

Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights
Celebrating 100 Years • 1919-2019

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October 2020

The Reformation Explained in Plain Language

What is it about an obscure 16th century Augustinian monk in a small German town that deserves international attention, celebration and recognition? After all, the Roman Catholic Church called Dr. Martin Luther a “wild boar in the church’s vineyard.” The town of Wittenberg, on the other hand, looks more favorably upon the monk.



Wittenberg is where Luther nailed his famous 95 Theses, setting in motion cataclysmic religious, political, cultural and social changes across Europe. Walk into any shop and you can buy Luther noodles, Luther beer and a Luther Playmobile. You can even bake a Luther cake. Luther is at the center of it all.

As essential as Luther is, the Reformation actually begins with another man, Albert of Brandenburg. Albert wanted the prestige and power that went along with being a bishop—but he was too young. Being a man of wealth, he met with Pope Leo X, and the two struck a deal. If he paid the pope 10,000 ducats, Albert could have not one, but three bishoprics. Albert had the money, but not in cash. So, he hired John Tetzel, a Roman Catholic friar and preacher, to raise the funds by selling indulgences.

An indulgence was a promise that the pope could declare you forgiven of your sins so your time in Purgatory was either cut short or eliminated (if you paid enough). Luther saw grave problems with this practice. The first of the 95 Theses stated, “The life of the Christian is one of repentance.” The key here is that Luther did not base his argument on the Vulgate, which was the Latin version of the Bible the Catholics used. Instead, he worked from a version of the New Testament written in Greek, the original language. This is important.

Luther was saying that the Roman Catholic Church had gotten it wrong all those centuries. The Vulgate translated the phrase “do penance,” thus laying upon man the burden of saving his soul from hell. This unnecessarily tormented man.

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Remember the Three P's

What are the three P's? Pray, Pray, and Pray.

During this pandemic, many are praying. Are you?

Praying is talking to God. Every day we talk to people, is God on your list? I'm talking of yourself and God.

The coronavirus has us all on edge. Most of us are following the recommendations of wearing masks that cover the mouth and nose, washing hands, avoiding crowds, and staying indoors if you have health problems. We are all fearful of what's happening in our world. But there are some good things – families are gathered together because the places where we used to meet are closed. Parents are now teaching their children, elderly are being cared for by their relatives. Love is practiced.

The three P's are to remind us, children of God, to call on God. He loves to hear our calling. He knows what's going on and waits to hear from YOU. He wants us to realize that He is the One who rules. The world has yet to proclaim Him as Lord of all. Are we spreading the Good News?

Christians should know Him. Many Christians have stopped praying because the practice is no longer in their lifestyle. In the Old Testament, the children of Israel began following the practice of idol worship. Because of this, God punished them. This punishment brought them back to worship the true God.

This virus is a wake-up call to His children. We have Good News to proclaim, pray that it be done. In our prayers have we prayed for the unbelievers to become believers? Have we prayed that missionaries in the world keep Christ as they preach? What about your neighbor? Are they believers in God? Are you an example of a Christian? There are times we give up on those we love, and never speak of the Savior Jesus Christ. Could your prayer include asking God to give you the means to reach them?

This world needs God. Pray for their salvation, their leaders, and pray for others to call upon God. Prayer is powerful, God is almighty. God is love and this includes you and your neighbor. Remember the three P's.

~Pastor Claudio Perez



Newsletter Contributors

Editor.....	Barbara Szalkowski
Contributors.....	Kathy Angst
.....	Cathleen Chevallier
.....	Karen Evans
.....	Demian Farnworth
.....	Pastor Richard Gaub
.....	Stephen Hernandez
.....	Deaconess Cheryl Naumann
.....	Phil Nelson
.....	Lauren Neu
.....	Pastor Claudio Perez
Graphic Design.....	Matthew Szalkowski

SUNDAY SCHOOL IS BACK!



Praise the Lord! Sunday, 13th of September, Sunday School gathered together back on Immanuel campus. The children were excited to see each other. Some children brought friends. The theme for the day was Grandparents' Day. The children learned about family trees, their own as well as family tree of Jesus. They also made cards for their grandparents. *Thank you to the parents for bringing the children back.* We have room for more. **JOIN US! All are WELCOME!**



~submitted by Cathleen Chevallier



Reformation . . .

(continued from page 1)

Luther, through the 95 Theses, and then subsequent books, pamphlets and sermons, pointed out that the Bible actually taught that no one could ever earn God's forgiveness—whether through good works or purchase of an indulgence. Forgiveness was found in Christ's finished work on the cross alone, a gift we received through faith alone by God's grace alone as taught in the Scriptures alone.

