



[Pastor Keith GeRue](#)

Sermon for Epiphany 3
January 23, 2022

In Christ in All Things

Colossians 1:15-20

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.¹

In the Name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Some of us struggle trying to be “**all things**” to all people. Some of us are anxious looking at all the things on our “**to-do**” list. Some of us are often disappointed with all the things we expect of ourselves or others. In our Lutheran school world, the staff considers all the things that go into teaching a class, facilitating a variety of activities, or administering a ministry. The congregation considers all the things including finances, staff, facilities and more that go into supporting an excellent Lutheran school ministry. “**All things**” is overwhelming, frustrating, and humbling. “**All things**” is a constant reminder of our sinful nature and the sinful world.

The National Lutheran Schools Week theme, “**In All Things,**” takes us to the text of Colossians, and the Good News that Christ is “**In All Things.**” Five times in these six verses, the Apostle Paul references Christ “**In All Things.**” Christ is the Creator of all things; He is before all things; He holds together all things; He reconciles all things to Himself.

Scripture begins with the creation of all things. In our text, Paul also begins, “**For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.**” The eternal, triune God is the creator of all. Christ’s participation in creation is described by the Apostle John, “**In the beginning was the Word ... All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.**”² While our Small Catechism explanations of the articles of the Apostles Creed divide the divine workings of the Father (creation), Son (redemption) and Holy Spirit (sanctification), the Holy Trinity works together in all things. Christ is also our Creator.

Adam and Eve, created in the image of God, are challenged by the serpent, “**Your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.**”³ Satan suggested that they could be and do all things without their Creator. Succumbing to the temptation, the crown of creation was separated from the Creator.

¹ Colossians 1:15-20 ESV 2016

² John 1:1, 3 ESV 2016

³ Genesis 3:5 ESV 2016



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Paul's introduction to Christ in all things states the reality of the **"domain of darkness."**⁴ The fall brought Adam and Eve and their descendants to the darkness of broken relationships, physical pains and **"thorns and thistles"** outside of the perfect garden. Sin affects all things. Most of all it affects man's relationship with God. Instead of being like God, Adam, Eve, and all of us hide in fear from God.

The Christ of all things in creation chose to reconcile His creation to Himself through Himself. Paul notes the means of reconciliation, **"making peace by the blood of his cross"**⁵ In Christ, God and mankind are brought together. As sinners, we have nothing to offer for reconciliation. Christ offers the only solution possible, Himself. The setting for reconciliation is Good Friday and the cross. Christ sheds His blood as the perfect and complete sacrifice for sin. All hostility has been removed between God and mankind.

The reconciliation is gifted to each of us through the Means of Grace. The little child is reconciled to God at the baptismal font. The word of reconciliation is announced in absolution: **"As a called and ordained servant of the Word and by Christ's command, I forgive you all your sins."** The communicant leaves the Lord's Table where the body and blood of the cross are received, and the communicant is blessed to **"depart in peace."**

A staple of every early childhood and early elementary child's supply list is the school glue. The drops of glue miraculously hold together craft projects and other items. The Means of Grace are the glue of the church. They hold together God's people. They hold together what happens in our church and school. The Means of Grace bring Christ to His people and hold the church family together in Christ.

Lutheran schools are places where the reconciliation through Christ is taught, lived, and shared. The response to the preschool playground disagreement is more than **"Say you are sorry."** The discussion includes, **"Jesus forgives you and so do I."** The tension between teachers becomes part of the staff devotional dialogue, **"We are the Body of Christ, and each part shares its gift and blesses the body of the church."** The disagreement between parents and teacher is resolved in light of the mutual desire to bring Christ to the child. Competition between church and school for resources is more than a stewardship conversation, becoming an opportunity to refocus the mission of the church. The focus is on Christ who continues to bring peace to His church and to unite the church in reaching out energetically and faithfully.

It is easy to get distracted in our individual and family life. We compartmentalize our lives. Christ is present in our family devotions, but we'd rather not have Him hear the disrespectful words to the spouse or to parents. Christ is the center of the Bible class conversation, but we'd rather not have Him hear the gossip in the office. Christ is worshiped with our words in the sanctuary on Sunday morning, but our words in the Saturday evening social setting do not honor Him. Christ has forgiven all things. By virtue of our Baptism, Christ is present in us in all things and all places.

Christ may also be compartmentalized in the church. Christ **"In All Things"** affirms the message of the Divine Service. He is also the focus in the Sunday school classroom, conversations in the church and

⁴ Colossians 1:13 ESV 2016

⁵ Colossians 1:20 ESV 2016



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school office, the quilting group, the committee meeting, care ministry, and all things that take place during the week. **“He is the head of the body, the church.”**

Schools have moved way beyond **“reading, writing and arithmetic,”** technologically and otherwise. Schools cheer for their athletic teams; music leaders conduct choirs; parents are asked to partner in many school projects; administrators make sure state regulations and Lutheran School standards are met; teachers are aware of curriculum standards and teach to excel above them; board members continue to review and develop policies; school Administration is faced with challenging student and family dynamics. Lutheran school ministry is challenging.

Christ is **“In All Things”** in Lutheran schools. Christ is the topic of the preschool Bible Stories and the junior high Religion class. Christ is worshiped at school opening and chapels and at the baptismal assembly of the school family asking to have their child baptized into God’s family. Christ is in the phonics lesson and Geometry lesson. Christ is on the stage and in the gym. Christ is at the parent meeting and faculty meeting.

“Christ” is the **confession** of Lutheran schools. Christ alone is our Master. He teaches me and all believers one doctrine. Christ is in all things in our teaching.

Christ is the basis of our **commitment** to Lutheran schools. It is important to always reevaluate, **“Why do we do what we do?” “Why do we invest in a Lutheran school ministry as parents or as a congregation?” “Why does a staff member serve in a Lutheran school when other opportunities might be more attractive?”** The response is **“because Christ is here!”**

Christ is the focus of the **commission** of Lutheran Schools. Our world is sometimes referred to as a **“post-Christian”** world. Christianity is no longer the basis of morality and other aspects of our culture. The world needs Christ. Our community needs Christ. Our children and families need Christ. Lutheran schools provide the opportunity to bring Christ to those who do not know Him and to nurture in Christ those blessed to be in His church. Every school day, the mission field drives onto our church and school parking lots. Increasingly, children and families first hear of Christ in our schools. We praise God for that opportunity as we respond to His commission energetically.

We cannot be all things to all people. All the things on our list will not be accomplished. Not all aspects of school ministry will be efficient and effective. However, Christ has chosen to be **“In All Things”** for His church. We continue to worship and serve Him **“In All Things”** in our Lutheran school and church ministry.

In the Name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.