



Faithful and Frequent Communing

The following article by Dr. James Kaltboff, president of the LCMS Missouri District, was first published in the May 1999 issue of *The Voice of Missouri*, the official newspaper of the Missouri District. It is reprinted here with permission.

More and more congregations in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are having communion services each Lord's Day. I personally feel this is a good trend, for the Sacrament of our Lord's body and blood has always been a precious means of grace for Christians.

In the book of Acts we see that the custom of celebrating Holy Communion on each Lord's Day (the first day of the week) began rather early. Luke relates: "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul preached to them . . ." (Acts 20:7). We note that "to break bread" is a term which the early church used to describe the sacramental eating and drinking of the Sacrament. They gathered for the express purpose: "to break bread"; i.e. to celebrate the Lord's Supper. And connected to this

was "preaching"—"Paul preached to them . . ."

From the earliest times, the church celebrated a weekly Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. Our Lutheran Confessions envision a weekly celebration of Holy Communion. In the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* we read: "In our churches Mass [i.e. the Sacrament of Holy Communion] is celebrated every Sunday and on other festivals . . ." [XXIV]. About a hundred years after the Reformation, the Lutheran Churches began to have communion services less frequently. Preaching services became predominant and have been so up to the present. But now many sense a need to return to a more balanced worship—one which embraces Word and Sacrament as the ideal.

I realize, of course, that while a communion service on every Lord's Day may be an ideal, it cannot be demanded. Our Lord left simple instructions: "This do . . . often . . ." (1 Cor. 11:25). He did not lay

down any particular command as to how often the Sacrament of his body and blood was to be celebrated in Christian congregations. The decision for this is left up to the congregations to whom Christ gave the Office of the Keys, which they, through the divine call, have entrusted to their pastors for public administration.

More frequent communion services in our congregations means that pastors will be taking on more responsibility for the proper administration of the Sacrament. Pastors are called to be "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4:1); i.e. managers of God's gifts of Gospel and Sacrament. A "steward" or "manager" does not indiscriminately manage that with which his master has entrusted him. Rather, he uses these gifts in accord with his master's instructions. "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:1–2).

Now concerning the preaching of the Word, a pastor has been given the command to "preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). But with regards to the Sacrament of the Altar, the good steward tries to determine as much as possible who is worthy and well-prepared to receive it. Scripture teaches us that those who partake of our Lord's body and blood unworthily do so to their great harm. For this and other reasons, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is not to be offered indiscriminately to all.

It is a meal for those who are baptized into Christ and who know how to examine themselves with regard to the meaning and purpose of the Sacrament, as well as with regard to their own spiritual state. Paul says: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup, for he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:28–29).

You may argue that this passage speaks of "self-examination," not of a "pastoral examination"—and yet, as a "steward of the mysteries," a pastor needs to discern as much as humanly possible if a communicant is "worthy and well-prepared." This is why our Lutheran



Confessions state several times: "In our churches . . . the Sacrament is offered to those who wish for it after they have been examined and absolved" (*Apology* 24, 1; c.f. AC XXV, 1).

Who is responsible for examination and absolving in our congregations? It is the pastor. Visitors and guests who are not members of a sister congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, but who desire to attend Holy Communion at that congregation's altar, ought to present themselves to the pastor before so doing. Pastoral responsibility is one aspect of our Synod's position on "close communion."

Our Synod has again and again reiterated that member

congregations are to practice "close communion." Pastors, as members of the Synod, ought to follow this practice very carefully. Bulletin as well as verbal announcements should be made concerning this practice.

The Commission on Theology and Church Relations has released a "Model Communion Card Statement" which says, in part: ". . . Any who have not been instructed, in doubt, or who hold a confession differing from that of this congregation and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and yet desire to receive the sacrament, are asked to speak with the pastor . . ." Such a statement recognizes the pastor as being "the steward of the mysteries of God." This is all part of what we often refer to as "responsible pastoral care." May such care increase among us!



Proposal for the Lutheran Service Book Now Available

The extensive labors and field testing of the Lutheran Hymnal Project for the last six years has now been assembled in a proposal for this summer's synodical convention.

22,000 copies are being mailed to all rostered church workers (pastors, teachers, DCEs, etc.), all convention delegates, and all congregations.

While supplies last, additional copies may be purchased for \$10 each (shipping and handling included) by sending a request with funds (checks made out to Commission on Worship) to:

LCMS Commission on Worship
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122

The entire proposal may also be downloaded from the commission's Web site at: <http://worship.lcms.org/LSBProposal>



Interested in offering comments on the hymnal proposal? See page 4 for details.

