

**THE MINISTRY OF WELCOME  
ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE AND THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS**

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**1. THE BIBLICAL EVIDENCE  
“Welcome” in the Gospels Read in the Churches  
in this Current Liturgical Year**

- *Jan 4 / Christmas 2: John 1* “He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.”
  
- *Jan 25, Feb 1 / Epiphany 3,4: Luke 4: 14 – 30* “Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. (Until Jesus identified the connection with the widow at Zaraphath in Sidon and with Naaman the Syrian, the folk at Galilee were happy with him.) Then...“They got up, drove him out of the town and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff.”
  
- *Feb 15 / Epiphany 6: Luke 6* Jesus speaking to the disciples says: “Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man.”
  
- *March 14 / Lent 3: Luke 13* Jesus in the parable of the fig tree has the gardener say in response to “cut it down” “Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.”
  
- *March 4 / Lent 4: Luke 15* In the parable of the two sons, the father invites the slaves to “Quickly, bring out a robe – the best one – and put it on him, put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, for this son of mine was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found!” In response to the son who exhibited jealousy he says: “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours but we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life, he was lost and has been found.”

- *March 28 / Lent 5: John 12* Jesus in the house of Martha and Mary is challenged by Judas about the ointment that Mary poured on Jesus feet. Jesus says to Judas: “Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”
- *April 4 / Palm Sunday: Luke 19* In response to the Pharisees who asked, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” He answered, “I tell you if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”
- *May 9 / Easter 5: John 13* “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
- *June 13 / Pentecost 2: Luke 7:36 - 8:3* The woman who washed Jesus feet.
- *July 11 / Pentecost 6: Luke 10:25 – 37* The Good Samaritan.
- *August 22 / Pentecost 12; Luke 13: 10 – 17* Healing on the Sabbath.
- *August 29 / Pentecost 13; Luke 14: 1, 7 – 14* Friend, come up higher.
- *September 12 / Pentecost 15, Luke 15:1 – 10* This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.
- *October 10 / Thanksgiving, John 6: 25 – 35* The true bread from heaven: “For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”
- *October 24 / Pentecost 21, Luke 18: 9 – 14* The Pharisee and the Tax Collector.
- *October 31 / Reformation, Mark 10:45* “For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”
- *November 7 / All Saints, Luke 6:31* “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”
- *November 21 / Christ the King, Luke 23:43* “He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” (This to the penitent thief next to him.)

**2. SOME INDICATIONS OF WELCOME IN THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS**  
*Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article 4, "Justification"*  
(Tappert Edition, section number/page number)

**2.1 The welcome of the Christian flows from a believing heart.**

- 49/114 "Faith is that worship which receives God's offered blessings; the righteousness of the law is that worship which offers God our own merits."
- 74/117 "Love and good works must also follow faith."
- 125/124 "Since faith brings the Holy Spirit and produces a new life in our hearts, it must also produce spiritual impulses in our hearts. What these impulses are, the prophet shows when he says (Jer. 31:33) 'I will put my law upon their hearts.' After we have been justified and regenerated by faith, therefore, we begin to fear and love God, to pray and expect help from him, to thank and praise him, and to submit to him in our afflictions. Then we also begin to love our neighbor because our hearts have spiritual and holy impulses."
- 167/130 "For who loves or fears God enough? Who endures patiently enough the afflictions that God sends? Who does not often wonder whether history is governed by God's counsels or by chance? Who does not often doubt whether God hears him? Who does not complain because the wicked have better luck than the devout, because the wicked persecute the devout? Who lives up to the requirements of his calling? Who loves his neighbor as himself? Who is not tempted by lust?"  
The follow [168] citations of Rom. 7:19, Psalm 143:2, Psalm 32:2, and 32:6. "Here he shows that even the godly must pray for the forgiveness of sins."

**2.2 Welcome flows from forgiveness, and a forgiving heart.**

- 149/127 "If somebody doubts that his sins are forgiven, he insults Christ because he thinks that his sin is greater and stronger than the death and promise of Christ."
- 152/ff./127-28 Citing and commenting on Luke 7:47.
- 172/130-31 "Augustine says very clearly, 'All the commandments of God are kept when what is not kept is forgiven.' Therefore even in good works he requires our faith that for Christ's sake we please God and that the works in themselves do not have the value to please God."

**2.3 Welcome requires love.**

- 232-34/139-40 "So he [Paul] is talking not about personal perfection but about fellowship in the church. He says that love is a bond and unbroken chain linking the many members of the church with one another. Similarly, in all families and communities harmony should

be nurtured by mutual aid, for it is not possible to preserve tranquility unless men cover and forgive certain mistakes in their midst. In the same way Paul commands that there be love in the church to preserve harmony, to bear, if need be, with the crude behavior of the brethren, to cover up minor mistakes lest the church disintegrate into various schisms and hatreds, factions, and heresies that arise from such schisms.

“For harmony will inevitably disintegrate if bishops impose heavy burdens on the people or have no regard for their weakness. Dissensions also arise when the people judge their clergy’s behavior too strictly or despise them because of some minor fault and then seek after some other kinds of doctrine and other clergy. On the other hand, perfection (that is, the integrity of the church) is preserved when the strong bear with the weak, when the people put the best construction on the faults of their clergy, when the bishops take into account the weakness of the people.”

- 326 / 157 “Scripture often stresses the same thing. Ps. 143:2, ‘Enter not into judgement with thy servant, for no man living is righteous before thee.’ This absolutely denies any glory in man’s righteousness, even to all the saints and servants of God, if God does not forgive but judges and condemns their hearts.”