

# Breakaway Sessions

Concordia University Texas // Austin, TX

July 27-30, 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 Gospelmotivated voice 4 LIFE!

*Michelle Bauman is with Lutherans for life, Y4Life, and can be reached at [michelle@y4life.org](mailto: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](mailto:mrsbenson@wittenbergacademy.org).*

### // The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Rev. Paul Egger

Freed by Jesus' blood. Freed into what? Freed to face the dragon? beasts? pandemics, chaos and an uncertain future? And why is Jesus wearing Nikes? John's testimony of Jesus gets him exiled to a prison island. Here, God reveals past, present and future to him and to you. God will bless us — HE PROMISES — as we read, hear and take to heart these words — because the time is near. In this breakaway we will discuss major victory themes from the Book of Revelation. God will open heaven for you to gaze in. And He shows you Jesus there and here... Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty.

*Rev. Paul Egger is the pastor at St John's Lutheran Church in Galva, IA and can be reached at [pdegger@hotmail.com](mailto:pdegger@hotmail.com).*

### // The Days that were Formed for Me: Suicide Prevention, Distinctly Lutheran

Deac. Tiffany Manor

Earthly life is full of suffering. Many people, including Christians, are tempted to end suffering through suicide. Join Deaconess Tiffany Manor, director of LCMS Life Ministry in this session to learn about suicide prevention that is distinctly Lutheran. We will discuss how we, as the Body of Christ, care for everyone, providing mercy throughout all of life, accompanying one another through the suffering of this world, and bearing one another's burdens to the end of earthly life--the day of natural death that our Lord formed (Psalm 139:16).

*Deaconess Tiffany Manor is the Director of Life Ministry of the LCMS and can be reached at [tiffany.manor@lcms.org](mailto:tiffany.manor@lcms.org).*

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## // Confess

Rev. Gary Piepkorn

My sins or my faith? Yes. There is significant confusion as to what the word “confess” actually means. Confess means simply “to speak with.” Christians “confess with” the Bible. Christians agree with and say what the Scripture says about our sin and sinfulness as well as what God has done about that sin. Many also misunderstand the difference between “confess” and “witness.” It is much easier and better to simply confess one’s faith. Then the Holy Spirit does the work that we cannot. We will discuss some really good hints as to what to say, when to say it, and how to say it. It is far easier than you think. Thus, Christians confess.

*Rev. Gary Piepkorn is the pastor at Faith In Christ Lutheran Church, Portales, NM and can be reached at [prpiepkorn@yucca.net](mailto:prpiepkorn@yucca.net)*

## // The Talk: What the Bible says about sex and why it says it

Rev. Joel Shaltanis

God’s Word and our culture say very different things on the topic of sex. Why? Does God want to deny us pleasure? Does being a Christian mean you are supposed to be repressed and uptight? We will look at what God’s Word says about the good gift of sex and its proper use, but also the reasons why it says what it does. [Hint: God wants you and your family to be blessed.] We’ll also discuss some of the myths and lies our culture tells about sex and leave time for Q&A.

*Rev. Joel Shaltanis is the pastor at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Plano, TX and can be reached at [pastorshaltanis@yahoo.com](mailto:pastorshaltanis@yahoo.com). He is also the Catechist for this conference.*

## // Will You Marry Me? What to look for in a future spouse

Rev. James Woelmer

What is the ultimate purpose of dating? What are some good qualities to look for in a future spouse? What are some warning signs while dating? What can we learn from Christ and the Church? What does the Bible say? We will discuss taking dating seriously. Your faith in Christ and your understanding of the Small Catechism matter when dating. Pray that God opens the door for you to find a good and faithful spouse.

*Rev. James Woelmer is the pastor at Faith Lutheran Church, Plano, TX and can be reached at [jwoelmer@verizon.net](mailto:jwoelmer@verizon.net).*

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## Session B

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

Erica Jacoby

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!

*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](mailto:erica@higherthings.org).*

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## // Talking Pictures

Dr. Jacob Youmans

"Movies are everywhere—at the theater, at home, on our computers, even in our pockets! Our culture's fascination with the power of movies brings us together in a shared experience. But did you ever think that watching the latest action-adventure flick with a friend could provide a truly unique opportunity to witness about your Christian faith? In Talking Pictures, Jacob Youmans takes us on a journey to the movies through the lens of ministry. He examines the ways in which we can see God at work in virtually any movie, and shows us practical and compelling ways to connect the power of movies to the Gospel message."

Dr. Jacob Youmans is a professor at Concordia University Texas and can be reached at [jacob.youmans@concordia.edu](mailto:jacob.youmans@concordia.edu).

