



MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH - KELLER, TEXAS
Messiah Messenger

F.A.Q.'s

Rev. Thomas Chryst



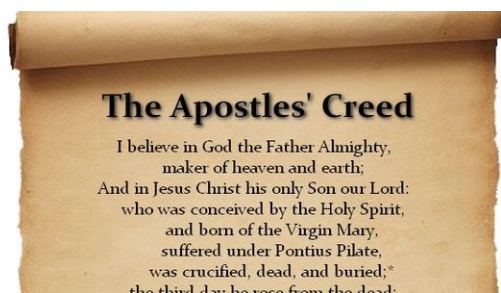
Q. Wouldn't it be possible to contract a virus via an infected person who has drunk of the communion cup prior to you? Drinking from the community cup seems to be the traditional and proper way. But does that potentially put me in harm's way? Does drinking from the individual cups remove some of the community aspect of the gift?

A. In its report on "[Theology and Practice of the Lord's Supper](#)," the Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations includes the following question and answer:

"Does it matter whether a congregation uses individual glasses or the common cup to distribute the consecrated wine? In the absence of a specific Scriptural mandate, either method of distribution, when performed in a reverent manner, is acceptable. Many Christians prefer the use of the common cup because of its symbolism as representative of the oneness of the body of Christ--the church--and because there is reason to believe that Christ used this method of distribution. Any decision in this area is to be marked by Christian liberty and charity."

Studies have shown that the risk of contracting illness or disease through the use of the common communion cup (properly wiped and handled) is quite small (though not, of course, non-existent). Those who are concerned about this possibility are certainly free to make use of the individual cup option, which is available in nearly all congregations today.

(The above Q&A, by the way, was written long before the current pandemic began)



Q. In this area, Baptists predominate. They believe that having the creed (Nicene or Apostle's) is at best superfluous when one has the Bible. How would you reply to this viewpoint?

A. A creed, in its most elementary meaning, is a statement of belief. It is what follows after the words "I believe...." For example, Paul wrote, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. It is with the heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Romans 10:9-10). The question which forces itself here is, is it "at best superfluous" to confess with your mouth "Jesus is Lord"? If the answer is, no, because that is what Scripture says, then we must respond by showing that there is nothing in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds that is anything less than what the Scripture itself says.

In discussing this issue with Christians who claim to be "non-creedal" (which cannot in fact be the case, if they are honest, because Christian hymns are principally a declaration of faith, in praise and in prayer), it is important to determine precisely what is the issue. Is the issue that a person rejects all creedal statements by Christians in principle as in and of themselves problematic, or is the issue that a creed is "man-made" and therefore in and of itself problematic? In the first instance, we must say that the Scriptures themselves not only contain numerous creedal statements by believers, but they exhort us to confess the faith. In the second instance, if a confession is completely in accord with Scripture, we can hardly claim that the content of the confession is merely "man-made" (1 Corinthians 12:1-2).

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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*

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. Thomas Chryst, Pastor

Rev. Jeremy McDonald, Vicar

www.messiahkeller.org



One of the many changes that was originally prompted by the pandemic was shifting the way we collect the offering. Already, a significant portion (some 40%?) of our offerings come in through online giving. So some changes were already afoot. But when Covid became a concern, the Board of Elders (along with myself), decided to stop passing the offering plate and instead put the plate “at the door” for members to utilize with less person-to-person contact.

I believe this was originally meant as a temporary measure, and it was assumed or envisioned that, along with all the other pandemic changes that were made, it would eventually be returned to “normal”. However, as we discussed the merits of each practice as well as the timing of it, it wasn’t as simple as we had assumed.

For one, practically, it did not seem that the placement of the plate and passing it or not passing it had much of an effect on the amount of giving. Which is, honestly, as it should be. If anything, our giving seemed to increase in the early days of the pandemic. Messiah is to be commended for this. Secondly, as we examined the matter, we learned that many other congregations had made a similar change and had decided not to go back to passing the plate. We also learned that passing the plate is not a tradition with a terribly long history in the Lutheran church, and that churches in various times and places had a wide variety of different practices for gathering offerings and gifts. So here is another case of “what is traditional for me” may not really be “what is traditional for the church”, at least in the longer view of history.

It seems the practice of “passing the plate” originated in our country in the 1800s. Prior to that, churches had many ways to raise money – from renting pews to state funding, to coin boxes and private donations of various types. What the pandemic had done was to force us, in a way, to examine this practice with a fresh set of eyes. Rather than doing what we have “always done” the way we had “always done it”, circumstances called us to re-evaluate. Some raised the positives, or pros, of passing the plate. A major one of these was as a teaching tool for children. Certainly our actions in church are powerful in teaching kids the importance of giving, the meaning of it, and to whom all our possessions truly belong. Indeed, “We give but Thine own!”