Serving the Lord— The Examples of the Saints

A hymnal contains more than just services and hymns. There are other pages filled with all kinds of useful and interesting resources, just waiting to be “discovered.”

One of these is the church year calendar. In addition to the familiar days and seasons on the church calendar—like Advent, Christmas, and Lent—there are also some specific calendar dates to which special festivals are assigned. For example, on page 3 in *The Lutheran Hymnal*, the date December 21 is listed at the top of the calendar as the day for St. Thomas. The calendar on page 9 in *Lutheran Worship* includes these and several additional days.

Why does the Lutheran Church include all these names and events on its calendar? Doesn't this border on the invocation of the saints that one finds in Roman Catholicism?



Actually, the Lutheran reformers understood that there was great benefit in remembering the saints whom God has given to his church. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession (Article 21) gives three reasons for such honor. First, we thank God for giving faithful servants to his church. Second, through such remembrance our faith is strengthened as we see the mercy that God extended to his saints of old. Third, these saints are examples by which we may imitate both their faith and their holy living according to our calling in life.

Note the last part of that sentence: according to our calling in life. In his goodness, God places each of us into various callings which revolve around the spheres of work, family, the civil realm, and the church. He doesn't expect us to abandon our responsibilities in these various callings in order to serve him. Rather, through these stations in life God enables us to serve our neighbor in need and, thus, to serve God himself.

Holy Scripture is filled with examples of men and women who did just that. They served God by faithfully fulfilling their calling. Because God has provided examples of the faith through them, it is fitting that we thank him for their lives of service and implore God to show such mercy toward us that he showed toward them.

Our hymnals provide biblical readings and appropriate prayers for each of these church year festivals. In addition, the hymn “By All Your Saints in Warfare” makes it possible to sing specifically about any of the festival days by inserting a hymn stanza unique to the day between two, more general stanzas (see sidebar). Together, these resources allow the faithful to sing and hear directly of God's work through that particular individual.

Six of these festivals are listed below. Three of them are additions to the *Lutheran Worship* church year calendar (St. Joseph, the Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist, St. James of Jerusalem) that have been proposed for the Synod's new hymnal. The other three were chosen because of new stanzas that are being added to the hymn “By All Your Saints.” The readings for each day and the collect of the day—also part of the proposal for the new hymnal—are also included. With these materials, a ready-made devotion could be used for personal use or perhaps for a Bible class or meeting.

■ St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus March 19

2 Samuel 7:4–16
Romans 4:13–18
Matthew 2:13–15, 19–23

Almighty God, from the house of Your servant David You raised up Joseph to be the guardian of Your incarnate Son and the husband of His mother, Mary. Grant us grace to follow the example of this faithful workman in heeding Your counsel and obeying Your commands; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*We sing our thanks for Joseph,
The guardian of our Lord
Who faithfully taught Jesus
Through craft and deed and word.
Grant wisdom, Lord, and patience
To parents everywhere
Who guide and teach the children
Entrusted to their care.*

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■ St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles June 29

Acts 15:1–12 (13–21)
Galatians 2:1–10
Matthew 16:13–19

Merciful and eternal God, Your holy apostles Peter and Paul received grace and strength to lay down their lives for the sake of Your Son. Strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit that we may confess Your truth and at all times be ready to lay down our lives for Him who laid down His life for us, even Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*We praise You for Saint Peter;
We praise You for Saint Paul;
They taught both Jew and Gentile
That Christ is all in all.
To cross and sword they yielded
And saw Your kingdom come;
O God, these two apostles
Reached life through martyrdom.*

■ St. Mary Magdalene July 22

Proverbs 31:10–31
Acts 13:26–31
John 20:1–2, 10–18

Almighty God, Your Son Jesus Christ restored Mary Magdalene to health and called her to be the first witness of His resurrection. Heal us from all our infirmities, and call us to know You in the power of Your Son's unending life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*All praise for Mary Magdalene,
Whose wholeness was restored
By You, her faithful master;
Her Savior and her Lord.
On Easter morning early
A word from You sufficed;
For she was first to see You,
Her Lord, the risen Christ.*

■ St. Mary, Mother of Our Lord August 15

Isaiah 61:7–11
Galatians 4:4–7
Luke 1:(39–45) 46–55

Almighty God, You chose the Virgin Mary to be the mother of Your only Son. Grant that we, who are redeemed by His blood, may share with her in the glory of Your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*We sing with joy of Mary,
Whose heart with awe was stirred
When, youthful and astonished,
She heard the angel's word.
Yet she her voice upraises
To magnify God's name,
As once for our salvation
Your mother she became.*

