

Breakaway Sessions

North Dakota State University // Fargo, ND

June 29 - July 2, 2021

Session A

// From Invisible to Indispensable 4 LIFE

Michelle Bauman

Invisibility would be an awesome superpower, wouldn't it? The ability to disappear, especially during embarrassing moments, sounds ideal. But what about the times we don't want to be invisible? What about the times the world averts its eyes from us because of our confession, abilities, or circumstances? Society cancels those who refuse to conform, but God declares every life indispensable because of Christ's redeeming work! How can we be certain of this? And how do we share this message with others? Join this session to find out how you can be a Gospel-motivated voice 4 LIFE!

Michelle Bauman is with Lutherans for life, Y4Life, and can be reached at michelle@y4life.org.

// Get Out of the Cave!

Jocelyn Benson

"Do you believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness? Yes. Let it be done for you as you believe." God's forgiveness is true, good, and beautiful—and it is real! Using Plato's cave metaphor, we will discuss ways the world tries to convince us not only that the world's shadows are real, but also that God's reality is too overwhelming to experience. God created us to experience His truth, goodness, and beauty, and through Baptism gives us weapons to walk away from the world's shadows. In this session, we will explore how the sanctity of life, biblical manhood and womanhood, and marriage are true, good, and beautiful gifts God has given us, but that the world seeks to shadow.

Mrs. Benson is with Wittenberg Academy and can be reached at mrsbenson@wittenbergacademy.org.

// Office of the Keys– Divine Call

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Rev. Bertsch is the North Dakota District President and a member at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Minot, ND. He can be reached at lcms.nd.dp@outlook.com.

// Who am I?

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When people look at you, what do they see? When what's expected of us crashes into what we actually do, the mess left behind very rarely matches up with the person we wish we were. It leaves us feeling lost, worthless, and without a place. When we carry all that baggage around, expecting someone to actually love us becomes an exercise in schizophrenia or a lifetime spent in fear of people finding out the truth. Your identity runs deeper than what you can do. In a world where identity is everything, God calls you His child.

Rev. Goodman is the pastor at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church in San Antonio, TX. He's also the Content Executive for Higher Things and one of the Plenary speakers for this conference. He can be reached at hgoodman01@gmail.com.

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// Serving in the Military: For Christ and Country

Rev. Dr. Steven Hokana

“Scripture honors those who serve. We know of centurions Cornelius and Julius, Abraham taking up arms to protect his own, and David the “warrior king.” Martin Luther wrote about the vocation of military service in “Whether Soldiers Too Can Be Saved.” If you are thinking about joining the military or know someone serving, you know it is a wonderful vocation. Service to God and country will challenge you. By grasping tightly to the Cross of Christ, you will find that the military is a place you can grow. You can serve in the military and thrive as a Lutheran Christian.

Rev. Dr. Hokana is with the Ministry to the Armed Forces of the LCMS. He can be reached at

seven.hokana@lcms.org.

// 3 S's - Sons, Sacrifice, and Substitutes

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Rev. Voth is the pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Grand Forks, ND and can be reached at

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Session B

// How do I find a New Church?

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// The "Talk"

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You know, the "talk." The birds and the bees. Ok, maybe not that, but close! Love and marriage. This time way less awkward than when your parents talk about it—this time by a pastor! You date. You marry. When? How to date? Who to date? Who to marry? We will consider these burning questions and more not only from the Sixth Commandment and the light of Scripture, but also, most importantly, we will look to Jesus (the true Husband) who saves the Church (the true Bride). His forgiveness has everything to do with everything, even love and marriage.

Rev. Fenker is the pastor at Bethlehem & Immanuel Lutheran Churches in Bremen KS. He's also the Dean of Theology for Higher Things and the Chaplain at this conference. He can be reached at aaronfenker@higherthings.org.

// Are Public School Kids Going To hell?

Erica Jacoby

It's time to talk about your education in this breakaway, even if you don't attend a public school. What are they teaching teachers to teach these days and are students really learning how to learn? Are you being taught how to think or are you being taught what to think? Let's take a look at why your school and teachers are

the way they are. The Bible and Luther, the chief teacher of our church, have lots to say about getting a good education, even— gasp!—in a public school.

Erica Jacoby is the Executive Director of Higher Things and a member at Summit of Peace Lutheran Church in Thornton, CO. She can be reached at erica@higherthings.org.

// Catechisms Galore

Rev. Robert Mayes

You know Luther's Small Catechism. Hopefully you've at least heard of Martin Luther's Large Catechism. But were you aware that there were many other Lutheran catechisms in the 1500s that were all different from each other? In this breakaway, you get to explore some of these lesser known catechisms and learn what they say about the Office of the Keys and the forgiveness of sins. Warning: There may be Latin and German words ahead, like claves or Schlüsselamt. And just maybe, you'll appreciate Luther's Small Catechism even more when you leave.