But others noted that the plate at the door is also visible, and that children can just as easily be taught the value of Christian giving if the plate is at the door. Another small positive about the plate at the door is it offers another opportunity for giving “on your way out” than if, under the old practice, for some reason you might have missed the plate that was passed or the time set aside for offering during the service.

Some raised possible negatives about passing the plate. Does passing the plate lend to a temptation that we give in order to “be seen” doing so? Certainly Jesus tells us that giving should be without regard for how others view or see us doing it. Even the right hand ought not know what the left hand is doing. Does passing the plate put forth an expectation that comes not from the gospel, but the law? Certainly it didn’t and doesn’t for many. But one considers the experience of the visitor. Also, we have heard of some churches addressing concerns from members who give electronically, and yet don’t want to be embarrassed when the plate goes by and they put nothing in. Some churches have even gone so far as to create little laminated cards for electronic givers to place in the plate, that say something like, “We give online”. This seemed like a bad idea to us, but it did make us rethink things.

We also found value in the “presentation of the offering” as a ceremonial recognition that we return these gifts to God out of the abundance he has given us. We plan to continue this. Certainly the Board and your Pastor mean in no way to condemn the old practice that has served us and many other congregations well. Certainly there is nothing intrinsically sinful about passing the plate. We see it as a matter of Christian freedom. Giving is commanded but “how?” is not. And so after grappling with this over the course of months (along with many other small changes and practices related to Covid), the Board has decided for now to keep receiving the offering at the door and yet continuing to ceremonially “present” the plate at the altar as part of our services. I don’t know that anyone has slammed the door shut on going back to the old way, but for the foreseeable future, we’ll see how this goes.

And one final word about Covid changes. We give thanks that for the most part, we are “back to normal”. And while the pandemic has brought many uncomfortable and sometimes tense situations and the uncertainty has made it difficult to know what is best – we give thanks to God that Messiah continues to keep our focus on the most precious and most important gifts God gives to us in the Word and Sacraments. What a blessing that we Christians are called to gather as a local congregation, an expression of the Body of Christ, and with our brothers and sisters here receive the treasures of heaven. May we never take these gifts for granted, even as we return a portion of our earthly treasures in thanksgiving and in support of the work God has given us to do at Messiah.

And I, as pastor, give thanks also for the Board of Elders who have worked “overtime” these many months, and wrestled with many difficult issues and taken their leadership responsibilities seriously. We know not everyone always agrees on decisions in the church, but thanks be to God for the relative peace and patience members have had with each other.



GOD IN MAN MADE MANIFEST

The season of Epiphany focuses on how God was made manifest in the flesh of Jesus. The church spends time hearing of the miracles, signs, and wonders of Jesus in the world. And this made plain to all that Jesus really is who He said He was. He is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the only begotten Son of the Father, in the flesh. For “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

It is revealed for all the world to see that Jesus is God in the flesh. It is made manifest by His words and His work, by what He said and by what He did. And these belong together, for “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Jesus is the Word and will of God in the flesh, that is, He is the walking, talking enactment of God’s Word.

It is no different for us. We are called not just to believe in God in hearts but also to trust in God in word and deed. As James wrote: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22), and again, “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? ... So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ... Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ... For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead” (James 2:14, 17–18, 26).

Our faith is lived out in works for our neighbor. Our trust in the Word and will of God is lived out not in word only but also in deed and in truth. In other words, the Epiphany of the Lord creates in us an epiphany of our faith in our works of obedience to God who commanded them. By this, our faith is made manifest to the world.

It is, as Luther wrote of faith: Faith is a divine work in us. It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God (John 1). It kills the old Adam and makes altogether different people, in heart and spirit and mind and powers, and it brings with it the Holy Spirit.

Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. And so it is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly. It does not ask whether there are good works to do, but before the question rises, it has already done them, and is always at the doing of them. He who does not these works is a faithless man. He gropes and looks about after faith and good works and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are, though he talks and talks, with many words about faith and good works.

Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. This confidence in God’s grace and knowledge of it makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and all His creatures. And this is the work of the Holy Spirit in faith. Hence a man is ready and glad, without compulsion, to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, in love and praise to God, who has shown him this grace. And thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate burning and shining from fire. Beware, therefore, of your own false notions and of the idle talkers, who would be wise enough to make decisions about faith and good works, and yet are the greatest fools. (*Preface to the Book of Romans*)

So, then, let our faith be active by God’s power in the Word through the Holy Spirit. And let then our faith be made manifest to the world by what this faith does: serving our neighbor – in church, in the family, and society – with the works of faith in time, talents, and treasures.

