



Sharing with you my heart . . .



## The Pastor's UNIFORM

“And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty... They shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons to serve me as priests.”

**Exodus 28:2, 4**

### Dear Baptized in Christ,

When visiting with pastors in Chile in May, I asked them why they wore their collars everyday. They said, “These are the uniform of the pastor.” They went on to explain that when they are in the community with their collars on, people immediately recognize them as pastors.

Chile has had some major catastrophes, especially since 2010, including an earthquake, tsunami, fires and a volcano eruption. When the pastors go to these areas of catastrophe to engage the people in mercy care, they testify that the people more readily connect to clergy with their collars on. They say that they have greater opportunity for outreach and evangelism with their collars on.

Another area for connecting with the people in Chile is outside the

medical clinics. The Church sets up a Lutheran Hour Ministries booth outside these clinics. Rev. Tino says that when he is wearing his clerical collar, many more people stop at the booth than when he is not wearing it. When the people stop by the booth, the pastor ministers to them regarding their sickness and other concerns. They have brought many people into the Lutheran Church this way.

The history of “the pastor’s uniform” is not so cut and dried. In the Old Testament, God prescribes garments for the priests. This is not a mandate, however, for all clergy throughout the ages. Neither is there a prescribed garment for the “preaching prophets” of the Old Testament.

In *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* (CPH), John Pless traces the history of vestments for

ministers. Pless traces the clergy vestments of the Christian Church to ordinary civilian clothing of the late Roman Empire. Between the fourth and ninth centuries, the church gained the clothing of the alb and chasuble. By the time of the middle ages, the vestments had now become elaborate and decorated. By Luther’s time, the Anabaptists and the Reformed Church rejected vestments. Luther, however, states, “We permit vestments to be used in freedom, as long as people refrain from ostentation and pomp.” By the 1700s, most vestments of the clergy were totally rejected by Calvinists, Pietists and Rationalists. It was from this rejection of vestments that the Reformed Church introduced the black [Geneva] gown. The Lutheran Confessions, however, states that vestments are to be retained in the church’s liturgy (Apology XXIV).

Pless writes that vestments in the Church of the Augsburg Confession are important for the following reasons:

- › Vestments are used as ensigns of the office of the holy ministry for the called and ordained servant of the Word.
- › Vestments are a visual reminder of the continuity of the church’s worship through history ... vestments should reflect the continuity of Christian worship.

The clerical collar, as a part of the pastor’s uniform, has an interesting history in and of itself. The alb (long, white pastor’s gown) was originally collarless. The alb became the pastor’s primary garment by the fifth century. At that time, the “amice” was introduced, which was a wrap-around collar

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# District News

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placed around the neck to protect the alb from sweat. From then on, the “collar” took on many variations throughout history and by ethnicity. Scandinavian and German groups generally used full vestments, much as we know today, with a variety of collars, amice and bifkin. Other groups, especially as they came to the United States, mostly Reformed, came with no clerical garb at all. Some in the Reformed tradition began to wear preaching tabs, or bands, around their shirts.

In the Roman tradition, clergy often wore a black cassock as their daily garb. It was not until the 20th century when Roman Catholic priests began wearing a tabbed shirt under the cassock. In the Lutheran Church in the United States, pastors have worn a variety of shirts, preaching collars and vestments — from shirt and tie to Geneva robe and bifkin to tabbed collars to full, wrap-around collars.

There is much freedom of vestments, shirts and collars today among the clergy. There is great freedom in what a pastor wears and what he chooses not to wear. While the “uniform” of the pastor has changed throughout the ages, this much is true: pastors have generally worn some kind of clothing that sets them apart as “clergy,” who are the office of the holy ministry, who preach and who give the gifts of God in the blessed Sacraments.

If you go to the hospital in need of a doctor, you can readily identify him as the person in the white coat and stethoscope. If you are in the city in need of a policeman, he can be readily identified by his uniform. The same is true for the butcher, the judge, the pharmacist and the beautician. Even more so, when one is in need of a caretaker of souls, the pastor is quickly identified by his uniform.



Earthquake victims in Iquique, Chile, meet with members from the LCMS Disaster Response team and Confessional Lutheran Church of Chile in April 2014, at an apartment complex damaged by a magnitude 8.2 earthquake.

