



Northern Illinois District
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Catechist/Guide for the Journey

Introductory Notes

This study is intended to be a holy journey. Just like the movement in the journey with Jesus, this study has movement. The goal is to bring congregations together through the study of Scripture as it teaches who we become through Holy Baptism. It is meant to be a reminder of the Church's unity of faith through sound doctrine and the interconnectedness of the many members of the Body of Christ. Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 are important in this regard. We are one body and many members within that body.

Division, racism, and segregation continue to be an issue in our world. There is a history of struggle that various ethnicities have faced in our country and in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The Northern Illinois District has also experienced some of these same issues and struggles.

This study has been crafted by the Taskforce on Multiethnic Mission and Ministry which came as a result of the passing of Resolution 3-03A at the 2022 Northern Illinois District Convention. It has been constructed with great care amid a lot of conversation and with a lot of prayer. This study has been approached prayerfully in an effort to address these serious issues and all that would hinder the unity of faith in our congregations.

This study seeks to facilitate a discussion about what makes for unity. **This study must be read from the perspective of the cross of Jesus Christ our Savior. Sin brings separation from God and from one another. The blood of Christ shed on the cross is the only way we can be drawn close. The blood of Christ draws all people near to God. Through Christ we have unity.**

This study is meant to be the beginning of something enduring and unifying. Its aim is to help congregations find renewal in identity and mission. It is meant to be a positive study that will encourage congregations to cross thresholds to engage other congregations in the District.

In our current society, many churches are feeling the stress of the economy, post-COVID-19 attendance, and uncertainty about the future. People and congregations are sometimes overrun with the worries associated with such dynamics. When this happens, it is difficult for people to look around. Troubles can cause us to suffer from myopia — a condition where we focus on the troubles right before us. This can hinder our ability to look up and out, to God and our neighbor.



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This study seeks to help people find the love and grace of Jesus Christ through His atonement. It is to bring to remembrance the mercies of Christ that bring joy in a world of uncertainty and division. It seeks a balance between *Unity in Confession and Confession amid Diversity*.

Each study will consider three main areas: Place, Learning, and Practice. These spring out of an early Christian paradigm in Greek: τόπος, μάθησις, ἄσκησις. Place is where we live. The central place for our lives is the baptismal font, pulpit, and the altar at church. It is there that we learn from the Holy Scriptures about the Gospel and the life that flows from the cross of Jesus. It is in the Word and the Sacraments that we not only learn about Christ's forgiveness but we also receive that forgiveness and, with it, the eternal hope of our Savior. We learn how to confess and how to live — how to practice.

It is our prayer that these studies will help the Church address the issues of race, division, and segregation. It is our hope that we can all come together as one Church. Confess the same faith while we recognize the value that other cultures and people bring into the body of Christ.