The Messiah Youth have been busy!!
They went rock climbing at the Summit Gym and also made lunches
for the homeless on MLK Day.



CHRIST ACADEMY SUMMER 2022

June 19 to July 2, 2022

Join the Tradition!

If you love the Lord and love attending church, Christ Academy is for you! It is a two-week seminary program for entering or current high school students. Use the link below to watch a video overview. The application process is now open. Please email Deaconess Buhler for questions or to inform her that you have applied for Christ Academy. Please email Deaconess Buhler that you have applied at deaconess.buhler@gmail.com.

Confirmed Boys sign up here ~ <https://www.ctsfw.edu/ctsfw-events/christ-academy/timothy-school/>.

Confirmed Girls sign up here ~ <https://www.ctsfw.edu/ctsfw-events/christ-academy/phoebe-school/>.

CHRIST ACADEMY 2021



The Voter's Assembly met on Sunday January 30th for the quarterly meeting.

Board/Officer elections was the major topic. See the list of new or returning officers or board members.

Dave Schultz has agreed to work as the project officer for an entrance access project funded by a special donation from John and Vera Sweet. The major goal of the project is increase parking access for elderly and movement impaired members and visitors.

The School Board has two items of news. First our plan to install a fence for the soccer field between the field and Whitley Road and to the north of the field is moving forward with a request to the City of Keller. The Keller City Council will consider the request at their February 15th meeting. And in more exciting news, early enrollment for next fall ended on January 31st with a record enrollment of 56. (I've looked back through our records for 2014 and this is a record re-enrollment for end of January.)

The Board of Evangelism is working to expand the Swaddling Clothes Ministry to more than once a month. See Eric Weber to help!

The elders asked for the approval of the voters to fund a Vicar in the FY23 budget which will allow Messiah to apply for another vicar. The voters approved the motion to fund the Vicarage.

All boards are working on the budget using templates provided by Bill Stone. Great process Bill! On a great note of participation we had over 50% voters present for the October and January Voter's Assembly. Please look over the list of Boards and see how you can participate! To see the full list click on this link ~ [List of Officers and Board Members 2022](#).

Here is the list of newly appointed Officers and Board Members—

CHURCH OFFICERS:

Secretary

Bill Brandt

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP:

Chairman

Bill Stone

BOARD OF ELDERS:

Vice Chairman

Neil Gessling

Elder

John Sweet

Elder

Andrew Latham

Elder

Lloyd King

Elder

David Schultz

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Chairman

Paul Lara

Trustee

Grover Downing

Trustee

Zack Snyder

SCHOOL BOARD:

Chairman

Brian Sifford

School Board

Bill Brandt

BOARD OF EVANGELISM:

Bruce Dana

Dates to Remember

February 11th - Youth Dance Lessons—Fellowship Hall

April 15 - Good Friday Service

February 24 - New Member's Class

April 16 - Holy Saturday Service

February 25 - Y 4 Life Summit Conference

April 17 - Easter Sunday

March 7 - Visit from Seminary "Kantorei" Choir (Evening Prayer Service 7pm)

April 22 - MLCA History Fair

March 2 - Ash Wednesday

April 29 - MLCA "Black and Gold" Auction

April 14 - Maundy Thursday Service

May 1 - Youth Confirmation, 10:45 Service

May 12 - MLCA Evening of Music & Art



MLCA celebrated National Lutheran Schools Week recently. This year's theme is "In All Things" and is inspired by Colossians 1:17-20: "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church...[He reconciles] to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."

For our chapel offerings for this week – we collected cereal boxes. Our MLCA families donated over 200 boxes of cereal! All will be donated to the Keller Community Storehouse. To make the collecting more exciting...we topped it off by having a cereal box domino challenge!

We had a scavenger hunt (put together by our 1st grade teacher – Mrs. Kris Carter) for all Kindergarten – 7th graders. They had a blast running throughout the hallways looking for clues! And they got popcorn at the end for a special treat! For the entire week (and this week too since we had snow days)...we had a spirit week with each day having a different theme. The students go crazy for the opportunity to get out of their uniforms! The teachers had a little bit of fun too 😊. On Tuesday (the MLCA Spirit Day) – we will also held a Pep Rally at the end of the day to celebrate our Boys and Girls Basketball teams and their wonderful coach – Mrs. Annesly Lambert. Check out our little Pep Squad that included our preschoolers!

