of Latin odes and elegies, for which the Emperor Maximilian, at the Diet of Augsburg, awarded him the honor of poet-laureate. This particular hymn source became of great а encouragement for the people of that time. It was written in 1563 when a terrible pestilence attacked Erfurt, and in the course of a year destroyed 4.000 of its inhabitants. Helmbold gave this hymn to the wife of one of his friends as she was starting on a hasty flight from the city. In many of the old hymn-books

of that time it is titled "The True Christian's Vade-Mecum" (*vade-mecum* is translated as a handbook or guide that is kept constantly at hand for consultation).

Additional scriptural references you may wish to read are Romans 8:38-39; Joshua 24:6; Psalm 73:23.

Yet even though I suffer the world's unpleasantness,
And though the days grow rougher and bring me great distress,

That day of bliss divine, which knows no end or measure,

And Christ, who is my pleasure, forever shall be mine. (stanza 6)

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VBS 2017 JULY 24-27 9:00 a.m. - Noon

We expect to have a building full of children eager to learn new songs and crafts, play with their friends, and most importantly, to hear about their Savior, Jesus.

For teaching them about Jesus is the reason we do VBS.

In order to do this, however...

HELP IS NEEDED!

We have our Superintendents!
Lindsay Brandt and Annesly Lambert have graciously taken on this task.

But they cannot do it alone...

If you can help, fill out the form on page 8 and place it in the C & L Brandt or Lambert mailbox.

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Free to Be Faithful....Protecting Our Ministry

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has worked diligently in the past few years to defend freedom of religion and conscience in the public square. Our President, Matthew Harrison, has even testified before the United States Congress on this topic. In order to help congregations protect their ministries from the imposition of non-Christian ideas and immorality, a few statements of belief have been crafted and offered for congregations to use in their own governing documents. The Statement below comes from the Synod office as a suggested statement of belief on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. We will begin the process of incorporating this statement into our constitution and bylaws in our July Voters Meeting (July 30). We welcome your comments.

LCMS - Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

Information on Marriage Policies for Member Congregations

The Holy Scriptures teach that God, in creating the world, gave marriage to be the lifelong union of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24), a gift to be held in honor and kept pure (Heb. 13:4; 1Thess. 4:2-5). As a man and woman freely commit themselves to one another, God himself joins them as one. Marriage is far more than a social contract or a mere interpersonal bond. It is an act of God the Creator. So our Lord Jesus says in Matt. 19:4-6: "Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female and said. 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be united to his wife and the two shall become one flesh'?"

Marriage cannot be understood apart from another gift: the gift of children. As he creates man and woman, God says, "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28). As the two become one flesh, the highest possible result of this marriage union, when it is God's will, is the conception and birth of a child. The child is in every sense the one flesh of the mother and father and the living sign of their union. The optimal setting for the care of children is the loving marital unity of a man and woman. In such marriage children are nurtured within the distinctive uniqueness and created differences of male and female serving together in the family.

This biblical understanding of the marriage union of man and woman is both purposeful and beautiful. Its

purposes include the procreation and nurture of children, the mutual and the support and given encouragement one another by husband and wife, and the restraint of selfishness and sin as each seeks to serve the other's needs. Such purposes reveal a beauty so great that Eph. 5:21-33 connects marriage to the holy union of Christ and His bride, the church. The apostle Paul writes that even as Christ, the bridegroom, pours forth sacrificial love for his church, the bride, and she trustingly commits her life to him, so also husbands are called to sacrificial love toward their wives and wives to a willing respect for their husbands.

This, in brief, is the Bible's teaching on marriage - and so it is also the doctrine of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS). Every congregation and called worker of the LCMS accepts the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice. Congregations and church workers also gladly declare their unswerving conviction that the confessions of the Lutheran church, as found in The Book of Concord (1580), are in full agreement with Scriptures. congregations, pastors, and other called servants thus agree to abide by the doctrine of the Synod. To believe that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman is not a political opinion or a cultural bias, it is the clear teaching of Holy something that the members of the Synod believe, teach, and confess as the very truth of God.

This understanding of marriage is not, however, the view of many

people in North America and Western Europe (the West). Recent legislative and judicial actions throughout the West reveal an undeniable fact: marriage is no longer understood to be the lifelong bond of one man and one woman. Countless millions now believe that marriage is a loving, legal commitment between any two individual adults. According to the Pew Research Center, a significant shift of opinion, largely generational in nature, has taken place in the United States. In 2001 only 35 percent of U.S. adults supported same-sex marriage and 57 percent opposed it, believing that marriage was only between a man and a woman. In 2013 the numbers are radically different with 50 percent favoring same-sex marriage and only 43 percent opposing it. The 2013 United States Supreme Court decisions striking down California's same-sex marriage ban and the federal Defense of Marriage Act reflect this changed view marriage.

For the LCMS and its congregations these societal and legal trends present great challenges. Pressure on churches to accommodate their teachings and practices to the changing societal view of marriage is increasing. Some church bodies have endorsed same-sex marriage in contradiction to clear biblical teaching. Will cultural attitudes or biblical truth guide our teaching and practice?

We cannot concede to Caesar what belongs only to God (Matt. 22:21). His Word and His alone must guide the church, not human opinions. "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the

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knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). To do anything less is to sacrifice the beauty and purposes of marriage as it has been given by God.

