



THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

Minnesota South District

...joyfully serving together in making disciples of Jesus Christ

The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany
February 13, 2023

Dear Brothers,

Since you occupy offices of leadership in the district, I wanted you to receive this important communication. To the extent that awareness of this situation unfolds, you are free to use discretion and good judgement to address what you know with any inquirer, but then send them on to me as fitting or needed as the ecclesiastical supervisor in this situation.

To that end, please take a moment to read the attached letter (page 2) from Rev. Dr. Dean Nadasdy, my immediate predecessor, my professor, and my brother in office. I think we can all sense his deep sorrow and regret over what transpired January 28 during his daughter's ordination as an ELCA pastor.

Those of us who are fathers can sympathize with the reasons that led him to participate in this service as he did. However, please note Dean is not asking us to excuse him, but to forgive him. That's an important distinction, as you know. Note his regret that, in this case, his love for his daughter led him to compromise his personal convictions regarding our LCMS biblical doctrine and practice on the subject of women's ordination.

In the Divine Service every week many of us solemnly profess: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). Dr. Nadasdy not only admits his error and sin, but asks for our grace and forgiveness. I think we can freely do just that. "But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

When Dean came to me only days after the event in great sorrow and contrition, it was my joy as a called servant of the Word to absolve his sin and pray for his peace and consolation. In light of his broken and contrite heart, I commend him to your grace and mercy as well.

This is a good reminder for us all that what we do in ministry and how we live as pastors affects our mutual bond as members of Synod and fellow servants of Christ; a truth we confess in our ordination vows and do well to regularly reflect on together. It impacts the blood-bought souls we serve in Jesus' name. Therefore, I urge you brothers: "Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tim 4:16).

Your brother in Christ,

Rev. Dr. Lucas V. Woodford

FROM THE DESK OF DEAN NADASDY

February 10, 2023

Brothers and sisters in Christ:

In the name of Jesus.

On January 28, my daughter Kristin was ordained as a pastor and will serve an ELCA congregation in New York. Her decision to study for the ministry came on the heels of a career as an attorney. That decision was delayed for several years out of concern for me and our LCMS position on women's ordination.

A few weeks before the ordination service, Kristin asked if I would be willing to take a small role in the service. She knew that I could not preach if asked but requested that I read a short Scripture text as a charge and silently join in the laying on of hands during prayer. Out of my deep love for Kristin, that is what I did in the service. I came forward to read this text: "Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called" (1 Timothy 6:11-12). I then joined other clergy in the laying on of hands accompanying prayer.

On the other side of the service, I have come to see that my love for my daughter compromised my commitment to adhere strictly to the doctrine and practice of the Lutheran Church –Missouri Synod. I saw my action as a personal, father-to-daughter act of love, not as a public statement of support for women's ordination. I was wrong.

I now know that in these acts I have sinned, and I have given offense. I have compromised our covenant of concord by which we preach, teach, and do ministry as one. I have also broken trust with those I have served in the LCMS as a pastor, seminary professor, district president, and synodical vice president. By my acts I have diminished my work over several years to enhance our concord as a church body. None of this was my intention, but these are the results of my participation in the service. I am haunted by how I didn't see it all beforehand. I submit myself to the oversight of my ecclesiastical supervisor and remain under his pastoral care.

I have erred, and I am deeply sorry. I ask for your grace and forgiveness. I know that I have disappointed many of you. In retirement now, I have called the LCMS home for all of my 75 years. I assure you of my ongoing commitment to all of our Synod's doctrines and practices, including our Scriptural stance against women's ordination. As in the past, I will celebrate the unity we have in Christ with all Christians everywhere, and I will not hesitate to identify and reject the errors of other church bodies, including those of the ELCA. May continued concord bless our walk together. I ask for your prayers.

In Christ,



Dean Nadasdy