



The September, 2025 issue of *Lutheran Witness* includes an outstanding article by Dr. Beverly Yahnke on engaging in difficult conversations. One of her key points reads as follows, “Remember, in all that you do, that this is a person for whom Christ died.” This is something of which we are constantly reminded when we receive God’s gifts in His Divine Services to us, and every time we study His Word. Yet, in a time of division and polarization, it is often too easy to forget this and in essence, dehumanize those with whom we disagree.

Our deeply held conviction that Christ died for all people is informed by Scripture. Consider, for example, John 3:16, “For God so loved the *world*, that he gave His only Son, that *whoever* believes in Him should not perish but have eternal *life*.” (emphases added) Furthermore, 1 Timothy 2:4: (God) “desires *all* people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (emphases added). Indeed, this very truth undergirds our proclamation of the sanctity of all human life from its very beginning as a one-cell individual, into eternity. It is thus not at all surprising that Dr. Yahnke’s piece was included in the issue focusing on the theology of the body.

“... God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8). As baptized Christians, we desire for others that which we have received. In our ultimate concern for their salvation, we are called to listen to them, showing that we truly care for them, be firm and unwavering in our defense of The One True Faith when challenged by our unbelieving neighbors, or even by brothers and sisters who are erring. Yet, we are called to do so “with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:16), always remembering that we too are sinners for whom our Lord died (and that we ourselves are frequently wrong). And as Christians, we are uniquely equipped to exemplify a “toning down” of the rhetoric. We all fail, and when we do, we each remember our Baptism, sorrow over our sin and repent of it. We make peace with the neighbor whom we offended, and confess our sin to God and receive Christ’s forgiveness won on the Cross, through our Pastor.

We proclaim Christ and Him-crucified, in thanks to God for His gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation freely available to all!