**The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**Lindy, Nebraska**

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**The Rod and Staff**



**August 2017**

**A Series on the Lutheran Reformation: Deeper Conflict**

We continue this month of August with our series on the Lutheran Reformation. When Martin Luther wrote the *Ninety-Five Theses* in 1517, that event came to represent for later generations the beginning of the era of the Reformation, which saw the rise of Lutheran and other types of Protestant churches. That is why this year of 2017 is significant; it is the five hundredth anniversary of that event.

But the *Ninety-Five Theses* of 1517 were not a complete statement of Luther’s theology as is often supposed, and he would continue over the following years to develop his thought. In fact, what he wrote in 1517 reveals that Luther considered himself to be a faithful subject and servant of the Church of Rome. He simply desired to debate the practice of the Pope and his representatives selling and granting indulgences, which promised people and even their deceased relatives reduction of time in purgatory after they died.

But the *Ninety-Five Theses* got the ball rolling, so to speak, and Luther soon found himself in deeper conflict. The fact that Luther questioned the Pope on this matter showed that he did not consider the Pope to be incapable of error. The German territories (at the time, there was no unified country called “Germany,” but rather separate territories and kingdoms) where Luther resided had a long- standing feud with the Roman Church, and many proclaimed Luther a hero of the German people because he had challenged the Pope.

Luther was called to the city of Heidelberg, today in southwestern Germany, in 1518. There he engaged in a debate with others, and the debate revealed deeper theological issues. The idea of granting indulgences is based on the idea of achieving “merit” before God. If you gain enough merit, then you can finally be admitted into heaven. The indulgences were meant to increase the amount of “merit” that a person needs to gain access to God’s presence. The whole idea is based on the view that people have the ability to contribute to their salvation through our free will.

But Luther came to see that this was a mistake. Basing his thinking on the tradition of the great church Father Augustine from many centuries before, Luther believed that people are spiritually dead and cannot contribute to their salvation by their will or good works. Instead, they can only receive salvation as a gift. In what was called the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518, Luther explained his thinking using the following example: There is much that a living person can do to make himself dead; there is nothing that a dead person can do to make himself alive.

During this time, Luther’s writings reached Pope Leo X in Rome. Alarmed by this challenge to his authority, he summoned Luther to Rome to allow him the chance to take back what he had written. Luther’s protector, Duke Frederick of Saxony, managed to arrange for the meeting to be in Germany rather than Rome, which would be safer for Luther. Luther met with a representative of the Pope, Cardinal Cajetan, in the German city of Augsburg. It was expected that Luther would simply recant at this meeting, but he instead began arguing with Cajetan.

The following year, in 1519, Luther was called upon to debate with another representative of the Pope, Johann Eck. Eck’s strategy was to get Luther publicly to deny the divine authority of the Pope, and in that Eck succeeded. Luther argued that Christ alone is the head of the Church, not the Pope. Eck sought to show similarities between Luther’s statements and those made by Jan Hus just over a hundred years before. Hus had been condemned and burned at the stake in 1415.

As a result of this, the Pope issued what is called a “bull,” an official letter, which gave Luther sixty days to recant. This letter, under the title of *Exsurge Domine*, meaning “arise, O Lord,” compared Luther to a wild boar that was destroying God’s vineyard. If Luther would not recant within sixty days, he could consider himself excommunicated, meaning that he would be defrocked from his position as priest and cut off from the sacraments, and therefore salvation.

However, when Luther received the papal bull, he burned it along with other official documents of the Pope. He was officially excommunicated in January of 1521.

It is important to understand that Luther did not “break away from the Roman Church.” In reality, he was kicked out. Luther’s goal was not to start a new church, but rather to speak the truth to the church.

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Special Announcements**

* Many thanks to everyone who was involved in the annual **ice cream social** on July 23. The turnout was possibly higher than ever before from what I have been told.
* As hard as it is to believe, the new school year is rapidly approaching! That means that **confirmation class** will resume starting in September. For new students and their parents (those entering seventh grade), there will be an informational meeting on Wednesday August 30 at 7:00 PM. The actual confirmation class (for both seventh and eighth grade students) will begin the following week, on September 6 from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM.
* Pastor Tom and family will be away for the annual North American Lutheran Church convocation in Nashville, Tennessee from August 4 to August 12, and after that a week of family vacation from August 13 to 19. Pastor Jamie Strickler from the Institute of Lutheran Theology will be at Good Shepherd on both August 6 and August 13. During this time, if there is an emergency, contact Pastor Dani Jo Ninke of Christ the King Lutheran Church of Yankton, SD. The church number is 605-665-8848.
* Our congregation has received a number of items from a congregation that recently closed. St. Peter Lutheran Church, located around ten miles south of Madison, SD, closed its doors a few months ago, and the building will now be used as a community center. However, they want their church furnishings to receive a new home. In particular, they have given us their old altar painting of Jesus the Good Shepherd. As we hang this painting in our church, the history of St. Peter Lutheran Church will live on among us.

**Commemoration of the Saints**

Lutherans do not venerate (pray to) special people called “saints.” Our Lutheran confessional documents speak against that practice. However, those same documents that prohibit the veneration of saints encourage Christian people to look to the lives of significant Christians of the past as a source of encouragement for our lives in the present.