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## Session C

### // One Song, Many Voices: How the organ shapes our singing

Dr. Joshua Chai

Is the organ still useful in modern worship? Why even sing at all in church? Is it important how we sing? How different is the organ than the piano? How does an organist encourage singing without singing a note himself? Whether you're interested in playing the organ and have had years of experience, or whether you're just interested in how an instrument so central to our song can shape how we sing (maybe even without our realizing it!), This session will discuss the role of the organ in worship and identify some basic strategies for encouraging congregational song.

*Dr. Joshua Chai is the University Cantor at Concordia University Texas and can be reached at [joshua.chai@concordia.edu](mailto:joshua.chai@concordia.edu). He is also the Conference Organist for this conference.*

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### // Absolution in the Old Testament - Jonah

Rev. Jason M. Kaspar

Yes, the Old Testament Christians were forgiven, too. In the book of Jonah, we find a failure of a prophet of the Lord in the northern kingdom of Israel. Jonah flees from his task to preach in Nineveh, but still, the Lord uses him to deliver forgiveness to Nineveh and teaches Jonah to receive it himself. We will discover that ourselves as we struggle with our own discomfort with God's generous mercy toward others.

*Rev. Jason M. Kaspar is the pastor at Mt Calvary Lutheran Church and Preschool and can be reached at [Jason.Kaspar@CTSFW.edu](mailto:Jason.Kaspar@CTSFW.edu).*

### // Building a Bridge

Lynda Nix

For all the talk today about diversity and inclusion, there's an ugly little truth that most people don't want to admit: It's still easier to be around people who are like us. Let's face it—if your language, cultural values, religion, interests, or abilities are not the same as another person's, you don't have as much in common and it takes more work to really get to know and understand him or her. How can we bridge that gap and build relationships with people who are not like us, both inside and outside the church? Special application will be made to deaf ministry and relationships between hearing and deaf people. This breakaway can be taught in ASL for the deaf.

*Lynda Nix is a member at Christ Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, SD and can be reached at [Lynda.Nix@k12.sd.us](mailto:Lynda.Nix@k12.sd.us). She is also one of the ASL Interpreters for this conference.*

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## // Jesus Is Your Anchor

Rev. Tab Ottmers

Hebrews 2:1 - "Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it." Life can get pretty "foggy" sometimes and you can get blown off course. Like a boat in heavy fog, sometimes in life you can lose your bearings. What keeps us anchored? Hebrew 6:19-20 "We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul...JESUS!" Jesus is our anchor in his word and sacraments. When the fog is thick and you might think you're alone, Jesus is there for you. We will explore the ways the scriptures speak of Jesus as an anchor.

*Rev. Tab Ottmers is the pastor at Immanuel LCMS, Fairview TX and can be reached at [pastor tab ottmers@att.net](mailto:pastor_tab_ottmers@att.net).*

## // Lions, and Dragons, and Lambs, Oh

### My: Worship and Baptism in Revelation

Rev. Philip Schielke

Revelation is probably the most misunderstood book of the Bible, filled with all kinds of strange creatures, terrifying catastrophes, and cosmic events. However, Revelation is really about Christ's presence with His Church which faithfully witnesses about Him in the midst of suffering and persecution. Revelation depicts God's baptized people worshipping Jesus, the Lion of Judah, who is also the Lamb. The dragon, though fierce, is utterly defeated. Come learn why one scholar says, "The Revelation of St. John may well be the most evangelistic book of the entire Bible."

*Rev. Philip Schielke is the pastor at Victory in Christ Lutheran Church in Newark, TX and can be reached at [pastor@viclutheranchurch.org](mailto:pastor@viclutheranchurch.org).*

## // Jesus Christ is Lutheran.

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](mailto:samuel.smith@ctsfw.edu). He is also the Higher Things Summer Vicar.*

## // The Divine Serve-Us

Rev. Jeffrey Ware

So you visited your friend's church. You heard the praise band, felt the excitement, and saw the show. Now you're wondering why your church seems to be stuck in the 16th century. Why is your church so different? Are Lutherans really that behind the times, or is there another reason why Lutherans do what we do in worship?

*Rev. Jeffrey Ware is the pastor at All Saints Lutheran Church in Charlotte, NC and can be reached at [revware@outlook.com](mailto:revware@outlook.com). He is also the Chaplain for this conference.*

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## Session D

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#### Jonah

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## // Born That Way?

Rev. Joel Shaltanis

Can you be gay and Christian? Is it a choice or are we preprogrammed? Is it contrary to nature, or perfectly normal? What do I say to a classmate who identifies as LGBT? Can I hate the sin but love the sinner? There are a lot of questions surrounding homosexuality. This breakaway will speak the truth in love by sharing what Scripture teaches on the subject as well as offering some helpful and compassionate ways of thinking about a temptation most of us do not experience and cannot fully understand.

