

Hirtenbrief
by Johannes A. A. Grabau
(December 1840)¹
(translation by William W. Schumacher)

I. Pastoral Letter

To all brothers and members of the evangelical Lutheran church in Buffalo, New York, Milwaukee, Eden and Klein Hamburg, Albany, Portage, Canada.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all!

Dear fellow-redeemed brothers, together with all those with you in your homes!

The mercy of our God has brought us, a part of the true church of God on earth, into a good land where no one hinders or may hinder the common edification of our souls in the Word and Sacrament. This freedom of religion and church, obtained with God's help, is a gift of God; and precisely for that reason must it be properly used and not abused. Such an abuse of churchly freedom against any article of the faith or any part of the divine service would negate for us the purpose of our emigration out of the land of church oppression. There is *one*² Lord of us all, one faith, one baptism; therefore the church seeks to preserve its spiritual unity, since without the proper unity and concord it cannot be the *body of Christ*, spiritually bound together. Because it is outwardly so easy here in America for each one to choose and set up his own order, and since the church can thereby so easily suffer harm, the ministers of the church ought to defend against such an *individual* character in the manifestation of the Spirit with the weapons which are not fleshly. I also would like to help toward that end through this modest instruction.

An important article of the Augsburg Confession, which here in America is misunderstood and misconstrued by many, is the 14th, which says:

Concerning church government it is taught that no one should publicly (*publice*) teach or preach or administer the sacrament without proper call (*nisi rite vocatus*).

People still concede this among us³ when it comes to teaching and preaching, although a few youths such as Gattel und Bauernmeister, two laborers, have had themselves made preachers among the Methodist and

¹The text used for this translation is that found in *Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo vom Jahre 1840, nebst den zwischen ihm und mehreren lutherischen Pastoren von Missouri gewechselten Schriften, der Öffentlichkeit übergeben als eine Protestation gegen Geltendmachung hierarchischer Grundsätze innerhalb der lutherischen Kirche*, printed in New York in 1849. The same publication contains the Missouri Saxon first response, Grabau's rebuttal, and further documents from the dispute. This translation was originally published in *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays on C. F. W. Walther in Memory of August R. Suelflow*, edited by Thomas Manteufel and Robert Kolb. [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000]. Permission is granted by the translator for reproduction of this electronic version for research, personal, or classroom use, provided the text is unchanged and the translator is properly identified.

²Emphasis indicated by italics in this translation is in every case original to the edition which served as the basis for this translation (see previous note).

³Because he mentions the Methodists and Anabaptists, Grabau may intend this "us" to mean "us Germans," not just Lutherans.

Anabaptist sects. And it is said that a certain tailor, Amereyn, who became delinquent from the church, has preached. It is also said that a farmer named Roggenbuck gives private instruction to many, which has a public character *in the midst of his sect*, in which he gives talks about texts. There are one or two speakers in every sect. But although the members of the church recognize the high importance of the office of the public ministry and of the proper call as far as teaching is concerned, the same cannot be said when it comes to recognition of the priestly part of the office, which has to do with the proper administration of the holy sacrament. The Epistle to the Hebrews says [5:4]: "No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was." Therefore I ask you all, beloved of God, to listen to this voice of your weak -- but, he believes, reliable -- shepherd. I exhort each one of you, for the sake of his own conscience's rest and at his soul's peril, that he not grasp the public administration of the holy sacrament without the proper and full call of the church, as has unfortunately already happened in some places. If we still want to be the church, then we must also believe that the 14th Article of the Confession is founded truly and deeply upon Scripture. It shall here be my task to show this, and I humbly and fraternally ask you to check my interpretation to see whether or not you perceive in it the voice of the ancient apostolic church. Where you believe that I am in error, please show and demonstrate this to me with brotherly words so that we may come to an understanding. It thus has to do with the public administration of the holy sacraments, which the Confession says should not happen through anyone who is uncalled or *improperly called*. The Confession also calls him uncalled or improperly called who is not called *rite*, i.e. according to the content of *the old orders of the church*. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession says concerning this: "Concerning this point we have often said here at the Reichstag *that we are inclined to keep the old church orders*." From this it is clear that by *rite vocatus* they understand that way of calling which was in use in ancient, apostolic times, and was also retained after the Lutheran Reformation of the church in Wittenberg and all other orthodox places. The same thing is still to be seen from the old Lutheran church orders. The old church orders are the main sources here from which the manner of calling must be recognized, since it is to be presupposed that they not only well *understood* the 14th article of the Augsburg Confession, but also *applied* it correctly. Old sermons of faithful teachers about the Augsburg Confession can also be consulted, e.g. those of Stenger, pastor at St. Gregory's Church in Erfurt, *Predigten über die Augsb. Confession*, 1648, especially concerning the 14th article.

