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

**Lindy, Nebraska**

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**The Rod and Staff**



**September 2017**

**A Series on the Lutheran Reformation: Luther’s Trial and Exile**

We continue this month of September 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.

Last month, I wrote about Luther finding himself in deeper conflict as he challenged the authority of the Pope in Rome. This month, I will write about the fallout from that challenge. Because of Luther’s refusal to recant (take back) his teachings, the Pope had issued a “bull,” a document that gave Luther sixty days to recant his statements. Upon receipt of this “bull,” Luther burned it along with other books of the Roman Church, such as volumes of canon law. Luther believed that many things in the existing church of Rome were getting in the way of what he believed to be the true message of the faith: Jesus Christ as savior and our trust in that gracious promise from God.

But the story did not end there. A new emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (a conglomeration of independent kingdoms and principalities mostly covering the territory of what is today Germany) came to the throne, the young Charles V. Charles V inherited a difficult situation. The various princes of the Holy Roman Empire were constantly seeking to expand their power and influence often at the expense of each other. From the outside, Muslim Turks were threatening to invade Europe and were approaching the city of Vienna, Austria. For Charles V, this was not the time for an internal religious conflict. He needed unity in his empire in order to defend Christian lands.

It is interesting that the threat of Muslim invasion of Europe is at least partly responsible for giving Luther a chance to live. Many of the common folk of Germany viewed Luther as a hero because he represented their dislike and distrust of Rome. Instead of storming in to take Luther by force for execution, Charles V offered Luther a chance to officially recant his writings. In doing so, he hoped to avoid a divisive conflict. He summoned Luther to an imperial diet (an assembly of princes) to be held in the city of Worms (in southern Germany). He was offered safe passage to and from the Diet of Worms. But would he meet the same fate as Jan Hus from a hundred years earlier? Hus had been summoned to the Council of Constance in 1415 with a similar promise of safe passage. But he was, in spite of that promise, burned at the stake for his views.

Luther entered the Diet of Worms on April 17, 1521. Assembled were various German princes, representatives of the Roman Church, local bishops, and Charles V himself. On a table, Luther’s prolific writings were laid out. In these writings, Luther was often critical of the Pope and of his representatives. Many of these writings had been deemed heretical (containing false teaching). Luther disagreed.

He was asked two simple questions. First, “Have you written these books?” and second, “Will you recant what you have written in these books?” Luther asked to have another day to formulate an answer, which was not expected. But his request was granted. The next day, Luther acknowledged that the books belonged to him, but he said he could not recant all of them, for even his opponents had found good in at least some of them. Furthermore, many of his concerns about the life of the church were shared by reputable people from years past. But a clear answer was demanded of Luther, and finally he responded with the famous words:

*“Unless I can be instructed and convinced with evidence from the Holy Scriptures or with open, clear and distinct grounds of reasoning, then I cannot and will not recant. My conscience is captive to the Word of God. Because it is neither safe nor wise to act against conscience.”*

In what is possibly a later addition by another author for dramatic effect, Luther concluded with *“Here I stand, I can do no other. So help me God.”*

One thing that is often overlooked when people discuss Luther’s response and use his words as their own in contemporary conversations is that Luther was not taking a stand on his own beliefs, but rather on the teaching of the Bible.

True to the agreement, Luther was allowed to leave the Diet of Worms in peace. But because of his refusal to recant his writings, Luther was now condemned by both the spiritual *and* the secular authorities of the day. Anyone who met him could kill him without threat of punishment.

On his way back to Wittenberg, the prince of Luther’s territory of Saxony, the powerful and influential Frederick the Wise, dispatched a group of men who kidnapped Luther for his own safety. They brought Luther to the Wartburg Castle, where he remained for about nine months. It was during his time at the Wartburg that he completed his translation of the New Testament into German, which I discussed a few months ago.

During his time at the Wartburg, Luther was disguised as “Knight George.” He was not accustomed to the rich diet of the knights, and he also began to fall into mental and spiritual despair. He felt as though the devil was taunting him, and in defense he shouted back, “I am baptized.” When assaulted by the devil, Luther’s best defense was to point to God’s promise given to him, which he believed had been given to him when he was baptized. For Luther, baptism was not a forgettable act that can be discarded because it happened as a child. Rather, baptism was a sure refuge of God’s promise to be carried throughout life in all times of doubt and temptation.

