

What Does This Mean?

What is a Küster?

Following the order of those whom God had gathered as His Church in Hoya, Germany in 1581, our parish has adopted the office of *Küster*, a combination of sexton and sacristan who is to assist the pastor in any way that he needs and Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions allow. He helps make sure that the church building is prepared for services, aids in the proper practice of Closed Communion, and, in general, sees that the pastor and parish have what is necessary for the prayer offices and occasional services (weddings, funerals, etc.), as well as for the weekly Divine Service.

Why does the Küster not simply lead a service or prayer office and preach or read a sermon, as I've seen laymen do elsewhere?

While such a practice has, indeed, become quite common among Lutherans, we find that our practice is testified to by those who actually signed the Lutheran Confessions when they were first published. Considering the many great errors among modern Lutherans concerning the Office of the Ministry (even in so-called “conservative” bodies), where both men and women function contrary to Scripture’s prohibitions, we have claimed this faithful testimony-in-practice to Augsburg Confession XIV (and, therefore, Romans 10) as our own: no one who has not been Called by God through His Church and Ordained to carry out the Office of preaching, teaching, and administering the Sacraments ought be found doing so among those who would claim to be Lutherans. As is seen by this page, we are very careful to keep from confusing what God has given us with what has been added by Man; just because something is common, that doesn’t mean it is correct or “Lutheran.”

Isn't the Small Catechism just for kids?

Martin Luther said that he had to review it every day. Doing so kept him in the “child-like” faith that is proper for the children of God.

Are there any optional parts of this recitation?

There are a couple of options with the hymns, which may be indicated on the announcement sheet of the bulletin. In general, if the recitations being used for more than one week, the first hymn option will be used for the first week and the second option on the second week. (Thus, week one: 288:1; 288:2; 444; 288:3-4; 262; week two: 263; 288:1-2; 444; 288:3-4; Preserve Us in Thy Word, O Lord).

The Recitation of the *Small Catechism* for Occasions on which the Pastor is Unavailable

(See Notes on Back Cover)

The Ringing of the Bell

Silent Prayer

Sit

**Hymn: TLH 288 - “Lord, Help Us Ever to Retain” st. 1 (Week 1)
TLH 263 - “O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe” (Week 2)**

Stand

Küster: Through the words of our Small Catechism, let us consider our God and how He has revealed Himself and His will toward us.

All: In the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed, we confess and pray: “I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.”

Küster: What does this mean?

All: I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still preserves them. He also richly and daily provides me with clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and yard, wife and children, land, animals, and all that I have—with all that I need to nourish and support this body and life. He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does purely out of fatherly, divine, goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all of this it is my duty to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

Küster: Let us examine how God has commanded us “to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him.”

All: He says in His First Commandment, “You shall have no other gods.”

Küster: What does this mean?

All: We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

Küster: How is this done with regard to the use of His Name?

All: In His Second Commandment, the Lord says, “You shall not misuse the Name of your God.”

Küster: What does this mean?

All: We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, practice witchcraft, lie or deceive by His Name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

Küster: Therefore, what does He command?

All: His Third Commandment is “You shall remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy.” Since St. Paul tells us in his Epistle to the Colossians that the Sabbath Day was a shadow that pointed to the Christ and the rest He would provide for us, in the New Testament era we understand this Commandment to say, “You shall sanctify the Day of Rest.”

Küster: What does this mean?

All: We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

Küster: The Lord next commands you to fear, love, and trust in Him above all things by a right relationship with your fellowman.

All: The Fourth Commandment tells us, “You shall honor your father and your mother.”

Küster: What does this mean?

All: We should fear and love God so that we do not despise our parents and lords, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and esteem them.

Küster: What about people in general, even those under your authority or of a lower station in life than you?

All: “You shall not murder,” our Lord says in His Fifth Commandment.