The following points belong to the proper call, which is seen as, and believed to be, divine in the church:

1) The one who shall administer the holy sacraments must not only understand how to perform such administration with some outward skill, for the Egyptian sorcerers also knew how to imitate skillfully God's miracles and were nevertheless not from God. Rather he must have thoroughly studied and learned from God's word under proper instruction what the holy sacraments are; for what purpose the holy God instituted them; why they are celebrated in the church as they are and not otherwise; why they are so important; how those who want to come to the sacrament of the altar are to be examined and dealt with in confession or otherwise; *how* and *when* he should pronounce absolution and what kind of office this is. Further, how he should keep the doctrine of the holy sacraments, of confession and absolution pure, and defend and maintain it against sectarians and undisciplined men. And how he has to defend and maintain the related doctrines of sin, repentance, law and gospel, faith, justification before God, of Christ's person,

office, states, and merit etc. Whoever wants to receive souls to the sacrament of the altar must be well founded in all of church doctrine.

2) It is considered part of the proper call that the person has not only diligently studied this from God's word according to the instruction of orthodox teachers, but in addition has the gifts *of the Holy Spirit* which put him in the position *to rightly use* the right knowledge to his own and the church's salvation and to avoid harm. That is, whether he is able to warn (Titus 1:9) through the Holy Spirit in order to preserve doctrine in all dangers of the church, so that one may find the word of the law in his mouth as in a priest's, for he is an angel of the Lord Sabaoth (Malachi 2:7). He is also a father who should know where the treasures of his house lie, and who should bring forth new and old (Matthew 15:52) as needed.

3) It is considered part of the proper call that he not only have knowledge and gifts of the Holy Spirit, but that he also, because of such knowledge and gifts, be *examined* and *tested* by those who are already ministers of the church in a so-called *tentamen* (test); cf. Stenger's sermon. For Paul says (1 Tim. 3:10) that they shouldn't serve or administer sacraments until one has had them tested (*hi autem probentur primum*), i.e. whether they have the characteristics named in points 1 and 2, whereby one must also check their testimonies about their course of instruction and their manner of life; and also observe them in their manner of life for a time during which one can delegate lesser offices in the church to them such as cantor, lector, etc. Thereafter one has them *serve*, i.e. *administer sacraments and help in pastoral ministry*, if they are blameless in doctrine and life (*sic ministrent, nullum crimen habentes*). But this *tentamen* focuses especially, according to 1 Tim 3:9⁴, on examining whether they have the mystery of faith in a pure conscience (*habentes mysterium fidei in conscientia pura*), i.e. whether they stand in purity of both doctrine and life and whether they thus can be true stewards over God's mysteries, so that afterwards they may not be servants of men, or of their own impure hearts, acting according to their whim and not according to the rule of the true faith and of true blessedness in their office.

4) After such a *tentamen*, however, they are still not ministers of the church, but only those whom one can admit to church ministry, and thus to administration of the holy sacraments. If the congregation now elects such a tested man to administer the holy sacraments, or to carry out other holy ministries in the church, then he can be admitted *by those who are already ministers of the church* according to 1 Tim 5:22: "Lay hands (you, *Timothy*) on no one hastily!" Through easy admission those already in church service would make themselves participate in the sin of others. The laying on of hands by those who are already ministers of the church takes place as follows:

5) When the congregation that has no shepherd has collectively prayed God every Sunday until it has found one and elected this man by name, it must, according to Art. 6⁵, *set him before the existing clergy*. These must hold another examination with him in the presence of the congregation, not in order to test his knowledge (since that must have already happened before in the *tentamen*), but so that the congregation

⁴Grabau has the wrong reference here (or there is a misprint in the 1849 edition), indicating "V.1". The reference he seems to have in mind has been supplied.

⁵Grabau's reference here is unclear.

hears what kind of confession he makes and that he is *no novice*. For St. Paul wants him (1 Tim. 6:12) to make *a good confession before many witnesses*, and to have learned the pattern of the sound words of faith (2 Tim. 1:13). And if the whole congregation cannot be present for this, then at least enough representatives of the congregation must be there so the confession takes place before many witnesses and everyone be convinced that hands were not laid on anyone too hastily. Thus private ordinations are to be rejected according to God's word.

6) When that has happened, namely when he has made such a confession, then the existing clergy lay hands on him, i.e. they ordain him, as is customary according to the agenda of the church, and *commit to him the ministry of the church in the name of the triune God*, as the Lord Christ himself ordained his disciples (Matt. 28, Luke 24). 2 Tim. 1:6; 1 Tim. 4:14; Acts 6:6; 2 Tim 2:2; Tit. 1:15 (cp. Stenger's sermon on the Augsburg Confession, Art. 14, pp. 602-603). See the form of the ordination in the old church orders.

7) After the ordination has thus taken place according to divine order, it still remains to publicly install the ordinand in that congregation he is to serve. There he is invested or confirmed, i.e. he is set before the congregation as a shepherd truly called by God, and the congregation is handed over to him as Christ's flock for which he is to care. He pledges himself to the congregation in his faithfulness in doctrine and life, and the congregation binds itself to him in its faithfulness and obedience in all things *which are not opposed to God's word*.

Note: What is and is not opposed to God's word is not decided by any single member of the church but by the church itself in its symbols, church orders, and synods.

This is the divine order of the *rite vocatus* of which Dr. Luther says that the apostles and their disciples observed it in this way, and that it must remain so until the last day.

II. On the Great Necessity of the Proper Call

1) This is plain from the fact that St. Peter and all the apostles always refer to their proper divine call in the introductions to their letters, as when St. Paul says: Paul a servant of Jesus Christ, called through the will of God to be an apostle, etc. He would not mention this if the proper call had not been necessary and had not *contributed something to the point*. In the case of the apostles this call came immediately from Christ, and in the case of Timothy, Titus, and Ignatius it was mediated; but that changes nothing about its necessity.

2) The Lord Jesus himself was given his proper call from the Father and testifies that the Father sent him and that he does the Father's will; therefore the Father calls him also his *dear Son* in whom he is well pleased and to whom one is supposed to listen (Matt. 3:17). Thus it also says in Heb. 5:5: "Even Jesus did not put himself into the honor of becoming high priest, but rather he who said to him: You are my Son, today I have begotten you." Thus only the proper call is in keeping with *the divine will*, and is therefore *necessary*, 1 Cor. 14:40. And the improper call is just as dangerous as the proper is necessary; because where the proper call is not held fast (says an old teacher of the church, ca. 1649), untaught and ignorant people can easily slip in and afterwards cause all kinds of disorder. Stenger's sermons.

3) God wants to deal with us on earth through the public office of the church⁶, through which he instructs, absolves, communes us, etc. Therefore the church must have a certain unmistakable *testimony* that the person is accredited in the office in the divine order and according to the divine will, so that God wants to deal with us through him; that is why the apostles (Acts 15:24) reject the sectarian men who had shown up as teachers without a proper call, and say that they had *not commanded them anything*, i.e. had not handed over any office at all to them or ordained⁷ them. Thus also the church from earliest times has believed that, for the right administration of the holy sacraments and pronouncement of absolution, not only the words of institution themselves were necessary, but also the right divine call and command. Even if the *person* in the office be evil, the words of institution are nevertheless powerful *because of the office, to which the Lord still binds himself*, for in the office lies *Christ's* testimony that he will always realize and offer his institution (absolution and sacraments) on earth through the word which is used in it. Not that Christ needs the office to give his words their power, but rather that Christ, to make things more certain for us, will in grace *be served* by the office instituted by himself in order to deal with men on earth by the power of his word. Compare Question 518 in the catechism⁸: Who distributes the holy supper? The called teacher and preacher of the true church. (1 Cor. 4:1 - "Therefore let everyone regard us as Christ's servants and stewards of God's mysteries.") Questions 519 and 520: "The work of the *servant of the church*⁹ consists in consecrating and distributing the holy supper. (1 Cor 10:16 - "The cup which *we* bless, etc.") From this we are convinced that a man haphazardly appointed by the congregation¹⁰ can neither give absolution nor distribute the body and blood of Christ, but rather that he gives mere bread and wine. For Christ binds himself to his divine, unchangeable order, not to our disorder and whim. Of course, in an emergency situation where no minister is present *or available*, one Christian can instruct, comfort, and provide spiritual help to another, without needing to be elected and appointed by the congregation. But whoever speaks of an emergency situation when he has the true church and pastor right at his door is a liar. And whoever has resources and means, either alone or together with others, to bring a minister from a distance and yet does not do so, he is a miser before God. But the emergency specifically in the case of the sacrament of the altar can never become so great that one *must be publicly appointed* to administer it. For on sickbed or deathbed the head of every family can give it without office or agenda. Besides, we are not saved through the sacrament itself, but through faith in Jesus Christ, which is strengthened through this sacrament; for the sacrament itself already presupposes *saving faith* when we approach the altar. Since the

⁶"*Das öffentliche Kirchenamt.*"

⁷"*geordnet*", not "*ordiniert*".

⁸It is clear that Grabau here refers to an edition of the catechism with additional explanations, not to Luther's Catechism itself. But it is not known which edition of the catechism Grabau is referring to here.

⁹"*Kirchendiener.*"

¹⁰"*. . . ein von der Gemeinde willkürlich aufgeworfener Mann.*"

Lord is not bound to this means of grace, but rather has only bound *us* to it, he can preserve our faith unto eternal life through the word alone without the sacrament, for years if need be.

III. Right Understanding of the Conferral of the Office of the Ministry in the Smalcald Articles

It has unfortunately also come up that the passages in the Smalcald Articles about the power of bishops have been misused. It is well known that, after they had returned to the Lutheran or old catholic church, Dr. Luther and other theologians and pastors at Wittenberg and many other places *ordained* and installed other ministers, after they had been elected by the congregations as tested men. The papist party arose against that and said: *Only a Roman Catholic bishop can ordain, therefore the Lutheran ordinations are invalid and those ordained in the Lutheran church do not have a right, divine ministry.*

To this Dr. Luther and the rest of the theologians answered in the Smalcald Articles: Originally, as church history teaches, there was no difference between a bishop and an ordinary parish pastor, for the word *e)pi/skopoj* "bishop" and *presbu/teroj* "pastor" (elder) are used synonymously in the New Testament. But thereafter many pastors, in order to guard against division and preserve the unity of the church, elected one from among themselves whom they called bishop, not because of a higher spiritual *office* but simply because of a wider *responsibility of the office*¹¹, that of supervising other pastors. This was a good human order which was not against the sense of holy Scripture. This bishop then received the *privilege*, but not however the special divine *official right*¹², to ordain further ministers in his territory or area of supervision. It thus does not follow that, according to divine order, an ordinary pastor can not ordain a new minister as soon as the latter is able and elected by the congregation. Indeed, the ordinary pastor, or pastors if there are several, are actually obligated by the divine order to ordain a new minister where the Roman bishop will not ordain such an able minister based on the right confession. The Roman bishops refused specifically to ordain based on the orthodox confession and required the papistic confession, such as, for example, that a person becomes righteous before God not through faith alone but also through works. Consequently the whole Lutheran, or actually old catholic, church -- and in fact each individual church diocese which had previously stood under a Roman bishop¹³ -- was obligated to ordain capable ministers itself as the older ones who had left the Roman church gradually passed away. Now as far as the individual congregation is concerned, our theologians certainly do not mean to say that it should all by itself and arbitrarily grab an untaught, untested, and unprepared man from its midst and appoint him to the public office of the church through the power of mere majority vote. For such a thing has not the least validity before God, but is mere chaos. Instead the theologians want the individual congregation to strive and work to find eligible, capable persons; to ask God for capable workers in his harvest, to conduct the

¹¹"*Amtsverpflichtung*".

¹²I.e., bishops have *Vorrecht* but not *Amtsrecht*.

¹³The reference is to the "Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope," §72 (Tappert, *Book of Concord*, p. 332).

election according to divine order, and to take care that the tested and elected person be ordained and installed among them. Dr. Luther calls this fostering, electing, and ordaining ministers, and says that this order must remain until the last day. In this way the apostles placed in office Timothy, Titus, Ignatius, Polycarp, etc., and these did likewise to their successors, the bishops, and so it must remain. The congregation was never excluded from the election and approval and prayer, but the pope withdrew the congregation's right to elect and to vote and filled the parishes arbitrarily, so that the pope is a spiritual and worldly tyrant.