In truth, the real hero of the Reformation was not Luther, but the Word of God. While the matter of our justification was the ultimate question, how one defended their answer was based on who or what they viewed as an authority. Was it the popes of Rome? The early church fathers? Tradition? The Bible? Or a combination of all the above?

Luther and the Reformers argued it was the Bible alone—*sola scriptura*. Why? Because the popes, the early church fathers and tradition were all inconsistent and prone to error. "The church," Luther said, "does not make the Word, but it is made by the Word."

If it was true that the Bible was the final judge of faith and doctrine, then Luther reasoned that everyone—not just clergy—had the right to read and study it. This meant the Bible, all sermons and all hymns should be clear, straightforward and understandable. Luther went on to translate the Bible into the plain language of his people, which was German.

Eventually, the beliefs responsible for the uniquely Lutheran faith, firmly rooted in Scripture, were collected and organized in a series of easy-to-read confessions. The most important confession was The Augsburg Confession (written by Phillip Melanchthon). In fact, 1530, the year the Augsburg Confession was presented to the Holy Roman Emperor, should be just as important to Lutherans as Reformation Day. It was the day, in plain language, that Lutherans declared what they believe, teach and confess.

And to this day, it is still what we believe, teach and confess.

*~Demian Farnworth
Senior Content Writer
Lutheran Church Extension Fund*

[This originally appeared in the 2017 fall issue of LCEF's official magazine, Interest Time, and is online at <https://lcef.org/reformation-plain-language/>]

~submitted by Pastor Gaub



Focus on Stewardship

We celebrate the Reformation at the end of each October. The Reformation began on All Saints' Eve in 1517, which was when Martin Luther posted the 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. So, let's hear from Luther himself on the topic of giving and stewardship.

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Stewardship . . .

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In the Small Catechism under the Table of Duties, Martin Luther gives specific Bible passages to help Christians know their duty in their various vocations as members of their family, society at large, and in God's family, the Church. Under the heading "What Hearers Owe Their Pastors," Luther lists five passages from the Bible, three of which have to do with giving to your local congregation. They are these:

- "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel."
(1 Cor. 9:14)
- "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." *(Gal. 6:6–7)*
- "The elders [presbyters, i.e., pastors] who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The worker deserves his wages.' "
(1 Tim. 5:17–18)

Luther comments on these passages in his 1535 Lectures on Galatians. He wrote:

"When Paul says 'all good things,' this is not to be taken to mean that everyone should share all his possessions with his preacher. No, it means that he should provide for him liberally,

giving him as much as is needed to support his life in comfort. ... The apostle is so serious in advocating this topic of support for preachers that he adds a threat to his denunciation and exhortation, saying: 'God is not mocked.' ... All this pertains to the topic of support for ministers.

I do not like to interpret such passages; for they seem to commend us, as in fact they do. In addition, it gives the appearance of greed if one emphasizes these things diligently to one's hearers. Nevertheless, people should be taught also about this matter, in order that they may know that they owe both respect and support to their preachers.

Christ teaches the same thing in Luke 10:7: 'Eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages'; and Paul says elsewhere *(1 Cor. 9:13–14)*: 'Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the Gospel should get their living by the Gospel.'

It is important for us who are in the ministry to know this, so that we do not have a bad conscience about accepting for our work wages ... it happens when those who proclaim the glory of God and faithfully instruct the youth derive their livelihood from them. It is impossible that one man should be devoted to household duties day and night for his support and at the same time pay attention to the study of Sacred Scripture, as the teaching ministry requires.

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Mission Report: Dominican Republic

This month's mission report is from Deaconess Cheryl Naumann. Cheryl administers the Dominican Republic Mercy Center, teaching women to share the Gospel and to carry out acts of mercy with their neighbors. She also assists with the diaconal work in mission congregations and facilitates the Spanish translation and distribution of Lutheran biblical resources to LCMS missionaries, mission churches and partner churches in this region. Her husband, Rev. Dr. Jonathan Naumann is the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) regional chaplain, providing pastoral care to LCMS missionaries and their families in over 10 countries. He also teaches future Latin American pastors at the LCMS seminaries in this region. Cheryl writes:

The Dominican Republic is still in the middle of various restrictions due to Covid-19. Schools won't open until November or December. They will teach online only, and the government has declared its intention to provide Internet and a computer to every family with school children, as well as computer training for teachers, parents, and children. This will be a massive undertaking if it goes forward.

