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The Georg Sverdrup Society

NEWSLETTER

Annual Meeting Scheduled October 8 in Glyndon, MN



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Dr. Jerry Moan

This year, the annual meeting of the Georg Sverdrup Society is pleased to welcome Dr. Jerry Moan, who will give a presentation on the life and legacy of Bishop Erik Pontoppidan, author of the Explanation of the Catechism that became a staple in Denmark-Norway for over 100 years. The meeting will be held at Maranatha Free Lutheran Church, Glyndon, Minnesota, on Saturday, October 8. Join us for lunch at noon, followed by the program at 1:00, and the annual membership meeting at 2:00.

—Brian Lunn



The Sverdrup family coat-of-arms (above) was first used in Norway during the seventeenth century by Lauritz Pedersen Sverdrup.

Georg Sverdrup

- Born to Pastor Harold Ulrich Sverdrup and his wife Caroline Metella, nee Suur, at Balestrand, Sogn, Norway, on December 16, 1848.
- Died on May 3, 1907, in Minneapolis, MN, and buried in the Lakewood Cemetery.



From the Annual Meeting, October 9, 2022:

Pastor Brian Lunn brought numerous visual aids to illustrate his in-depth presentation on "Lutheran Ceremonies from the Reformation to Norway and America."

2021 GSS Annual Meeting Held in Minneapolis

The Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the Georg Sverdrup Society was held Saturday, October 9, in Heritage Hall of Free Lutheran Bible College on Medicine Lake.

Following a noon meal, Rev. Gary Jorgenson, President of the GSS, welcomed members and friends to the program and gave the opening prayer.

Rev. Robert L. Lee opened the “Sverdrup Songfest,” a tradition he began at the first GSS Annual Meeting held in Fargo in 2004. The first song he led us in was “When Earth With All Its Joys Defeats Me,” a song written by Dorothe Engelbretsdotter, the first Norwegian woman poet and hymnwriter to publish under her own name. Gracia Grindal translated the hymn. According to Lee, Engelbretsdotter married a pastor who was famous for his flowery funeral sermons. Lee’s second song was written by Petter Dass, “*Gud er Gud*,” translated as “God is God” or “Lord Our God, With Praise We Come Before You.” The melody was written by Leland B. Sateren, longtime Augsburg College Choir Director. According to Pr. Lee, Sateren wrote the music for this hymn as the theme for the 1960 Luther League Convention of the Lutheran Free Church.

Vice President of the Georg Sverdrup Society Rev. Brian Lunn spoke on “Lutheran Ceremonies from the Reformation to Norway and America.” His was a unique journey through history, tracing various practices in the Lutheran Church such as conducting “exorcisms” before baptisms. This practice was eventually abolished in Denmark-Norway by royal decree in 1783. Lunn also pointed out additions and subtractions to Confirmation practices including the pastor laying hands on the heads of confirmands. Luther said “no” to this practice, but Martin Chemnitz said “yes.” Changes were also made to the Lord’s Supper in Lutheran congregations with various practices added and then removed as centuries passed. Through Lunn’s presentation, it became apparent that

the ceremonies our Lutheran congregations observe today—ones we thought to have been standard in Lutheran Churches for centuries—have in reality been in a greater state of flux than we ever imagined. Lunn also handed out an informative timeline of some changes to Baptism, Confirmation, and the Lord’s Supper practices.

Following Lunn’s presentation, Seminarian Mikey Meester sang a stirring rendition of “When Sinners See Their Lost Condition,” a hymn written by the famous nineteenth century Norwegian pastor-poet and compiler of hymns, Magnus Brostrup Landstad.

The program concluded with editor and translator of *The Sverdrup Journal* Larry Walker reading an excerpt from his translation of “Papal Rule,” which traces the concentration of power from the loosely organized early church to the top-heavy hierarchy of the Catholic Church under the Pope.

After a coffee break, Rev. Gary Jorgenson called the annual meeting to order. Membership and

Treasurer’s Reports from Rev. Kris Nyman were read. Our membership for 2021 is 106, and our current working balance in the treasury is \$6,545.34. Since publishing costs for the *2020 Sverdrup Journal* have not yet been recorded, the actual balance will be lower. Tim Larson gave the Secretary’s Report. Status reports for the following were presented: *2020 Sverdrup Journal* (Loiell Dyrud), Republishing Translations of Sverdrup’s Volumes (Brian Lunn), and Journal Development Committee (Martin Horn).

Members elected to the board were Pastors Brian Davidson, Brian Lunn, and Kris Nyman. Dues for 2022 will remain the same: Regular, \$30; Institutions, \$15; and Students \$15. After the annual meeting, the board met to reorganize and elected Brian Lunn, President; Martin Horn, Vice President; Tim Larson, Secretary; and Kris Nyman, Membership Chairman and Treasurer.