Now when someone is fostered, elected, and ordained in this way he can give comfort by means of real spiritual gifts in his office, but someone without a call cannot. For how shall they preach, instruct, absolve, baptize, commune, etc., if they are not sent? Rom. 10:15; John 20:21. Much less can someone without a call preserve the church as the church when it is attacked and persecuted, but instead he falls away and looks out for his own interests, and falls into either sectarianism or worldliness. But the genuine office has the unchangeable promise from Christ: "*I will be with you always to the end of the world*" (Matt. 28:20); by which the Lord does not mean that the genuine ministers of the church cannot also fall away, but rather that he will protect, rule, and support them in the preservation of the true church, to the extent that they faithfully persevere, so that there should always be genuine shepherds and one genuine church until the last day. No one without a call has this comfort. And when the congregation appoints such an uncalled person, it robs itself of this comforting certainty that God will preserve the true church among them. It would be better for the congregation to remain without a shepherd and pray with one heart for a real, faithful pastor until God hears them. Concerning uncalled ministers Dr. Luther says:

It is a terrible and awful thing when one's conscience says: O, Lord God! What have you done, doing this and that without call or command! Then such a fright and pain of conscience begin that such an uncalled preacher may well wish that he had never in his life heard or read of that which he has taught. For disobedience makes all works evil, however good they may be in and of themselves, so that even the greatest and best works become the greatest and worst sins. Here one can compare the good opinion of King Saul and what the Lord said to him through Samuel (1 Sam. 15:13-25).¹⁴

From this one will understand the right meaning of the fathers in the Smalcald Articles and not suppose that the fathers allowed such a notion, as if every congregation, or even every group that falls away from the true church and honors itself with the name "congregation", could appoint someone from its midst to the spiritual office as it wishes.

Therefore, beloved in the Lord, I admonish you to consider what you do in church matters during the current shortage of pastors, and I ask you:

1) To call on God earnestly every Sunday in the general prayer, to send capable workers into his great harvest in North America, that also the false shepherds which have slipped in here among the uninformed Germans may be put to shame.

¹⁴The source of this citation has not been located. Grabau does not give a reference.

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- 2) To leave your children, as long as they are healthy, unbaptized until the prayed-for arrival of a minister; but if they become seriously ill and are in danger of death, that you as their fathers baptize them yourselves, or if a father feels too weak to do it, that he ask another of the brothers to do it for him.
- 3) To omit the celebration of the holy supper until the arrival of a genuine minister, and to strengthen your faith through the word alone.
- 4) To also delay, with God's help, the performance of marriages as long as at all possible; but if it must be that Christian persons enter into marriage at this time, that they choose one of the genuine Christian brothers to marry them before witnesses after announcing the banns three times, according to Luther's *Traubüchlein*.¹⁵ But in doing so, the Christian couple should promise to appear before a minister when he arrives and before the whole congregation and have their marriage declared proper and in godly order, and to receive from him the public, churchly blessing.
- 5) That those elders or school teachers who have the gift should read printed sermons in the services and lead the worship service. Beyond that the elders will recognize from what has been said that a false priesthood is set up when they want to have themselves named or appointed to administration of the sacraments. In any case they are elders who govern with the pastor, i.e. those who are to watch over the Christian discipline in the congregation. But this is to be conducted entirely in keeping with the old church order, specifically as the great Pomeranian church order of 1690 and the Saxon-Coburg order both teach. Everything which is *against* these church orders must be regarded as an innovation and must not be introduced, as happens for instance when the elders become official guardians over the office of the guardian¹⁶ in matters of doctrine (1 Tim 4:16), since this is [rather] the daily obligation of pastors as shepherds and guardians of the congregation.

They should (1) pay attention to themselves; (2) pay attention to doctrine. If they persevere in these two things they will keep the way of salvation themselves and so will those who hear them (Acts 20:28). Should a pastor come into errors in doctrine, as was the case for example with Pastor Oertel in N.Y., it will not remain hidden from the whole congregation. Even in that case the congregation should not pronounce judgment itself, but should rather turn to one or more pastors through a letter from the elders and present the matter in keeping with the truth. These should then ask the accused about the matter, and should discuss with him in person or in writing. Then it will probably become apparent whether and how such an accused pastor is in error. But we have unfortunately had the experience that individual members of the congregation have become impertinent judges of their pastors and have thereby confused the consciences of the weak here and there. You should guard against such impertinence, and therefore leave the judging of doctrine to those to whom it belongs according to the 28th Article of the Augsburg Confession. Your teachers are not teachers of a false church, nor teachers of the spirit of the times, but rather teachers of the *true church*, as is sufficiently well known. You can therefore presuppose that they

¹⁵*Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*. 11th printing. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 528.