Preserve Us in Thy Word, O Lord

1 Pre - serve us in Thy Word, O Lord; Sub - due the
2 Lord Je - sus Christ, Thy pow'r make known, For Thou art
3 O Ho - ly Ghost, our Help di - vine, Make Thou Thy
4 Lord, bring Thine e - ne - mies to naught, And let them
5 Then must our foes at last con - fess That Thou, Lord

pope and Mus - lim horde, Who, yet in vain, Thy Son dis -
Lord of lords a - lone. De - fend Thy Chris - ten - dom, that
peo - ple of one mind. Stay by our side till life's last
in the net be caught That they have hid - den to en -
Je - sus, dost pos - sess The pow'r to res - cue and set

own And seek to wrest Him from Thy throne.
we May sing Thy praise e - ter - nal - ly.
breath, And lead us in - to life from death.
snare Thy Chris - tians, who Thy truth de - clare.
free Thy sheep, who trust in none but Thee. A - men.

Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort
St. 1-3, Martin Luther, 1541
St. 4-5, Justus Jonas, 1545
Tr., Paul Rydecki, 2015

Erhalt uns, Herr
"Geistliche Lieder"
Wittenberg, 1543

those in bondage, grant health to the sick, comfort to the grieving, and a safe journey to all who travel (we remember especially _____, in his/her/their time of need):

All: Almighty and Everlasting God, the Consolation of the sorrowful and the Strength of the weak, may the prayers of them that in any tribulation or distress cry unto Thee, graciously come before Thee, so that in all their necessities they may mark and receive Thy manifold help and comfort; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Küster: Let us pray for the fruits of the Earth, that God would send down His blessing upon them and graciously dispose our hearts to enjoy them according to His own good will:

All: O Lord, Father Almighty, by Thy Word Thou hast created and Thou dost continue to bless and uphold all things. We pray Thee so to reveal to us Thy Word, our Lord Jesus Christ that, through His dwelling in our hearts, we may by Thy grace be made ready to receive Thy blessing on all the fruits of the Earth and whatsoever pertains to our bodily need; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Küster: Finally, let us pray for all those things for which our Lord would have us ask, saying:

All: Our Father, Who art in Heaven: Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and Lead us not into temptation, but Deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Sit

**Hymn: TLH 262 - “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” (Week 1)
“Preserve us in Thy Word, O Lord” (tune to TLH 265) (Week 2)**

Silent Prayer

Announcements

Küster: What does this mean?

All: We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every bodily need.

Küster: In what other ways are we to honor God in relation to our neighbor?

All: In the Sixth Commandment, we are told, “You shall not commit adultery.”

Küster: What does this mean?

All: We should fear and love God so that we lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed, and each one love and honor his spouse.

Küster: Thus, God protects our neighbor’s body in every way; what about his possessions?

All: In the Seventh Commandment, we are told, “You shall not steal.”

Küster: What does this mean?

All: We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor’s money or property, nor get them by false merchandising or dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and income.

Küster: Does God protect only physical things?

All: In the Eighth Commandment, He says of His people, “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”

Küster: What does this mean?

All: We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or harm his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

Küster: Are only actions sinful?

All: No, in the Ninth Commandment, the Lord tells us, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house.”

Küster: What does this mean?

All: We should fear and love God so that we do not cheat our neighbor out of his inheritance or house, using a pretense of legality to obtain it, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

Küster: For what else must we not have a sinful desire?

All: In the Tenth Commandment, the Lord says, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, his manservant, maidservant, or livestock, or anything that is his.”

Küster: What does this mean?

All: We should fear and love God so that we do not alienate or drive away our neighbor’s wife, servants, or livestock, or persuade them to forsake him, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

Küster: What does God say about all of these Commandments?

All: He says: “I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, Who visits the sin of the fathers upon their children who hate Me, to the third and fourth generation. But to those who love Me and keep My commandments I do good for a thousand generations.”

Küster: What does this mean?

All: God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly act according to His commandments.

Küster: How, then, shall we who cannot properly obey all these Commandments ever have God’s mercy and salvation?

All: In the Second Article of the Apostles Creed, we confess and pray: “I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into Hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.”

Küster: These questions and answers are no child’s play, but are drawn up with great earnestness of purpose by the venerable and devout Dr. Luther for both young and old. Let each one pay attention and consider it a serious matter, for St. Paul writes to the Galatians in chapter six: “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked.”