For August of 2017, we remember **Augustine of Hippo**, the North African Christian theologian who lived from the year 354 to 430 AD. He is commemorated on August 28, the anniversary of his death.

The influence of Augustine for Latin (Western) Christianity is difficult to overstate. Indeed, Augustine is considered one of the cornerstones of Western civilization. His theological writings set the tone for later theological developments, and today both Roman Catholic and Protestant (Lutheran, Reformed, etc.) Christians are heavily influenced by him. Martin Luther himself, when he became a monk in the early 1500s, joined the Augustinian monastic order, named after the great St. Augustine.

His personal story is also interesting. He was born in the city of Thagaste, which is in present-day Algeria. His father was a pagan (non-Christian), and his mother Monica was a Christian, who reportedly always prayed for her son. But Augustine fell under the influence of a number of religious and intellectual influences in his young life. For a time, he was a follower of a religious movement called Manicheanism, which taught that the powers of good and evil were equal, contending for control of the world. He also experimented with sexual promiscuity.

In the year 384, he moved to the city of Milan in Italy. There he encountered Bishop Ambrose and was impressed by his preaching. While sitting in a garden in Milan, he heard a child in the distance saying, “Pick it up and read.” He came to believe that this was the voice of God telling him to pick up his Bible and read it. Augustine was eventually baptized, and he then returned to North Africa where he was ordained as a priest and became bishop of the city of Hippo. Over the years, he engaged in a number of theological disputes that continue to be relevant today. In particular, he disputed with a priest named Pelagius, who claimed that people possess the freedom to live up to God’s standards. Augustine, on the other hand, believed that because human beings are by nature sinful, they cannot earn salvation and must rely on it as a gift.

The life of Augustine is hard to encapsulate in a few paragraphs. In fact, there are entire libraries devoted solely to Augustine! But perhaps most importantly, his life is a testimony to the working of God’s power in our lives, even when we are rebellious. God is persistent and calls us to Him.

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Worship Schedule**

**August 6:** Ninth Sunday after Pentecost with Holy Communion at altar rail (Green)

**August 13:** Tenth Sunday after Pentecost (Green)

**August 20:** Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost with Holy Communion continuous line (Green)

**August 27:** Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost (Green)

**Featured Hymn for August 2017**

***Have No Fear, Little Flock***

*Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home, 202*

1. *Have no fear, little flock; have no fear, little flock, for the Father has chosen to give you the kingdom; have no fear, little flock!*
2. *Have good cheer, little flock; have good cheer, little flock, for the Father will keep you in his love forever; have good cheer, little flock!*
3. *Praise the Lord high above; praise the Lord high above, for he stoops down to heal you, uplift and restore you; praise the Lord high above!*
4. *Thankful hearts raise to God; thankful hearts raise to God, for he stays close beside you, in all things works with you; thankful hearts raise to God!*
* Text: Luke 12:32, vs. 1; Marjorie Jillson, 1931-, vs. 2-4
* Tune: Heinz Werner Zimmermann, 1930-

*Note: Zimmermann’s tune introduced modern jazz style into the hymnal. The hymn became a favorite of the American Lutheran Church Women as it was associated with their Scope Bible study for one year.*

**Monthly Watchword for August 2017**

“To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great.”

* Acts 26:22 ESV

**Ushers for July:**

* Head Ushers:
	+ Carsten and Darci Barger
* Ushers:
	+ Travis and Shauna Kauth
	+ Perry and Lavon Kolterman
	+ Gary and Sheri Ermels

**For Further Information on LCMC and the NALC:** You can download and read the newsletters of both organizations at the following addresses:

* **http://www.lcmc.net/newsletters**
* **http://thenalc.org/newsletter/**

**Website:** The web address is as follows:

* **www.gselclindy.weebly.com**

**Some Quotes from Martin Luther:**

“The hour of death is a heavenly gift for which we should constantly ask God and daily prepare ourselves so that…we look forward to our departure and our gain with pious longing.”

“The comfort men give consists in external, visible help, which one can grasp, see, and feel. The comfort God gives consists only in the Word and promise, without seeing, hearing, or feeling.”

**From Martin Luther’s Small Catechism:**

**The Ten Commandments**

**The Second Commandment**

**The Second Commandment:** You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold guiltless those who take his name in vain.

**What does this mean?** We should fear and love God so that we do not use his name superstitiously or to curse, swear, lie, or deceive, but call upon him in every time of need, and worship him with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.

**July 2017**

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| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  |  1 |  2 Pr. Tom in Lindy | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6Worship, 10:30 with Holy Communion (altar rail)Pr. Jamie Strickler presidingGreen | 7 | 8 | 9Pr. Tom at NALC convocationChurch council meeting, 7:00 PM | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13Worship, 10:30Pr. Jamie Strickler presidingGreen | 14 | 15 | 16Pr. Tom on vacationWomen’s meeting, 10:00 AM | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20Worship, 10:30 with Holy Communion (continuous line)Green | 21 | 22 | 23Pr. Tom in Lindy | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27Worship, 10:30Green | 28 | 29 | 30 31 Pr. Tom in LindyConfirmation Meeting with newStudents and parents,7:00 PM |
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Good Shepherd Evangelical

Lutheran Church of Lindy

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