¹⁶“*Wächteramt*,” an unusual term.

have a right knowledge of church doctrine, and indeed a deeper knowledge than you can have, since they have learned to believe, to teach, and to keep you in the true faith; you, on the other hand, have learned to believe, to be kept and sanctified in the true faith (Heb. 13:17-18). Obey your teachers and follow them, for they watch over your souls as those who will give an account; so that they may do this with joy and not with sighs, for that is not good *for you*. Pray for us. Our comfort is this, that we have a good conscience and are diligent to live a good life among all.

IV. [Questions Related to Church Discipline]

It has also come to light that there are still some weak and disordered minds among us who leave the church assemblies of the congregation because they think some of their friends and relatives have been treated unjustly in church discipline. Even supposing this were the case, it would still not make the church false, for it remains the right and true church as long as God's word and the holy sacraments are pure in it. Consequently they do not act in a Christian way, but rather with a clan spirit and according to the flesh, when they leave the church because they think one or the other of their relatives was treated unfairly. We are bound by God's command to the holy church of Jesus and not to our relatives or friends. All people, whatever family they may come from, who fear God and do justice, i.e. who seek and love the genuine way to salvation, are pleasing to him, i.e. he accepts them in his church. And so we should not ask whether someone is our relative, but whether he is a member of the church after God's heart. And even if he has been our relative and friend for thirty or fifty years, and becomes now a despiser and a mocker of the holy church, we should, according to God's word, avoid such an erring spirit, if (for here it doesn't matter if one is a Jew or a Greek, or some kind of relative, but whether one is a new creature) he has been warned two or three or even more times. This avoidance should, however, not be done out of hate, but out of love, so that he may be moved to repentance through our loving remoteness from him. But if we are fickle and show ourselves to be on good terms with such erring persons, we strengthen them in the wrong way and participate in their sin.

V. [Some Church Usages]

Finally it has also come up that some souls who were barely awakened entered the church, but did not like the practices of the church, e.g. candles and crucifix on the altar, the sign of the cross, singing the collects and the blessing, and the responses of the congregation, and fell away from the church. In answer to this: (a) Singing is in any case more edifying than reading. Thus Paul does not say: whoever is happy, let him *read* psalms, but rather let him *sing* psalms. And if singing in the assembly is more edifying than mere reading in any case, then the church does well to have chanting or singing at the altar and to itself sing the Amen to such singing. Cp. 1 Cor. 14:16.

(b) The sign of the cross is not a magical or mystical sign in the true church, but rather a sign of remembrance and confession, as the ancient church also had it before the beginning of the papacy. The picture of the crucified Christ is not a picture to be worshipped or venerated, but is rather a public confessional expression of the church that the crucified, omnipresent Christ is portrayed for us in word and sacraments, and that he is our foundation, our head, and our hope.

(c) The candles stand on the altar because it was *at night* and not in daylight when Christ was betrayed and when he instituted the sacrament of the altar. Through such arrangement of the altar especially the grievous, high-priestly night of suffering of Maundy Thursday is portrayed before the eyes of the believers, in which the Light of the world, God of God and Light of light, Jesus Christ, was given for us into the anxiety of death. Who is afraid of that? Or who despises such a thing? How should such a constant reminder not help our fickle and forgetful hearts? Thus the church does well to keep its arrangement of the altar, although it knows that ceremonies *in and of themselves* neither help nor harm our salvation, for the cross and candles in and of themselves can neither help me nor harm me, but the *true use* of such ceremonies which is not contrary to God's word can be useful to our souls.

May God our Lord grant that this brief and modest instruction may be a blessing and through the Lord's mercy may prove to be a voice which enlightens and warns many hearts. The Father of mercy, together with his dear Son Jesus Christ and the precious Holy Spirit who proceeds from them both, be with your souls and keep them in the ark of his holy church unto eternal life. Amen.

Buffalo, December 1, 1840.

Your pastor, brother, and friend in the Lord,

(signed) A. Grabau

The undersigned elders testify that the Lutheran congregation in Buffalo acknowledge the principles pronounced herein to be their own:

Friedrich Lütke, Ernst Krieg, Christoph Schmelzer, Rudolph Krause, Ernst Schorr, Gottfried Schönfeld