

FROM THE MOUNT



Mount Calvary Lutheran Church

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD



2017

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You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

-- Mark 7:8

Dear Friends in Christ,

It has arrived! The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation is upon us. For 500 years the Lutheran Reformation has thrived and for 95 years it has thrived among us here at Mount Calvary.



Not that the Lutheran

Reformation has not faced significant challenges from the influence of the world around us. There are many churches using the name Lutheran who question the inerrancy of Scripture, for instance, having been heavily influenced by cultural values around them. But there are many other places where core Lutheran beliefs remain firmly confessed, beliefs that are traced back to the earliest years of the Church, for they stand on Scripture alone.

In August, I presented that Mount Calvary is traditional & liturgical, a church focused on teaching & learning, and that we are a church of people who care deeply for one another. Previously, I have spoken of the important role the historic liturgy plays in our lives, but this month we take a look at “tradition”.

Now “tradition” might seem a strange word to use as something important to who we are as Lutherans. For one thing, did not Luther build his reformation on *Sola Scriptura*, which means “Scripture alone”? Did Luther not on many occasions criticize the church of his day for using tradition in place of Scripture to formulate teachings and practices for faith? Did not Jesus Himself speak against “tradition”? (Mark 7:8)

An informed position using Scripture and church history leads us to some insightful awareness. There are two types of tradition that are spoken of in Luther's writings. In short, there is the tradition whereby the church either adds to or take away from the teachings of Scripture based on the preferences of people as if they were the ideas of God. And then there is the type of tradition which refers to the consistent message that the church has given witness to throughout the ages, the teachings of Scripture alone because the witness has been formed by that Scripture.

Jesus Himself gave the Church a command to preserve His teachings. In the Great Commission to go make disciples Jesus commanded, "Go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to observe (*tayrein*) all that I have commanded you." The Greek word here, *tayrein*, often translated "observe" or "obey" also has a strong sense of honor, preserve, protect and so forth. One "*tayreins*" by following, keeping, obeying, honoring, preserving etc... That which God has given continues unchanged through all ages.

This sense of "tradition" Martin Luther not only honored but saw as essential. Alvin Schmidt, in his book *The Hallmarks of Lutheran Identity*, shares that when we speak of the intersection of *Sola Scriptura* and tradition, we must pay attention to the words of Luther for Lutherans do not discount tradition as some protestants even though we are certainly do not advocate for tradition in the medieval sense which believes the church has the authority to create doctrine. Schmidt writes, "Lutheran theology has always honored many traditions in the historic church, especially if they did not contradict the teachings of Scripture."

Luther honored tradition that conformed to and communicated the teachings of Scripture because he saw in them the form of the common confession of the church teaching the truth of Jesus throughout the ages. Continuity in doctrine and public confession with the truth witnessed throughout history was vital to Luther. This is why Luther only reformed those parts of the public worship service, the liturgy, which had changed and were no longer in conformity with Scripture. Indeed, Luther not only advised that worship forms should

maintain their continuity with the ancient church through the ages, but they should be the same from one church to another, especially in a geographical area. Consistency and continuity were important for Luther.

The Reformers saw value in continuity with the witness that transcended the particular ages including the use of the ancient liturgical forms passed down generation to generation. They were out to reform the church, not to make something new. They sought rather to reclaim something old: continuity with the one true faith that remains unchanging throughout the ages. This is why in our Lutheran churches the ecumenical creeds still hold an important place in our worship when many other protestant traditions have tossed them as belonging to "tradition".

Luther understood the church is not of the world. Even in his day, and perhaps even more so today, the pure Gospel of the Word can become polluted through mingling with the forms of the world around us. Form is not isolated from substance. With the packaging comes what the package contains. We exist in a world with values contrary to Scripture. Just like when we breathe, we take in dust particles from the rock quarry nearby or bacteria from the person who sneezed nearby, the church can easily bring in and adopt ideas from the world that begin to add to or erode the clear Gospel.

Kurt Marquart, an esteemed professor at the Fort Wayne Seminary and noted LCMS author taught the liturgy, a traditional form passed from one generation to another, is steeped in God's Word. He saw the liturgy as a public confession of the faith of the church to the world that is more than mere packaging or form, but was interwoven with the Word from first syllable to the last. The liturgical content was nothing but the Word of God and the form itself is shaped by the teaching of that Word. God speaks to us, we speak that Word to one another, we speak that Word back to God.

Schmidt sums up Luther's view of "tradition" and the value in preserving the form/content throughout the ages. He says that Luther had no desire for variety or novelty in church services and points out that for five centuries (until our own generation) Lutherans followed Luther's advice on this matter. Schmidt declares, "Producing

liturgical innovations is not a hallmark of Lutheran theology and identity.” Preserving liturgy and our common confession of the Gospel in continuity with the historic church that transcends the ages is a hallmark of Mount Calvary. Praise be to God.