■ The Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist August 29

Revelation 6:9–11
Romans 6:1–5
Mark 6:14–29

Almighty God, You gave Your servant John the Baptist to be the forerunner of Your Son, Jesus Christ, in both his preaching of repentance and his innocent death. Grant that we, who have died and risen with Christ in Holy Baptism, may daily repent of our sins, patiently suffer for the sake of the truth, and fearlessly bear witness to His victory over death; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*Our thanks for John the Baptist
Who, till his dying day,
Made straight paths for the Savior
And heralded His way!
In witnessing to Jesus
Through times of threat or shame
May we with faith and courage
The Lamb of God proclaim*

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■ St. James of Jerusalem, Brother of Our Lord and Martyr October 23

Acts 15:12–22a
James 1:1–12
Matthew 13:54–58

Heavenly Father, Shepherd of Your people, You raised up James the Just, brother of our Lord, to lead and guide Your Church. Grant that we may follow his example of prayer and reconciliation and be strengthened by the witness of his death; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*We sing of James, Christ's brother,
Who at Jerusalem
Told how God loved the Gentiles
And, in Christ, welcomed them.
Rejoicing in salvation
May we too, by God's grace,
Extend Christ's invitation
To all the human race.*

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“By All Your Saints in Warfare”

The following are the first and last stanzas of the hymn “By All Your Saints in Warfare” (*LW* 193/194).

By all Your saints in warfare,
For all Your saints at rest,
Your holy name, O Jesus,
Forevermore be blest!
For You have won the battle
That they might wear the crown;
And now they shine in glory
Reflected from Your throne.

(Insert the stanza appropriate to the day.)

Then let us praise the Father
And worship God the Son
And sing to God the Spirit,
Eternal Three in One,
Till all the ransomed number
Fall down before the throne,
Ascribing pow'r and glory
And praise to God alone.



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“But in the original Greek this literally means . . .”

Wise Words for Exegetes

The following article appeared earlier this year in *Preach the Word*, a bi-monthly newsletter published by the Commission on Worship of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. It was compiled by Professor Keith Wessel, who teaches Latin, Greek, and religion at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. Back issues of *Preach the Word* can be found at wels.net/worship.



Benjamin Chapman, perhaps best known in our circles for his handy insert of Greek syntax and forms (designed to fit in the back of the UBS text, but also available as a Logos module), offers some wise words to students of Greek concerning exegesis. The principles given here are, naturally, also applicable to the handling of Hebrew. These words are especially valuable for pastors who labor over the original texts to correctly handle the word of truth as they prepare sermons to share with God's people. Dr. Chapman writes (p. 47-48):

“Preachers and teachers frequently give the impression that Greek exegesis

is a mystical craft, designed to open whole worlds of meaning to the initiated. ‘In the Greek this word *literally* means . . .’ they intone, and they leave their hearers gasping, ‘I never would have found that in the passage!’ They ‘learn’ that Greek words possess stronger magic than their English equivalents. Nevertheless, such an approach is almost invariably wrong-headed and erroneous.

“Part of the task of exegesis is the defining of words . . . You will not perform full-blown word studies on every one of the words, but those you perform must be accurate and honest.

“Your goal in word study will be to determine:

- **Step 1:** How the word was used generally at that time (of writing)
- **Step 2:** How biblical writers typically used the word
- **Step 3:** How this author typically used the word
- **Step 4:** How the word is used in this specific context

“A note of warning! If you do a massive word study on, say, *akoloutheo* in Matthew 8:19, and after all that work decide that in fact it means nothing more than “to follow,” a meaning you could have gotten right out of the NIV, you may become disenchanted with the value of your Greek learning. After all, how can you say, ‘In the Greek, this word *literally* means “to follow,” when anyone with a Bible can readily spot that?’ *In fact, you may have stumbled on the true value of Greek exegesis: that while it occasionally yields insight into individual words, its goal is to help you follow the flow of sentences and paragraphs.*” (emphasis mine)

Chapman then goes on to give practical examples under the title: *Fallacious Methods of Word Study*.

“The meaning of a word in a context is not fixed by:

“*Its etymology:* Etymology is a word's family history, but it is sometimes tapped in order to find some mythical ‘basic’ or ‘original’ meaning.

It's remarkable that people try to define a word in the New Testament by the way it was used a thousand years before hand. A word means what it means when the author uses it.