LCMS beliefs, practices and policies regarding marriage are firmly established and have long been documented. They are set forth in any number of documents. As examples, please refer to the following materials concerning the Synod's beliefs on marriage:

Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective (English | Spanish) (1981) – A report by the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations.

Plan for Ministry to Homosexuals and their Families (1999) – A compassionate discussion of the spiritual needs of individuals who experience same-sex attraction and their families, together with suggestions for ministering to them. Our Lord deals with sin in one way, calling each of us to repentance that we might receive His forgiveness.

FAQ on Same-Sex Marriage and FAQ on the LCMS Response to Homosexuality – In other words, while we reject same-sex marriage, we do not reject individuals who struggle with same-sex attraction, but we seek to love them and call them to repentance and faith in Christ's forgiveness, just as we do for all sinners. We cannot bless same-sex marriage (just as we cannot bless sexual intercourse outside of the marriage of one man and one woman) because we cannot bless what God calls sin. To

do so would be to place those who engage in such behavior outside the need for repentance and forgiveness, and thus outside the need for redemption in Christ. Our concerns are always ultimately pastoral, focused on the care of souls in Christ. We seek to be faithful to the Word of God because we care about people.

Response to Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust (2012) – A Commission on Theology and Church Relations response opposing the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's decision to affirm same-sex relationships.

Statement: An Affirmation of Marriage (2013) – Joint statement by the Anglican Church in North America, Lutheran Church—Canada, the LCMS, and the North American Lutheran Church

Open letter – Marriage and Religious Freedom: Fundamental Goods That Stand or Fall Together – An Open Letter from Religious Leaders in the United States to All Americans.

It is our understanding, based on information from LCMS legal counsel, that currently there is no federal or state law which prohibits ministers from refusing to officiate over same-sex marriages requires churches to allow their sanctuaries or church facilities to be used for marriage same-sex ceremonies, same-sex civil unions, or same-sex marriage receptions. Indeed, it is our understanding that most, if not all, state laws that recognize same-sex unions and/or same-sex marriages have express exceptions providing that such statutes do not require ministers to participate in such ceremonies or require churches to allow them to take place on their property. However, because laws relating to marriage, same-sex unions and antidiscrimination vary from state to state, as do laws governing certain tax exemptions, each congregation should consult its local legal counsel regarding the applicable state and local laws to confirm this.

Governing documents of member congregations, such as Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, and Bylaws, usually include a statement of adherence to the confessions and beliefs of the Synod as set forth in the Synod Constitution. Such a statement is of particular importance at the present time in light of today's evolving laws on same-sex marriage and antidiscrimination. For these reasons, it is recommended that congregations affirm their beliefs, practices and policies on marriage in a written statement. Such policies could be included as part of your congregation's handbook or policy manual or simply be prepared as a separate document.

Further, due to some concern over at least one reported case of a nonprofit organization losing a partial real-estate tax exemption for refusing to rent a seaside pavilion on its property that was open to the public to a same-sex couple for a civil union, it would be prudent to include a provision in your marriage policy limiting the use of the property congregation's marriages that are consistent with and your beliefs policies marriage.

FREE TO BE FAITHFUL is a focused education and awareness campaign aimed at protecting American citizens' freedom of religion, maintaining rights afforded in the Constitution for future generations and responding faithfully to increasing intrusions by government in the realm of the Church. For more information, check out the LCMS website, https://www.lcms.org/social-issues.

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Messiah Lutheran Church & School

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248

Church Office: (817) 431-2345 **Academy Office:** (817) 431-5486

Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Glenn Huebel, Senior Pastor Rev. Thomas Chryst, Associate Pastor

www.messiahkeller.org

Miscellany (/'misə lānē /) noun. —a mixture or collection of different things

MLCA is seeking a Preschool teacher for the 2017/18 school year. Please contact the school office at 817-431-5486 or schooloffice@mlcatexas.org for more information.

Taking a vacation this summer? Check out lutheranliturgy.org to find a church offering liturgical worship while you travel.

Please keep in mind that even when you are not here, our expenses are the same. You may

find that our Online Giving option is very convenient. Check it out on the main page of our website, www.messiahkeller.org.

Swaddling Clothes needs diapers! Please keep it in mind as you shop. All donations of diapers and wipes are particularly appreciated!

Summer hours for the school office: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9am—2pm. Calls are being forwarded, so if you need to reach someone, call the school office, 817-431-5486.



VBS 2017 I can help!

In Jesus, the Victory Is Won!	be a Class Leader (taking students from site to site)	be a Site Helper at the following site:
	be a Class Helper	Opening/Closing each day
with Decorating (before event) Photography (before and during event)	be a Site Leader (Site leaders stay in one place and the students come to him/her.) At one of the following sites:	Storytelling (Bible story time) Bible Challenge
with Publicity	Opening/Closing each day	Crafts
with Registration (VBS week 8:15—10:00)	Storytelling (Bible story time)	Games (outdoors)
take a part in the Opening Skit	Bible Challenge	Snacks
be a "Gopher" during VBS hours	Crafts	
be a Pre-School Leader	Games (outdoors)	
be a Pre-School Helper	Snacks	
Name:	Phone:	
Email:		
Please place the completed form i	n the C & L Brandt or Lambert mailbox.	

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