Several government offices are currently closed, including the one that provides civil marriage ceremonies. Thankfully, that office will now send its representatives to private homes for the civil wedding ceremony. This is important for us because in the Dominican Republic, couples can only be married in our Lutheran congregations after they have been married by the civil authorities.



Back in January, a colleague happened to snap a photo when I was witnessing to a man while we were waiting for our flat tires to

be repaired. In August, eight months later, we had the joy of welcoming this man, named Ricardo, to worship at the mission congregation in Pueblo Nuevo. God's timing is of course always perfect. Like all who plant or water the seeds of God's Word and witness to His love for all, we never know when or where a seed might take root.

[Full biographical information on the Naumanns can be found at <https://www.lcms.org/jonathan.naumann> Complete August 2020 issue of their newsletter is located at https://missioncentral.us/naumann_dominican-republic_aug2020-pdf/]



Stewardship . . .

(continued from page 5)

Since God has commanded and instituted this, we should know that we may with a good conscience enjoy what is provided for the comfortable support of our lives from church properties to enable us to devote ourselves to our office." (LW 27:125–126)

~submitted by Kathy Angst

[Stewardship newsletter insert for October 2020, from the LCMS website <https://files.lcms.org/wl/?id=XmbcyXKTdPoEWFpPzjW6Z5reB1AAh25r>]

Support Our Sponsored Missionaries

Dominican Republic Ministry
Rev. Joel Fritsche & Family

Seminary Support

You can donate online through the following link: <https://www.lcms.org/givenow/seminary-support>.

By mail, make a check payable to Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and specify “Dominican Republic Seminary” in the memo line. Mail to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Mission Advancement
PO Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

General Support

Support/prayer card:

http://prayercards.lcms.org/Fritsche_DR_April%202017.pdf

To support the Fritsche’s ministry, you may send a tax- deductible gift to either of the following:

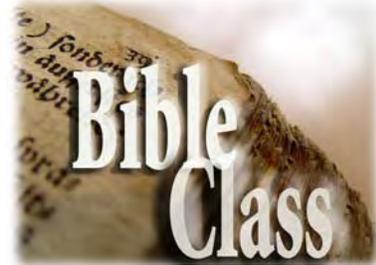
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

OR

Mission Central
40718 Highway E16, Mapleton, IA 51034

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks “Support of Joel & Clarion Fritsche.” Gifts can also be given securely online on the LCMS website, at <http://www.lcms.org/fritsche> or call (888) 930-4438.

Reformation Sunday
October 25th
Wear Red!



Pastor Gaub is beginning a study of the Gospel of Matthew in the Sunday morning Adult Bible class.

This is a great time to start a new habit or get back into the habit of spending more time in the Word. Join us every Sunday at 10:30 am in Miertschin Hall.



Daylight Savings Time ENDS
Sunday, November 1st at 2:00 am.
Don't forget to turn your clocks
BACK 1 hour
before going to bed
Saturday night, October 31st



A Celebration of Autumn

FUN - REFRESHMENTS - TREATS

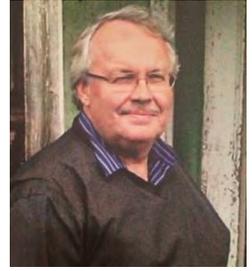
31 Oct
6:00-8:30 PM

**Volunteers welcome to help serve
and connect with the community**

Come join in the Celebration. We will be handing out candy, refreshments and Bibles to the community. We ask volunteers to wear masks as we will be serving our community. Candy donation drop off available in the narthex.

Contact Phil Nelson: Philiptnelson@gmail.com (508) 944-9982

2020 Head for the Cure, Houston, Run For Rod



[Editor's note: Rod Anderson was an active member of Immanuel, serving as Congregation President at the time of his death in December 2013.]

We are excited to be a part of the 8th annual Head for the Cure 5K Houston, but the event on October 10th, 2020 will be virtual this year! Team Run for Rod is set up and we'd love to see you again! For those in Houston, depending on COVID-19, we may map out an area for us to walk/run in Jackie's neighborhood. Otherwise, you can participate virtually from anywhere.

We participated in the first Head for the Cure; Dad was still with us then but couldn't attend due to the rainy weather. Dad was touched that we participated, especially because the money raised goes back to where he was treated at MD Anderson. The Brain Tumor Trials Collaborative at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center began in 2004. For more information about all of their great work please visit <http://www.bttconline.org> and <http://www.mdanderson.org>. Last year, **we had a team of fifty and raised over \$10,000! We appreciate everyone's love and support!**

The staff at MD Anderson was always caring and supportive. We had ups and downs throughout Dad's illness but he fought hard and the caring people at MD Anderson did everything in their power to treat his disease and ensure his quality of life. We were blessed by the extra time his care team was able to provide us with him. The brain cancer research trials he was able to participate in certainly blessed us with additional time.