Rev. Mayes is the pastor of Immanuel, Zion, and St. John Lutheran Churches in Beemer and Wisner NE. He can be reached at revmayes@hotmail.com.

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Rev. Mohr is the pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Vandalia, IL. He can be reached at pastor@holycrossvandalia.org.

// Watermarked, now what?

Rev. Randy Sturzenbecher

Watered and Worded in Holy Baptism, now what? What comes after God makes us alive in Christ? Is it working to keep the Law? Is it being a better person? Is it (fill in whatever you think God wants from you)? God gives Baptism and He keeps giving. He gives us Jesus. He gives us a life-changing reality: “You are forgiven!” Join us to find out more about private confession, where you receive Jesus. Join us to see the joy in confessing all your hurt, your heartache, your stubborn, sinful, selfishness to Jesus and receiving those blood bought words, “You are forgiven!”

Rev. Sturzenbecher is the pastor at Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church in Black Hawk, SD. He also serves on the Higher Things Board of Directors and is the Catechist for this conference. He can be reached at dslcpastor@divineshep.org.

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Session C

// Further Up and Further Into Narnia

Rev. Anthony Dodgers

So, you've read *The Chronicles of Narnia*. You've seen some movie versions. You know Aslan is supposed to be Jesus and the White Witch is the devil. But are these just simple allegories? Maybe the land of Narnia deserves another visit. We'll take a closer look at what C.S. Lewis was trying to do with these books and where he got many of ideas. We'll revisit some beloved characters as well as some more obscure themes. For example, what do the planets have to do with Christianity? Why do the children leave Narnia while hunting a white stag? Or are there problems with Lewis's theology? Whether you love him or hate him, this is the place to talk about this talented author and his classic books.

Rev. Dodgers is the pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Charlotte, IA and can be reached at pastordodgers@gmail.com.

// My Church and Others

Rev. Nathan Dudley

You Lutherans think that you're right and everyone else is wrong. You probably think you're the only ones who will be in heaven. You've likely heard it. Is it true? How do we see ourselves in the greater world of Christianity? How should we think about other churches that confess Jesus Christ but teach some things incorrectly? How much false doctrine is too much false doctrine? And at what point do we consider a church body not to be Christian at all? Come, and together we'll find the answers in the Bible.

Rev. Dudley is the pastor at St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church in Clarinda, IA and can be reached at ndudley@iowatelecom.net.

// Go In Peace

Rev. Aaron Filipek

What is Private Confession & Absolution? Do Lutherans practice it? I thought it was only something Roman Catholics do? Confessing my sins to my pastor seems scary. Why should I do it? How should I do it? What should I confess? If I confess my sins, will my pastor think differently about me? This breakaway gives answers to the many questions you might have. We will review Private Confession & Absolution using Luther's Small Catechism. We will also walk through the rite of Private Confession & Absolution so you know what to expect when you go to Private Confession. It is a gift. Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace.

Rev. Filipek is the pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Gwinner, ND and can be reached at pateraaron@gmail.com.

// Generation Z Survival Guide: Spoiler alert; It's all about the Gospel!

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One out of five Americans belongs to Gen Z and yours is the first generation in American history whose the majority doesn't identify as Christian. In fact, most of you believe that there is no one true "religion." What does the Church need to do to keep the youth we have in the Church, and what more do we need to do to reach those outside of it? Let's talk about this generation's unique challenges and opportunities and why the Gospel just might flourish in spite of us!

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// Youth Ministry 101

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Thinking about putting together a youth program can seem daunting. Let's be honest, if you were asked to build something from scratch with immediate success, it WOULD be daunting! There are a lot of building blocks that go into a healthy, sustainable, safe youth program. Crysten Sanchez, former youth coordinator at a church in Iowa, will walk you through the many pieces of the puzzle to do just that!

Crysten Sanchez is the Events Executive for Higher Things and a member at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Mount Vernon, IA. She can be reached at csanchez@higherthings.org.

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Samuel Smith

Have you made Jesus Lord of your life? "Hey dude, you're a Christian, what's the rapture?" "Lutherans and Catholics are basically the same right?" Come hang out with the Vicar, and learn how who Jesus is answers the above questions. Come and see why the Lutheran confessions put forward the faith of the bible. Come see how we are saved, and learn how these beautiful little words, "for you," make Jesus a Lutheran, Church something awesome, life worth living now, and the bible something worth reading. *Samuel Smith is a member at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Broadlands, IL and can be reached at samuel.smith@ctsfw.edu. He is also the Higher Things Summer Vicar.*

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