

Higher Things

DARE TO BE LUTHERAN

September 23, 2019

An Open Letter to *Higher Things Magazine* Readers:

In the summer of 2000, some pastors pulled off a Lutheran youth conference that no one expected to be successful. Some 750 youth, pastors, and chaperones gathered for a few days on the campus of the University of Wyoming in Laramie, WY to learn about their faith, worship together following the liturgies of the hymnal, and have some old-fashioned fun together.

Those pastors realized they had stumbled onto something with a lot of potential and began to organize and continue the momentum, making plans for another youth conference. And in the summer of 2001, they published Volume 1, Issue 1 of *Higher Things Magazine*. This magazine was the first of its kind, a publication written just for Lutheran youth.

In his introductory letter for the first issue, Editor-in-Chief, Rev. Todd Peperkorn wrote of the magazine's purpose:

On the following pages, you will read about how Jesus Christ came into this world to free us from the bondage of sin, death, and the power of the Devil. These are not dead words you learned from the Catechism, but living words that flow from the voice of God Himself. Our Lord Jesus Christ gives us this life through His Word, Preaching, Baptism, Holy Absolution and the Lord's Supper. These "Higher Things" provide you with the knowledge that Christ is in you and you in Him. And it is the "Higher Things" of Christ that change who you are and how you look at the world.

Then 9-11 happened. The editors had already planned the fall issue, but Higher Things knew that we couldn't go ahead with the original set of articles. We had to include one about the attack on our country that had thrown everyone and everything for a loop. If we didn't provide a resource to help teenagers process this massive tragedy at a spiritual level, we had no business being in youth ministry in the first place.

Over the years since 2001, Higher Things has continued to publish quarterly magazines. We've had articles written by pastors, parents, youth, college students, some who have since grown up to be college students, deaconesses, pastors, and parents themselves! We know that countless teenagers, adults, and pastors have read the magazine. Articles and their accompanying Bible studies have been used to lead discussion in Sunday School classes and youth group meetings for 18 years. HT Magazine has blessed many people by providing deeper insights into Lutheran faith and practice, with our unflinching focus on the Gospel of Christ and Him crucified for you.

Higher Things has been restructuring our internal organization the last few months (a very grown-up thing to do after 18 years), and we have come to realize that we can no longer provide a print magazine for our readers. Costs of printing and postage have risen exponentially over the years, and we simply can't justify charging our subscribers rates that would keep the magazine in the black. Undoubtedly you've noticed a similar trend with your other favorite magazines discontinuing print versions, as well as the price increases for single issues at your local check-out stands.

However, we can migrate to a fully digital magazine to keep this unique resource available to you. With a digital *Higher Things Magazine*, you will continue to receive the same quality writing that drips with the Gospel and teaches young people to apply their Lutheran faith to situations in real life. The format will change, but comes with some additional benefits: It arrives in your email automatically. Just click the link to access the latest edition!

- It's portable. Once you've downloaded the issue (which takes a matter of seconds), just power up your computer or laptop and view it anywhere. You can even read and download articles on your mobile device!

- It still looks like the *Higher Things Magazine* you're familiar and comfortable with. You like the magazine and the format is beautiful. Our digital platform will deliver that same magazine experience on your computer. You'll be able to "turn" the pages as you have done all along!
- It's lively and interactive. Our digital edition offers rich media options right within its pages.
- Yes, you can download and print it! You can print as many pages of the magazine (and Bible studies) as you want.
- It's searchable. Here's something the print *Higher Things Magazine* couldn't do. Enter a search term and the digital magazine will find all the related pages!
- A live TOC: The table of contents is not only a place to find out what's in this quarter's issue. You can also use it to navigate directly to the stories you want to read.
- It will include the Bible studies that go with articles from that issue so your magazine can also be used as a teaching resource for youth group, Sunday School, or personal study.

Because it no longer makes sense to maintain two separate subscription lists, we will be combining the print subscriber list with the HT Magazine+ list. ALL subscribers will be able to access their magazines through the new digital platform on Issuu. For the remaining few weeks while we finalize this transition to a digital magazine we will be suspending new subscriptions to HT Magazine+.

Here's how this new system will work: When a new issue is released, *Higher Things Magazine* and HT Magazine+ subscribers will receive an email with a link to the publication as well as a code to grant them access to that issue. This is how you will access new issues as they are released, for the remainder of your existing subscription. When you want to renew the subscription, you will need to create an account with the magazine platform and enter your payment information there. To read past issues of Higher Things Magazine and Bible studies, we will send you a directory of those issues and their Free Access Codes. The codes will only be active for the duration of your current subscription. When you renew your subscription, you will receive an email message with a new directory. **If you have an existing subscription or are providing a gift subscription for someone, please contact us at media@higherthings.org to confirm the email address(es) on your account so your service can continue uninterrupted.** If your subscription has already expired, we will be releasing the link to subscribe to the digital magazine on our website and on social media in early October.

While we are excited about the opportunities provided by a digital format, I assure you that the decision to stop producing a print magazine for our flagship resource was not an easy one to make. But the reality is that the ever-growing expense of print and delivery has turned the publishing of a physical product into an untenable business proposition.

I want to personally thank you for more than 18 years of dedication to Higher Things and our print magazine. I invite you, if you haven't already, to support our mission to pass on our Lutheran faith to the next generations by reading, sharing, and subscribing to Higher Things Magazine.

In Christ,



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