The cause is extremely close to us and we want friends and family to be able to celebrate Dad's life and memory. Head for the Cure is dedicated to raising funds and awareness for brain cancer research. Each year, over 200,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with a primary or metastatic brain tumor. More than 120 types of brain tumors exist, making effective treatment complicated. Cutting edge research is needed as we continue to make strides in this fight. The majority of the money raised stays at MD Anderson Cancer Center here in Houston.

Every Head for the Cure event marks a day of celebration where those diagnosed with brain cancer are honored and celebrated by their friends and families, those who have lost their battles are remembered, and we are all inspired to carry on the fight. Please consider joining our team and walking or running with us, or making a donation today to help Head for the Cure defeat brain cancer, step by step!

~Love to all, Carrie, Jackie, Chris & Claire Anderson

To donate by check, make out to Head for the Cure and put Run for Rod in the Memo field and mail them to Jackie or leave it with Karen in the church office. To join the team or donate online:

https://secure.headforthecure.org/site/TR?team_id=12622&pg=team&fr_id=1894&et=eXVy_M00C4Wnf1qzTlyR3g



Immanuel Lutheran Church – October 2020



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p><i>Daylight Savings Time Ends Sunday November 1 at 2:00 am. "Fall Back" – Turn Your Clocks BACK 1 Hour Before Retiring Saturday Night, October 31</i></p>			1	2	3
<p>4 LWML Sunday <i>Usher Team #3</i> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @10:30 am</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Monday night Bible Study @ 7:00 pm</p>	<p>6</p> <p>All Boards @ 7:00 pm</p>	7	8	9	10
<p>11 <i>Usher Team #4</i> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @10:30 am</p>	<p>12</p> <p>ECE Closed Offices Closed In observance of Columbus Day</p>	13	14	15	16	17
<p>18 <i>Usher Team #5</i> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @10:30 am</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Monday night Bible Study @ 7:00 pm</p>	20	21	22	23	24
<p>25 Reformation Breakfast @ 7:30 am <i>Usher Team #1</i> Worship @9:00 am w/Communion Bible Class & Sunday School @10:30 am</p>	26	27	28	29	30	<p>31</p> <p>Fall Gathering @ 6:00–8:30 pm</p>  <p>Daylight Savings Time ENDS</p>

Serving Immanuel October 2020

	Sunday October 4	Sunday October 11	Sunday October 18	Reformation Sunday October 25
Elder	Mike R.	Mike R.	Mike R.	Mike R.
Acolyte	Molly H.	Nikki B.	Emily H.	Molly H.
Usher Team	#3 Lonnie A.	#4 John C.	#5 Bill O.	#1 Bill E.
Media	Barbara S.	Karen E.	Melissa T.	Jackie A.
Audio	Gerald O.	Max B.	Ray T.	Gerald O.
Altar Guild	Margaret B. & Melissa T.	Margaret B. & Melissa T.	Margaret B. & Melissa T.	Margaret B. & Melissa T.
Trustee	Max B.	Max B.	Max B.	Max B.

If you would like to fill in, trade, or substitute please contact the church office. Thank you.

Serving Immanuel November 2020

	Sunday November 1	Sunday November 8	Sunday November 15	Sunday November 22	Thanksgiving Eve Wednesday November 25	Sunday November 29
Elder	Steve H.	Steve H.				
Acolyte	Nikki B.	Emily H.	Molly H.	Nikki B.	Emily H.	Molly H.
Usher Team	#2 Larry G.	#3 Lonnie A.	#4 John C.	#5 Bill O.	#1 Bill E.	#2 Larry G.
Media	Barbara S.	Karen E.	Melissa T.	Jackie A.	<i>No Media</i>	Barbara S.
Audio	Ray T.	Max B.	Gerald O.	Ray T.	Gerald O.	Max B.
Altar Guild	Mary O. & Vivian G.	Mary O. & Vivian G.				
Trustee	Mike R.	Mike R.				

If you would like to fill in, trade, or substitute please contact the church office. Thank you.



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To the Family of:

Witness, Mercy, Life Together ✝
In Christ, for the Church and the World



31 Oct
6:00-8:30 PM

FUN - REFRESHMENTS - TREATS