Sit

Pastoral Epistle: At this point, the Küster shall read a letter from the pastor.

Stand

Küster: Let us pray for all the Ministers of the Word, for all vocations in the Church, and for all the people of God:

All: Almighty and Everlasting God, by Whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified, receive the supplications and prayers which we offer before Thee for all Estates of men in Thy holy Church, that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve Thee; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Küster: Let us pray for all in authority:

All: O Merciful Father in Heaven, Who holdest in Thy hand all the might of man and Who hast ordained the powers that be for the punishment of evil doers and for the praise of them that do well, and of Whom is all rule and authority in the kingdoms of the world, we humbly beseech Thee, graciously regard Thy servants, the President of the United States of America, the Governor of this State, our Judges and Magistrates, and all the rulers of the Earth. May all that receive the sword as Thy ministers bear it according to Thy commandment. Enlighten and defend them by Thy Name, O God. Grant them wisdom and understanding, that under their peaceable governance Thy people may be guarded and directed in righteousness, quietness, and unity. Protect and prolong their lives, O God of our salvation, that we with them may show forth the praise of Thy Name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Küster: Let us pray our Lord God Almighty that He would deliver the world from all error, take away disease, ward off famine, set free

All: We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His Blood, as He taught us: This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

Küster: Why should we remember and proclaim His death?

All: First, so that we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins. Only Christ, true God and man, could do that. Second, so we may learn to be horrified by our sins, and to regard them as very serious. Third, so we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and through faith in Him be saved.

Küster: What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?

All: His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2 and Ephesians 5.

Küster: Why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?

All: That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.

Küster: What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?

All: First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given.

Küster: What if we feel no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?

All: No better advice can be given than this: first, touch your body to see if you still have flesh and blood. Then believe what the Scriptures say of it in Galatians 5 and Romans 7. Second, you should look around to see whether you are still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in John 15–16 and in 1 John 2 and 5. Third, you will certainly have the devil also around you, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let you have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in John 8 and 16, 1 Peter 5, Ephesians 6, and 2 Timothy 2.

Küster: What does this mean?

All: I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His Kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from death, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

Sit

Hymn: TLH 288 - “Lord, Help Us Ever to Retain” st. 2 (Week 1)
TLH 288 - “Lord, Help Us Ever to Retain” sts. 1-2 (Week 2)

Stand

Küster: Since God has had such mercy on us, what does He invite us to do?

All: Our Lord Jesus invites us to pray, “Our Father, who art in Heaven.” With these words, “God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.”

Küster: With such an invitation, what do we pray?

All: First, we pray of our Father, “Hallowed be Thy Name.” “God’s Name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also.” God’s Name is kept holy “When the Word of God is purely and plainly taught, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in Heaven! But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God’s Word profanes the Name of God among us. Protect us from this, heavenly Father!”

Second, we pray, “Thy Kingdom come.” “The Kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.” God’s kingdom comes “When our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace

we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.”

Third, we pray, “Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.” “The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.” God’s will is done “When God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and will that does not want us to hallow God’s Name or let His Kingdom come—namely, the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh—but rather strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. This is His good and gracious will.”

Fourth, we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” “God gives daily bread to all evil people, even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to recognize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.” Daily bread includes “Everything that has to do with the nourishment and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, yard, land, livestock, money, property, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.”

Fifth, we pray, “And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” “We pray in this petition that our Father in Heaven would not look at our sins and deny our prayer because of them, for we are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them; but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve only punishment. We, in turn, truly also wish to heartily forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.”

Sixth, we pray, “And lead us not into temptation.” “God, certainly, tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice, and although we are troubled with these things, that we would nevertheless overcome and triumph in the end.”

Seventh, we pray, “But + deliver us from evil.” “We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in Heaven would rescue us from every sort of evil of body and soul, of property and of honor, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in Heaven.”

of sins, life, and salvation are given us through such words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

Küster: How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?

All: Certainly it is not the eating and drinking that do these things, but the words written here: “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” These words, along with the bodily eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament. Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say, and as they declare: “forgiveness of sins.”

Küster: Who receives this Sacrament worthily?

All: Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward discipline. But he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” But he who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared. For the words “for you” require nothing but believing hearts.

