

GOOD SHEPHERD NEWS

October 2012

The Luther-ran Story



Martin Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses on the Castle Church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. That was the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. But, it actually began before that event. Luther's life was more than just "The Lutheran Story." It is so much more. We can think of it, and learn from it, as "The Luther-ran Story."

In his early twenties, a fearful Luther ran to God in a storm, bargaining with Him, vowing to serve God if he survived. As a monk, Luther ran through his days in guilt and fear of God and His punishment. But then God changed Martin's course.



Led by the Spirit while teaching Scripture and theology in Wittenberg, Germany, Luther ran into a God of grace, a God of Law and Gospel, not just of Law. Luther ran to tell others through his Ninety-Five Theses and other writing. When Rome and the papacy demanded that he recant his teachings, Luther ran to the Word of God. He stood firm on its teaching of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, not by works. Luther ran to his mighty fortress – the God of the Bible – and found safety, life, and true freedom.

Luther's refuge and strength is also yours. For God ran to you in Christ Jesus, to raise you from death to life, to give you forgiveness and show you mercy, to bear your sin and be your Savior. We run as Luther ran – to the God of all grace and life and comfort and compassion.

Reformation blessings,

Pastor Dan

Rebels Without a Clue

I remember this phrase thrown about a lot in my youth, as a twist on the famous James Dean movie about a *Rebel Without a Cause*. While a rebel without a cause knows what he's rebelling against in general but just doesn't have anything to direct his rebellious spirit against at the moment, a rebel without a clue was generally a quip made against someone who was in rebellion for no particular reason or with no particular ends. A clueless rebel could be anything from pitiful to laughable, or even dangerously wild. A rebel without a clue just likes to fight.

As we approach Reformation Day on the 31st of October, it's pretty tempting for Lutherans to act like rebels—tearing down what is traditional, or what may smell of being “catholic,” and imagining that such rebellion is both our birthright and our purpose. We're protestants, right? Let's get to protesting! But what if I told you, that Lutherans are not really protestants nor rebels, particularly in the way that those terms are bandied about in the church today... what if I told you, there's much more to being a Lutheran Christian, than simply being a rebel or a protestor.

If we read the Lutheran Confessions, which our forefathers penned during the controversies of the 16th century in Germany, you'll notice something peculiar. Not only do the Reformers note their opposition to false doctrines and dangerous practices of the time, but they also affirm what is true, and right, and good. There is both affirmation of the good, and rejection of the ill. Lutherans were not anarchists looking for

something burn down or destroy—on the contrary, Lutherans were seeking to shore up what was good in the church, while weeding out what was not. Neither Luther nor his comrades were out to rebel against Christ's Church, but rather, to be faithful to Christ and serve the Church, by reforming it more to the image of Christ and His Word.

Of course, at their time, the Pope asserted his divine right to control every living thing on earth, from political kingdoms to every individual Christian. The Lutheran Reformers rejected that idea as unbiblical, and contrary to the spirit of Christ. For having said so, a tyrannical pope and his minions, declared the Lutherans rebels, and put them under the ban of excommunication. Since that time, some Lutherans have embraced that label of rebel, and used it to justify all sorts of bad ideas... from prejudice and bigotry against non-Lutherans, to rebelling even against the Apostles and Prophets of Holy Scripture, and ultimately against Christ Himself. Living as a rebel might seem cool to our worldly and fleshly minds, but in God's Kingdom, Christ doesn't have much good to say about rebels... in fact, the chief of rebels, Lucifer, is destined for the Lake of Fire, together with all his co-conspirators.

As we approach this Reformation Day, I encourage you to meditate with me, on the not-so-rebellious nature of our Christian calling as Lutherans. Ponder for a while, what it means to affirm everything that Holy Scripture teaches, no matter how hard it may be to hold onto—and likewise, to

reject everything that Holy Scripture rejects, no matter how easy it would be to hang onto it. Think of what it means to build up the Body of Christ, which is the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, rather than tearing down its venerable walls and burning down its ancient forms. Consider what it means to weed out the vineyard of Christ's Church, rather than hacking the ancient vines to the ground.