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Special Announcements**

* Sunday School will resume on Sunday September 10 at the usual time of 9:30 AM.
* There are no new incoming confirmation students from seventh grade, so the eighth grade confirmation class will resume on September 6 at 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM.
* During the months of September and October, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church will be collecting donation items for the River City Domestic Violence Center in Yankton. Boxes will be set in the entryway of the church, and a list of donation items is provided on a later page.

**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 September of 2017, we remember **John Chrysostom**, the bishop of Constantinople who died in 407 AD. He is commemorated on September 13.

John was called "Chrysostom," which means “golden mouth.” This is because of his reputation as an eloquent preacher. He was a priest in the city of Antioch, and it was said that people hung on his every word. People were warned not to carry large amounts of money when they went to hear him speak. Thieves found it very easy to steal from those who listened to him; they were too intent on his words to notice what was happening.

Like Augustine, who was discussed last month, John Chrysostom was a prolific writer, and only Augustine exceeded him in the number of surviving writings from that era. John’s sermons are mostly straightforward expositions of Holy Scripture, yet he was known for “plumbing the depths of the biblical text” as he proclaimed the Word of God to the people. He wrote extensive commentaries on both the Old and New Testaments, with special attention to the letters of Paul.

Coming out of the city of Antioch, he emphasized the literal meaning of a biblical passage, whereas the style popular at Alexandria in Egypt tended to read allegorical meanings into the text. He loved the city and people of Antioch, and they loved him. However, he became so famous that the Empress at Constantinople desired him for her court preacher, and she had him kidnapped and brought to Constantinople and there made bishop.

However, the Empress of Constantinople was disappointed. John preached sermons against corruption in high places that earned him powerful enemies, including the Empress. John was sent into exile, where he died.

But John Chrysostom left a lasting legacy. Even Martin Luther from centuries later thought highly of John’s writings. Along with Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil the Great, and Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom is counted as one of the Four Great Eastern (or Greek) Doctors (teachers) of the Ancient Church. The Four Great Western (or Latin) Doctors are Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory the Great.

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Worship Schedule**

**September 3:** Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost with Holy Communion at altar rail (Green)

**September 10:** Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Green)

**September 17:** Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost with Holy Communion continuous line (Green)

**September 24:** Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Green)

**Featured Hymn for September 2017:**

***Abide with Me***

*Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home, 62*

1. *Abide with me; fast falls the eventide; The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide. When other helpers fail and comforts flee, Help of the helpless, O abide with me.*
2. *I need Thy presence every passing hour. What but Thy grace can foil the tempter’s power? Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be? Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.*
3. *Swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day; Earth’s joys grow dim; its glories pass away; Change and decay in all around I see; O Thou who changest not, abide with me.*
4. *I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless; Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness. Where is death’s sting? Where, grave, thy victory? I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.*
5. *Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes; Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies. Heaven’s morning breaks, and earth’s vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.*
* Text: Henry F. Lyte, 1793-1847; Tune: William H. Monk

*Note: Lyte, an Anglican priest, wrote this not long before he preached his last sermon in 1847 and died shortly thereafter. It’s words, which proclaim the abiding presence of God, make this hymn especially appropriate for evening worship as well as for funerals.*

**Monthly Watchword for September 2017**

Jesus says, “And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

* Luke 13:30 ESV

**Ushers for September:**

* Head Ushers:
	+ Ed and Tina Sage
* Ushers:
	+ Dale and Connie McDonald
	+ Chris Braunsroth
	+ Doug and Amy Stewart
	+ Tim and Annie Jessen

**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:**

“Just as there is no fire without heat and smoke, so there is no faith without love.”

“God grant us to live as we teach and to practice what we preach.”

“Being afraid of God is different from fearing God. The fear of God is a fruit of love, but being afraid of Him is the seed of hatred.”

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

**The Ten Commandments**

**The Third Commandment**

**The Third Commandment:** Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

**What does this mean?** We should fear and love God so that we do not despise his Word and the preaching of it, but acknowledge it as holy and gladly hear and learn it.

**Donations for River City Domestic Violence Center**

As with last year, the council decided to seek during the months of September and October donations for a women’s shelter. We have one of those near us in Yankton, SD. The following is a wish list from their website. There will be boxes labeled for this purpose in the entryway of the church. Thank you for your generosity!

