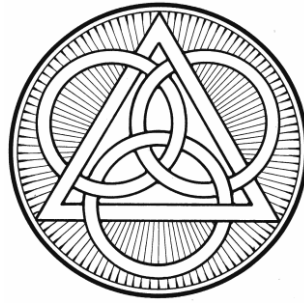




*10 Commandments*



*Apostles Creed*



*Holy Baptism*

*Lord's Supper*



*Keys & Confession*



*Lord's Prayer*



# Confirmation Essays

## Class of 2024

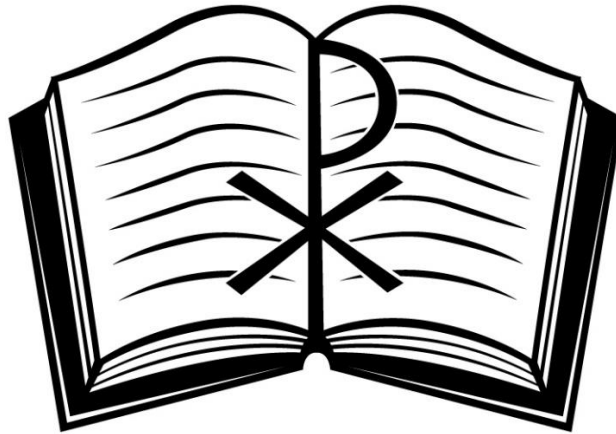
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## **The Bible is God's True Word**

By Sophia Miller

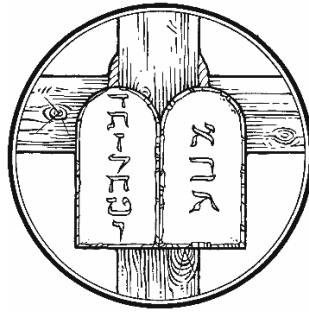
When you are reading the Bible, it is very important to know that what you are reading is true. In this essay, I will be describing how you can be sure that the Bible is God's true Word.

How can we be sure the Bible is God's true Word? All the writers of the Bible were eyewitnesses of God's Scriptures. We can be sure that this is God's Word because the Holy Spirit taught the human writers not only the thoughts but even the words they wrote. 2 Peter 1:21 assures us, "*Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*"

Of what are we assured by the fact that the Bible is God's word? Numbers 23:19 says, "*God is not a man, that he should lie.*" The fact that the Bible is God's Word assures us that the Bible has no errors but is true in everything it says. The Holy Spirit works through eyewitnesses, therefore ensuring that the Bible is God's true Word.

Knowing that the Bible is true is very important. Without understanding or believing it is the truth can make it very hard to grow in your faith with assurance. However, we can be sure that God was working through the eyewitnesses that wrote the books of the Bible. 2 Timothy 3:16 announces, "*All scripture is God breathed and useful for teaching rebuking correcting and training in righteousness.*"

As you can see, when you are reading the Bible, you can be confident that what you are reading is true. We can trust that what the Bible says is God's true Word. It tells us it is true. It comes from our God who cannot lie and He oversaw the whole process of writing this Word so that we can place our confidence in it.



## **Law & Gospel**

By Taylor Bortner

I think we can all agree the Bible is a very long book with 1500 pages (give or take). But did you know that the whole of the Bible, with all those pages, can be summarized in just two doctrines? These doctrines are Law and Gospel.

The first doctrine is the Law. The Law mainly focuses on our sins. It shows us what we did and announces punishment for sin. Because Adam and Eve sinned, we sin too. We are born into sin and can't help but sin. The 10 commandments are a perfect example of how we can't keep God's commands. Time and time again, people in the Bible stray from God and need to be reminded of their sin and punishment.

The second doctrine is the Gospel. The Gospel mainly focuses on Jesus and how He saved us from the punishment of death and hell. In Genesis 3:15, God tells satan, *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.* Here we already see God's plan to send us a Savior. God requires perfection and since we couldn't fulfill that, He sent us His Son, Jesus, to do everything for us. Because Jesus saved us, we have the promise of Heaven and salvation.