—Loiell O. Dyrud



From the Annual Meeting (above): Pres. Gary Jorgenson opens the program. **Photos from January Discussion** (facing page): Top: Rev. Micah Hjermstad and his father, Rev. Wayne Hjermstad. 2nd from top: Editor Larry Walker ponders a question after reading his translation. 3rd from top: Some of the seminarians in the audience, L to R: Joe Larson, Jeremy Nikunen, and Joe Frech. Bottom of page: “*The Servant Pastor and the Congregation*.” Panel members L to R: Rev. Terry Olson, Dr. James Molstre, Moderator Loiell Dyrud, Dr. Martin Horn, and Rev. Brian Lunn.

GSS January Discussion Forum Held at Free Lutheran Seminary

The Georg Sverdrup Society gathered with guests and students of the Free Lutheran Seminary on Friday, January 14, 2022. The theme for the day was “Life in the Congregation” and included a translation, two papers, and a panel discussion.

Following devotions led by Pastor Terry Olson, Mr. Larry Walker presented a portion of his recent translation of an article by Sverdrup on deaconess work.

The first presentation was given by Pastor Brian Lunn, entitled, “The Liturgy Committee of the LFC.” Lunn has recently translated the 1902 “Report of the Liturgy Committee,” of which Sverdrup was a member. This report was not included in Andreas Helland’s *Professor Georg Sverdrups Samlede Skrifter i Udvalg*, but was discovered in the 1902 issue of *Folkebladet*, the periodical of the Lutheran Free Church. The report is interesting in its own right and will be included in the 2021 *Sverdrup Journal*, but it also prompted Lunn to seek further information about the history of the LFC Liturgy Committee. Lunn’s paper traced changes in liturgical

practice throughout the history of the LFC.

The second presentation was given by Dr. Martin Horn, entitled, “Sverdrup on the Sacraments.” Horn discussed how Sverdrup’s view of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper interacted with his view on the congregation. Special emphasis was placed on the tension between subjective and objective dimensions of faith within Lutheran theology, and Sverdrup’s insights were offered as a guide for navigating that tension.

The panel discussion on the theme “The Servant Pastor and the Congregation” was moderated by Mr. Loiell Dyrud, the emcee for the Forum. The panel consisted of Pastors Terry Olson, Brian Lunn, Martin Horn, and James Molstre. Sverdrup envisioned the pastor, not as a hireling of the congregation nor lord over the congregation, but a servant of the Lord and of the congregation. In contrast to many, both in his time and at the present, Sverdrup would not tolerate a view of the pastoral office that did not acknowledge congregational sovereignty.

Attendance was slightly lower this year than in some years past, likely owing to the then-ongoing effects of Covid-19. The event was live-streamed on the FLBC Vimeo page, where it is still available for viewing, under the title, “Georg Sverdrup Society Forum 2022.” Visit <https://vimeo.com/498421340> to view or follow the link from the Georg Sverdrup Society Facebook page.

—Brian Lunn





**THE GEORG SVERDRUP
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

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(The Word Became Flesh)

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Prospective members are invited to
contact the treasurer
at the above address.

Musical Moments from the Annual Meeting



*Pastor Robert Lee leads the
Sverdrup Songfest*



*Seminarian Mikey Meester sings
“When Sinners See Their
Lost Condition”*

From “The Significance of Baptism for the Congregation”

By Georg Sverdrup (coming in the 2021 Sverdrup Journal)

From time to time in church history, there comes an attack on infant baptism. . . .

These objections to and attacks on infant baptism come from two opposed positions, at least as it would appear. The rationalists attack infant baptism in part because they believe that children are so good that they need no baptism, in part because they regard baptism as a beautiful symbol of moral change, which takes place in persons when they make up their minds to forsake the ways of vice and walk in the way of virtue.

On the other side, infant baptism is attacked by Christians who place such great emphasis on awakening, conversion, and conscious confession of sin and faith that they do not regard anyone as children of God who has not experienced a conscious and sensible transition from a state of sin to a state

of grace, from death to life. They consider it a misuse of baptism when small children are baptized, because they cannot be born again if they do not know that they are being baptized.

Thus those who do not believe that people need to be born again and those who do not believe that anyone can be born again without prior awakening and conversion unite in attacking infant baptism.

Against them stand the congregations of apostolic times [and the congregations] up to now, with the full assurance that Jesus is also the Savior of children, and that they need Him, and that whether we understand or do not understand, He is mighty to take the children to His breast and bless them now as in the days of His flesh. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and only those who are born again of water and the Spirit will see the Kingdom of God. Therefore congregations baptize small children according to Christ’s friendly invitation: Let

the little children come to Me! and according to the testimony He lays down for adults: Unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

In a time such as ours, when everything belonging to the church and Christianity is once again indicted and tested [as to] whether it is genuine or not, it is important to “cling to that which is good.” That is fully justified conservatism. And it is here that the protection of infant baptism fits. Those people and congregations do poor service who abolish infant baptism, describing it as something superfluous and unnecessary, or else meaningless and harmful.

(Excerpt from *Professor Georg Sverdrups Samlede Skrifter i Udvalg*, 2:323-324. Translation by Larry Walker.)