Christ bless you richly and abundantly family of God.

Pastor David Reed



Dear Christian friends,

Well, the big month is here! The 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation has arrived. Martin Luther has attracted some media attention lately, and although some of the representation of Luther’s teaching and motives has been accurate, others have not.

Luther was not a political revolutionary. Luther was not a rebel trying to find a way to “stick it to the man.” Rather, he was a Christian who so deeply cared for God’s people that he had no choice but to speak up about the inaccuracies being taught by the church.

Luther’s theology is typically summarized with four “only” statements - *sola* in Latin. He taught that we are saved by grace only through faith only in Christ only as revealed in Scripture only. Grace was a huge emphasis for Luther in his personal life and also his teaching. The realization that one was saved not by works but purely by the grace of God brought him from the brink of depression and failed attempts to justify himself to the understanding of the enormity of God’s love for sinful mankind (Ephesians 2:8-9).

This grace is received through faith. Faith, the book of Hebrews tells us, is the hope in unseen things (Heb. 11:1). It is also a gift from God that comes by hearing God's Word (Romans 10:17). Luther often wrote about how doubts can creep into our lives and how important the external Word of God is to waylaying those doubts by the work God does for us.

Jesus Christ is the focus of our faith. He is the only way by which sinful mankind is saved (John 14:6). He is the image of the invisible God who shows us what God is like (Colossians 1:15). He redeemed us, not with gold or silver, but by shedding His blood for us on the cross (1 Peter 1:18). He was a perfect sacrifice to pay for our sins once and for all (Hebrews 10).

As you might have guessed by all of the Bible references above, for Luther only Scripture could be the rule and authority for what we believe, teach, and profess. Everything Luther wrote and taught was backed up with the Bible, and he criticized the church leaders for allowing traditions and human reason to trump Scripture when it came to understanding theology (that is, the study of God). The words of the old familiar children's song heartily affirm what Luther believed and taught, "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so!"

As Martin Luther is celebrated and taught about this October, let's not lose sight of the simple teachings of the man who sought to bring the church back to only grace, only faith, only Christ, and only Scripture!

In Christ,
Pastor Mark T. Pulliam

Memorials

In memory of:

Natha Lee Smetzer
Janet Edwards

Given by:

Gerald Smetzer
Muriel England

ELDERS FOR OCTOBER

	<u>8:30 am</u>	<u>11:00am</u>
October 1 (communion)	Mac McNamara	Mike Wille
October 8	Jim McNeel	Walter Marks
October 15 (communion)	Jason Strawn	Jim Koenig
October 22	Don Cummings	Alex Hansmann
October 29 (communion)	Will Liebmann	Marshall Leiber

USHERS FOR OCTOBER

<u>8:30am</u>	<u>11:00am</u>
Al Lariosa	Sid Greehey
Wally Mencke	Madison Marceau
John Smetzer	Karl Johnson
Jeremy Hanson	Matt Johnson

ACOLYTES FOR OCTOBER

	<u>8:30am</u>	<u>11:00 am</u>
October 1	Corben Perankovich	Daniel Morrison
October 8	Josh Smetzer	Wyatt Wilson
October 15	Corben Perankovich	Colton Roberts
October 22	Josh Smetzer	Jacob Wille
October 29	Corben Perankovich	Daniel Morrison

GREETERS FOR OCTOBER

	<u>8:30 a.m.</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>
October 1	Kim Hendrix Virginia Axtell	Rexann George Deidra Thompson
October 8	Grace Morris Elaine Ward	Mary Marks Judy Ganoza
October 15	Brenda Hoffmann Denise LaBonté	Judy Hanson Clara Cobb
October 22	Olga McGlothing Donna Dickert	Jill Cott L.J. Cott
October 29	Jo Ann Koehn Sarah Hanson	Bonnie Koenig Carolyn Friedle

MORNING CLASSES

- **Adult Bible Class** | This large, lecture-style class meets in the gym and is taught by Pastor Reedy. On September 3rd, this class will look at the next chapter in the book of Romans. Upon conclusion, this class will begin a study of *The Theology of Martin Luther* (by Paul Althaus).
- **Bread of Life Adult Class** | This class is smaller and meets in the Parish Hall, allowing for more discussion. This class is led by Wanda & Larry Laxson. Join us on September 3rd with the LHM DVD series "A Man Named Martin: The Movement."
- **PreK through College** | Children and students in are divided into classes that teach the Bible in age-appropriate ways. We offer classes specific to: PreK-K (small gym classroom), 1st-2nd (room 210), 3rd-4th (room 206), 5th-6th (Pre-Confirmation, room 204), 7th-8th (Confirmation, room 208), High School & College (room 218), Special Education (room 112), and Nursery (room 117)