Küster: To whom, therefore, must the Lord’s Supper be denied?

All: Those who are openly ungodly and impenitent, including those who take part in non-Christian religious worship; those who are unforgiving, refusing to be reconciled; those Christians who hold a different confession of faith, even if their church body claims the name “Lutheran,” and those who are unable to examine themselves.

Küster: Do you believe, then, that the true Body and Blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?

All: Yes, I believe it.

Küster: What convinces you to believe this?

All: The word of Christ: Take, eat, this is My Body; Drink of it, all of you, this is My Blood.

Küster: What should we do when we eat His Body and drink His Blood, and in this way receive His pledge?

Küster: Which are these?

All: Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments, whether you are a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker; whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy; whether you have been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome; whether you have hurt someone by your words or deeds; whether you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm.

Sit

Hymn: TLH 288 - “Lord, Help Us Ever to Retain” sts. 3-4

Stand

Küster: Has Christ left us any further assurance of our forgiveness?

All: He gives us the Holy Supper of His own Body and Blood, which were sacrificed for our sins at Calvary and now distributes to us the forgiveness, life, and salvation which they earned there.

Küster: What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

All: It is the true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.

Küster: Where is this written?

All: The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul write: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My Body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.” In the same way also He took the Cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you; this Cup is the New Testament in My Blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

Küster: What is the benefit of this eating and drinking?

All: That is shown us by these words, “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins,” namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness

Küster: Are we confident that our prayer will be heard?

All: Our prayer ends, “For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.” This means “That I should be certain that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in Heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Amen! Amen! That is, ‘yes, yes, it shall be so.’”

Sit

Hymn: TLH 444 - “Rise! To Arms! With Prayer Employ You”

Stand

Küster: Where did we inherit the right to call upon God as “Our Father” in this way?

All: In the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed, we confess and pray, “I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church, the Communion of Saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; + and the life everlasting. Amen.”

Küster: What does this mean?

All: I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on Earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers, and will at the Last Day raise up me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me together with all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.

Küster: What, specifically, has the Holy Ghost used to call, gather, enlighten, and sanctify you?

All: God made us His own dear children in Holy Baptism. “Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water contained in God’s command and combined with God’s word.”

Küster: Which is that word of God?

All: “Our Lord Christ says in the last chapter of Matthew: “Go forth into all the world, teach all heathens and Baptize them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19).

Küster: What benefits does Holy Baptism give?

All: It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Küster: Which are these words and promises of God?

All: Our Lord Christ says in the last chapter of Mark: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16).

Küster: How can water do such great things?

All: Certainly water does not do it, but the Word of God that is with and in the water, and faith that trusts this Word of God in the water. For without God’s Word the water is plain water and no Baptism.

Küster: So, Holy Baptism is simply another way of applying God’s saving Word, the Gospel?

All: But with the Word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a water of life, rich in grace, and a bath of the new birth in the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says to Titus in chapter three: “Through the bath of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Ghost, Whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified and heirs of eternal life according to hope. This is most certainly true.” (Titus 3:5-8).

Küster: What does such baptizing with water indicate?

All: It implies that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man, in turn, should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Küster: Where is this written?

All: St. Paul writes to the Romans in chapter six: “We were buried with Christ through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we, too, should walk in a new life” (Romans 6:4).

Küster: But, what shall we do when we see that we do not live perfectly in this way?

All: We use The Office of the Keys: “It is that special authority which Christ has given to His Church on Earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to retain the sins of the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.”

Küster: Where is this written?

All: This is what the holy Evangelist St. John writes in chapter twenty: “The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you retain them, they are retained’” (John 20:22-23).

Küster: What do you believe according to these words?

All: I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they exclude open and unrepentant sinners from the Christian congregation and, again, when they absolve those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is just as valid and certain, even in Heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.

Küster: How does one receive such Absolution?

All: Confession has two parts. First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, and in no way doubt, but firmly believe that by it our sins are forgiven before God in Heaven.

Küster: What sins should we confess?

All: Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those of which we are not aware, as we do in the Lord’s Prayer; but before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.