

GOOD SHEPHERD NEWS

October 2014

Celebrating the Reformation



On October 31, we Lutheran Christians mark the day when, in 1517, Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, an event that marked the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. On Reformation Day we celebrate the gift of God to the church through His servant Martin Luther. Luther reminded us of our freedom from the Law in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus told the self-satisfied religious leaders of His time, "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). You see, they thought, "I've got it made." They believed that their birth automatically made them free. In the 16th century many religious people felt much the same way: "I've got it made." Birth and religious vocation give a false sense of freedom. Is it possible for lifelong church members with good records to make the same mistake – "I've got it made"?

Another tragically mistaken group says, "I've got to make it." People in Jesus' day followed the Pharisees and tried to keep their religious laws to the finest detail. Paul once lived by those standards, "I've got to make it." In the 16th century many struggled to gain freedom from guilt through prayers, fastings, pilgrimages, and indulgences. Is it possible that today many depend on church attendance, financial contributions, church work, and acts of service to make it before God? A hopeless task!

Then we eagerly realize: The Son makes me free. Jesus Christ took on the slavery of the Law and died to atone for the world's sin. God declares the world righteous for Jesus' sake. "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." When Luther discovered that freedom through faith in Christ, the gates of paradise opened to him. We rejoice in our movement from slavery to freedom and live in that freedom.

Celebrate Reformation Day. Re-discover the joy of God.

Blessings, *Pastor Dan*

Revisiting the Augsburg Confession:

Article XV: Of Ecclesiastical Usages (Church Rites and Ceremonies)

Ecclesiastical usages, or what we might now call Church rites and ceremonies, are found in every local congregation, and individual church bodies throughout the world. They are different in many ways between churches in Africa versus Asia, or the Americas versus the Pacific Island nations. Rites and ceremonies often develop over long periods of time, and are shaped by the places in which they develop. The Lutheran Reformers recognized that rites and ceremonies were not central to the Church's identity under Jesus Christ, because unlike Jesus and His Word, rites and ceremonies changed over time and reflected the ideas of men. Because rites and ceremonies reflected men's ideas and were not established by God through His Word, such rites and ceremonies were always open to debate and critique... always in light of the Word of God.

And so, in Article XV of the Augsburg Confession, the Reformers treat this subject in three primary ways. First, how good traditions, rites, and ceremonies should be kept; secondly, how people ought to think about the importance of such traditions; and thirdly, what to do with bad traditions which are found to conflict with the Word of God. Since traditions, rites, and ceremonies are only established on the power of man's word, they must always be subject to examination under God's Word.

In the first category, the Reformers confirm that such good traditions, rites, and ceremonies (for example, remembering particular holy days on the church calendar, festivals, the order of the Mass for Christian worship, even the canonical orders of the clergy, etc.,) which they inherited from the ancient Church in the west, should be maintained as profitable to tranquility and good order in the Church. In so far as they could be kept without sin, such traditions were good for the peace of the Church, kept individual congregations recognizable to each other both locally and around the world, and kept the individual congregations from falling into disorder by making stuff up on their own. This is why so many historic and confessional Lutheran congregations look and feel so catholic—we live and walk according to the old common ways of the western catholic church. This distinguishes us from churches that tossed out their history, and often make up their own traditions, rites, and ceremonies, under the influence of a charismatic leader, or the contemporary spirit of their age. Lutherans recognize, like all catholics, that the Church was here long before we got here, and will likely be here long after we're gone. We inherited the Church from our forefathers, and our

children will inherit it from us, even as we all form One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church that stretches across all time and space. We don't fiddle with the Church as if it were our play thing.

In the second subject, the Reformers remind us, that as good as our inherited traditions, rites, and ceremonies are, they can never appease God. Only the Blood of Christ shed for the sins of the world, can make us right with God. And so, even as we keep our good inheritance of liturgies, calendars, festivals and feasts, we remind people that keeping such practices are never to be trusted as a way of salvation. We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone—never by the rites and ceremonies of our churches, established by men. At their best, our traditions and rites and ceremonies, highlight the saving work of Jesus Christ, always pointing us to our Savior.

