



Reformation Lutheran Church

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

October 2020

“If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more...” - Philippians 3:4 - Do you remember the song, “It’s Hard to Be Humble,” by Mac Davis? Even if you weren’t alive in 1974 when this record was released, you’ve probably heard it on the radio. The country singer crooned, “O Lord it’s hard to be humble, when you’re perfect in every way,” and, “to know me is to love me...”. It’s a silly song, however, certainly we know people who actually think this way about themselves. St. Paul wrote to the church in Philippi saying that he had every reason to be proud of himself. If salvation came by works of the flesh, he had a resume that was sure to impress: circumcised on the eighth day according to the Law, a Benjaminite, a good Hebrew when it came to following the Torah, a Pharisee full of zeal, and blameless when it came to righteousness. Who can compete with that? No one! And, that’s not the way it works with Jesus anyway. (Thanks be to God!) Instead of singing, “It’s hard to be humble when you’re perfect in every way,” St. Paul was saying, “I count all of that as loss for the sake of Christ.” Just sit with that sentiment for a moment. In a world where success means more money, more possessions, more status and power, it is quite countercultural to be of the mind of Christ, “who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6–8). Salvation comes through the cross of Christ alone. Our human desire is to be noticed, rewarded for our efforts, praised even. But humility and servanthood is the way of the cross. We can laugh at Mac Davis’ song, and then we can recognize that his words bear witness to our lack of humbleness. There was only one who was perfect in every way, and he was the epitome of self-emptying humility. (He would never have dared to sing such a tune!) All the accomplishments we can put on our resume are nothing if we do not have Christ in our lives. He is our treasure and our greatest gift. Amen.

Pr.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

At the end of this month, we will “Fall Back” and turn our clocks back to gain an extra hour. Many of us so look forward to that thinking, “I get an extra hour of sleep! I get an extra hour to (fill in the blank).” How do we really use that time though? So many of us are running ninety to nothing to try and keep up with all we have going on in our own lives and trying to keep up with all that’s going on in the world. We run ourselves to the point of exhaustion. An extra hour of sleep may be nice for our physical bodies but what we need more than that is what Jesus offers. He wants us to fall back into a deeper relationship with him. Fall back into His word. Fall back into His guidance. Accept the rest that Jesus gives. The rest that will give us refreshment for our souls.

Peace be with you,
Gabi

Treasurer's Report: Thanks to everyone who is keeping up with their tithes! It really does make a difference. With folks being out because of Covid and other issues, it is starting to make a difference in our bank account. It's a small slide down, but we don't want it to keep going backwards.

Blessings to all,
Judy

Fellowship: Nothing is planned for the moment, but we'll get started again soon! (I've been saying that for a few months now. Hopefully, soon will actually be SOON!)

Property: A quote for carpet has been sent to the building owner. We're waiting to hear back from him. Our clean up day will be Saturday, October 24th starting at 9:00.

Education – Our in person Bible study will resume at some point in life. 😊

Worship and Music: Each month it seems like I write the same thing for the newsletter. Covid has definitely put a dent in what we do, what we can do and what we want to do. With that in mind, we continue holding Sunday services each week with social distancing as the rule. We also continue to send the service and Pastor Jon's audio sermons to everyone who doesn't make the Sunday morning service. Please feel free to share them with those you know who may also not be attending church or who are unchurched. It may warm some hearts, and our welcome mat is always open. Our Monday devotion is continuing with the Lord's Prayer. We have two more weeks to go to finish the Lord's Prayer, and then we will start on the sacraments.

REFORMATION SUNDAY

One of the biggest days in the Lutheran Church is fast approaching. On October 25, we will celebrate Martin Luther's nailing his 95 theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. His plan at the time was simply to encourage change within the Catholic Church, but he truly did start a revolution that changed the world.

On the Sunday before, October 18, we will have a special presentation in order to prepare us for Reformation Sunday.

Mission and Ministry: With fall come some of our best opportunities for Outreach. Operation Christmas Child collections and packing will be getting under way soon. We will likely do food boxes for the county for Thanksgiving as we did last year. Keep an ear out for other possibilities as well and keep in mind we have Thrivent Grant Cards that we can apply for to help us in our mission work.



October 23rd – Pat Hunsaker



October

Sunday – October 4th – executive council

**Saturday – October 17th – FREE – drive-thru document shredding –
Columbus Technical College – 8:30 – 11:30**

Sunday – October 18th – council

Saturday – October 24th – clean up day

Sunday – October 25th – Reformation Sunday!