We need both the Law and the Gospel. They are equally important. If we only had the Law, we wouldn't know that we were saved. We would only know what we did and what our punishment is. If we only knew we were going to Hell and couldn't be saved, we wouldn't live a happy life. We would be in constant fear. However, if we only had the Gospel, we wouldn't know what we were saved from. We wouldn't even know that we needed a Savior from sin. It's important we know both what we did and that we are saved.

Just because we are saved, doesn't mean we should live the worst lives possible. In fact, because we know that we are saved and we know what we did wrong, we should at least try to avoid making those same mistakes and instead live lives of thanks and praise. We pick up the law again and use it as a guide in thankfulness for what our Savior did for us.

Yes, though the Bible is a big book, its message is rather simple. Law and Gospel tell us we are sinners who need a Savior and then show us that Savior that we might be with Him forever. The two main teachings of the Bible aren't just important, they are absolutely necessary for us and our salvation.

## Modern Societies False God's

By Sawyer Fritch

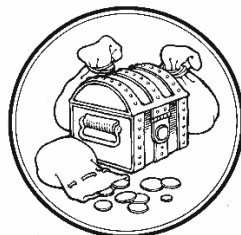
The First Commandment tells us, *"You shall have no other gods.* Martin Luther explained what this means for God's people, *"We should fear, love, trust in God above all things."* Have you ever thought about false gods and their meanings in our daily lives, and what false gods could look like in our everyday and modern lives?

False gods, as Luther says, are ultimately anything we put above God, so think about what we put on top in our lives in these modern days. I think some modern false gods today are phones, money, popularity, and much more. The list can go much longer because it is anything we fear, love, or trust more than our God. Idols can even be teachings or people. Matthew 7:15-16 tells us, *"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit, you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?"*

Most of the stuff I've listed so far doesn't seem like it could be that harmful but all of it infects our lives and makes us only focus on it and makes us feel like we need it. In the first Commandment, God says to us that He should be number one in our life because He has our home in heaven and provides everything for us and has given us life, both life here in this world and with Him forever in heaven. That's why Proverbs 3:5-6 encourages us to *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

All of us need to resist the urges and temptation of the devil and the world because simple things, even good things, like phones, money, friends, and fame can get in the way of our lives and take God out of the number one spot in our lives. God should be number one in our lives because of all the gifts and love He gives us. Because He only wants what is best for us, it is always best to respect and honor His wishes as we live for him. Paul tells the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 5:21, *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

We must not let false gods take control of us or let them into our lives. Resist temptations, stay away from the things that might get in the way of our lives and which seek to knock God out of first place in our lives. I'm thankful we have Jesus who did all this for us. It's because of Him that I'll strive to keep Him first my whole life long.



## Keeping the Sabbath

By Miles Rickert

In today's world, we are distracted from many things. Satan can use these distractions to slowly pull us away from our God. We must stay focused on a God-pleasing path so we don't drift off. One way to do this is by taking what God says about the Sabbath seriously.

One way that we keep the Sabbath is by going to church. For example, I work and go to school during the week, get all of my work done ahead of time, and then on Sunday, I go to church. After church is done I hang out with my family and friends and do activities with them. God tells us in Exodus 20:8-11, *“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”*

Another way that we keep the Sabbath is by studying God's word. For example, I go to church in the morning and study and worship God at church. God's word brings rest and comfort to us through its message of forgiveness. Doing daily devotions at home is an easy way of studying God's Word. If we don't hear His Word and praise God for his blessings, we are not worshiping and might fall away from God. So it is important that we go to church and worship Him. Hebrews 10:24-25 encourages us, *“Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

With all of the distractions in today's world, it is important to keep God in the front and center. Colossians 2:6-7 promises, *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.* Whenever we go to church and study God's Word, we have God's promise that He strengthens our faith and keeps us close to Himself, our rock and cornerstone.



## God Wants Us to Honor Our Authorities

By Owen Dukelow

Have you ever made fun of an authority before? Well, in the Fourth Commandment, God is letting us know that we should always honor our authorities and show them love and respect.

Perhaps a good place to start is with a good question often asked, “How do we honor them?” In 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, we hear, *Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.* Again, Hebrews 13 verses 7 and 17 encourage, *7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. ... 17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.* We honor them by not angering them and by obeying their rules and listening to what they say.

But some may argue “What are we supposed to do when they say something that goes against God?” In Acts 5:29, Peter tells the Sanhedrin, which has recently commanded him to stop talking about Jesus, *“We must obey God rather than men.”* So we can simply tell them what they want goes against what God has commanded. But even here, 1 Peter 3:13-15 is in effect, *“Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”* So, if they’re in the wrong, it is not time to lose all respect for them but try to get them to understand that God doesn’t agree with them and that they are one of God’s authorities, and hopefully, they will see where they went wrong.

Ultimately, God wants to bless us through authority. We can turn to Ephesians 6:2,3 which says, *“Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise — that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy a long life on the earth.”* When you love and respect authorities it comes with God’s promise that you will enjoy a long life on earth. You will be blessed.

In question 52 of our Catechism we’re asked, “How does God bless us through those He’s placed over us?” Well that’s simple, we have safety and can feel secure with being protected by our authorities. It’s true at home as moms and dads take care of their children and teach them important things. It’s true at Church as we are blessed with forgiveness and salvation. It’s true of the government that blesses us with order and protection.

In summary of all that I’ve mentioned today, God wants us to always honor and obey our authorities and listen to what they say. We only disobey if their command goes against God’s Word. Why? Because God wants to bless us through them.

## Human Life Is a Precious Gift to Protect

By Thomas Kemnitz

Have you ever wondered why human life means so much? Well in this essay, I will be talking all about how much human life matters using some questions from Luther's Small Catechism and words from the Bible.

In Luther's small catechism, question 60 we are asked, "Why is human life so precious?" Well God says in Genesis chapter 2 verse 7, "*The Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being.*" So God created us! He made us how He wanted to! That means human life is precious and unique and also a wonderful gift from God who created our first parents in His likeness.

That's just the beginning of how much our lives mean to God and how much it should mean to others, and even ourselves. In Luther's small catechism, question 61 asks, "Who alone has the right to end a human life?" Let's see what God says in the Bible about that question. Deuteronomy 32:39 says, "*See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.* So with that the editors of the Catechism respond with "God alone has the power to end a person's life but he also lets his authorities do that - government soldiers and police officers may carry out capital punishment, take life in war and take life in order to protect the lives of others." God's Word also warns, "*For he (governmental authority) is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.* (Romans 13:4)" Anything else is a breaking of the Fifth Commandment.

Question 65 asks "How does the 5th Commandment serve as a guide to express our gratitude towards God?" Colossians 3:12,13 says, *as God's chosen people holy and dearly loved clothe yourselves with compassion and kindness humility gentleness and patience. Bear with each other if any of you have a grievance against someone, forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

With that being said God values our life and considers it to be very precious and so should we. No one had the right to take it from you besides God's authorities in special circumstances as we said. May we value life as the gift that it is from our loving Creator.

THANK GOD  
FOR THE  
GIFT OF  
LIFE



# Using Earthly Possessions in a God-Pleasing Way

By Ella Schoonover

As humans, we are blessed with many earthly possessions that God has provided us. However, it is essential to use these possessions in a way that pleases God. In this article, we will discuss how to use our earthly possessions in a God-pleasing way.

The Bible teaches us about possessions and how God views them. We must understand that possessions are a gift from God. Psalm 24:1-2 tells us, *The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it: for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.* It is, therefore, our responsibility to use them in a way that honors Him. In Proverbs 3:9-10 we hear, *"Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."*

If we don't understand how God wants us to use our possession then we should take it to prayer and listen to His answer in His Word. There are various ways to use our possessions in a God-pleasing way. One way is by giving to those in need. Acts 4:32 describes the early Christian church, *"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had."* It is essential to be a good steward of what God has given us by using our possessions for His glory and avoiding greed and materialism. Another way is to focus on buying necessary items instead of wants. By focusing on necessary purchases you are avoiding cluttering your living environment but also your life with a love of stuff. In Luke 12:15 Jesus warned, *Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.* Finally, God would have us be generous with Him. Paul told the Corinthians, *"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made"* (1 Corinthians 16:2).

This will not always be easy. There are many challenges we face in using our possessions in a God-pleasing way. For example, we may be tempted to accumulate possessions, and it can be challenging to balance our needs and wants. Additionally, societal pressure can make it difficult to live a God-pleasing life. But God will supply the strength and motivation in our Savior Jesus. In Philippians 2:5-8 we read, *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!*

To conclude, we must understand the importance of using our possessions in a way that pleases God. We can do this by giving to those in need, being good stewards, using our possessions for God's glory, and avoiding greed and materialism. Despite the challenges we may face, we must strive to use our possessions in a way that honors God as we remember all He has done for us.