I wager that what you'll find, is that you have more friends—more brothers and sisters—than you thought you did, scattered in places you didn't expect. Some of those brothers and sisters might seem a little wonky, some downright strange, but we remember with the authors of the Lutheran Confessions, that where the faithful gather around Christ in Word and Sacrament, there is the One Church of Christ—spread across time and space, yet united in the One Lord and Savior of us all.

So, there's my challenge. Rather than considering ourselves rebels (with or without causes or clues,) may we think of ourselves as stewards, servants, and keepers of the Word of Christ—born from above by Water and Spirit, living by grace through faith in the Son of God. With eyes focused thus on Christ our Savior, you might be surprised to see how many others are gathered together with you, in Him. May the Lord God Almighty, bless and keep His whole household of faith. Amen.

Pastor Brad

Pillars of Tradition: The Psalms

A few weeks ago, some of us were discussing the Psalms. They commented on the fact that we had recently emerged from the desert (*that's my not-so-thinly veiled opinion*) by restoring the Psalm between the First and Second Lesson. Discussion also ensued about why we were SINGING the Psalm. I thought some of their questions warranted answers for all.

Let us start with the Common Lectionary. If you do not know, Lutherans follow received tradition of the Common Lectionary that assigns Scripture readings to specific Sundays of the Church Year. This both binds and liberates our Pastors. Left to their human nature, Pastors might choose only the parts of Scripture that they want to deal with. Even worse, they might develop Sermon series on "Ten Steps to Marital Bliss" or "How to Use Biblical Principles to Create Wealth." There may be such wisdom in the Bible, but the promise of Scripture and the call upon our Pastors is to proclaim Law and Gospel every time we come together.

By using the Lectionary, we challenge ourselves with EVERY theme of Scripture over a One-year or Three-year period, depending on which option our particular Parish chooses. You don't want to discuss frustration, vengeance or retribution? Tough! The Psalms will make you think about it. You don't want to consider the proper relationship between a Man and a Woman? Noogies to you! The Lectionary will challenge you every week. You want to hide your travails in immorality? Don't expect to hide from the Lectionary. The Lectionary further guarantees that we see Christ in the Word at every step.

Where did this Lectionary come from? The ancient Hebrews! Remember the story about Jesus reading from the scroll in the

synagogue? He was reading from the appointed scroll for that day. As the early church developed its Lectionary, they adopted the Jewish cycle of readings and slowly added in readings of the Gospels and the Epistles (*Letters*) from the living Apostles.

But why focus on the Psalms?

The Psalms themselves are ripe with history, prophecy, admonition and art. They deserve a very prominent position in our Liturgy. It may surprise you to learn that the Psalms were, until very recently, dominant in our Lutheran Liturgies. If you consider the fact that the Psalms are the longest book of the Bible (*150 Psalms and Psalm 119 is almost a book unto itself*) it is no wonder that the Psalms were prominent. The early Hebrews believed, and passed to the early Christians, that the best language to worship God was that language given to us by God through His Scripture. As a result, aside from the many Hymns in the Old and New Testaments, the Psalms retain primacy as God's Hymnal.

You might be surprised to learn that there is not ONE Psalm appointed for each Sunday but THREE! Every week our Introit (*Latin for Entrance*) is a Psalm. Historically, this was the first time that the Ministers entered into the Chancel to lead worship. Then there were Gradual Psalms (*meaning that we are getting close to the Gospel*) between each of the lessons.

As you can see, if we want to truly embrace the entirety of the Psalms, we have a good distance to go to get back to where we once were.

Finally, you may ask: "Why do we sing the Psalms?" I give two answers to this question.

1) Historically, the Church (*and the Jewish congregations that preceded us*) used specific tunes to sing the Psalms. This aided the Church in memorizing the Psalms. The singing of the Psalms (*and the entire Liturgy, for that matter*) further helped by synchronizing our participation. Furthermore, pastors sang almost everything, including the Gospel and the Prayers at the Altar because SINGING carried to the far reaches of the congregation before the days of electronic amplification.

2) I also think that we should sing the Psalms because they were meant to be sung. In a way, it is a matter of artistic integrity. When an artist creates a work of art, we should reproduce it in a way that is as close the intent of the artist as possible. David wrote many of the Psalms. He even dictated tunes in certain cases. We may not know his melodies but we know his intent. Many of the Psalms continue to be sung by Jews with melodies that are millennia old. Why do we deny ourselves this precious link to the saints who have preceded us?