Why do I write an article on such a topic? There seems to be some confusion today about what the pastor wears, including the alb, to cassock and surplice to stoles to chasubles to clergy shirts to what kind of tab the pastor wears in his shirt. Sometimes this confusion can lead to disagreements or strife in the church. While there is much freedom and flexibility in this area, there is also continuity and similarity among us.

Pastors wearing specific clothing is certainly nothing new; it dates all the way back to Exodus. Pless makes a valid point when he says pastoral garb identifies the pastor as an emblem of his office and as one in line with clergy through the ages of the Church.

And what about the pastor in his own community, among the disasters and situations of the people where he lives? What about the crisis of people, the crisis of the community or the everyday struggles of the faith and life of the pastor’s neighbor in his own town? Is it just in Chile, or is it universal that the pastor is identified by his uniform? Does the pastor in his uniform make himself more recognizable as one whom people see as a servant, mouthpiece — and in the stead — of Christ? If the person in the clinic or checkout line or political rally is apt to speak to a pastor

in these places, will that person more readily approach a man in a suit or jeans and T-shirt, or a man wearing a collar? Perhaps it’s an ongoing question that deserves some thought and conversation.

This, however, is true: the Lord dresses us all in a very special uniform — the uniform of “Christian.” He has clothed us all with His righteousness, which is our glorious dress. We are adorned with the sign of the cross on our forehead and on our heart as we are clothed and dressed with Christ in the waters of Holy Baptism. We are set apart from the world, redeemed by Christ the crucified, to love and serve our neighbor.

And the pastor: he is the one who helps us understand this. He is the one who teaches us all things. He is the one who preaches the Word, shapes and forms us in the Christian faith and life, through whom the Holy Spirit brings Christ to us in His Word and Sacraments. You know... he is the one in the pastor’s uniform.



In the name of Jesus,  
Rev. James Banek  
Galatians 2:20

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## Hambleton installed IN LISBON

The members of Redeemer, Lisbon, welcomed their new pastor, Rev. Aaron Hambleton. A recent graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., Hambleton was ordained and installed in June. He is pictured here with his wife, Katie (front row, center). He was also welcomed to the North Dakota District by fellow clergy, from left, (front row) Rev. Sean Daenzer, Rev. Dr John Pless, District President Rev. James Baneck, Rev. Les Wolfgram; (middle row) Rev. Jonathan Fisk, Rev. Matt Richard, Rev. Tom Puffe, Rev. Adam Moline, Rev. Douglas Wanderer; (top row) Rev. Bernie Worrall, Rev. Jacob Swenson, Rev. Paul Preus and Rev. Anthony Ahrendt.



## Vicar shared in Bismarck

**B**ethel Lutheran Church and Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Bismarck, worked together to find a unique solution to their ministry staffing needs. The two congregations applied for and were blessed to have a student from Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS), Fort Wayne, Ind., assigned to serve in Bismarck from August 2014 through July 2015.

Rev. Tim Jenks and Rev. Lester Wolfgram served together as supervisors for Vicar John Koopman. Both congregations were truly blessed to have Vicar Koopman and his wife, Brittany, be a part of the community during the past year. In addition to preaching, teaching, leading the liturgy, making visits



From left, Rev. Tim Jenks, Vicar John Koopman and Rev. Lester Wolfgram.

and spending time with youth and older adults, Koopman also had the opportunity to be a part of the ministry at Martin Luther School as he taught in the classroom and helped with staff devotions and chapel service for the school. The Koopmans will be greatly missed by members of both congregations as they return to instruction at CTS.

## North Dakota District ...

this is **YOUR** news!

Bible school • Youth group  
 Servant events • Mission trips  
 Outreach • Retreats  
 Campus ministry  
 Community events  
 Anniversaries • Awards  
 Camp events

We want to hear from YOU!

Send photos, news items, feature stories, new subscriptions, etc., to Denise Wolfgram at [ndlcmsssec@midconetwork.com](mailto:ndlcmsssec@midconetwork.com)



# Scenes from Vacation Bible School



The whole troupe from **Messiah, Mandan**, at Camp Discovery!



Kids at **Immanuel, Grand Forks**, used their talents at Camp Discovery.



Left, **St. Andrew, West Fargo**, made a colorful splash at VBS. Top, joy-filled, enthusiastic leaders are a blessing!



**St. Matthew, Hazen**, had some interesting guests.



Learning about Jesus through awesome outdoor activities was done at **Our Savior, Minot**. As was coming to the Lord in prayer.