

2024 Spring Pastors Conference Speaker Bio



The Rev. Mark Surburg is pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Marion, IL. He received his B.A. from Concordia College, Ann Arbor, MI. He attended Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, where he received Master of Divinity and Master of Sacred Theology degrees. He was a Ph.D. candidate in Biblical Studies at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX, where he focused on Paul's letters. Mark taught as an adjunct professor in the Theology department at Concordia University, Chicago. He has published articles in the *Concordia Journal*, *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, and *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology*. He served as a consulting scholar for Concordia Publishing House's *Lutheran Study Bible* and was a contributor to *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Services*.

Confirmation, Catechesis and First Communion – History and Pastoral Practice

During the history of the Lutheran Church, Confirmation has achieved a prominent place in the piety of congregations. Congregation members focus upon it as an event of great significance, and yet pastors wrestle with how Confirmation functions today in the life of the Lutheran Church. A growing emphasis on the Sacrament of the Altar has raised questions about forcing youth to wait until Confirmation when they are around 13 years old to receive Christ's body and blood. An examination of Confirmation's history demonstrates that the existence of these difficulties is not surprising. The development of Confirmation is an unusual story, both before and after the Reformation. By understanding Confirmation's past, we are equipped to consider our present and future pastoral practice.