

# Messenger

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## UPDATE Addition Edition

### From the Desk of Rev. Arturo Mendez

Greetings in the name of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As you know we start our First Divine Service on Feb 5th of 2023 and thankfully we have a great response from some E.S.L. students, I'm still working on them to teach the Catechism and teaching about the Lords Supper, Praying that Soon they will be able to Partake the Table of the Lord, During this time, of Lenten I pray to God our Father, that some more people be touched to Word Proclaimed, and be able to plant the seed in their Hearts, and to be saved by the Power of the Word, we are living very hard times, where humanity is increasingly separated from the Word of God, it is important that people know that the Church and the word that is Proclaimed for them, is an opportunity of Hope and Eternal Life, let us pray to God, to continue using us as His instruments, and that whenever we have the opportunity we can share what Christ has done and continues to do for us, let us thank God for his beloved Son Jesus who has saved us from the damnation of Eternal Death, let us all rejoice so that Together we rejoice in this Lenten, with the Hope that Christ will rise for the promise that has us together with the Father of Eternal Life.

### The Lutheran Way - It Makes A Difference?

*(An Introduction, part 2)*

Back in the early 1980s a book was written entitled *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance* (David S. Luecke, Concordia Publishing House, 1988). The author, pastor diligently attempted to separate style, or what we might label as "practice," from substance, or what we might define as "doctrine" or "teaching." Okay, a lot of big fancy words need to be defined here. As always, sometimes when discussions begin we need to define terms so that we are understanding what each other is saying. Here we are defining "style" as the way something is presented. In the fashion industry we know that "styles" change quite often, and we see that in the different clothes which are being presented. We are defining "substance" as that thing which is under what is presented. In other words, no matter the "style" of clothing, the fact is clothing is a material which is worn in one fashion or another. We are defining "practice" as how we conduct ourselves, either in our lives or in our Divine Service. And we are defining "doctrine" as what we believe, teach and confess. And yes, we use all of those terms, "believe, teach, and confess" because each is important. We believe something, not blindly, but as Christians our faith is in a historic person, Jesus. We teach about Jesus,

and we confess our faith in Him. One more definition is important as we will hear, and that is the word "rhetoric." Perhaps you have heard of a "rhetorical question" meaning a question which is asked without any expectation of a response. We are defining "rhetoric" as the unspoken statement behind what is being presented. In other words, when you look at a piece of art, what does that art work say to you? What is its meaning? We will have more definitions as we go.

Last time we talked about style and substance, about practicing what you preach and about talking the talk and walking the walk. What does this mean? Perhaps you grew up and your mother told you, "Practice what you preach." That was her way of reminding you that if you say something, then you better follow through with what you have said. If you say you are a good person, you had better be a good person. If you make a promise, you had better keep it. A few years ago the statement was "If you're gonna talk the talk, then you better walk the walk," meaning you had better do what you say, that is let your actions confirm your words. Of course, as memory serves me, this may have had to do with some bit of bragging by one or another.

Today I like to use the illustration of a hand and glove. A five-fingered glove is made for a five-fingered hand. If you change the glove, it does not fit so you have to make an adjustment to the hand. Likewise if your hand changes, you have to make a change to the glove. If your glove has only four fingers, it does not fit, and although I would not suggest it as such, the way to make your glove fit would be to lose a finger. And if you lose a finger, for whatever reason, your glove no longer fits thus you need to make a change to your glove. This analogy works for style and substance and more to the point for doctrine and practice. We believe that doctrine and practice go hand in hand such that if you change one, you are automatically changing the other, or if you change the other, then you change the one. So, if I change my practice, my Divine Service and how we do that thing we call worship, then I change my doctrine, that is what I believe. And if I change what I believe, then I need to change my practice accordingly.

Before we move on, let us define two more words, "worship" and "Divine Service." "Worship" is often defined as something we do for God. We are the actors, and God is the audience. "Divine Service" is defined simply as God's service to us. God is the one acting, and we are the ones being acted upon, given to, done to, etc. More on this next time.