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## Session E

### // Masculine and Feminine

Rev. Paul Doellinger

Have you heard that the patriarchy is an oppressive social structure that must be dismantled? That women are oppressed by an overarching toxic masculinity that must be overcome? That a woman can do anything a man can do, and vice versa? What does God have to say about all of this? God's Word tells us everything we need to know about what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman. In this session we'll discuss Biblical Masculinity and Biblical Femininity as it is revealed to us in Christ and what that means for us Christians who seek to live as men and women in this world.

*Rev. Paul Doellinger is the pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Cassopolis, MI and can be reached at [paul.doellinger@gmail.com](mailto:paul.doellinger@gmail.com).*

### // How to Avoid Wearing Masks

Rev. Tim Eckert

Most of us are sick and tired of COVID and wearing masks. But there are other masks, invisible ones, that we like to wear sometimes: a Christian mask at church, a respectful mask around those in authority, and a "look at me I'm cool" mask with our friends. After all, Paul said be all things to all people, right? Maybe that's not exactly what he meant. We'll talk about the pressure to display a certain image and how to burn your masks and show who God made you to be in Christ. This breakaway can be signed by the presenter for deaf attendees.

*Rev. Tim Eckert is the pastor of Word of God Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids, IA and can be reached at [deaflutheran@q.com](mailto:deaflutheran@q.com). He is also one of the ASL Interpreters for this conference, and works with the Lutheran Deaf Mission Society.*

### // From the Strife of This Life to Christ's

### Joy Immortal - Fall in Love with

### Lutheran Hymnody

Rev. Chris Hull

Who has four thumbs and loves singing and discussing Lutheran hymnody? Pastor Chris Hull and the Bach of Tomball, Lynea Sander! Do you love Lutheran Hymns? Awesome, keep up the good work; the devil hates your guts for it. Do you not love Lutheran hymns? You're hashtag blessed, because after this breakaway, you will be infatuated with them. From Gerhardt and Luther, to Starke and Resch, we will talk about how Lutheran hymns teach us about the Gospel, preach the Gospel to us, and assure us of who we are in Christ as we go through the strife of this life to the joys of heaven immortal. It's gonna be fun times!

*Rev. Chris Hull is the pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Tomball, TX and can be reached at [luther1546@gmail.com](mailto:luther1546@gmail.com). He's also one of the plenary speakers for this conference.*

### // 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](mailto:erica@higherthings.org).*

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## // The Illuminati, the Secret Society and the Truth

Rev. Arturo Mendez

Have you ever seen the protractor and compass sign on the back of a car or truck and wondered what it means? Have you heard people talk about the Illuminati and wanted to know more about who they are, where they come from, and what their rituals are like? In this breakaway you will learn about the Masonic Lodge its roots and history, including their beliefs about the Lord Jesus Christ. Pastor Arturo Mendez is a former Mason and a current Lutheran Pastor in Houston. Come and learn all about the problems of the secret society called the Illuminati.

*Rev. Arturo Mendez is the pastor at St. Matthew Lutheran Church of Westfield, Houston, TX and can be reached at [pastormendez@stmatthewlcms.com](mailto:pastormendez@stmatthewlcms.com).*

## // Youth Ministry 101

Crysten Sanchez

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](mailto:csanchez@higherthings.org).*

## // Jesus Went to Hell?

Rev. Joel Shaltanis

Every Sunday all over the world, Christians confess of Jesus, "He descended into hell." But what exactly does that mean? What was He doing there? Suffering for sins? Releasing souls of those who had died? In this session we will take a look at this phrase in the creed. We'll explain what Lutherans mean when we say it and compare it with a few other views.

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## // Living Forgiven in an Unprecedented Time

Cory Smith

Why is depression among teens skyrocketing at an alarming rate? Do you know someone who struggles with depression? Come find out what two parents of a lifelong Lutheran faith-filled young woman in the throes of college found out about depression, faith, and Lutheran identity.

*Cory Smith is from St. John Lutheran Church Mansfield, TX and can be reached at [cory.smith@cune.edu](mailto:cory.smith@cune.edu).*

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## Session F

### // One Song, Many Voices: How the organ shapes our singing

Dr. Joshua Chai

Is the organ still useful in modern worship? Why even sing at all in church? Is it important how we sing? How different is the organ than the piano? How does an organist encourage singing without singing a note himself? Whether you're interested in playing the organ and have had years of experience, or whether you're just interested in how an instrument so central to our song can shape how we sing (maybe even without our realizing it!), This session will discuss the role of the organ in worship and identify some basic strategies for encouraging congregational song.

