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Vol. 31, No. 10 Plano, Texas October 2017

New Hymn for Reformation 2017: "How Could I Stand, If not for Christ?"

It's not every day you meet a hymn writer. In July, I traveled to Montana to serve as Liturgist for the Higher Things conference. While there, I got to reconnect with an old friend who is a professor at Concordia University in Irvine, CA. The Concordia schools send professors and admissions counselors to the conferences to engage the hundreds and hundreds of Lutheran high school students that attend Higher Things. This was how I met Katherine Dubke.

Katherine is a Lutheran Pastor's daughter in her early twenties and a recent graduate from Concordia Irvine. She is now working as an admissions counselor and was at the Higher Things conference in Montana with my friend, Professor Armstrong. After introducing us, he said, "Did you know Katherine likes to write hymns?"

Having met only a few other self-professed hymn writers in my time, I knew this was a rare person who identifies themselves thus. A good hymn writer is also someone who possess a talent few of us do, so I wanted to know more. She told me about her hobby and how some of her hymns were available online at Concordia University's website (two hymn paraphrases of Martin Luther's morning and evening prayers.) I got to see some of her other works and quickly realized she has a true gift, a real way with words. At some point in our conversation, I blurted out something like, "I should commission you to write a hymn for the upcoming

celebration" (of the 500th anniversary of Luther's posting of the 95 Theses –the traditional starting point of the Reformation.) She said she would be happy to, but would need some guidelines or ideas to get her started. So, I sketched out some notes and came up with the following:

The overall theme should somehow play off of Luther's famous statement, "Here I stand." In addition, it would be great if three verses would highlight the three "Solas" of the Reformation –Grace Alone, Faith Alone, and Scripture Alone. Of course, it should not be a hymn in praise of Martin Luther, but it should be Christ-centered and give glory to God for what He had done for us in Jesus. Finally, since it would be written for the 500th anniversary, I suggested that it should be set to a 16th Century tune –something from the time of the Reformation.

Sounds easy, right? Well, not for me and not for most, but Katherine did not disappoint. A few weeks ago, she finished her assignment and sent it to me. Simply put, I love it. I hope you do too. The choir has sung it through and I have shared it with some fellow pastors as we sang it at our circuit meeting in September. You will get a chance to sing it too, on Sunday, October 29, the day we will celebrate the Reformation.

God's richest blessings to you in Christ, PrS

(Continued on the next page)

How Could I Stand, If Not for Christ

by
Katherine Dubke
For:

Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Plano, Texas On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the posting of Martin Luther's 95 Theses, October 31, 2017

METER: 87 87 88 7

TUNE: ES IST GEWISSLICH / ES IST DAS HEIL / HER WIE DU WILLST

How could I stand, if not for Christ Who calls me to be faithful? I scoffed at truth and savored lies Until His Word enabled My soul to yearn for Living Bread, My will to seek His will instead. His Word alone is able.

I stand on what I cannot see, Yet I am not forsaken. For Christ has strengthened my weak knees And I will not be shaken. Though all the world quakes in distress, I lean upon His promises. By faith alone I'm able.

The place I stand is holy ground
Beneath a cross's shadow,
Where Christ endured a brutal crown,
And bore my sins and sorrow.
What else could change this blemished soul
Into God's child, pure and whole?
His grace alone is able.

Now boldly in Christ's love, I stand, For He alone is able.
In life, in death, the time at hand—
Lord help me to be faithful!
Yes, I will see Him face to face
And stand with all who lived by grace.
To God alone all glory!

Suicide and Awareness

by Thomas Read

The word suicide brings about very painful emotions in me, especially when associated with so many young teens who either contemplate or commit suicide. My heart really hurts for them and their families.

We live in one of the best school districts in the United States, yet in the last few years our newspapers have reported several suicides in our senior high schools. What events are so terrible that our young people can't live with themselves? What is so horrible that they can't go to their mother or father, brother or sister, school friend, counselor, priest or pastor? I just don't get it! It is such a waste of one of God's greatest gifts, the life of a child.

When I was young, suicide was something we never discussed. It was not "news", it was not part of our high school or college memories.

My first exposure to suicide was with a close buddy in the Navy, we'll call him Bill. Bill was a good friend. He had a wonderful wife, Kelly. While we were overseas 8 months of the year, she stayed home and took care of their home and family dog, and writing letters every day. Once back home, Bill and Kelly took in strays like me, giving a home away from home. I so envied him.