At Good Shepherd Lutheran Church we have saved the Psalm. We are working on restoring the Gradual and the sung version of the Introit. May God bless us as we continue to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

And may God bless all of you!
DVP (Denes Van Parys)

If you would like to continue the discussion of the Psalms, Liturgy and all things related to worship, please join me at my website: denesvanparys.com. Also known as "Music in God's Ears" (musicingodsears.com). This site will enable us to widen this very important conversation.



Preschool News

www.littlelambstacoma.com

God continues to bless our preschool with students. Currently we have nineteen students between both classes. We still have room in our Tuesday / Thursday class and are praying for more.

Our Sunday Sundaes went well. Thank you to everyone who showed up and enjoyed some fellowship and ice cream. Our next big event will be our Tea & Talk which is scheduled for March 3rd.

Please remember our cookie sale is coming up on November 11th. We will be accepting donations of cookies to sell on that day.

Our preschool / Sunday School windows are scheduled to be replaced the second week of October. Larson Glass of Puyallup will be installing our new safety glass windows. Thank you to everyone who has donated money for this project!

Our preschool will be learning about colors and the season of fall as well as the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, wandering in the wilderness, Gideon trusting in God, and about King David. October is a full month of learning and activities!

Please continue to pray for our preschool students, staff, and board as we move forward in ministry.

Thank you,

Bonnie Jean Huset
Director / Teacher

Lunch Bunch News

LUNCH BUNCH is a group of retired members of Good Shepherd who enjoy getting together once a month for fellowship. We begin with a devotion from Pastor Dan, then a shared meal, followed by a program that varies from month to month. In the next 3 months our program includes a presentation by Catherine Cummings who assumes the role of Katharina Von Bora, who later became the wife of Martin Luther. In November we will enjoy one of Myron Schmidt's varied videos. December has

traditionally become a sharing of special foods, and a visit from Mrs. Wright, with the exchange of wrapped gifts. We would enjoy having you join us on Tuesday, October 2nd, November 6th, or December 4th. You do not have to be retired or a senior -just be free on those dates and want to join fellow believers for a couple hours of fellowship, food and fun.

Pastor Ken Boetcher

Men's Breakfast / Bible Study October 20th

Join us **Saturday, September 15th at 8 am** for a delicious breakfast, wonderful fellowship, and in-depth Bible Study. We are going through the series "Stuff They Didn't Teach Me in Sunday School." This month our topic is: "Trapped Between a Rock and a Hard Place" (Exodus 14). *Pastor Dan*



Women in Mission

Please join us for our activities in September!

Weekly Bible Study on Tuesdays at 9:15 am.

Weekly Quilting on Tuesdays at 10 am.

Mites Collected – October 7th

Seafarers Auxiliary – October 23rd

To **All Women** of Good Shepherd,

Join in worship Sunday, October 7th, LWML Sunday...70 years of Missouri Synod Lutheran Women working together in Prayer, Praise, and Proclamation in the Lord and using Mites to fund grants in **His** service. Your Mites count...please be generous! "Salted for Service," (Mark 9:50) is the theme written by Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, President of our Synod. Are you salted for service? Listen October 7th and find out.

Please note the quilts hanging in the sanctuary. We make them for Lutheran World Relief and will be packing them October 16th for transport to Seattle, October 19th or 20th. You may purchase them - \$40 minimum. (Money will be paid to Good Shepherd LWML and then sent to LWR) Be generous!

Lutheran World Relief also needs your support – 700 Light Street, Baltimore MD 21230.

Lastly...please save Trick or Treat Candy for Seafarers' Christmas Boxes! Thank you!

Serving the Lord With Gladness,
Jane Oberg



GROW ENDOWMENT DINNER & AUCTION

Saturday, September 24

5 – 7 pm Cost: \$30.00



Come help us **GROW** the Endowment Fund for our **Children's Christian Education**. Interest from the fund is used for scholarships to assist qualifying members of Good Shepherd who are endeavoring to have their children in Christian schools. Your support helps grow the fund to enable more assistance to be given.