*Dr. Joshua Chai is the University Cantor at Concordia University Texas and can be reached at [joshua.chai@concordia.edu](mailto:joshua.chai@concordia.edu). He is also the Conference Organist for this conference.*

### // Masculine and Feminine

Rev. Paul Doellinger

Have you heard that the patriarchy is an oppressive social structure that must be dismantled? That women are oppressed by an overarching toxic masculinity that must be overcome? That a woman can do anything a man can do, and vice versa? What does God have to say about all of this? God's Word tells us everything we need to know about what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman. In this session we'll discuss Biblical Masculinity and Biblical Femininity as it is revealed to us in Christ and what that means for us Christians who seek to live as men and women in this world.

*Rev. Paul Doellinger is the pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Cassopolis, MI and can be reached at [paul.doellinger@gmail.com](mailto:paul.doellinger@gmail.com).*

### // How to Avoid Wearing Masks

Rev. Tim Eckert

Most of us are sick and tired of COVID and wearing masks. But there other masks, invisible ones, that we like to wear sometimes: a Christian mask at church, a respectful mask around those in authority, and a "look at me I'm cool" mask with our friends. After all, Paul said be all things to all people, right? Maybe that's not exactly what he meant. We'll talk about the pressure to display a certain image and how to burn your masks and show who God made you to be in Christ. This breakaway can be signed by the presenter for deaf attendees.

*Rev. Tim Eckert is the pastor of Word of God Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids, IA and can be reached at [deaflutheran@q.com](mailto:deaflutheran@q.com). He is also one of the ASL Interpreters for this conference.*

### // From the Strife of This Life to Christ's Joy Immortal - Fall in Love with Lutheran Hymnody

Rev. Chris Hull

Who has four thumbs and loves singing and discussing Lutheran hymnody? Pastor Chris Hull and the Bach of Tomball, Lynea Sander! Do you love Lutheran Hymns? Awesome, keep up the good work; the devil hates your guts for it. Do you not love Lutheran hymns? You're hashtag blessed, because after this breakaway, you will be infatuated with them. From Gerhardt and Luther, to Starke and Resch, we will talk about how Lutheran hymns teach us about the Gospel, preach the Gospel to us, and assure us of who we are in Christ as we go through the strife of this life to the joys of heaven immortal. It's gonna be fun times!

*Rev. Chris Hull is the pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Tomball, TX. He's also one of the the plenary speakers for this conference.*

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# Breakaway Sessions

Concordia University Texas // Austin, TX

July 27-30, 2021

## // 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](mailto:erica@higherthings.org).*

## // The Illuminati, the Secret Society and the Truth

Rev. Arturo Mendez

Have you ever seen the protractor and compass sign on the back of a car or truck and wondered what it means? Have you heard people talk about the Illuminati and wanted to know more about who they are, where they come from, and what their rituals are like? In this breakaway you will learn about the Masonic Lodge its roots and history, including their beliefs about the Lord Jesus Christ. Pastor Arturo Mendez is a former Mason and a current Lutheran Pastor in Houston. Come and learn all about the problems of the secret society called the Illuminati. *Rev. Arturo Mendez is the pastor at St. Matthew Lutheran Church of Westfield, Houston, TX and can be reached at [pastormendez@stmatthewlcmcs.com](mailto:pastormendez@stmatthewlcmcs.com).*

## // Youth Ministry 101

Crysten Sanchez

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](mailto:csanchez@higherthings.org).*

## // Jesus Went to Hell?

Rev. Joel Shaltanis

Every Sunday all over the world, Christians confess of Jesus, "He descended into hell." But what exactly does that mean? What was He doing there? Suffering for sins? Releasing souls of those who had died? In this session we will take a look at this phrase in the creed. We'll explain what Lutherans mean when we say it and compare it with a few other views.

*Rev. Joel Shaltanis is the pastor at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Plano, TX and can be reached at [pastorshaltanis@yahoo.com](mailto:pastorshaltanis@yahoo.com). He is also the Catechist for this conference.*

## // Living Forgiven in an Unprecedented Time

Cory Smith

Why is depression among teens skyrocketing at an alarming rate? Do you know someone who struggles with depression? Come find out what two parents of a lifelong Lutheran faith-filled young woman in the throes of college found out about depression, faith, and Lutheran identity.

*Cory Smith is from St. John Lutheran Church Mansfield, TX and can be reached at [cory.smith@cune.edu](mailto:cory.smith@cune.edu).*

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