As it happens with people in the service, once discharged, those relationships can begin to drift apart as you develop new friends and interests of your own. That happened with Bill and I.

After about 3 years, I tried to make contact with Bill but was only able to find a number for Kelly. I contacted her and she told me that Bill had committed suicide two years after we were discharged. I often wondered if maybe I had remained in contact with Bill, I might have been able to prevent this horrible tragedy. Maybe he just needed someone to talk to? Could I have been a better friend?

The Bible tells us to love one another (1John 4:7) Did I love my friend like Jesus loves us?

Over the past few years here in Plano, we have all read about student suicides of young high school students due to peer pressure, teen love breakups, bad grades and other issues. Are we doing our best to recognize the possible signs of emotional turmoil in our friends, acquaintances and even our family members? There is a lot of speculation on why we are seeing this trend, who is at fault, etc... Rather than point fingers or debate the issue, perhaps we should follow Jesus' example and love one another. Pay attention to the Risk Factors as follows:

Risk factors identified by the American Academy of Pediatrics for suicidal teens:

- A history of physical or sexual abuse
- Bullying
- Mood disorders

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Questioning sexual orientation
- Transgender identification

Other possible symptoms to assist in identifying emotional upheaval are teens with health complaints, but no underlying physical reason; changes in eating habits; sleep patterns; low energy; anxiety; withdrawal from friends and family; or sudden bursts of happiness or bouts of depression.

Leviticus 19:18 tells us, "...you shall love your neighbor as yourself..."

It is only with God's strength that we can confront this problem.

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10

Whether we are reaching for our own strength to help a neighbor in crisis, or we want a verse for that neighbor to cling to during their journey thru difficult times, God's Word will always provide for our every need.

Teen Times

Have you ever wondered what life would have been like if you had lived in another time period; in another place? How about one hundred years ago? You would be living as a teenager during World War 1, and perhaps riding in your horse-drawn wagon to school. You know that camera in your smart phone? A century ago, a camera was built that weighed 1,400 pounds? How about two hundred years ago? American colonists were still fighting British soldiers in the north and Indians in the south. Texas would not become an official state for another fifty years! Ok, here's the big question. What would life be like 500 years ago, say in Germany? More than likely you only went to school for a couple of years and then you would probably have to start working at a young age with your brothers and sisters just so your family could afford something to eat. Life was hard for many people. They had very little or no money at all for the finer things in life, like more than one change of clothes. People died very young from diseases like measles or smallpox. There seemed to be little hope among the citizens, but then something happened that would make a historical impact for the next five centuries!

A young catholic monk named Martin Luther nailed a few sheets of paper on the door of the castle church where he lived in 1517; Wittenberg, Germany. They contained 95 points of debate that he wanted to address with the church leadership. Known as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, his actions would change the world in the areas of religion, politics, philosophy, education, and music. Wittenberg was just a small German town with no real distinction, but it would soon become a famed location in the history of Christianity.

Can you imagine yourself living in a time like that? One thing Europe is known for is its historical architecture. Many buildings and structures still exist that were built centuries ago. Wittenberg is no exception. In 2004, several church leaders from the LCMS and SELK (short for Selbstandiga Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche or the Germany's Independent Evangelical –Lutheran Church) were leading a tour group and the idea of purchasing and restoring a building known as "The Old Latin School" was born. It was a place where people were taught Lutheran confessions and Lutheran understanding of the Holy Scripture. The building had been vacant for twenty years and was in very poor condition, but through the efforts of many people and fundraising The Old Latin School has been completely renovated. It is now a Gospel-based, distinctly Lutheran, Christian education, outreach, and welcome center. The idea became known as The Wittenberg Project and has encompassed many areas of the town to revitalize and share our Lutheran identity. It identifies Wittenberg as a place of historical significance in God's plan of salvation.

My son, Curtis, had the opportunity to go to Germany this past summer and was able to spend some time in Wittenberg. Here are a few things he had to say about his experience:

"This past summer I had the opportunity to go to Wilhelmshaven, Germany for a study abroad program through Texas Tech University. Fortunately for me there was a designated weekend while I was in Berlin where we were given the freedom to explore the city or travel somewhere else of our choosing. Being raised in the Lutheran Church and because this year is the 500th anniversary of the reformation, I chose to travel 2 hours south to Wittenberg. The city is smaller than you would imagine; at least the part that I visited. Not much has changed since the time that Martin Luther walked the streets, which created a historic atmosphere and really makes you feel like you're traveling back in time. I'm planning on giving a presentation towards the end of the year in bible class to share with you the tremendous experience that it was."

Curtis was given an opportunity to experience something that many of us only dream about; to spend time seeing the places where religious history was made. We need to thank God for the many blessings in our lives, for our heritage as Lutheran Christians, and for a man named Martin Luther whom God used as a powerful tool to bring the message of salvation through Jesus Christ to the world. As we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation this month, reflect on what God has done for you, for your faith, for our church, and for humanity; His gift of grace and the hope of eternal life with Him in heaven.

Until next time, Scott Peters



Lutheran Women in Mission

"Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes." As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit's help we want to do the right things for the right reasons and strive for excellence in all we do.

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 first of the seven "T's" and we will examine the others in coming articles, extracted from LCMS Stewardcast tract, 2007.

TIME is a gift from God. Psalm 139:16 states that "All the days ordained for me were written in Your [God's] book before one of them came to be." Our times are truly in God's hands (Psalm 31:15). And, regardless of the number of years God ordains for us, we say with the Psalmist, "You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before You. Each man's life is but a breath" (Psalm 39:5). Jesus reminds us that we cannot add a single hour to our lives just by worrying about it (Matthew 6:27). Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us that "there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven."

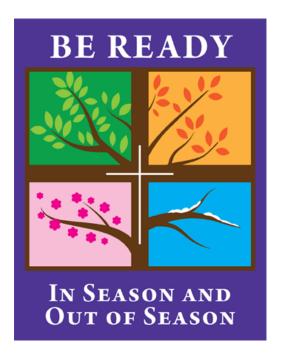
So what are we to do with God's gift of time? St. Paul gives this instruction: "And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:11-12). St. Paul also gives encouragement in Ephesians 5:15-16: "Be very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."

As maturing stewards we receive time as a gift from God and strive to make the best use of it in our work, families and other life activities. We do this not only as an obligation but also as a free and joyous activity. At the end of our lives when we stand before the Judge of every human being we will rejoice when the King says, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).



LWML Celebration on Sunday October 8th, 2017

The theme chosen for LWML Sunday 2017 is "Be Ready to Confess Jesus". LWML Sunday is celebrated annually in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) churches. Come celebrate LWML Sunday on October 8, 2017. Watch for more information about the LWML and becoming involved in reaching others with the love of our Lord, Jesus Christ.



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
- ₩ill meet on Sat. September 21st at 6:30 PM

EPIC PARENTING

- ₱ For 30ish couples with kids
- † For info contact Ben Scarth
 BenjaminScarth@vahoo.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 <u>PastorShaltanis@yahoo.com</u>
- 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



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utheranreformation.or



DALLAS SYMPHONY CHRISTMAS POPS

Saturday, December 16th at 2:30pm

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



Come enjoy a delicious potluck lunch, play some games, and celebrate this 500th anniversary of the Reformation. An Oktoberfest potluck will be hosted by the Family Ministry in celebration of Reformation Day on Sunday, October 29th following late service.

Brats, hotdogs, and sodas will be provided by the church. Attendees are invited to bring a favorite side dish or dessert; German potato salad, Sauerkraut, Red Cabbage, Green Bean Casserole, Mac & Cheese, Spätzle, Cucumber Salad, Rye Bread, Pumpkin Pie, Apple Pie, German Chocolate and/or Black Forest Cake, etc.

You may sign up in the narthex or online through *Sign-Up Genius*. Please contact Carol Ozlowski at 214-394-6482 or carolsop2@sbcglobal.net if you are available to assist with planning of this event, or have ideas for activities.

Introducing Our New Church Secretaries

I am happy to formally announce the hiring of our two new secretaries at L ord of Life: Mrs. Cindy Carter and Mrs. Elizabeth (Liz) Harris.

About Cindy.

Cindy likely does not need much of an introduction as she and her family have been members of Lord of Life for over 20 years. As I had stated in an earlier newsletter, my original intent was not to hire a member of the church in order to eliminate any conflict of interests. Cindy, along with Winona Parish, stepped up right away to help cover the secretarial duties while we searched for a more permanent hire. During that time, Cindy expressed some interest in the position, but I insisted that we would only consider a non-member. As time wore on though, Cindy proved herself to be indispensable. Her knowledge and experience with computers and software are vast



and impressive. I came to the realization that hiring someone else with her skills would be highly unlikely. So, we have now welcomed her to the office team on a permanent basis.

She was born in Oakland, CA and as the child of a military officer (her dad was a doctor in the Navy) her family moved around a lot. Among other places, she lived in San Diego and Kansas where she eventually graduated from high school and then went to college at Kansas State University. There she majored in electrical engineering and met her husband, Duffy. Cindy has had many interesting jobs like working for the Kansas Department of Transportation as the State Asphalt Inspector and even as an electrical engineering intern at a nuclear power plant, but before devoting her attention to full-time parenting, she worked for Associated Air Center, where she designed electrical systems for aircraft cabin interiors and avionics.

Cindy and Duffy have been married 21 years and have two sons, Samson, 15 and Jonah, 12. Her hobbies include crocheting and knitting, and arts-and-crafts in general. Cindy has also been our newsletter editor for many years and enjoys doing graphic design.

About Liz:

I had originally tried to fill the secretarial positions by asking fellow Lutheran pastors to post an opening in their Sunday bull etins. It was through this network that Liz found out about our open secretary position. Liz and her family, (husband, Tom, daughter Aubrey, 10 and son Aidan, 8) are members of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Fairview. Liz is very active and even serves as secretary of the church council.

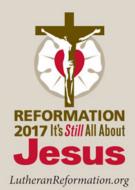


Liz grew up in San Diego and attended San Diego State University, where she graduated with a bachelor's in classical humanities. Liz worked for publishing and editing for a number of years and this is what eventually brought her to Texas, 20 years

ago. After some time, she decided to change careers and pursue a job with Nortel. While working there, she earned a Master's of Business Administration degree from the University of Texas at Dallas and excelled to become a leader of project management of research and development. At this time, she also met and married her husband Tom and decided to leave the corporate world to raise her children. She is now a self-described "homeschoolin' Mamma" and cherishes her time with her two wonderful children. Liz's hobbies include reading, sewing, and other arts and crafts.



REFORMATION TALKING POINTS



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1. WHY CELEBRATE LUTHER? I'VE HEARD HE SAID SOME THINGS EVEN LUTHERANS DON'T AGREE WITH.

Martin Luther, an intellectual giant with a strong personality, is not the true focus of the Reformation. The focus of the Reformation is God's love and action for humanity in His Son Jesus Christ. The question of the Reformation is how a person deals with their guilty conscience. Luther and the other Reformers taught that the solution comes from outside of a person, from what God did in His Son Jesus Christ. Luther proclaimed the crucified God as the center of real living.

2. LUTHER WROTE TERRIBLE THINGS AGAINST THE JEWS. WHY CELEBRATE AN ANTI-SEMITIC RACIST?

Martin Luther did write some very upsetting things against the Jewish people near the end of his life. The Lutheran church has repeatedly said that we do not follow nor agree with those statements. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod does not follow Luther's writings as doctrine or divinely inspired. Luther himself was inconsistent on his writings about Jewish people. He did write against them, but he also said that Christians should honor Jewish people and thank God for them. Lutherans believe that God loves everyone, all people, and that Jesus Christ died and rose for every single person — regardless of their nationality. Because God so loves the world, Christians are called to love, also.

3. WHY DO YOU CALL YOURSELVES LUTHERANS?

The name Lutherans is not primarily a reference to Martin Luther the man, but to his teachings about the truth of the Gospel. Luther reformed the Church by teaching the truth of Scripture. Luther taught that God saves people through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. This salvation is given by grace through faith and not by works. Luther taught what the early Church and the apostles taught in the New Testament. This return to the truth of God's Word is the cause and reason for celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Many of our congregations are named for saints. Yet, it is not the saints we worship, but the Christ whom they taught. The same is true for Luther. It is not the man we treasure, but the truth about Jesus that he proclaimed.

4. DID LUTHER LEAD TO HITLER?

No. Many people presume, based on charges William Shirer brought against Luther in his book *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, that Luther taught the German people to never resist any government authority, even if it is corrupt. But this is not accurate. Luther taught that God rules in two different realms: the right-hand realm of the Church, in which God rules by grace through His Word and Sacraments; and the left-hand realm of society, in which God rules by human reason and force to curb evil and preserve order. Luther said that it is not God's will for the Church to try to rule in the left-hand realm, just as it is not His will for the government to mandate what the Church teaches. Luther did not, however, advocate unquestioned quietism. Toward the end of his life, Luther acknowledged that there are times when the secular authorities might be so corrupt that Christians must resist. Yet Luther said that this should never be violent, but always done in good order and according to law.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD

ConcordiaHistoricalInstitute.org

5. DIDN'T THE LUTHERANS AND THE CATHOLICS MEND THEIR DIFFERENCES OVER JUSTIFICATION?

This was Luther's desire (and the desire of the other Reformers). Sadly, the Catholic Church has yet to yield to the Scriptural teaching of justification by grace through faith for Christ's sake, without any merit, works or satisfactions on man's part. The recent pronouncements that this has taken place are sadly misleading. The Roman Catholic Church does not define faith or grace the same way the Scriptures do, and thus their agreement that people are saved by grace through faith is not a true agreement with what Lutherans mean when using the same words according to Scripture.

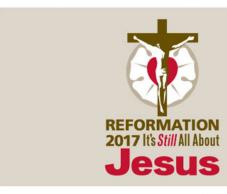
6. WHY DO YOU CELEBRATE A MAN WHEN YOU **TEACH SCRIPTURE ALONE?**

The Lutheran church does not celebrate Luther, but rejoices in the Scriptures as the only source for our doctrine and life. The Reformation taught that authority is found in the Scriptures and not in the clergy or councils of the Church. The Scriptures are God's inspired and inerrant Word, and therefore can be fully trusted and believed. God's Word is the only place we look for truth and revelation of God.

7. WHO CARES ABOUT SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED 500 YEARS AGO? IS THIS STILL RELEVANT?

The central issue of the Reformation was humanity's place in existence. How do we exist before God and before each other? Is there truth? Is there meaning? Is there evil? Is there love? How can God exist if evil exists? These questions occupy conversations today, and were the exact questions that Luther and the other Reformers wrestled with. Sure, their context was different than ours today, but the questions and their answers are the same. The Reformation is about not figuring out God by your own speculative thoughts. The person who follows that path is already wrong. Don't look within but without, to the Scriptures where God makes promises. The Reformation teaches us to look to God in the Scriptures to answer our questions. The questions we ask about humanity are addressed in God's love in Christ. The guestions about who God is are answered through Christ's death and resurrection. And there are also questions that we learn we cannot answer. We are taught to trust in the God who is love.

For more information about Luther, Lutherans and the Reformation, see lutheranreformation.org and lcms.org.





Serving in Worship in October

	October 1		October 8		October 15		October 22		October 29	
	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM
Elder	Peters		Ziegelbein		Read		Kunschke		Kunschke	
Common Cup	Read	Hite			Lutek	Hite			Read	Ziegelbein
Altar	Carol Nance, June Edelmann, and Lynda Abbott									
Acolyte										
Greeter	Martin	Manning	Schrank	Abbott/McVicker	Ehrett	Dorak	Vess	McVicker	Martin	Barnes
Sound	Wolf	Hite	Wilkerson	Pittson	Hacker	Raj	Wolf	Selvaraj	Botello	Selvaraj
Usher	Bunger Scarth	Ozlowski Loewecke Ziegelbein	Frinsko Read Paradise	Cruz Moudy	Cinquepalmi Bunger	Oltman Berger McVicker	Hacker Schrank	Buckmeier Short Crabtree	Schrank Hacker	Crabtree Buckmeier Short

FINANCIAL REPORT January - August, 2017

		ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
RECEIPTS:	Regular Offerings	\$441,171	\$472,461	(\$31,290)
	Other	\$3,519	\$200	\$3,319
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$444,690	\$472,661	(\$27,971)
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$459,889	\$474,408	(\$14,519)
	RECEIPTS OVER EXPENSES	(\$15,199)	(\$1,747)	(\$13,452)
	OTHER INFORMATION			
	1. General Operating Fund Ba	\$87,732		
	2. Dedicated Funds Balance	\$141,235		
	3. Building Note Balance		\$353,893	