MIDWEEK CLASSES

- **Adult Information Class (AIC)** | *Every Wednesday beginning August 23rd | 7:00-8:30pm | Church library*
New to Lutheranism? Just want to brush up on the basics? This is the class for you! Each course is 10 sessions. Taught by Pastor Reedy. If you are interested, speak to Pastor Reedy for class start information.
- **Pastor Mark's Bible Study (Morning)** | *Every Tuesday | 10:00-11:30 am | Room 212 (upstairs)*
Beginning September 5th, this class will study *Lifelight: Isaiah Part II*. Sign up in the Parish Hall lobby. Childcare available.
- **Pastor Mark's Bible Study (Evening)** | *Every Wednesday | 6:30-7:30 pm | Room 212 (upstairs)*
Beginning September 6th this class will study "The Weird and Wonderful Ways God Worked through the Judges of Israel." Sign up in the Parish Hall lobby. Childcare available.
- **Men's Bible Study** | *1st & 3rd Saturdays | 8:00-9:30 am | Parish Hall*
Nothing starts the weekend off right like breakfast tacos, coffee, and Christian fellowship! This group is led by Jeff Harwood and will be continuing their study of the intertestamental books of the Apocrypha. On September 2nd this class will look at the wit and wisdom of Ecclesiasticus.
- **Triple F Men's Bible Study** | *Mondays beginning September 11th | 6:30-pm | Cheddar's, IH35 in Selma*
A new men's Bible study followed by fellowship/food.
- **Women's Bible Study** | *3rd Mondays | 7:30-8:30 pm | Meets at members' homes*
Talk to Shirley Wille for more information. The class will meet next on October 16th and will determine what topic to study then.

● **Mothers' ChristCare Small Group** | 2nd & 4th Mondays | 6:30-8:00 pm | Room 218 (upstairs)

This group is led by Wanda Laxson and is a great way for moms to get to know one another and be encouraged for the coming week! This class resumes September 11th. We will be completing "The Vine Speaks."

● **Night ChristCare Small Group** | 1st Thursdays | 7:00-8:30 pm | Miyauchi Home

This group is led by Jan Miyauchi and meets at 2219 Peach Blossom. Join us on September 7th as we determine what we will study.

● **Theological Pub** | 1st Wednesdays beginning Sept. 6th | 7:30-8:30 pm | Nosh Restaurant

Less like a Bible study and more like a gathering of C.S. Lewis's famous "Inklings," adults of all ages are invited to join us for an evening of digging into participants' topics of choice. Bring your deep thoughts—this is an opportunity to ponder theology, the Bible, and what it means to be Christian in a casual atmosphere.

● **Other** | TBA

Would you like to participate in a study but don't know where to begin? Contact the church office for more details about any of these classes or to let us know if a class at another time or in another location might be beneficial to you and a few friends. We'd love to provide support for starting a Bible study in your workplace, neighborhood, or school!



PARENT-TO-PARENT

GAYLE PULLIAM | STUDENT MINISTRY MENTOR TEAM : PARENT SUPPORT

Perseverance

The end is near, y'all! And...no, I'm not talking about the end of the world, just the end of what has been **my** world for the entirety of last summer...painting the outside of our house!! It has taken over three months of time and fifteen gallons of paint to get to this point, and we have incurred injuries to both our home and our bodies in the process. There were two broken panes of glass...long story (ladders and a piece of fencing were involved)...and one sprained ankle that, as of this writing, Tom is still favoring...**BUT** the end is near! I can't tell you how ecstatic it makes me that we're rounding the corner on this one! What I thought, in passing, would be a breezy "do-it-yourself" job has ended up trying my patience and my pride, but it has taught me one really fabulous lesson about.....wait for it.....**PERSEVERANCE!**

There were so many times in the course of this project that I wanted to throw in the towel, chunk the paintbrush, and call it quits. It was hot, there were spiders and bees...and mosquitoes, and let me tell you, you don't want to be dodging any of those while you're perched precariously on the top of a ladder hanging onto the rafters for dear life!! As if that weren't enough, then came the saga of the screens. We had taken them down to paint the window wells and, unfortunately, hadn't put them back in place before the rains of Harvey hit. Well...when we tried to hang them back up, they stood out at forty-five degree angles, I kid you not. The rain had caused the wood to swell so much that we had to use the table saw to shave 1/16 of an inch off three sides of all seventeen screens **17!** before we could prime, paint, re-screen, and hang them! Full disclosure: This part of the job is **still** on-going...ugh!