# The Human Tongue: A Tool for Good and Evil

By Wynter Ciske

Have you ever wondered how you are using your tongue and whether you're using it to praise God, or using it for evil? Well if you have, today I will tell you about the human tongue and how you can use it for good, instead of evil.

What is the tongue? The tongue is the part of the body that helps us speak, speaking is a gift we are given by God, and with our tongue we can say both good things and bad things about God's Word and His creation.

James 3:5-6 says, *"The tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body."* The Bible says lots of things about the tongue and how it can be a very good tool for spreading God's Word to other people. But it also says that the tongue can be dangerous and can be used as a tool for evil. We have to be careful with whether we are speaking good or evil.

Thankfully we have help. In 2 Samuel 23:2, we hear, *"The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue."* We read that the Lord spoke through David, the Lord also in some ways speaks through us when we speak God's word to others. At times the devil also tries to get us to say evil things, but with God by our side, we can resist the temptations of evil and speak God's word instead. When the devil tries to speak through us to others, I could make a bad reputation for all Christians and make people think that we are not God's messengers.

We have to be careful with how we use our tongue and that we are using it for good by speaking God's word to others. And make sure we resist the devil's temptations and not speak evil. Thankfully we also have forgiveness for our evil words and that forgiveness helps us to desire to use our speech for good.





## The Triune God

By Cameron Holmes

The Triune God is a difficult topic to try and understand, in fact we can't understand it; it's humanly impossible and in the following essay we will dive deeper into the topic to try and hopefully better understand it as best we can.

What do we mean when we say that God is triune? As Christians, we worship the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In Matthew chapter 3 verses 16 and 17, Jesus was baptized, and when He emerged from the water heaven opened and we saw the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus and the voice of the Father saying "*This is my son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased.*" In this passage, we see that Jesus is equal to God, that He is God. Not only that, but all three Persons are present, the Father's voice is heard. Jesus is in the Jordan. The Holy Spirit descends as a dove.

Though we can't comprehend this great truth, why do we believe that God is triune? As Christians, we believe that the Holy Spirit reveals this truth to us. In the Word that the Holy Spirit told the prophets to write, it tells us that God is three persons. We therefore call this teaching an article of faith.

How do we know that the Holy Spirit is God? John 4:24 tells us that *God is spirit and that we must worship in spirit and in truth*, but it's important that we do not think that the Holy Spirit, the Father, or the Son are the same person, they are different from each other, but they all are God, again we cannot understand how this is possible.

The Bible clearly teaches that God is three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And yet we do not have three gods but one God. Our God is the Holy Trinity.

## Using God's Name to Win Souls

By Hannah Kemnitz

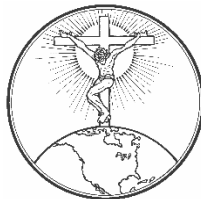
What happens after death? Everybody has wondered this at some point. Most people believe in some sort of religion, whether that be Christianity, Judaism, or Buddhism. But what do people who don't necessarily believe in a god think? Reincarnation, some form of an afterlife, or maybe just a void. Thoughts about death and the afterlife can be confusing and can fill our lives with uncertainty. My confirmation essay will be about using God's Name as a comforting message to teach that He loves all people, that all people are saved through faith in Him, and that we can have eternal life with Him in Heaven forever.

Everyone also has a conscience. They can differentiate good from bad, wrong from right. Without God's Word as guidance, many people can get confused with things that are spiritually right and wrong. In Acts 4:12 God says: *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."* Whether people are unbelievers because they don't believe in a god, or they simply just don't think one exists, they are doomed to hell if they don't know Jesus as their Lord and Savior and by grace, put their faith in Him.

As hard of a topic it may be to speak about, we have to inform those around us about their sin. In Matthew 18:15, *"Jesus announces, If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over."* We can use God's Name and His Word not only to help them notice their sin but also to bring comfort to them. Romans 10:13 says: *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* As scary as it may be to confront other people or even strangers about their sin, it is absolutely necessary for them to notice their mistakes and find comfort and faith in Christ Jesus.