In the third category, is the treatment of bad traditions which directly conflict with the Word of God. Specifically condemned are any traditions that seek to “propitiate God, merit grace, and to make satisfaction for sins...” Any tradition of men that seeks to make peace with God through man's works, is an insult to the work of Jesus' Vicarious Atonement upon His Holy Cross. Thus, whether they are vows, or ceremonies, or liturgies, or fasts, or celebrations, no matter how old or by whom they are endorsed, if they conflict with the Word of God, they must be tossed out and repudiated. There is no room in the Church of Jesus Christ, for the traditions of men that undermine Jesus Christ, or attempt to shift the glory of His death and resurrection for the salvation of mankind, to paltry human works.

So how should this play in the modern, local, Christian church? We should receive our good inheritance with humility and thanksgiving, remembering that we stand on the shoulders of theological giants, who are still members with us in this One Holy Church. We should teach any and all who will listen, that though we hold our inheritance of traditions, rites, and ceremonies in high regard, we always hold them under the Word of Christ, knowing that the words of men, no matter how great, are always servants to the Word of God which abides forever. We should be on the look-out for any tradition that might creep in, which would steal glory and honor from Christ our Savior, and attempt to glorify men. In this way we remain authentically catholic, in peace and harmony with the universal Church of Christ in all times and all places, and yet we remain the Church always reforming to the image of the Gospel, trimming away the things of man so that the Word of God might always shine most brightly in our midst. Amen.

Pastor Brad

Music in God's Ears

How New is New? How Old is Old?

One question raised about how we worship has to do with the “style” that we choose. Like many of the words we use to describe worship (e.g. “traditional”, “contemporary”) this one word can cause much confusion. Here we go!

How New is New? How Old is Old?

When discussing “style” with some, it is clear they are talking about liturgical style. Does the service rely on traditional Creeds, Prayers and Forms such as the Confession and Absolution? Some will call this style “traditional.”

When discussing “style” with others, it is apparent that they are more concerned with the style of the music. This description can be even more confusing. “Traditional” music may refer to older Lutheran Chorales. Some will define it as music written before a certain date and “contemporary” as music written in recent years.

The problem is that much of the music in our hymnals was written in the '80s, '90s, and later, although it was composed in what many would call a “traditional” style. On the other hand, much of the music identified as “contemporary” was written almost 40 years ago in the Folk-Music era and long before some of the so-called “traditional” music.

Another problem with these descriptions is that people define them differently. Say “traditional” music to a Lutheran and they will think of their favorite Luther Chorale. Say “traditional” to a Baptist or a Methodist, and you will probably evoke a Gospel Hymn or a Southern/Western style ballad.

The point is simply this: we need to be careful when we discuss “style” and “worship” that we are truly listening to each other.

Otherwise, we may waste lots of time and goodwill by arguing about “style” with one person talking about music and the other talking about liturgy. All we accomplish is that everyone's blood pressure goes up and we

haven't really touched the root of the problem.

There are many questions worth discussing—and that we MUST discuss—and we will discuss them over the coming months.

Where is the balance between maintaining tradition and making our worship accessible to our young people and visitors?

How do we strike a balance between worship that identifies us as Lutherans and worship that remains open to the flexibility of the Spirit, and the growth of the Church?

And, perhaps, most importantly, where is the line that allows our worship to be “in the world” and not “of the world?” How do we remain open to visitors without letting the world's tastes shape our worship?

No matter the question, we need to make sure we try to clearly understand the views that our friends offer. We need to hear and listen. Otherwise we will argue apples and oranges and will only reap rotten fruit that no-one wants to eat.

DVP
(Denes Van Parys)

Men's Breakfast / Bible Study Saturday, October 18th – 8 am

Join us 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.” We will be discussing the chapter “Here Comes the Judge” (Judges 2:11-23)



Pastor Dan



-Preschool News

www.littlelambstacoma.com

Sharing Christ, Feeding Lambs

Our **Sunday Sundaes** will be **Sunday, October, 5 at 4 pm** in the Fellowship Hall. Please join us for ice cream as we get to know our preschool families.

Our October Bible lessons will include: Wandering in the Desert, Gideon, and David as a Shepherd Boy. We will also continue learning about the 5 senses and the season of fall.