We finished up National Lutheran Schools Week with a community service/outreach project led by Mrs. Amanda Rothe that included a performance for the residents of Whitely Place by the 5th – 7th grade strings class. Here are some fun pictures from the week!

Monday – Crazy Hat/Sock/Hair Day

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1zrtcuxxbw0gdmp/AACBN0yINhdD0ofILZ1NsEVca?dl=0>

Tuesday – Favorite Sports Team Day

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/r08610ug8swh4dk/AACA4ld9mQK1ch4rwj2JeeNea?dl=0>

Wednesday – Career Dress Up Day

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2l80thm4iero0ok/AADzWjHTy6ek52Xt43H6ztira?dl=0>

Monday – Superhero & Princess Day

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/4rzlxl9mcvxs6o/AAB9l7wjr1PkoZIDHD6ssLsla?dl=0>

Tuesday – MLCA Spirit Day

This is a video that our “vlogger” did for us for career day!

<https://youtu.be/UqcPkkRb4rc>

Our 1st graders also celebrated February 2, 2022 (2-2-22)

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/vprza1zbxkss7r1/2-2-22.jpg?dl=0>

And our Kindergarten had their 100th Day of School!

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/puhspet6fskt6e3/100th%20Day%20Kindergarten.jpg?dl=0>

Tuesday—Prep Rally Pics !!

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/d4mqsign3jpnucu/AABEpck8umcawWSod20pCiPVa?dl=0>

MLCA GIRLS AND BOYS BASKET BALL TEAM PREP RALLY PICS!

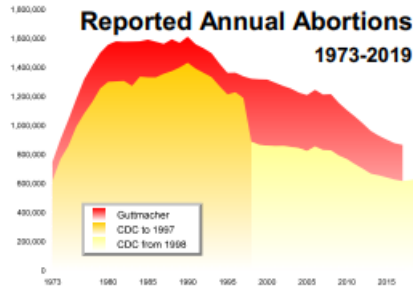


ABORTION statistics

United States Data and Trends

1973	744,610	615,831
1974	898,570	763,476
1975	1,034,170	854,853
1976	1,177,300	988,247
1977	1,316,700	1,079,430
1978	1,409,400	1,157,776
1979	1,497,470	1,251,921
1980	1,553,890	1,297,606
1981	1,577,340	1,300,760
1982	1,573,920	1,303,980
1983	1,575,000	1,268,987
1984	1,577,180	1,333,521
1985	1,588,550	1,328,570
1986	1,574,000	1,328,112
1987	1,559,110	1,353,671
1988	1,590,750	1,371,285
1989	1,566,900	1,396,658
1990	1,608,400	1,429,247
1991	1,556,510	1,388,937
1992	1,528,930	1,359,146
1993	1,495,000	1,330,414
1994	1,423,000	1,267,415
1995	1,359,400	1,210,883
1996	1,360,160	1,225,937
1997	1,335,000	1,186,039
1998	1,319,000	884,273*
1999	1,314,800	861,789*
2000	1,312,990	857,475*
2001	1,291,000	853,485*
2002	1,269,000	854,122*
2003	1,250,000	848,163*
2004	1,222,100	839,226*
2005	1,206,200	820,151*
2006	1,242,200	846,181*
2007	1,209,440	827,609*
2008	1,212,350	825,564*
2009	1,151,400	789,116*
2010	1,102,470	765,651*
2011	1,058,490	730,322*
2012	1,011,000	699,202*
2013	958,700	664,435*
2014	926,190	652,639*
2015	899,500	638,169*
2016	874,100	623,471*
2017	862,320	612,719*
2018	871,806§	619,591*
2019-21	886,677§	629,898*

§ NRIC projection for calculation



There are two basic sources on abortion data in the U.S.: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) publishes yearly, but relies on voluntary reports from state health departments (and New York City, Washington, D.C.). It has been missing data from California, New Hampshire, and at least one other state since 1998.

- The Guttmacher Institute (GI) contacts abortion clinics directly for data but does not survey every year.
- Because it surveys clinics directly and includes data from all fifty states, most researchers believe Guttmacher's numbers to be more reliable, though Guttmacher still believes it may miss some abortions.
- Both the CDC and Guttmacher show significant recent drops and sustained declines over the last 25 years.
- Total abortions dropped 28.8% from 1998 to 2019 with the CDC, and fell 46.4% from 1990 to 2017 with GI.
- Total abortions fell below 1 million for the first time in the 2013 GI count and have continued downward to 862,320 in the most recent GI figures for 2017.
- The **abortion rate** for 2017 for GI was 13.5 abortions for every 1,000 women of reproductive age (15-44), less than half that of 1981 (29.3) and lower than when abortion was legalized in the U.S. in 1973 (16.3).
- GI says there were 18.3 abortions for every 100 pregnancies ending in live birth or abortion in 2016, 18.4 for 2017, lower **abortion ratios** than any since 1972.
- Guttmacher says that abortion "providers" have dropped from a high of 2,918 in 1982 to 1,587 in 2017.
- According to the CDC, the percentage performed with chemical abortifacients like mifepristone rose from 9.6% in 2004 to 43.7% in 2019.