“*Its use in a very different context.* The verb *katartizo* is used in Galatians 6:1, to direct spiritual Christians to restore a brother who has fallen into sin. The verb is also used in Mark 1:19, in which James and John are repairing their nets. But don't make the mistake of saying that restoring a sinning Christian ‘literally’ means ‘to mend their net.’ *A single word may have different connotations in different passages.*

“*All of its possible meanings every time it is used.* The verb *akoloutheo* may mean “to come after,” “to accompany,” or “to follow as a disciple,” but it doesn't mean all of those in every single passage . . . Sometimes people will regard the New Testament differently from the way they regard other pieces of literature . . . as if there is some secret code between two verses that happen to use the same word. Don't believe it! *A word means what it means in that passage.*

“*An English equivalent.* Some words are easily defined in that way: *chilios* means ‘thousand,’ and that's that. But *logos* can mean ‘word, message, speech, reason, matter, etc.’ Defining a Greek word means scouting out what it may mean and what it does not mean.”

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“It Is Good To Be Near God” A Devotion for St. Mary Magdalene's Day

Nevertheless, I am continually with you;
you hold my right hand.
You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will receive me to glory.
Whom have I in heaven but you?
And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
For behold, those who are far from you shall perish;
you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you.
But for me it is good to be near God;
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,
that I may tell of all your works. (*Psalms 73:23-28 ESV*)

Then the disciples went back to their homes. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but

go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” (*John 20:10-17 ESV*)

The psalm portion for St. Mary Magdalene's day is the last few verses of Psalm 73. This psalm tells the story of its writer, Asaph, as he started looking at the prosperity of the wicked and envying the arrogant. The wicked seem to get away with everything, and to get off scot-free. The thought occurred to the psalmist, as it occurs to us at times: what's the use of doing any differently? It's enough to make you think that God doesn't care and question, if there is a God at all.

Asaph's account of his experience shows that when God is disrespected, man will be too—even by himself. Asaph grew senseless and ignorant, like

a brute beast before God. Maybe that is one of the reasons why this section was appointed for the day of Mary Magdalene. Luke says she had once been possessed by seven demons (Luke 8:2).

But when Asaph entered the Lord's temple and looked at the whole situation in light of God's Word, he saw it differently. The Lord's judgment looms over those who reject Him in favor of the world. Their fortunes can be reversed by Him in an instant. And even if they hang on to their wealth and power all their lives, in the end their only treasure is of this world, and they cannot take that with them, especially not where they are going.

Then Asaph gets to the best part, the words of our text.

Not only are those he envied sure to come to eternal ruin; he finally realized what he had right under his nose. God is always with me, the psalmist said. He guides me and takes me to glory. “God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

On the first Easter morning, a highly distraught Mary Magdalene encountered someone at the empty tomb. She thought He was the gardener. Then came His Word. He called her by name, and then she recognized what had been right under her nose. She had Him back, and at that point nothing else mattered. He was her portion, indeed.

Asaph had said, “Who do I have in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.” Jesus told Mary,

“Do not hold on to me . . . I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” Jesus was telling Mary that it was even better than she thought. If Mary were to ask who *she* had in heaven, the answer is: Jesus. Not the transcendent God whose paths are beyond tracing out, not only the God who hates iniquity, but the crucified and risen Jesus. He answered for her sin, and yours. He is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for you, the sheep. He died, and behold He is alive for ever and ever. And He hold the keys of death and hell.

Whom do we have in heaven but Him? He has

ascended to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God. Earth really has nothing to desire besides Him. Asaph believed it, and Mary saw it: it is good to be near God. He has drawn near to you, baptizing you and calling you by name as He placed upon you His Name. He gives you forgiveness and life through the very body and blood that bought and paid for it in the first place.

When you are tempted to think someone else has it better, think of Asaph and of Mary Magdalene. Recognize what you have right under your nose. Who do you have in heaven but Christ? And what else could earth hold besides Him? It is truly good to be near God.



NOW AVAILABLE!*Study Guide for***Text, Music, Context: A Resource for Reviewing Worship Materials**

How can pastors and musicians go about assessing worship materials from non-Lutheran sources? The new resource from the Commission on Worship, *Text, Music, Context: A Resource for Reviewing Worship Materials (TMC)*, provides a helpful framework for worship leaders to evaluate worship materials of all kinds—hymns, songs, choral anthems, orders of service, prayers, and the like.