Quitting, though veeery tempting at times, was not an option. We had committed our time, our resources, and our paintbrush-wielding

talent to getting the job done, but It was going to take more than all of that to actually accomplish our goal. We would need perseverance. So many things we do, so many things we're engaged in in our everyday lives requires that same kind of "stick-to-it-iveness" (is that a word?)...that same perseverance. This is the lesson I learned best this summer.

Painting is a rather repetitive activity and therefore affords me a decent amount of time to pray and to think while doing so. Over the course of the last few months I've thought a good deal about how painting my house -and the perseverance **it** has required- is a lot like life. Whether it be learning a new skill, mastering a difficult subject, making a marriage work, parenting our kids, or living out our faith, there will be times in all those endeavors when we are likely to hit a rough spot, because life in this fallen world just isn't easy.

Accomplishing hard things is going to take remembering that when the going gets tough, we need to pray, trust God, and power through. I acknowledge that sometimes it's necessary to change directions, or even to quit a thing when it is clearly not working, but often success is within reach if we would simply persevere a bit longer.

Though the following statement is cliché, it is also true: Whatever in life is worthwhile is rarely easy (**aside from God's free gift of grace, which was hard-won for Jesus, but astonishingly simple for us.**)

Take parenting for example. What a noble, worthwhile calling! To bring up the next generation in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to help children become productive citizens, teachers, leaders, scientists, humanitarians.....to instill within our children the qualities of both confidence and humility, strength and gentleness ...to model for our kids things like character and loyalty.... is a **MAMMOTH** undertaking. Worthwhile? Absolutely! Easy? No way!!

There may be times when, in the throes of a difficult season of parenting, we want to just up and quit...to resign from parenthood altogether with the grievance, "This can**NOT** be part of my job description!" In honesty, I **have** had times when I felt this way as a mom, but this is where I've needed to hit my knees and ask God to give me the wisdom, patience, and perseverance to power through. He hasn't always removed the obstacle. Sometimes I've had to be

longsuffering in order to accomplish my goal, but God has always given me a way to see things through...if I don't quit first.

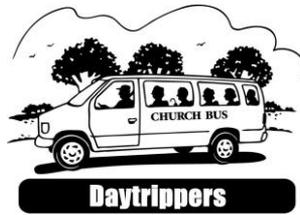
I remember trying to teach my daughter, Elizabeth, to read. She is the third of our four children. The older two had taken to reading like ducks to water. Elizabeth, well, she was her own person and not to be confused in any way with her siblings. She dug her heels in and resisted with every fiber of her little five-year old body. When I would call her to the table for her turn at reading, the waterworks would start. She would wail, "How many pages? How **many PAAAAAGES??!!**" Mind you, this happened every day. Every. Single. Day. *By the way, Elizabeth has given me permission to tell this story (...lest you think I decided to throw her under the bus without her knowledge, just to make a point.) I would answer her the same exact way each and every time. "Just this one page.....and then one more." When we would get to the end of the second page, she would ask again, "How many more pages?" My reply, "Just this one.....and then one more." Before she knew it, she would have read her way through an entire section of her phonics reader one page at a time...and just one more.

Elizabeth persevered, and so did I. She became not only an accomplished reader, but a voracious one as well; she was soon devouring every book she could get her hands on. Take a guess what Elizabeth's major was in college. She attended Concordia University in Austin to become an educator. She is now a teacher in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and her area of expertise...secondary English with an emphasis in literature. Perseverance...gotta love it!

More than anything else, the thing we should be most committed to as Christian parents is sharing the faith with our children and walking the talk too. The ways we go about doing this will likely look different from family to family, but it involves a daily (sometimes hourly) focus or refocus on God's Word and His will for our lives and for the lives of our kids. It involves repentance and forgiveness...yes, for us as parents also, because we are **all** sinful and have fallen short of the glory of God. It involves teaching hearts to be grateful and showing grace when hearts are not. And when those trying times come, and they will eventually come in one form or another for all parents, we take a

deep breath, call on the name of the Lord, and persevere. This one thing above all others is what we must not quit. Not today. Not tomorrow. Not ever.

"...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." - Hebrews 12:1



The DayTrippers have scheduled the following field trips:

- September 14 – Witte Museum, San Antonio
- October 12 – Bigfoot Wallace & Blacksmith Museums, Devine
- November 9 – El Mercado, San Antonio
- January 11 – Buggy Museum, Blanco
- February 8 – Fire & Railroad Museums, New Braunfels
- March 8 – Frontier Museum, Bandera
- April 12 – San Antonio River Barge, San Antonio
- May 10 – Shopping/Museum, Bastrop

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