We are finishing our first month of class for this year with **14 students**. Our preschool does have space available for students in both our classes. If you are interested or know someone who might be, please contact us. We welcome all inquiries and visitors.

We thank you for your continual prayers and generous support as we continue to serve Christ through Little Lambs Preschool.

Bonnie Huset
Director / Teacher



SUNDAY SUNDAES

Preschool and Congregational Families
You are invited!

Sunday, October 5th at 4 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Please join us for some fun with fellowship!

Following the social, all are invited to stay for our 5 pm chapel.

Men's Clothing Needed!

If you have any men's clothing in good condition, please donate for our Tuesday evening Clothes Closet that is available during Operation Thanks-Giving Free meal. Thank you!



The Lunch Bunch -



Our group for seniors and young at heart – will meet on Tuesday, October 14th at 11:30 am for a pot-blessing lunch and Bingo. (Bring a wrapped gift or two.) We will also use this time to make future plans, such as do we change our meeting day and what activities or trips do we want to plan.



Women in Mission / Women's Ministry

- **Tuesdays:**
Bible Study (9:15 am) **Quilting** (10 am)
- **LWML Sunday and Mites** - October 5th
- **Seafarers' Auxiliary** – October 18th
 12 noon.

3. National LWML Convention June 25-28, 2015 in Des Moines, Iowa.
 Theme: Bountiful! Sow. Nourish. Reap

Autumn – changes of season – time to reflect – where are you with the Lord?

What is upcoming?

1. LWML SUNDAY Special Worship Service written by the Rev. Dr. Victor Belton. I was privileged to hear him in June at the WA-AK District Convention in Wenatchee and was very impressed.
2. Fall Rainier Zone Rally in October at Light of Christ Lutheran Church. Details to follow.

You are seeing quilts in the Sanctuary side aisles once again...the results of Tuesday Quilters. Twice a year we pack and ship them to **Lutheran World Relief** (see poster in lower hallway for details). Would you like to purchase a quilt? **\$45.00 minimum**. All monies to be sent to **LWR**. Want to help purchase supplies for quilts? If so, donate to LWML marked "For Quilts."

Seafarers' Christmas Boxes will be filled in November so knitters keep on knitting so each of the 150 boxes we fill will have a hand knit cap made with love.

Blessings to all!
Jane Oberg



Saturday, October 11th
5 pm in Fellowship Hall
\$15 per person
Ticket includes a delicious meal.



Oktoberfest
Sunday, October 16th at 12 noon
**We will provide the Sausages,
 Buns and Drinks.**
You provide the Salads and Desserts.
See you there!

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Voter's Meeting

August 31, 2014

Meeting called to order by President Julian Doyle.

Opening prayer by Pastor Brad Varvil.

New voting members were approved and the total voting members in attendance was 45.

A motion was made to approve as written the Preschool Mission Statement, the Mission and Philosophy Statement, and the Governance Authority. Some discussion took place. An amendment to the motion was made and seconded to add the word "his" to the mission statement so it would read, "Sharing Christ, Feeding His Lambs." After further discussion on the amendment, a vote was taken by voice and the amendment was defeated. The original motion was then passed by voice vote.

A motion was made and seconded to sell the church van. After discussion a voice vote approved the motion.

A financial update review was done. It showed where the church was after Sunday, August 24th, in income, expenses, and average attendance.

Updated for the congregation included

- Fixing the church sidewalk on B Street between the public sidewalk and the church driveway.
- Installation of an Elevator Box for first responders to comply with Washington State Code.
- Purchase of an elevator "Maintenance Control Plan (MCP) to comply with Washington State Code.
- The Church Council reviewing a plan to include (use) Pay Pal. Also reviewing a guideline change to pay fees of all church workers to conferences.
- An update on preschool lighting.
- A Discussion for a lay delegate to the District Convention (2015). This was open for thought with a vote to be done at the December Voters Meeting.

Announcements were done.

Asking to think about the Mission Project for 2015.

Meeting was closed with prayer from Pastor Dan Gerken.

Respectfully submitted by:

Joe Morton
Protem Secretary