TMC is divided into five sections, each providing specific “diagnostic questions”:

■ **Theological Overview**

- What does the Word of God say concerning worship?
- What insights do the Lutheran Confessions bring to the subject?
- What is the relationship between unity and uniformity in worship?

■ **Considering the Text**

- What are features that make a text strong?
- What theological issues should be considered?
- What are our uniquely Lutheran teachings?

■ **Considering the Music**

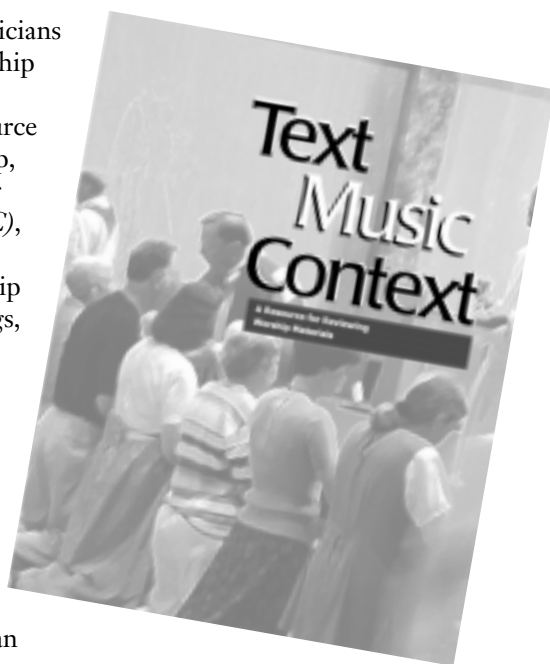
- What makes a melody particularly appropriate for congregational singing?
- What are characteristics of good tunes?

■ **Considering the Big Picture**

- What issues should be considered when choosing hymns and songs for corporate worship?
- How does one set before the congregation the full range of theological topics?

■ **The Liturgy in Perspective**

- What is the function of the various parts of the service?



- In what ways can variety be added without losing the overall structure and pattern of the service?

TMC is an ideal resource for pastors and musicians, and now the commission has made a study guide available for free. The *TMC Study Guide* is designed to help pastor/musician teams, or even larger groups, work through *TMC* in just five sessions. With some adaptation, it could also be used as an adult Bible study.

The *TMC Study Guide* can be downloaded for free from the commission's Web site at:

<http://worship.lcms.org/TMCStudyGuide>

Excerpts from *TMC* itself can also be downloaded from the same address.

Copies of *TMC* can be ordered from Concordia Publishing House at 1-800-325-3040. **Cost:** \$5 each for single copies; \$4 each for two to five copies; \$3 each for six or more copies. *Shipping and handling are not included.*

Upcoming Events

June 13–19, 2004

Concordia Music Camp

Seward, NE
Contact: Rebecca Dorn
E-mail: rebecca.dorn@cune.edu
Call: (402) 643-7384

June 14–July 9, 2004

Master of Church Music

“Music in the Age of Reformation,”
Carl Schalk
“Music Research and Bibliography,”
Mary Stahlke
Concordia University
River Forest, IL
Contact: Steven Wentz
E-mail: steven.wentz@curf.edu
Call: (708) 209-3069

June 16–18, 2004

**Symposium on Catechesis
The Ten Commandments—
The First Table of the Law**

Country Inn Hotel and
Conference Center
Waukesha, WI
Contact: Deacon Matthew Gatchell
Email: deacon@peacesussex.org
Call: (262)-246-3200
Register:
www.peacesussex.org/CCA

June 19, 2004

Church Music Conference

Concordia University
Mequon, WI
One-day event.
Contact: Kenneth Kosche
Call: (262) 243-4239
E-mail: kenneth.kosche@cuw.edu

June 20–July 18, 2004

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June 20–22, 2004

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Fort Wayne, IN
Contact: Mary Rogers
E-mail: rogersmc@mail.ctsfw.edu
Call: (260) 452-2105

Primer Level: June 28–July 2, 2004
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Beginning Improvisation: NEW
July 19–23, 2003

Level II: July 26–30, 2004

August 4–6, 2004

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Field Testing Continues

The Commission on Worship continues to receive comments on the Proposal for the *Lutheran Service Book (LSB)*. Comments may be submitted at the following Web site:

<http://worship.lcms.org/fieldtest>

Comments will be received through May 12, after which the commission will review them and prepare final recommendations for the convention floor committee meeting on May 21–24. The floor committee's report will then be printed in the first edition of *Today's Business*.

As always, the Commission on Worship values the input of the Synod-at-large as together we prepare a hymnal that will serve us in the coming generations.