God's Name is a warm message to those who hear it. It can be comforting in times of sadness, anger, guilt, or regret. We should love sharing God's Name with others who need it because through it God brings people to faith. Philippians 3:14 *"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."* When we share God's Name with others, we are not only comforting them, but we know that one day we will see them in Heaven again.

We can use God's Name to help people find comfort in health, grief, and in everything else by spreading and teaching His Word to those who don't know it and to those who need it.



## Baptism

By Lincoln W. Nebl

Have you ever wondered why we use water to baptize people? Have you ever wondered why it's so important that we are baptized? Today, I will tell you about Baptism and what it means to me.

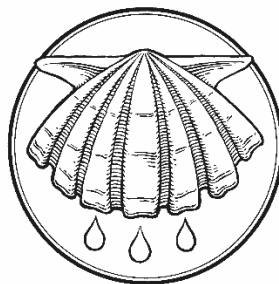
Why do we say that Baptism is not just plain water? Matthew 28:19 says *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* This passage shows us that God isn't just concerned about one city, one state, or even one country, God cares about everyone on planet Earth, both men and women, old and young, no matter what you have done, God loves and cares for us. In fact, He loves and cares for us so much that He commands us to baptize those from all nations and to get baptized ourselves so we can live with Him forever in heaven.

Mark 16:16 also announces, *“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”* This says that all unbelievers are condemned, but through the faith, which is given to us in baptism, we are saved and we have eternal life through faith in the name of our Triune God and all that Name has done for us. That's why Martin Luther calls Baptism a gracious water of Life in the catechism.

But that's not all. Baptism also equips us to battle our sinful nature in our daily lives. In Romans 6:3-4 it says, *“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”* We were in a slavery to sin but through Jesus' death on the cross, we are freed from the slavery of sin and have a chance to say “no” to sin, death, and the devil. Our baptism isn't just some small meaningless event in our lives. It is the moment we were connected to Christ by faith. So we are freed to live for Him. We are freed to show our thanks and appreciation each day for the promise that we will be with Him someday in heaven.

Our Baptisms are important. We can see that in many places throughout the Bible. It is where many of us were given our faith. Through this gift called baptism, we are given faith so we can live with God in heaven someday.

Stated again, we learned that baptism is important because it creates or strengthens our faith, gives us eternal life, and fights off our sinful nature. This right here is why our Baptism is so important. Because it creates faith and saves us from sin, death, and the devil.





## **The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

By Marcus Kampman

In a little over a week, my classmates and I get to partake in something that we have been looking forward to partaking of for our whole lives, the sacrament of Holy Communion. Communion is something that we Christians are blessed to receive, and it is important to understand what communion is, the blessings we receive, and why it truly is a comfort.

First, it is important to know what we receive in the Lord's supper. In Mark 14:22-24 and Matthew 26:26-28 it says, the Lord's Supper is Jesus' body and His blood. But what exactly does that mean? It means that Jesus' body and blood is in, with, and under the bread and wine we receive. We actually and miraculously receive Jesus' real body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine.

Secondly, we get many blessings in Communion. But what are those blessings exactly? One of the many blessings we receive in Communion is forgiveness of sins through Jesus' body and blood in the bread and wine. This is because when we receive the body and blood of Jesus' we receive what that body and blood did for us. In 1 Peter 2:24, *"He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed."* Of course, forgiveness is never alone but is accompanied by other blessings as well. It says in Luther's Small Catechism, "Wherever there is forgiveness of sins there also is life and salvation." We receive strength to live our lives now here on this earth and forever with God in heaven.

Another blessing we receive is getting the opportunity to confess our unity of faith with our fellow Christians, as it says in 1 Corinthians 10:17, *"Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf."*

Receiving the Lord's Supper is comforting. Receiving the Lord's Supper is comforting for me because I know that I am partaking in the eternal life which gives me eternal life in Jesus, I can be sure of this because it says in Ephesians 1:7 *"In him we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace."*

Holy Communion is a great blessing from our Savior in which we receive His body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine and I am looking forward to it and am excited to receive it with my family, both my actual family and the family of believers here at St. Paul's.