



Reformation Lutheran Church

“Come and See, Learn and Rejoice, Go and Tell!”

July, 2020

“At that time Jesus declared, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.’” - Matthew 11:25-26.

Has anyone ever asked you when you were saved? This question can be dangerous since it sometimes causes Christians to doubt their faith. Moreover, as Lutherans, we may struggle to answer this question since it arises from a different theological framework. Therefore, we will approach this question by questioning the framework behind it.

In this regard, many evangelical Christians hold that everyone can understand God’s truth. What saves us is making a decision to accept it. But Lutherans understand salvation differently. We believe that no amount of wisdom and understanding will allow us to know the hidden things of God until he first reveals them to us. He must first save us before we can know these truths.

Within a Lutheran framework, what saves us is not our decision for God, but God’s decision for us. Even the faith by which we believe is a gift of God’s grace. Our decision for Christ is but the response of a newly saved person to God’s grace. Thus, it is not that we must make a decision for Christ in order to be born again. Rather, we must be born again to make a decision for Christ.

In Scripture, God’s work of salvation unfolds in a couple of ways. Paul was clearly an adult convert. People like him can name the day and the hour of their conversion. However, John the Baptist was born again from his mother’s womb. Like John the Baptist, those of us who were baptized as infants cannot remember our conversion. We experience spiritual growth over time but cannot recall its starting point.

What both of these cases share in common is the priority of God’s grace in salvation. By grace God overcame the hardness of Paul’s heart, and by grace he gave John the Baptist a soft heart even before birth. However we are saved, therefore, our decision for God is always a response to his saving grace. And for Lutherans this decision occurs daily as we return to our baptism in repentance.

Pr.

I. Am. Over. All. Of. This. Craziess. OVER IT! No matter where you turn, you’re going to hear about: the virus, riots, politics – everything wrong with the world. And that’s on top of what you’re dealing with in your own little corner of it! It’s enough to cause us all heartache and a tidal wave of stress. But, realistically, we all have to deal with the world and its issues. Sticking our head in the sand doesn’t make things better. For myself, I am limiting my news intake and truly trying to find good news each day. Of course as Christians who bear HIS name, we ALWAYS have good news! Our Lord knows our needs and weaknesses. HE is our source of all good and we are reminded to lean on HIM for strength, guidance, and comfort for whatever happens in the coming weeks and months.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Philippians 4:6-8).

Peace be with you,
Gabi

Treasurer's Report: Many thanks to the folks who are keeping up with their tithes

The money that was in our cd has been moved into our savings account pending discussion on where best to invest it.

Blessings to all,

Judy

Fellowship: Nothing is planned for the moment, but we'll get started again soon!

Property: Clean up day for July will be Saturday, July 25th. We'll be getting in touch with the building owner to see when he wants to proceed with the new carpet.

Education – Our in person Bible study will resume after summer.

Worship and Music: Not a lot has changed since last month. We are holding Sunday services each week with social distancing as the rule. It has worked well. We still have a few people who don't feel safe yet, which is fine, so the service and Pastor Jon's audio sermons are being sent to everyone who doesn't make the Sunday morning service.



SOME MORE CHURCH HISTORY - Without question all Lutherans are familiar with Martin Luther. Many, however, are not familiar with Philip Melancthon. He was actually the person who formulated many of the basic tenants of our faith.

He arrived at the University of Wittenberg primarily to teach Greek, but his intellectual breadth, rhetorical abilities, and pedagogical skills could never be confined to one area of study. He was so gifted that history has lauded him as the "teacher of Germany."

Though he taught at least two generations of students at Wittenberg, today the focus is usually on the substance of his teaching, as this is reflected in his most important writings. As a scholar who came to share, and even influence-Martin Luther's understanding of the gospel, Melancthon was the author of both the Augsburg Confession (1530), the defining confession of the Lutheran movement; and its Apology (1531), or Defense, which offers a thorough evangelical and biblical argument for the most basic proposals for doctrine and practice that had been made by Luther and his Wittenberg colleagues.

Especially in these writings, one discovers the classical Lutheran formulation of "justification" – that is, God pronouncing helpless sinners righteous-by grace alone, for Christ's sake alone, through faith alone.



"To mix Law and Gospel not only clouds the knowledge of grace, it cuts out Christ altogether."

Melancthon also insisted that it is necessary to distinguish carefully between God's accusing law and God's promissory gospel...and that this distinction is key to a proper interpretation and salutary reading of the Bible. Virtually everything else in the Lutheran confessional writings contributes to or derives from these two pervasive and interdependent themes, namely, the centrality of justification and the proper distinction between Law and Gospel.

Certainly, the best way to remember Philip Melancthon is to recall him at his finest hour, as the scholar who was willing to stand before princes, and emperor, and the theological opponents at Augsburg in 1530 and 1531 and produce some of the finest theological work to appear in two millennia of Christian history. In these writings, he affirmed over and over again that to know Jesus Christ is to know his blessings, "the promises which by the gospel he has spread throughout the world."

Mission and Ministry: We are getting back in the swing of things with our Law Enforcement Appreciation project. Once the Thrivent project card arrives, we will purchase the BBQ and get the lunch certificates to Sheriff Jolley for his staff. Thanks to all who contributed! It's so good to share God's love and our blessings to show our appreciation to these fine folks!



2nd – Tammy Jensen
 10th – Stephanie Stephens
 11th – Keith Owen
 12th - Pastor Jon
 23rd – Wayne Ramming



Saturday – July 4th - God Bless America!

Sunday – July 5th – executive council

Sunday – July 12th – council

Saturday – July 25th – clean up day beginning at 9:00

	<u>July 2nd</u>	<u>July 12th</u>	<u>July 19th</u>	<u>July 26th</u>
Altar Guild	Wayne	Carolyn	Judy	Junior
Comm. Asst.	none needed as we are currently using intinction during communion			
Usher	Junior	Judy	Carolyn	Wayne
Lector	Wayne	Chuck	Lynne	Junior
Sermon	Pastor	Pastor	Wayne	Chuck

