

LIFELINES

of



LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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500th Anniversary LWML North Texas Zone Rally

For this month's newsletter, I decided to share with you a devotion I wrote for the Dal-North LWML Zone Event that was recently hosted at Lord of Life on October 21. Here it is:

This October 31st marks the 500th anniversary of...? I suspect many of you will say, "The Reformation" as this is what we have been hearing a lot lately. However, what we really commemorate that day is the posting of the 95 Theses. This, of course, was the catalyst for the Reformation, but the Reformation itself lasted for decades. What happened 500 years ago this month, was just the spark that started the Reformation. That being said, I want to say a few things about the Reformation in general, and not merely the posting of the 95 Theses on this quincentennial year.

It is appropriate that we honor our fathers, that we remember our heritage and those who faithfully confessed the truth and handed it down to us, and Martin Luther was one such faithful confessor. Or, at least that is what we Lutherans say about him, isn't it? Or, is there some confusion even among Lutherans of how we understand Martin Luther? What are we to make of him? What words should we use to describe him? The interpretations of him have a broad range: Teacher of the Church; Heretic; Prophet of God; Drunken Monk who just wanted a wife; Pious man of conscience burdened by sin and the law, set free by the grace of God in the Gospel; Sinner; Saint. We could go on with other explanations of the man, but let's deal with one that still enjoys some popularity, namely: "Revolutionary."

It isn't difficult to see why some see Martin Luther as a revolutionary. After all, his posting of the 95 Theses was a bold move that certainly shook things up. In them he spoke truth to power. He challenged the local bishops and indulgence preachers exposing them as charlatans and hypocrites peddling forgiveness and using religion for filthy lucre. But as was said, this was only the beginning! Luther would go on to speak this way to many others. He would question the wisdom of the Scholastics, and many medieval theologians, blaming them for countless errors that had crept into the Church. He would question the authority of Church councils and traditions, and most of all, the Pope. But Luther not only challenged the authority of the Church, he even stood up to the state. At the Diet of Worms in 1521, Luther stood before Emperor Charles V, one of the most powerful men in the world at the time. Pressed by the Emperor's representatives, Luther was told to recant, to renounce his writings as heretical, but he refused. In memorable words that still stir our hearts, he said, "I cannot and I will not recant! *"Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders! Gott helfe mir, Amen!"* (Here I stand, I can do no other. God help me, Amen.)

To put this great confession into context, here's a translation from the actual transcript of Worms:

(Continued on the next page)

“Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by evident reason-for I can believe neither pope nor councils alone, as it is clear that they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves-I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture, which is my basis; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant, because acting against one's conscience is neither safe nor sound. God help me. Amen.”ⁱ



Martin Luther at the Imperial Diet of Worms

April 17-18, 1521

Anton Von Werner (1843-1915)

Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie

The more famous, “Here I stand” comment is only found in the earliest published version of Luther’s confession, but not the actual transcripts from the Diet, leading many scholars to doubt that Luther actually said those words before the Emperor.ⁱⁱ But even if he never said them and they were only attributed to him, we can be sure that he would have approved! And it is on the basis of those words, “Here I stand” that I want to make the case for Luther, not as a revolutionary, but as a conservative Reformer who stands on the truth of God’s Word.

You see, I think the words “Here I stand” and how we interpret them, are helpful in understanding the different interpretations of Luther. Those who see him as a revolutionary, hear the phrase: “Here I stand” and emphasize the second word, “I”. To them, the big deal in Luther’s confession is that he is standing up to the man, speaking truth to power, or speaking on behalf of the little guy (those taken advantage of by the indulgence preachers.) Didn’t he mention conscience? Isn’t he asserting the right and freedom of individual conscience against religious oppression? Viewed in this light, we can easily see why so many conclude that Luther was a revolutionary.

But is this what Luther was saying? Was he some outstanding individual asserting his right not to be bullied by the hierarchy of the Church? Or, was he standing for something else?

In our Lutheran tradition, that is, in the Confessional Lutheran understanding of churches like the LCMS and many others, we hear the words, “Here I stand” and emphasize the first word, “Here”. For us it is not the fact that Luther stood that is important, but it is *where* he stood that matters, and it is easy to tell from the context of Luther’s own words, where he was standing. Luther took a stand not merely against power and authority, certainly not on his own individual rights, but he took his stand on the truth of God’s Holy Word. Here is what he said again:

(Continued on the next page)

“Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by evident reason... I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture, which is my basis; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant...”

Luther’s protest was not like the Leftist movements we see in our culture today. He was not some Social Justice Warrior trying to tear down the institutions. –Luther loved the Church! But in the spirit of the Apostles who said, “We must obey God rather than men,” (Acts 5:29) Luther would not forsake the truth of God’s Word for the sake of a flawed and corrupt human institution (the papacy.) Luther’s motivation was not to assert his own will, but to contend for the truth of God’s Word and that the Holy Scriptures alone are to determine matters of doctrine. He took a stand for the truth that the Bible is God’s Word to guide us and lead us to salvation in Christ, who alone is the Savior of the world. With his refusal to recant, he boldly confessed the truth taught in Scripture, that salvation is by Grace through faith, not by works, so that no man can boast. (Eph. 28-9)

It is good to honor our fathers, to remember our heritage, to celebrate those who confessed the truth before us and handed it down to us. But if we do not understand why Luther did what he did and what he stood for, we can easily turn these anniversary celebrations into something Luther himself would not approve. To avoid this, it best for us to remember Luther as a teacher of God’s Word. Not a revolutionary, not a pope, or a prophet, that is, not as someone who thinks their own words can trump God’s Word, but as one who championed the authority of the Holy Scriptures and faithfully taught the Gospel revealed in them, which points people to Christ.

Because from its first days, the Lutheran Reformation was about the truth and authority of Scripture, very early on, the Lutherans adopted the motto: *Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum*, “The Word of the Lord Endures Forever.” (Perhaps you have seen the letters VDMA around a cross? This phrase in Latin is where the symbol originates.) The motto comes from Isaiah 40:6-8, which is quoted in 1st Peter 1:24-25. ⁱⁱⁱ This motto was so foundational, that you might have noticed, it was included in the 4th verse of Luther’s great hymn, A Mighty Fortress: “God’s Word forever shall abide, no thanks to those who fear it. For God Himself fights by our side with weapons of the Spirit.” (LSB 657) This motto is also your theme for today, and a reminder that all people and every manmade institution and everything else in this world may fade away, but the Word of God will ever remain. It remains to instruct, rebuke, correct, and train us in righteousness, but above all it remains to save us by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

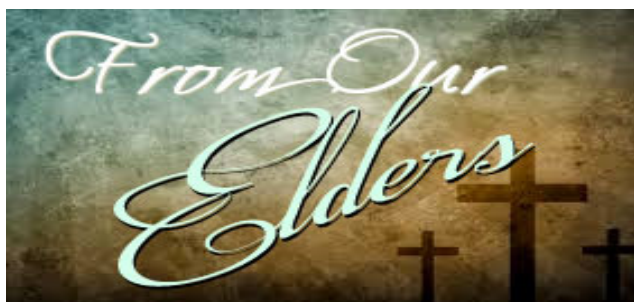


In conclusion, I want to commend this special 500 year anniversary to you as a time to thank God for the faithful witness of Martin Luther, a great preacher of Christ and teacher of God’s Word, a man who took his stand on Holy Scripture and pointed to Jesus. May we who belong to one of the churches that bears his name, learn from His example and continue to be a church founded on God’s Word and centered on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ⁱ Oberman, Heiko A., *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*, Image Books, 1992 p. 39

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.* p.40

ⁱⁱⁱ Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, CPH 2005 page 2



Elders as Servants

One of the very important roles of the elders in our congregation is to serve members in times of need, such as when a member has been absent from worship, or is sick, dying or grieving.

As elders we serve others because we are servants of Jesus, and we see how Jesus humbled himself to become a man and how he died on the cross to save us. He set an example and gave us a command that we must follow, in spite of our human weaknesses.

When someone has been absent from worship, the elders are concerned and follow up to determine if there are any prayer needs, spiritual or physical needs with which they can assist. Sometimes encouragement or admonishment is needed to bring the member back to worship with the church family.

When someone in the congregation is sick, it is important for the elders, as assistants to the Pastor, to reach out, visit the sick person, share God's Word and pray with them. If the sickness becomes more critical, the elder has the opportunity to listen and counsel, emphasizing the forgiving grace of God, and ultimately the gift of God which is eternal life. By helping the person accept the reality of death, the dying person can reach a sense of freedom from fear.

It is also important for the elders to spend time with those who are grieving. By listening and supporting the grieving member, the elder can help them understand that grief is a normal process, so they need not be terrified of it. Some Christians may at first be unable to accept the death and need help to acknowledge that they are denying it. Accepting the death will help them cope with it. Feelings of guilt may also surface in the survivors and they may find healing by

sharing and confessing the guilt. It is important to give the grieving person time to talk and pray about their loss, and help them grasp by faith the power of God to continue daily life in spite of the loss. New challenges and new relationships beckon.

Jesus set an interesting example when he listened to the grieving disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). He walked with them, asked them about their concerns, and spent time listening to their whole story. He counseled them, and when invited, he stayed the night with them. Now that's a commitment to caring!

Servanthood to our members is an essential part of the elders' role in our congregation. The elders ask for your prayers as we try to follow Jesus' example and provide Christian care in times of need.

Blessings,

Ben Lutek,
Board of Elders



Don Padgett
Mary Ravitz
Myrna Schulze
Jason & Sarah Sowers
Mickey & Rebecca Greer
Elisabeth Bennett
Michael Coon
Amanda Matthys
Brooks & Joanna Smith
Dennis & Linda Delzer



Teen Times

The summer of 2018 seems like a long way off, but I want you to consider thinking about it now. I know we haven't even celebrated Thanksgiving or Christmas this year, however one of the events that we look forward to in youth ministry is the summer youth trip to the Higher Things youth conference. Next summer our youth group will travel to the University of Kansas and join hundreds of other Lutheran teenagers and adults July 24-27, 2018 for "Sanctified", the theme for next year's conference. The Higher Things conference provides teenagers with many aspects in their journey of faith and growth as a Lutheran Christian. First and foremost is the opportunity to participate in liturgical worship with many other young adults just like them and to see that they are a small part of a bigger picture in the LCMS. It also gives them a chance to hear fundamental teachings from other pastors on a variety of topics that teenagers face in today's society. Second, it is a chance for our teens to connect with the youth group from Lord of Life as a whole and make friendships they otherwise may have never known. I had the privilege to witness this firsthand last summer as it happened to one of the young ladies who attended Higher Things for the first time. She became good friends with several other members of our group and her appreciation for liturgical worship reached a new level. It also energized her dedication to the study of God's Word and commitment to daily devotions. God is truly working in the life of this person. So why am I bringing the subject of Higher Things up at the beginning of November?

November 1st marks the opening of registration to attend the Higher Things conferences next summer. As I said it is a long time between now and next July, but out of the four conferences that took place last summer, two of them reached capacity very quickly and had waiting lists for those who did not register fast enough. Now is the time to commit and start planning for it. The Higher Things organization even has events for the Jr High teens that are not yet confirmed as a chance to experience a taste of what is to come when they do reach the high school age.

Four times a year, there are overnight retreats for Jr. High youth that include the same elements as the larger conferences during the summer for Sr. High youth. Faith Lutheran in Plano is hosting one such retreat on Friday-Saturday, Nov. 3-4. I encourage every one of our 6th-8th graders to attend and see what it's all about. I have always said that if you don't go, you will never know. This is your chance to worship with other people your own age, develop new friendships that you never knew existed, and discover a new part to growing in your faith as a Lutheran Christian. Just like the young lady that discovered an entirely new aspect of faith and friends last summer; don't let the opportunity pass you by.

I will be in touch soon with all of those who will be eligible to attend Higher Things 2018, "Sanctified."

Until next time, Happy Thanksgiving!

Scott Peters

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Sunday, Dec. 10, 2017 – Sr. IMPACT Progressive Christmas dinner

Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017 – Jr. IMPACT Progressive Christmas dinner

Locations TBD

SUPPORTING A FRIEND WHEN SHE'S UNEXPECTEDLY EXPECTING



I had been brought up to believe that life is always a gift, but it certainly didn't feel like one when I gazed in shock at a positive pregnancy test. As a mom who had my first baby in college, I know that an unexpected pregnancy can sometimes bring fear, shame, and doubt.

However, I also know that an unexpected pregnancy can bring joy, excitement, awe, gratitude, and deeper love than I knew was possible—not to mention the little bundle who inspires these sentiments! About nine months after looking at that pregnancy test, I received the very best gift I have ever been given: my daughter, Maria*. An unexpected pregnancy might be confusing along the way, but life—though at times difficult—is ultimately beautiful.

Perhaps one of your friends has become pregnant unexpectedly. As someone who has been there, I encourage you to support your friend in her new

journey of being a mother; it's important that she knows you are thinking of her and supporting her.

An unexpected pregnancy can send a woman into crisis mode. If your friend just found out she is pregnant, she may not be thinking clearly, and she may feel she has no control over anything at the moment. When a woman experiencing challenging circumstances confides she is pregnant, the reaction of the first person she tells tends to set the tone for her decision-making.

Avoid responding with shock or alarm, and be calm and understanding. Let her know you're there for her and that it's going to be okay. Pay close attention to her emotional state, and act accordingly.

Depending on where she is emotionally, it may or may not be helpful to congratulate her at that time. However, it is always important to affirm that every person's life—including her child's and her own—is precious and beautiful no matter the circumstances.

Pay attention to what might make her feel most loved. One person might appreciate encouraging words, while another might feel more supported if you help with specific tasks. Don't be afraid to ask her if she needs help with anything or to make specific offers to help. For example, you might offer to help with cleaning, finding a good doctor, or running to the store to pick up the one food that won't make her feel sick. (But remember to read her cues, and make sure you're not being overbearing.) Simple things—letting her know that you care and are always ready to listen, that you are available to help her, that you are praying for her—can give hope and courage when she might otherwise feel alone.

The most important thing, though, is to pray; it is the most effective way we can help. Pray for her, for her child, and for guidance in how you can give her the best possible support.

Your support might be the only support she receives. Even if we never know how, the smallest things we do can change someone's life. You can make a difference in her life. Will you?

*Name changed for privacy.

This has been adapted and shortened from "10 Ways to Support Her When She's Unexpectedly Expecting," originally published in the 2015-16 Respect Life Program and delivered by Lutherans for Life. Please visit www.bit.ly/10WaysRespectLife for the original version.

SEVEN "T'S" OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Time, talent and treasure have long been the "favorite three" items of Christian stewardship. But even those three do not exhaust the meaning and impact of Christian stewardship. Here is the second of the seven "T's" and we will examine the others in coming articles.

TREASURE

Treasure, or money, is what people most often think of when they hear the term "stewardship." And it is true that money and, specifically, the wise use and management of it are important parts of Christian stewardship. One of the Bible passages that speaks to the wise use of money is 1 Timothy 6:17-19: ***"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."***

Money is another gift from God to be used for our enjoyment but for much more than our enjoyment. Our cold and selfish natures encourage us to use money and goods for ourselves, adopting some strange strategy like, "God helps those who help themselves." But the new nature within us because of the working of the Holy Spirit urges us to use all our gifts, including the gift of money, for the common good and the expansion of God's kingdom on earth. What joy will follow us into heaven when our glorious Lord commends us for our wise use of money and says, ***"Well done, good and faithful servant"*** (Matthew 25:21).

DALLAS SYMPHONY CHRISTMAS POPS

Saturday, December 16th
at 2:30 PM

Hear some of your holiday favorites including *Sleigh Ride* and *12 Days of Christmas* at The DSO's annual Christmas Pops concert featuring the Dallas Symphony Chorus and Children's Chorus of Greater Dallas in the beautiful Meyerson Symphony Center. Lord of Life will be placing a group ticket order for the 2:30 Performance on Saturday, December 16th. Sign up in the narthex by Sunday, November 12th. Payment of \$20 per ticket (cash or check payable to Lord of Life) will be due by the same deadline. Tickets will be distributed at church at the beginning of December.