The Consequences of Roe v. Wade

63,459,781
Total abortions since 1973

Based on numbers reported by the Guttmacher Institute 1973-2017, with 3% added for GI estimated possible 3-5% undercount for 1973-2014. Another 12,000 per year added for 2015-2021 for abortions from "providers" GI says it may have missed in 2015-2017 counts. 1/22

Life Thoughts ~ Praise God! Some very important **life-affirming legislation** was passed in **Texas** during 2021. The first was the **Texas Heartbeat Act, SB 8**. The bill passed the Texas Legislature with bipartisan support, was signed into law by Gov. Greg Abbott on May 19, 2021 and went into effect on September 1, 2021.

This new law requires physicians to check for a baby's heartbeat and inform the mother if the presence of a heartbeat is detected. Once a heartbeat is detected, usually between 6-8 weeks of gestational age, **the doctor must take all necessary steps to protect the life of the child.** The bill creates a civil liability for aiding and abetting an abortion, so an individual may bring a *civil suit* against a doctor performing abortions. The woman may not be sued for seeking an abortion, and perhaps some fathers will now have the necessary tool to save *their* baby's life.

At the same time, the Legislature appropriated **\$100 million for the highly successful Alternatives to Abortion program** over the next two years. That program will assist 150,000 women with unplanned pregnancies **each year**. Services continue for three years after childbirth.

Life-affirming law number 2—SB 4 ~ On December 2, 2021 **the Texas ban on mail-order chemical abortions went into effect** after Governor Greg Abbott signed it into law last summer.

Half of all abortions done at-or-less-than 8 weeks of gestation are now medication abortions using the abortion pills, RU 486

(mifepristone) and misoprostol. The drugs are labeled for use up to 11 weeks of gestation, but the FDA has removed **all** restrictions on these drugs as a response to the COVID "crisis". **Anyone** can get these pills online or over the phone and deliver their dead baby at home—alone. No doctor, no exam---what could go wrong? By mandating that a woman see a doctor and be examined before receiving the medication, the Texas law protects women from the risks of unsupervised use of abortion pills, including:

- Hemorrhage or death from an undiagnosed ectopic pregnancy,
- Risk to future pregnancy by undiagnosed Rh factor,
- Hemorrhaging and infection from use of abortion pills later in pregnancy, and
- Use of abortion pills for forced abortions by sex traffickers.

We Christians care about babies, moms, and dads! We Christians care about ALL human life from fertilization to natural death. It would be wonderful if no one wanted an abortion ever again; if no one contemplated or committed suicide ever again; but this will never happen in our sinful world. Jesus' teachings about chastity, abstinence, marriage, faithfulness, kindness, generosity, our *worthiness as God's beloved children*, and so much more are the message of the church—the body of Christ. Be informed. Be gospel-motivated voices for Life! Be the church! To view the pdf on Abortion Statistics go to this link [National Right To Life Abortion Stats](#).

Written by Barb Geistfeld, Trinity Life Team Leader and LFL Regional Director of Texas.

Over 160 LCMS members from many Texas congregations participated in the Life March to the Texas Capitol on January 19th. St. Paul Austin was the hosting congregation. Plan on attending the Life March to the Capitol 2023. God willing, “Roe” will soon go. However, the fight is far from over. We are living during a profound revolt against God's moral law. A post Roe America must honor and reward modesty and purity. Come join the fight and pray, pray, pray. May God have mercy on us all.



LIFE ESSAY CONTEST & Y4 LIFE SUMMIT

[2022 Lutherans For Life Essay Contest](#)

The Lutherans For Life Council of Federation Presidents sponsors an essay contest each year for students in two grade categories: 6th-8th and 9th-12th. This contest is available for students in all states who attend a Lutheran school or a Lutheran church. Click on the link above for more information.

[Y4Life Summit - Concordia University Texas](#)

- Y4Life Summit is February 25th-27th! This is a Leadership Retreat open to all college and high school students and their Y4Life Teams! Attend the Y4Life Summit at Concordia University Texas and learn how YOU can respond to life issues with a Gospel motivated voice. Register by February 1, 2022. Click on the link above for more information.

High School Students March for Life

Deaconess Buhler