**Wish List:**

toilet paper, paper towels

tuna

individually packaged snack crackers, saltine crackers

ketchup, mustard

instant potatoes

hamburger/tuna helper, home style bakes (boxed meals)

suddenly salad, mac 'n cheese

canned veggies: mixed, green beans, corn

garbage bags

canned fruit: mixed, pears, peaches

individual packaged fruit cups

large freezer bags (gallon size)

shells 'n cheese

soups: chicken, veggie, beef

pasta sides

spaghetti noodles, spaghetti sauce

ramen noodles: beef, chicken

peanut butter

pancakes, syrup

muffins, granola bars

small box cereal (travel size)​

juice boxes, fruit snacks

oatmeal

Diapers (sixe 5 and 6), laundry soap (must be HE), sports bras (size M, L, XL)

**NALC News**



**Brief notes from the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) Convocation August 9-11, 2017**

* 2017 NALC Convocation focuses on Discipleship and Reformation. Nearly 700 NALC members gathered August 9-11 for the 2017 NALC Convocation in Nashville, Tenn., around the theme, “Holding Fast: Being Reformed.”
* The 500th anniversary of the Reformation provided a focus for the Convocation. The leaders of the largest Lutheran churches in the world were featured speakers for the worship services. The Rev. Dr. Fredrick Onael Shoo, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, was the preacher for a festival service observing the Reformation anniversary. The Rev. Yonas Yigezu, President of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, preached for the opening worship of the Convocation Mission Festival.
* The Rev. Dr. James Nestingen and the Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder delivered keynote Bible study addresses on Reformation themes. The Rev. Dr. Jared Wicks addressed Martin Luther from a Roman Catholic perspective, and Carmen Fowler LaBerge addressed the Lutheran Reformation from a Reformed perspective.
* The NALC’s focus on discipleship featured prominently in the Convocation. Bishop John Bradosky provided a keynote address and Bible study on discipleship for the Mission Festival. Discipleship was also a focus of his report to the Convocation and of other speakers and workshops.
* The NALC Mission Festival began the Convocation under the theme, “Renewing Congregational Life Through the Word of God.” Keynote addresses were given by Bishop Bradosky, the Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, and the Rev. Dr. Joseph Parsalaw of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Church leaders from around the world took part in a panel discussion on congregational life in their countries. Workshops addressed a variety of topics.
* Stuff the Truck for NALC Disaster Response was a great success. So many supplies were brought for NALC Disaster Response that a larger truck needed to be obtained. Donated supplies included 400 quilts, 366 health kits, 112 school kits, 70 flood buckets, and 225 Bibles.
* The Bishop election process will remain the same as proposed constitutional amendments were not approved.
* Elected to the NALC Executive Council to four-year terms were Brian E. Sutton of Statesville, N.C., and Pastor Mark Braaten of Tyler, Texas. Pastor Jeffray S. Greene of Brooks, Ga., and Lyle Hollander of Boyden, Iowa were elected to the Court of Adjudication. The Convocation also ratified the election of Julie Eskeland to the NALC-Canada Section Governing Board.
* 2018 budgets were approved. The Convocation approved a $2.1 million operating budget for the NALC. Budgets were also approved for NALC designated funds: $543,000 for the Theological Education Fund (which includes the North American Lutheran Seminary); $165,500 for the Great Commission Fund; and $64,000 for the Disaster Response Fund. Budgets anticipate spending some cash reserves. Delegates also approved a resolution encouraging congregations to increase their benevolence giving to the NALC by at least 1 percent of their congregational budget annually.
* The Braaten and Benne Lectures in Theology, the annual theological conference which precedes the Convocation, focused on theological perspectives on the Work of Christ. The speakers were Dr. Don Collett, Dr. Gordon Isaac, Dr. Paul Hinlicky, Dr. David Luy, and Dr. David Yeago.
* Video recordings of the NALC Convocation and the BraatenBenne Lectures on Theology will be available for viewing online at www.thenalc.org. Documents and photos from the Convocation are also available online.

**September 2017**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  |   |    |  | 1 | 2 |
| 3Worship, 10:30 with Holy Communion (altar rail)Green | 4 | 5 | 6Pr. Tom in LindyConfirmation class resumes, 5:00-6:30 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10Sunday School, 9:30; Worship, 10:30Green | 11 | 12 | 13Pr. Tom in LindyConfirmation class, 5:00-6:30Church council meeting, 7:00 PM | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17Sunday School, 9:30; Worship, 10:30 with Holy Communion (continuous line)Green | 18 | 19 | 20Pr. Tom in LindyWomen’s meeting, 10:00 AMConfirmation class, 5:00-6:30 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24Worship, 10:30Green | 25 | 26 |  27 28 29 30 Pr. Tom in LindyConfirmation class,5:00-6:30 |
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Good Shepherd Evangelical

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