For more details, visit <https://www.mydso.com/buy/tickets/dso-christmas-pops> or contact Carol Ozlowski, Family Ministry. 214-394-6482 or carolsop2@sbcglobal.net



Lord of Life Small Groups

EMPTY NESTERS' CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Mike and Sandra Paradise at (972) 424-2951 or itsparadise.inplano@verizon.net
- † Will meet on Sat. November 18th at 5:30 PM

EPIC PARENTING

- † For 30ish couples with kids
- † For info contact Ben Scarth BenjaminScarth@yahoo.com
- † Usually meet one Sunday a month in the afternoon or evening

GOOD NEWS CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Chris Oltmann at (972) 727-6330 or Mike Kunschke at (847) 951-6974
- † Usually meet the 2nd Sat. of each month at 6:30 PM for Bible study

MIXED BLESSINGS

- † For info contact Fred and Ruth Bernhardt at (972) 398-0771
- † Usually meet the 2nd Sat. of each month at 6:30 PM for Bible study

TWENTY SOMETHINGS

- † For couples and singles in their twenties
- † For info contact Pastor Shaltanis at PastorShaltanis@yahoo.com
- † The group is currently in transition, but has usually met on Sundays after late service

NEW SMALL GROUPS FORMING

- † Watch for information about new small groups starting in 2017
- † One will be led by Tim Ozlowski and aimed at people in their late forties and early fifties. Times and dates TBD

In the works: a group for professionals without kids, a group for folks in their fifties, and a Gen X group



Ana Scarth – 11-7-04
Emily Scarth – 11-21-04



- 3 Jeff Loewecke
- 4 Caitlyn Moudy
- 4 Peggy Stagliano
- 7 Leo & Nora Parrent (48)
- 9 Jacob Hacker
- 9 Brooke Wilkerson
- 11 Dolores Stormont
- 13 Ken Tabor
- 16 Lauren Gibson
- 16 Laura Lutek
- 21 Stephani Belcher
- 21 Al Martin
- 22 Linda Delzer
- 22 Joe Isbell
- 23 Cameron Klein
- 23 Nathaniel Reinert
- 24 Tom Ashburn
- 24 Dick Hemingway
- 24 Dave & Kathy Wilde (33)
- 25 Melissa Kunschke
- 26 Evelyn Buckmeier
- 28 Russ Wilkerson
- 28 Al & Norma Martin (60!!!)
- 30 Haley Moore

Serving in Worship in November

	November 5		November 12		November 19		November 22	November 27	
	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	7:00 PM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM
Elder	Lutek		Kunschke		Read		Ziegelbein	Peters	
Common Cup	Read	Hite			Lutek	Ziegelbein	Hite		
Altar	Sandra Paradise and Kay Oltmann								
Acolyte	Cadence T.	Hayden C.	Jonah C.	Athan S.	Madeline P.	Will G.		Emma Z.	Nathan R.
Greeter	Martin	Barnes	Schrank	Dorak	Ehrett	Abbott/McVicker		Martin/Vess	Manning
Sound	Wilkerson	Pittson	Hacker	Raj	Wolf	Hite	Wilkerson	Botello	Selvaraj
Usher	Scarth Bunger	Ziegelbein Ozowski Loewecke	Paradise Read Frinsko	Moudy Cruz		McVicker Oltmann Berger	Paradise Crabtree Loewecke	Schrank Hacker	Crabtree Buckmeier Short

FINANCIAL REPORT

January- September, 2017

		ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
RECEIPTS:	Regular Offerings	\$480,216	\$532,426	(\$52,210)
	Other	\$3,529	\$200	\$3,329
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$483,745	\$532,626	(\$48,881)
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$504,102	\$532,836	(\$28,734)
	RECEIPTS OVER EXPENSES	(\$20,357)	(\$210)	(\$20,147)

OTHER INFORMATION

1. General Operating Fund Balance	\$77,518
2. Dedicated Funds Balance	\$156,568
3. Building Note Balance	\$348,222