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| |  | | --- | | Dear fellow servants of Jesus,  Next week, the season of Lent will enfold us into the journey of Jesus to the cross. It is a season of repentance, leading each of us to bow humbly before the God of all grace who loved us and gave His life for us.  I agree with Martin Luther when he stated in the first of the 95 theses: “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ‘Repent’ (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.”  Why “the entire life of believers”? Because repentance is so easily lost to our busyness, our self-justification, and our lovelessness. Yes, even as servants in ministry and the church, repentance fades into the distant background as the value of being intelligent, right, and in charge overtakes the admission that we are merely dust and ashes before the Holy God. Yes, even in our rightness, we are wrong: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one” (Romans 3:10-12).  As the Apostle John noted about us and our gracious God, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8-9).  I invite you to join me in the Texas District’s annual Day of Repentance on Ash Wednesday, February 14th. It’s a fitting day to confess our sins and to lift up prayers to God for His loving forgiveness.  One area of practical application in our own district is in our attitude about Concordia University Texas and the LCMS. While I cannot comment on details of the legal process between the LCMS and CTX, I can comment on the proper attitude of our hearts during this time. First, we are the Synod together. As the LCMS bylaws state, “Individual Christians are joined together in a worshiping and serving community, the congregation. Congregations, the basic units of the Synod, have joined together to form the Synod and relate to one another through it” (bylaw 1.3). The Texas District is the Synod in this place—walking together as the body of Christ with our brothers and sisters in faith—joined together as the LCMS. Please be assured that, as an officer of the Synod, I am working diligently and faithfully to implement every portion of resolution 7-03 that relates to me as the ecclesiastical supervisor of the rostered workers at CTX. As member congregations and member church workers of the Synod, your role is not to treat the Synod as an enemy or to engage in battle against CTX. Walking together, your job is to pray for our beloved church and for everyone involved. With a humble heart filled with the love of Christ and with a spirit of repentance, your holy calling is to ask Jesus, the Lord of the Church, to send His Spirit of repentance and reconciliation so that the goal of resolution 7-03, repentance and forgiveness, is realized by God’s grace. Yes, you need to engage in the most important component of this process: humble and fervent prayer.  In your family, at church, and even in the most challenging situations, a life of “godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation” (2 Corinthians 7:10). All of us are called to be engaged in “godly grief” during this challenging season. Linguistically, this verse from 2 Corinthians is related to the great Psalm of confession, Psalm 51. What is our posture as we walk with one another? “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise” (Psalm 51:17). Why? Because “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).  May this Christ-accomplished outcome be ours as we walk in repentance together.  Find resources for the Day of Repentance at [**txlcms.org/day-of-repentance-2024/**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001BRKDVazONxI80aYYpY-xrvtvu0_VMWp5J5woVG85dOAFsHrdKoYfZt-jU9MT9Tz4wE6MKDFONjmPJ3RC9DWkcMMiw84ihg2V2YIpgN3VFK4inxgdBidhqdV0U-BXne1TH3KtKHQjVUwoW4ZF0hKXZkblPxvTrHhEzyEj0FfwJNU=&c=YbiuancTtlCSY59liO231Pn-NRfDYQICMpOsGEjxgfih9lAo7_TWIQ==&ch=jdl55yvzKwMGn_rTkO-b7jARXbhIEqYOg5rQusDm7_okTq9UwUpVtA==).  Walking with you in repentance, | |

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