	<u>Oct. 4</u>	<u>Oct. 11</u>	<u>Oct. 18</u>	<u>Oct. 25</u>
Altar Guild	Carolyn	Judy	Wayne	Junior
Comm. Asst.	none needed as we are currently using intinction during communion			
Usher	Junior	Carolyn	Junior	Judy
Lector	Gabi	Wayne	Chuck	Junior
Sermon	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor



"October's the month
When the smallest breeze
Gives us a shower
Of autumn leaves.
Bonfires and pumpkins,
Leaves sailing down -
October is red
And golden and brown."

The Ninety-Five Theses: All About Sin and Its Consequence

Martin Luther spent his career as a teacher of the Bible at the University of Wittenberg. However, when he assumed that role upon the completion of his doctor's degree in 1512, he did not give up his priestly and pastoral duties. He continued to preach frequently, and – most importantly for the topic of this article – he continued to hear the confessions of the men and women of his town parish. It was his experiences in this latter role that led him to prepare and post the Ninety-Five Theses on October 31, 1517, the day that has come to signal the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation.

The tradition of seeing these theses as the dawn of the Reformation is somewhat misleading, for the theses themselves were neither a manifesto against the established Roman church nor a call to begin anything like a new church. Rather, the theses were a pastor-professor's carefully crafted call to an academic debate about a subject with very practical consequences for his parishioners. Specifically, how were fallen people to deal with their sin-its presence in their lives, the guilt it causes, and the consequences to which it leads?

The Roman church of Luther's era dealt with those issues through its sacrament of penance, which entailed sorrow over one's sin (or "contrition"), oral "confession" of the sin(s), remission of one's eternal punishment, and then a prescribed act of "satisfaction" to deal with the remaining temporal consequences of the sin, which could be addressed either in this life or in purgatory (hence the expression "do penance"). This was further complicated at the time by the presence of "indulgences," which pertained to the "satisfaction" part of penance and amounted to a financial substitution for a performance penalty.

What Martin Luther had come to learn in the confessional was that pious people were burdened by sin and guilt, but they were finding false consolation in the purchase of these "indulgences." The traditional Roman sacrament of penance no longer squared with what Luther had learned in his study and teaching of the Bible, and this was especially true of the way it was being practiced in the months leading up to October 31, 1517. Hence, the Ninety-Five Theses are an indication of the problems Luther was experiencing in his pastoral work as well as the beginnings of a fresh and radically new approach to Christian life.

First, Luther chose the word "repent" to describe what really ought to be going on here. "Penance" risked focusing more on human works than on God's once-and-for-all work in Jesus Christ. This is Luther's key point: Repentance is not about any human activity (not even one's sorrow or confession, much less one's act of "satisfaction"). In this sense, it is easier than all of that. One does not have to perform or purchase one's way into God's favor. Luther wrote: "Any truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without indulgence letters. Any true Christian, whether living or dead, participates in all the blessings of Christ and the church; and this is granted him by God, even without indulgence letters" (theses 36 and 37). In short, focus on the Word of God. Focus on God's promise of full and free forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Second, even if one does not need to earn or buy God's grace, Luther recognized that this approach to the Christian life (i.e., "perform these works of merit," or "procure this indulgence") was entirely inadequate, especially when one put his or her confidence in the works or the indulgences. Luther's study of the Scriptures taught him that the Christian life was much harder than Rome's sacrament of penance could lead one to assure. Indeed, he began the Ninety-Five Theses with this bracing observation: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said 'Repent' [Matthew 4:17], He willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance." He applied this to the immediate issue at hand a bit later:

“Christians are to be taught that papal indulgences are useful only if they do not put their trust in them, but very harmful if they lost their fear of God because of them.”

Yet if one does not have to follow sixteenth-century Rome’s prescription for dealing with sin, and if that or any other works-oriented approach is inadequate anyway, what is one to do? Martin Luther would spend the rest of his career as a reformer fleshing out-and confessing-his answer to that question. It would go something like this: “For the sake of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Rely on this unconditional promise. Work not for others not because you are compelled to, but because you are freed and empowered to. In short, trust Jesus Christ and what He has done.” While not all of this answer is present in so many words in the Ninety-Five Theses, what one does find there is an indispensable early expression of the theology of grace and of the cross that made it possible. Luther intimated as much in thesis 62, which provides a fitting summary of the entire document: “The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.”

THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE