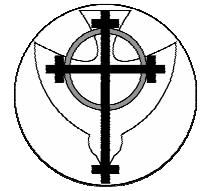
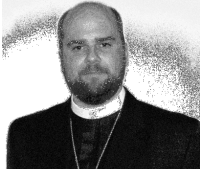


The Peace Post



✠ REFORMATION EDITION ✠

The peace of the Lord be with you always. Amen!



From the Desk of Pastor Messer

Greetings in the Name of our Crucified and Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

I love the fall season. There is just something about the beauty of the changing leaves and the crisp, fresh air that makes this my favorite of the four seasons. Being a sports fan, I'm also especially fond of the fall season because football, hockey and basketball return, which means there is something worth watching on television again (the Spartans are looking good, aren't they? - Go Green! Go White!), and because, Lord willing, I'll get to spend time with my family in the woods deer hunting, which is a tradition I hold near and dear to my heart.

But, for all the reasons I love the fall season, the greatest reason is that this is the season in which we make the transition from the Non-Festival half to the Festival half of the Church Year. We get to experience a prelude to this transition this month as we celebrate the Festival of Reformation Day, a very important day for we Lutherans. Then comes the Festival of All Saints Day the following week, three more weeks in the Trinity season, and then we're off and running with the Festival half of the Church Year with the beginning of Advent.

None of this is to say that the Non-Festival half of the Church Year, which begins following the back-to-back Festivals of Pentecost and Holy Trinity, is less important than the Festival half. But, there is just something extra special about the Festival half, which includes Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Pre-Lent, Lent, Holy Week, and Easter, and I look forward with eager anticipation to making this transition.

For all those reasons, I love the fall season and, while I'll miss the warmth of summer, I look forward to basking in the warmth that the Festival half of the Church Year provides. And, for me, the Festival of Reformation Day is kind of like what Thanksgiving is to Christmas. When we celebrate Thanksgiving, we know that Christmas is right around the corner. Likewise, when we celebrate

Reformation Day, we know that the Festival half of the Church Year is right around the corner.

But, far more than merely marking the coming of the Festival half of the Church Year, the Festival of Reformation Day is a very important and meaningful day on our liturgical calendar. It is a celebration not only of our heritage, but also of the fact that we have the eternal blessing of the true Gospel in our midst. But, it is even more than that, for the Festival of Reformation Day serves as a reminder to us that we must safeguard that true Gospel which has been handed down to us not only from the heresies of the past, but also of the present. It reminds us that the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, to which we confessional Lutherans belong, is always under attack, always at battle, and always called upon to adhere to, and defend, the truth of the Gospel.

As we prepare for the Festival of Reformation Day, let us be ever mindful of the very present danger we face, that we might take up the "sword of the Spirit," i.e. the Word of God, and enjoin the battle for the truth that we are called by our Lord to fight. To aid us in that endeavor, this expanded "Reformation Edition" of *The Peace Post* includes writings of faithful Lutherans past and present. I hope and pray that you will take the time to read what is offered here, for in these writings the spirit of the Reformation, which continues to this day, sounds forth.

Let us embrace the beauty of the fall season, and may our prayer always be: Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word!

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Messer



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Luther on Gal. 2:16.....	2-3	Ladies' & Altar Guild.....	18
Walther Ref. Sermon	4-7	Ladies' Guild Minutes.....	19
Pless article.....	8-10	Christian Education.....	20
Beane Ref. Sermon.....	11-12	Birthdays & Anniversaries...	20
Meeting Minutes.....	13	Parochial Report.....	20
Pastor Appreciation Day.....	14	October Calendar.....	21
Peace News & Notes.....	15-17	Serving in October.....	22

COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS 2:16

BY THE BLESSED REFORMER, DR. MARTIN LUTHER

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2:16)

For the sake of argument let us suppose that you could fulfill the Law in the spirit of the first commandment of God: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart." It would do you no good. A person simply is not justified by the works of the Law.

The works of the Law, according to Paul, include the whole Law, judicial, ceremonial, moral. Now, if the performance of the moral law cannot justify, how can circumcision justify, when circumcision is part of the ceremonial law?

The demands of the Law may be fulfilled before and after justification. There were many excellent men among the pagans of old, men who never heard of justification. They lived moral lives. But that fact did not justify them. Peter, Paul, all Christians, live up to the Law. But that fact does not justify them. "For I know nothing by myself," says Paul, "yet am I not hereby justified." (I Cor. 4:4.)

The nefarious opinion of the papists, which attributes the merit of grace and the remission of sins to works, must here be emphatically rejected. The papists say that a good work performed before grace has been obtained, is able to secure grace for a person, because it is no more than right that God should reward a good deed. When grace has already been obtained, any good work deserves everlasting life as a due payment and reward for merit. For the first, God is no debtor, they say; but because God is good and just, it is no more than right (they say) that He should reward a good work by granting grace for the service. But when grace has already been obtained, they continue, God is in the position of a debtor, and is in duty bound to reward a good work with the gift of eternal life. This is the wicked teaching of the papacy.

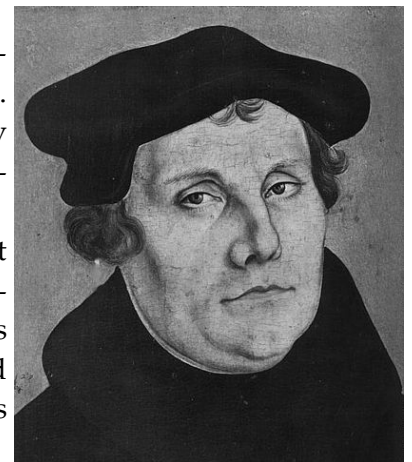
Now, if I could perform any work acceptable to God and deserving of grace, and once having obtained grace my good works would continue to earn for me the right and reward of eternal life, why should I stand in need of the grace of God and the suffering and death of Christ? Christ would be of no benefit to me. Christ's mercy would be of no use to me.

This shows how little insight the pope and the whole of his religious coterie have into spiritual matters, and how little they concern themselves with the spiritual health of their forlorn flocks. They cannot believe that the flesh is unable to think, speak, or do anything except against God. If they could see evil rooted in the nature of man, they would never entertain such silly dreams about man's merit or worthiness.

With Paul we absolutely deny the possibility of self merit. God never yet gave to any person grace and everlasting life as a reward for merit. The opinions of the papists are the intellectual pipe-dreams of idle pates, that serve no other purpose but to draw men away from the true worship of God. The papacy is founded upon hallucinations.

The true way of salvation is this. First, a person must realize that he is a sinner, the kind of a sinner who is congenitally unable to do any good thing. "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." Those who seek to earn the grace of God by their own efforts are trying to please God with sins. They mock God, and provoke His anger. The first step on the way to salvation is to repent.

The second part is this. God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we may live through His merit. He was crucified and killed for us. By sacrificing His Son for us God revealed Himself to us as a merciful Father who donates remission of sins, righteousness, and life everlasting for Christ's sake. God hands out His gifts freely unto all men. That is the praise and glory of His mercy.



The scholastics explain the way of salvation in this manner. When a person happens to perform a good deed, God accepts it and as a reward for the good deed God pours charity into that person. They call it "charity infused." This charity is supposed to remain in the heart. They get wild when they are told that this quality of the heart cannot justify a person.

They also claim that we are able to love God by our own natural strength, to love God above all things, at least to the extent that we deserve grace. And, say the scholastics, because God is not satisfied with a literal performance of the Law, but expects us to fulfill the Law according to the mind of the Lawgiver, therefore we must obtain from above a quality above nature, a quality which they call "formal righteousness."

We say, faith apprehends Jesus Christ. Christian faith is not an inactive quality in the heart. If it is true faith it will surely take Christ for its object. Christ, apprehended by faith and dwelling in the heart, constitutes Christian righteousness, for which God gives eternal life.

In contrast to the doting dreams of the scholastics, we teach this: First a person must learn to know himself from the Law. With the prophet he will then confess: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And, "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." And, "against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

Having been humbled by the Law, and having been brought to a right estimate of himself, a man will repent. He finds out that he is so depraved, that no strength, no works, no merits of his own will ever deliver him from his guilt. He will then understand the meaning of Paul's words: "I am sold under sin"; and "they are all under sin."

At this state a person begins to lament: "Who is going to help me?" In due time comes the Word of the Gospel, and says: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee. Believe in Jesus Christ who was crucified for your sins. Remember, your sins have been imposed upon Christ."

In this way are we delivered from sin. In this way are we justified and made heirs of everlasting life.

In order to have faith you must paint a true portrait of Christ. The scholastics caricature Christ into a judge and tormentor. But Christ is no law giver. He is the Lifegiver. He is the Forgiver of sins. You must believe that Christ might have atoned for the sins of the world with one single drop of His blood. Instead, He shed His blood abundantly in order that He might give abundant satisfaction for our sins.

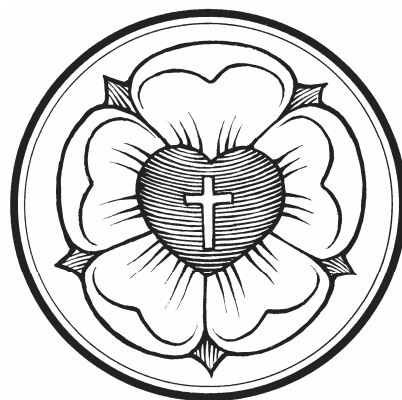
Here let me say, that these three things, faith, Christ, and imputation of righteousness, are to be joined together. Faith takes hold of Christ. God accounts this faith for righteousness.

This imputation of righteousness we need very much, because we are far from perfect. As long as we have this body, sin will dwell in our flesh. Then, too, we sometimes drive away the Holy Spirit; we fall into sin, like Peter, David, and other holy men. Nevertheless we may always take recourse to this fact, "that our sins are covered," and that "God will not lay them to our charge." Sin is not held against us for Christ's sake. Where Christ and faith are lacking, there is no remission or covering of sins, but only condemnation.

After we have taught faith in Christ, we teach good works. "Since you have found Christ by faith," we say, "begin now to work and do well. Love God and your neighbor. Call upon God, give thanks unto Him, praise Him, confess Him. These are good works. Let them flow from a cheerful heart, because you have remission of sin in Christ."

When crosses and afflictions come our way, we bear them patiently. "For Christ's yoke is easy, and His burden is light." When sin has been pardoned, and the conscience has been eased of its dreadful load, a Christian can endure all things in Christ.

To give a short definition of a Christian: A Christian is not somebody who does not sin, because of his faith in Christ. This doctrine brings comfort to consciences in serious trouble. When a person is a Christian he is above law and sin. When the Law accuses him, and sin wants to drive the wits out of him, a Christian looks to Christ. A Christian is free. He has no master except Christ. A Christian is greater than the whole world.





“Why Dare and Can We Never Give Up the Church’s Struggle for the Pure Doctrine?”

A Sermon preached by C.F.W. Walther on Reformation Day, 1876

(C.F.W. Walther was the first president of our synod and one of the greatest Lutheran theologians ever to live)

Prayer before the sermon: Lord Jesus, hot was the conflict which once our fathers had to fight; but glorious was the victory which you granted them. Therefore, we today joyfully extol and praise you. For what our fathers once had to gain by fighting, your precious pure saving Word, that today is still their children’s, our precious inheritance. However, this holy war has not yet ended. The foe is continually try-ing to tear from us what we have. Therefore, you also constantly cry to us: “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” Rev 3:11. “Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Jude 3. Therefore, grant that the remembrance of our fathers who fought faithfully until death will today enkindle us to fight in our days as they did, so that we may be as victorious as they, some day be crowned by you, and also rejoice with them forever and ever. Amen.

The text is Jude 3.

My dear friends of the Lutheran faith, confession, and conflict:

The history of the Reformation, whose remembrance we today celebrate, is the story of a continuous war of almost 30 years, from the year 1517 when Luther publicly posted his 95 Theses against the papal abomination of the indulgence until the year 1546 when Luther died. This war was not so much a physical as a spiritual one. On the one side stood Luther, a defenseless monk, no weapons in his hand but the Bible, and supported alone by a few generally faint-hearted friends. On the other side stood the well reinforced pope with the temporal and spiritual sword, as he called it, that is, the power of church and state, in his hand, supported by a countless host of prelates, of cardinals, bishops and archbishops, of priests, monks, and nuns, as well as by the greatest world monarchy of that time in Christendom, the Emperor. On the one side, however, stood error, on the other, the truth; on the one side, the word of men, on the other, God’s Word; and, this is the main thing, on the one side stood the invisible Jesus Christ, the King of truth and the Lord of salvation with all his holy angels, on the other, Satan, the prince of darkness and ruin with his entire hellish army.

Today 359 years ago, on October 31, 1517 it was as Luther with those 95 Theses first declared war on the pope and all his followers, girded himself with the sword of the Spirit, as David once did with his sling against Goliath, left his dark monk’s cell in the name of the Lord the living God, made his appearance, and to all who wanted to stand on the side of the Lord and his true Church gave the signal for the attack and the holiest war which was ever waged on earth.

Then followed one engagement upon another, orally and in writing. In the year 1518 Luther was victorious in a secret duel in Augsburg with the Cardinal Cajetan on the subject of the one little word: “Revoco,” that is, “I recant;” but all the rhetoric of the wily Italian was in vain: Luther did not recant and thus left the arena as victor. In the year 1519 followed a public debate between Luther and the papal sophist Dr. Eck in the Leipzig Disputation in which the matter dealt chiefly with the standing of the papacy and the councils; but at the close all who were of the truth, even papists, granted Luther the prize of victory. Two years later in the year 1521 Luther was finally cited to appear in Worms, in order to appear personally before Emperor and empire to defend himself and hear his sentence. All the friends of Luther trembled but not he. He stated: “And if there were as many devils in Worms as tiles on the roof tops, I would go; and if my friends would make a fire from Wittenberg to Worms which would reach up into heaven, I would still enter the mouth between his large teeth, confess Christ, and let him rule.” Thus a hot battle began. But see! as Daniel came unhurt from the lions’ den and as the three men came unscathed from the fiery furnace, so Luther again left Worms unconquered; for his closing declaration is and remains: “I do not recant! Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God help me. Amen!”

A second hot Reformation battle was fought during the presentation of our Confession to the Diet at Augsburg in the year 1530. Because he was excommunicated by the pope and outlawed by the emperor, Luther could not stand in this great, decisive conflict at Augsburg with the rank and file of the confessors of the Gospel; but as the real God-chosen general in this war he was not only the one who by the writing of the Torgau Articles, so to say, had sketched the battle plan and dictated the articles of peace, but he was also the one who during the diet led and encouraged from Coburg the little group in Augsburg who stood before the foe by his daily letters. And what happened? What Luther even during the raging conflict had composed and sung:

*A mighty Fortress is our God,
A trusty Shield and Weapon;
He helps us free from every need
That hath us now o’ertaken,*

that was gloriously fulfilled. Also this decisive battle was won. In spite of the threatening bloody imperial recess, the huts of the righteous of all Christendom again sang of victory.

However, the story of the Reformation is not only the story of a war from without, but also a spiritual civil war. After Zwingli, the Swiss preacher, had at first agreed with Luther and had bravely battled with him for God’s Word against the papal doctrines of men, Zwingli soon fell away and declared: It is against reason to believe that Christ’s body and blood is in the Lord’s Supper. With dismay Luther saw that Zwingli intended to replace the pope with human reason. So after the futile exchange of several polemical writings between Luther and Zwingli in the year 1529 after the Colloquy at Marburg there finally came a decisive battle. Whether the words of the truthful and almighty Son of God: “This is my body, this is my blood,” still stand firmly, hence whether God’s Word must give way to reason or whether reason must give way to God’s Word, that was the second *casus belli*, the second great cause of

war which was to be decided in Marburg. And praise God! Luther did not give ground even here; as he in Worms had preserved God's Word against the pope's authority of the church, so in Marburg he preserved the same Word of God against the authority of human reason.

And thus Luther continued the fight until he was finally called into the land of eternal peace, in order to be crowned there and to celebrate with all faithful soldiers the feast of triumph of eternal life.

Now my dear brethren, has the victory of the Reformation of the Church finally brought peace? Alas no! The Church is to triumph above; here it must fight until the peal of the last trumpet. That God's Word testifies to us on all pages, and so also the apostle Jude, who has the surname Thaddeus, writes in our text: "Beloved, when I have all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write to you, and exhort you THAT YE SHOULD EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS."

On the basis of these words permit me today to answer the question:

WHY DARE AND CAN WE NEVER GIVE UP THE CHURCH'S STRUGGLE FOR THE PURE DOCTRINE?

I answer:

- I. Because The Pure Doctrine Of Our Church Is Not Our Possession, But A Treasure Only Entrusted To Us For Our Faithful Administration,
- II. Because The Loss Of This Treasure Would Be Something Much More Terrible Than All The Strife And Discord Among Men, and finally,
- III. Because This Conflict Is One COMMANDED By God, And Therefore Is Certainly BLESSED By God In Time And In Eternity.

I. The first reason why it is supposed that the time has finally come to stop the strife for the pure doctrine in our Church is because this everlasting quarreling and fighting, as it is called, is against love. Christ, they say, says in clear words: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Jn 13:35. Therefore, John also writes: "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." 1 Jn 3:14. Yes, Paul says expressly: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." 1 Cor 13:13. When the Galatians quarreled and fought with one another, the same apostle severely reprimanded them and wrote: "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed of one another." Gal 5:15.

It is true, my friends, that brotherly love is the indispensable sign of true Christians; without love all other virtues are only an empty pretence and all gifts, no matter how great, are unprofitable; it is true that loveless quarreling and fighting can bring only ruin; yet it does not in the least follow that for us the time has finally come to give up all the struggle for the pure doctrine in our Church; for as we have already heard the Apostle Jude writes thus in our text: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you THAT YE SHOULD EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS." Concerning the true faith the apostle, therefore, says that it was "once delivered unto the saints." True faith, or what is the same, the pure doctrine is, therefore, not given but only "delivered" to the saints, that is, not granted to them but only given into their charge, not made their possession over which they are free lords and with which they can do as they please but only something entrusted to them as belonging to another, that is, God's possession, which they merely as servants and stewards must faithfully preserve and administer.

Now tell me yourself: Does love demand that a steward give away some of the property entrusted to him, or that he make a reduction of the debt to the debtors of his lord? or that he can calmly take for himself the treasures of his lord which are given to him to guard and keep? Was it, for example, love when that steward, in order to make him his friend, said to a debtor who owed his lord 100 measures of oil: "Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty"? Lk 16:6. Was that not rather unfaithfulness, yes, open deceit and theft? Does not Christ for that reason also call him the "unjust steward"? Would it be love if in order to avoid a battle a general would allow merely a small opening to be made for the enemy in the wall of a fortress given to him to defend? Would not such a general rather be called to account and punished as a traitor? Or is it love to steal their possessions from others in order to do good to the poor? And finally, would it be love if Luther would have immediately become silent about the discovered and known truth?

So judge for yourself: Would it be love if in the conflict for the pure doctrine "delivered" to us, that is, entrusted to us only for faithful administration, we Lutherans would finally give up? if in order to make friends among men and in order to pass for loving and peaceable people, we would let it go? No, that would not be brotherly love, or love of our neighbor, to say nothing of love toward God, but self-love, not faithful stewardship of the great possession entrusted to us by God only to be administered but shameful embezzlement of another's possession, yes, nothing else before God but robbery and theft. And thieves shall not inherit eternal life.

Of course, our love should be ready for the sake of peace to yield in such things over which we have the say, but not in things over which not we but others are in control; true, our love should be ready to sacrifice everything which we have, even our life if necessary, however, not the possessions of others but only our own. That is why in the year 1522 Luther said to his opponents: "My love is ready to die for you...; but faith or the Word you should adore. You can expect anything you want of our love; but fear our faith in all things."

Oh my dear friends of the Lutheran faith, confession, and conflict, do not be misled when today those are everywhere accused of lovelessness who still do not give up the battle for pure doctrine in our Church. Bear in mind: This doctrine, as our text says, is the faith which "was once delivered unto the saints." It, therefore, is not our property which we would have the power and freedom to give away. It is rather God's property which we can but administer and not only we ourselves but all Christendom, yes, which the entire world should preserve and leave behind and give to the coming generation. On that day God will, therefore, say to us also in regard to

the pure doctrine of his Word which he has entrusted to us Lutherans: "Give account of thy stewardship!"

True, it is a bitter disgrace to have to let oneself be regarded as heartless and loveless people; yes, believe it, my friends, this disgrace will often completely break the hearts of those fighting for God's pure Word. This disgrace, however, all true soldiers have always had to endure. Therefore, our pious fathers also say in the confessional writings of our Church: "To dissent from the agreement of so many nations and to be called schismatics is a grave matter. But divine authority commands all not to be allies and defenders of impiety and unjust cruelty." Therefore, that the world might see that love is still in us Lutherans, let us in all earthly things show our love so much the more richly; however, in matters pertaining to God, to the pure doctrine of his Word which "was once delivered unto the saints" let Christ's utterance be our motto and guiding star: "He that loveth father, or mother, and he that loveth son, or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me."

II. However, my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, we still cannot give up the struggle for the pure doctrine in our Church because secondly, the loss of this treasure would be something much more frightful than all the strife and discord among men.

It is true, my friends: The conflict and strife being continually carried on in all Christendom, not only between the different church denominations but often between the members of the one and the same church, is such a great calamity, that it simply cannot be expressed in words nor deplored sufficiently, yes, neither wept over enough with bloody tears. Is it not a calamity that all who want to be children of the one and the same heavenly Father, the servants of the one and same Savior, temples of the one and the same Holy Spirit, fight with one another? Is it not a calamity that those who are to fight against the countless and mighty foes of Christendom as one man draw their sword against each other? How Satan must rejoice when he sees this disunity among Christians. How many unbelievers are offended and, therefore, do not want to become Christians because they think: How can that be the only saving religion whose confessors, so to say, lacerate one another? And also how many weak Christians go astray in their Christianity and fall again to the world!

What? many, therefore, say, is it not high time that we Lutherans finally give up our struggle for the pure doctrine in our Church? that we, as Isaiah has prophesied, beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks? that we at last make peace with all Christians, extend them the hand of reconciliation, and we unite with them in one great congregation of peace? Certainly, my dear hearers, if we Lutherans could purchase a salutary, universal treaty of peace with our blood, no Lutheran, to say nothing of a Lutheran minister, would consider his blood so precious but would rather with a thousand joys shed it in this behalf.

And yet, my dear brethren, we cannot give up our struggle for the pure doctrine in our Church. This the Word of God teaches on all its pages, this also our text teaches us when we read: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of THE COMMON SALVATION, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Because the apostle wanted to write to the Christians "of the common salvation" he deemed it necessary, first of all, to admonish them to "contend for the faith." So according to this apostolic explanation the question concerns nothing less than "the common salvation." (German: the salvation of us all.)

Dare we, can we, therefore, now give up the conflict for the pure doctrine in our Church? Never! Yes, if we were fighting over money and goods, over honor before men, over good days, in brief, over earthly things, woe would be us if we would never ask whether peace in the world and Church is thus being destroyed, whether unbelievers and weak Christians were being offended, whether God's work was being hindered or not. But it is a different matter when we "contend for the faith which once was delivered unto the saints." Then we are not fighting over temporal but eternal treasures, then we are fighting not over man's but God's honor, then we are fighting not for this but for eternal life, then according to our text we are fighting in one word, "for the common salvation."

That is why even all the prophets and apostles and Christ himself constantly fought for the pure faith; and indeed Christ expressly says in Matthew 10: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Mt 10:34-36. The strife which arises because one fights for the pure doctrine is, therefore, not an un-fortunate but a blessed strife which Christ did not come to end and forbid but rather to send and to incite in this world.

Of course, if no one would falsify God's Word, no conflict would be necessary, yes, it would be a serious, terrible sin. But flesh, world, and Satan are continually bent upon falsifying God's Word or the pure doctrine; and never has it been falsified in so many ways as just in our times so that now millions die the death eternal because of the poison of falsified doctrine. So dare we, can we be silent so as not to destroy earthly peace? For is it more terrible that temporal peace be taken from men, or rather that they be robbed of God's Word which alone can save their souls? Is this not worth more than the whole world? Does not Christ say: "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world," and thus also the peace of the whole world, "and lose his own soul?" Mt 16:26.

Suppose, when in the fourth century the doctrine of Christ's divinity was attacked by Arius, that neither Athanasius or any other person would have fought this falsification; suppose, when in the fifth century the doctrine of man's conversion only through grace was assailed by Pelagius, that neither Augustine nor any other person would have fought against it; suppose, when in the 16th century the entire doctrine of Christ had been falsified by the papacy that neither Luther nor any other person would have fought against it; suppose, when at the end of the past century rationalism forced its way into the Christian Church, that no one would have fought against it. True there would have been infinitely less strife and dissension in the world, but where would the pure Word of God be now? where would the Lutheran Church be now? where would the true doctrine of the way to salvation be now? All this would have disappeared long ago from the surface of the earth, and with it the salvation of countless people would have been lost.

Oh my dear friends, let us indeed sorrow and lament over this: that false teachers constantly assail the pure doctrine in our

Church and thus are at fault for the conflict and strife in the Church; however, let us never lament but rather extol and praise God that he always awakens men who fight against those false teachers, for, I repeat, this pertains to “the common salvation.”

III. And yet, my dear hearers, the most important, the most irrefutable reason why we dare not nor cannot give up the fight for the pure doctrine in our Church is this: Because this conflict is one commanded us by God and is therefore certainly one blessed in time and in eternity. Permit me now in the third place to speak to you about this and, therefore, grant me a few moments of your attention.

There are now many well meaning Christians who say that naturally not all struggles for the pure doctrine should be rejected, one must at times rather most earnestly fight for it. Thus, for example, it was absolutely correct that Luther 400 years ago fought until death for the pure Gospel as courageously as a lion against the falsifications of the papacy. That is why his conflict had such a result the like of which the history of the Church has never again pointed to. But now it is clearly time to end the fight for the pure doctrine in our Church and instead of fighting against one another build with one another, in-stead of the sword to seize the trowel. For what is the result of all the strife in our time? Nothing but greater splits and confusion.

As well as these preachers of peace mean it, they nevertheless are caught in a great error.

First of all, it is not true, that the conflict for the pure doctrine in our Church in our times which has already lasted longer than 30 years has had only great splits and confusion as its result. Rather to God’s honor it is to be said as a result of this conflict the Church of the Reformation with its golden pure doctrine has again risen among us as though from the dead, more than a thousand congregations have again rallied around the old pure confession of our Church; from our America the sound of the old pure Gospel has at the same time gone out into all lands and has won new confessors of the truth everywhere and gathered them around the good old banner of our pious fathers. Others, indeed thousands upon thousands who already were about to give up the old eternal faith completely were at least stopped on the road of error, some were moved more and more to return to the way of the truth they left. This present conflict has been rightly and gloriously blessed by God beyond all hopes, prayers, and understanding.

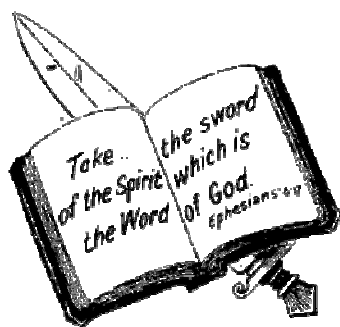
Suppose this were not true; suppose it seems as though finally all struggle in our days for the pure doctrine in our Church were completely without results and useless. We nevertheless dare not and could not give up this Conflict. And why? Because the great God has commanded it in clear words. For who is it who in our text so earnestly summons all saints, that is, all Christians through the Apostle Jude to “contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”? It is the great God himself. For these holy men of God have spoken being moved by the Holy Ghost. What more do we need? Which man, yes, which angel, will dare to say “No, do not fight” when God says “Fight!”?

And when we are now fighting at the command of the great God, dare we ever fear that our struggle would be in vain? Never! What God does or commands to be done cannot be anything but blessed in time and in eternity. For as the wise man Sirach writes: “Defend the truth until death, then will God the Lord fight for you.” Sir 4:33.

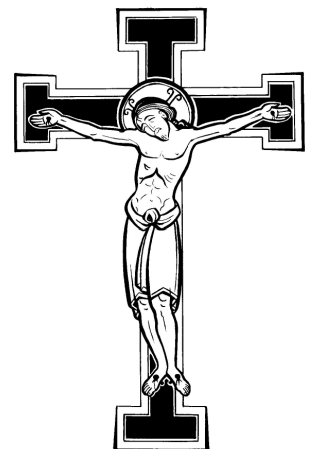
Oh, therefore, let us never listen to those who praise and extol the conflict of the Reformation for the pure Gospel but want to know nothing of a similar conflict in our days. God’s command: “Contend for the faith!” applies to all times, also to ours. Let also our hearts be kindled by the fiery zeal with which Luther and his faithful helpers fought. Let us not like a coward surrender without a fight what they in hot conflict and with word, writing, blood, and tears gained by conflict, but faithfully preserve it and courageously defend it against all assaults until death. Let us consider no truth revealed for salvation as insignificant and agree to its falsification; for here applies: “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” Nor let us be concerned that for the sake of our conflict our names are rejected as malicious people. Even Luther and his helpers once had to experience this, and today millions bless them after they are long since at rest in their graves. If today we show that we are not the degenerated but the true children of the Reformation, some day when we also lie dust to dust, our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren will bless us.

Granted that our name remains covered with disgrace before men until Judgment Day because of our struggle for the pure doctrine in our Church, nevertheless if we remain faithful in the struggle, as truly as God is righteous and true, for the sake of Christ Judgment Day will be the day of our crowning and our entire eternity a festival of eternal victory and peace. Oh, what joy, what glory that will be when also we poor despised, scolded, and hated people will be received into the countless host of all the holy soldiers of God from Adam until the last faithful fighter who triumph before God’s throne!

In conclusion I say to all of you:



*Then let us follow Christ, our Lord,
And take the cross appointed
And, firmly clinging to His Word,
In suffering be undaunted.
For who bears not the battle's strain
The crown of life shall not obtain. Amen.
(LSB 421, st. 5)*





Holy Lord ... Holy Gifts ... Holy People

REV. JOHN T. PLESS
AGNUS DEI CONFERENCE
ARLINGTON, TEXAS
17 OCTOBER 1998

"Then God said, 'Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.'" (Exodus 3:5)

Moses was in wilderness watching over his father-in-law's sheep. There was nothing extraordinary about that. But as Moses tended to that very ordinary task something extraordinary took place. Before his very eyes, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire that burned from a bush without consuming the bush. Moses was caught off guard, taken by surprise. How could this bush burn without being reduced to ashes? He turns to gaze at this wondrous sight. Out of that flame the Lord spoke, calling Moses by name. God says to Moses, "Do not draw near...take off your shoes for you are standing on holy ground." Holy ground. It is God's ground; His space. "Our God is a consuming fire," says the Letter to the Hebrews, yet the bush is not consumed. The fire is the manifestation of the Lord's presence, that is, of His holiness.

God alone is holy. Regin Prenter writes "God is holy. This statement is the starting point for any thing of man's sanctity. God has manifested His holiness among men in Jesus Christ, His only Son, made man" (Man's Concern With Holiness, 124). Thus we sing in the Gloria in Excelsis: "For Thou only art holy." Likewise the Sanctus confesses the Holy God who comes to us in the body and blood of His Son to cleanse us from our sins: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory." It was for this reason, incidentally, that Luther placed the Sanctus after the Consecration in his German Mass to confess the real presence of the holy God with sinners.

The liturgy simply echoes the Scripture as over and over again the Scriptures tell us that God is holy. Old Testament scholar John Kleinig notes: "The Lord alone was inherently and permanently holy. His holiness was in a sense the essence of His being. It was inseparable from Him and His presence. It followed then that all other holiness derived from Him, and was available only by way of contact with Him, like electricity from a battery" ("Sharing in God's Holiness" Lutheran Theological Review, Fall/Winter 1995, 107).

God reveals His holiness to Moses in the fire of the burning bush. This gives us an insight into the nature of God's holiness. It is the nature of fire to be either beneficial or destructive. Take for example, that great mass of flame, the sun. The sun can scorch the earth, causing plants to wither and die. Or the sun can radiate warmth causing plants to grow and be fruitful. It all depends on the on occupying the right position in relationship to the sun. So also with God and His holiness. If one is positioned in unbelief and sin over against the holiness of God, His holiness is a fire that destroys. But if one stands before God on His own terms, that is, in faith, God's holiness is flame that generates the warmth of mercy, bestowing light and life.

In his book, *The Trivialization of God: The Dangerous Illusion of a Manageable Deity*, Donald McCullough writes "God is not safe, but God is good, very good. For the dangerous otherness is a transcendent, loving commitment not to be separate- a threat to our egos that establishes our true selves, a danger that is our only safety. 'Our God is a consuming fire' (Hebrews 12:29). As children we were told not to play with matches, and as adults we treat fire with caution. We must. Fire demands respect for its regal estate: it will not be touched, it will be approached with care, and it wields its scepter for ill or for good. With one spark it can condemn a forest to ashes and a home to memory as ghostly as the smoke rising from the charred remains of the family album. Or with a single flame it can crown a candle with power to warm a romance and set to dancing a fireplace blaze that defends against the cold. Fire is dangerous to be sure, but we cannot live without it; fire destroys but it also sustains life" (*The Trivialization of God*, 68). So also the holiness of the God who is to be feared, loved, and trusted above all things.

For many, even the word "holy" is a red flag kind of word. Many people confuse holiness with morality or a particularly strict and dour lifestyle like that espoused by the Pietists of the 17th century, the Methodists of the 18th century, and the so-called Pentecostal Holiness Churches in our own day. Holiness is then seen as something we do or achieve, like the self-appointed evangelist who claimed not to have sinned in over ten years. But I suspect there is another reason that we may have trouble with the biblical language of holiness. Perhaps we have been influenced the cultural secularism that maintains nothing is holy, that is, nothing really belongs to God. Not the unborn baby in its mother's womb who is granted life only if the mother so chooses. Marriage is being redefined so as to ignore the fact that God established it as a life-long union of fidelity between one man and one woman. Men and women are encouraged to view their bodies as toys rather than as temples of the Holy Spirit. And we have Dr. Kevorkian to take care of those toys once they break.

Now this is not detached from what we see happening in many churches. Church buildings in their very design were once built to reflect the fact that here we come into the presence of Holy God. The chancel was lifted up giving prominence to the altar as the symbol of the Lord's presence. An altar rail draws a line between God and the world. The Baptismal font was given a prominent place, often near the door of the church reminding worshipers that we have access to God only through the cleansing waters of Holy Baptism. Stained glass windows illustrated the holy history of our salvation. Nowadays church buildings are designed that look very

secular, like auditoriums. And it is no wonder that the things which transpire within them have little connection with heavenly realities. Ministers act as though they were talk show hosts, not stewards of the mysteries of God. Homemade liturgies tell us more about the creativity of those who devised them than they do about the Triune God. The practice of closed communion is dismissed as downright unfriendly as in some churches all are invited to belly up to the altar without regard to catechesis, confession, and pastoral care. Indeed we may say, "Is nothing holy any more?"

What has happened? David Wells, professor of systematic theology at Gordon Conwell Seminary has authored three immensely insightful books on the church and culture: *No Place for the Truth* (1993), *God in the Wastelands* (1994), and just this year, *Losing Our Virtue: Why the Church Must Recover Its Moral Vision* in which he helps us understand the loss of the holy in contemporary American churches. In *God in the Wastelands*, Wells notes that holiness has become irrelevant in many of our churches. Wells writes "The church has succumbed to the seductions of our therapeutic culture, and in that context it seems quite natural to favor the relational dimensions over the moral dimensions, mysticism over cognitive conviction, self-fulfillment over personal surrender, self-image over character, pluralistic religious equality over the uniqueness of the Christian faith. When all is said and done, modernity dispatches the God who is outside, and all that remains is the God who is inside" (136). This culture then shapes the life of the church. In his most recent book, Wells provides this analysis: "The wisdom common to many of our marketers is that, if it wants to attract customers, the Church should stick to a positive and uplifting message. It should avoid speaking of negative matters like sin. Not only so, but what has distinguished the Church in its appearance and functions should now be abandoned. In order to be attractive to people today, church buildings should not look that different from corporate headquarters, malls, or country clubs. Crosses and robes should go; dress should be casual; hymns should be contemporary and empty of the theological substance by which previous generations lived, because this is uncomprehensible today; pews should be replaced by cinema-grade seats, organs by synthesizers and drums, solemnity by levity, reflection by humor, and sermons by light dialogues or catchy readings. The theory is that people will buy Christianity if they don't have to deal with what the Church has traditionally been" (201).

Entertainment is a poor substitute for reverence. Neil Postman worries over how the entertainment industry has influenced education, politics, and religion in North America. Cornelius Plantinga Jr draws on Postman's analysis and describes what happens when church services seek to entertain rather than lead worshipers to stand on the holy ground of God's saving presence: "Naturally services of this kind give an impression of a religion somewhat different from historic Christianity. One could imagine a visitor walking away from such a service and saying to himself: 'I had it all wrong. I had thought Christianity included a shadow side-confession, self-denial, rebuke of sin, concern with heresy, willingness to lose one's life for the sake of Jesus Christ. Not so, apparently. The Christian religion isn't about lament or repentance or humbling oneself before God to receive God's favor. It's not about the hard, disciplined work of mortifying our sinful self and learning to make God's purposes our own. It's not about the inevitable failures in this project and the persistent grace of Jesus Christ that comes so that we might begin again. Not at all! I had it all wrong! The Christian faith is mainly about celebration and fun and personal growth and five ways to boost my self-esteem. And especially, it's about entertainment'" (Not the Way Its Suppose to Be :A Breviary of Sin, 193).

God is not present to entertain or amuse us but to save us. There is a Holy God and He calls us to stand on holy ground. Our sin and God's holiness is a deadly combination. When God's holiness and man's sin mix there you have an explosion and it is not God who gets burned. Or does He? A Holy God whose passion it is to have a holy people stand in His presence for all eternity sent His Son into this world to take on all of our sin, all that makes us unholy, all that alienates us from His holy presence, to take all of that on Himself. As the sacrifices were consumed by fire in the Old Testament Temple, so the Lord Jesus Christ offers Himself in our place. He is the Lamb of God basted with the juices of our sin and roasted over the flames of God's wrath in our stead. He becomes the holocaust - the whole burnt offering that takes away our sin. His holy blood shed on the cross of Calvary cleanses us from all sin and makes us holy people, a "holy nation" as Peter calls us in his first Epistle. In His flesh, Jesus is the very Temple of God and those who are joined to Him in Holy Baptism are made members of His royal priesthood, sanctified by His blood to offer spiritual sacrifices.

Holy people live holy lives. Luther's doctrine of vocation begs to be rediscovered in our church. That doctrine is the setting and the context for both the doctrine of the royal priesthood and the doctrine of sanctification. This can be seen from Luther's treatise of 1520, *On the Freedom of the Christian*. Wilhelm Maurer called this writing "the most perfect expression of Luther's Reformation understanding of the mystery of Christ" (quoted in E.Juengel, *The Freedom of a Christian: Luther's Significance for Contemporary Theology*, 20). In this treatise, Luther defends dual propositions: "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all" (AE 31:344). Faith lives in the freedom of Christ Jesus. Love lives a life of service to the neighbor.

Yet faith and works of love must be distinguished. Listen to Luther "Good words do not make a good man, but a good man does good works; evil works do not make a wicked man, but a wicked man does evil works. Consequently it is always necessary that the substance or person himself be good before there can be any good works, and that good works follow and proceed from the good person, as Christ also says 'A good tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit' (Matt. 7:18). It is clear that fruits do not bear the tree and that the tree does not grow on the fruits, also on the contrary, the trees bear fruits and the fruits grow on the trees"(AE 31:361).

In other words the *vocatio* or calling of the Christian faith is a double calling. It is first of all, the call to faith. It is the calling of the third article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe that I cannot by own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord or come to him but the Holy Ghost has called be by the Gospel..." It is also a calling to live the holy life of love within the creational struc-

tures of this world. Thus Luther places the "Table of Duties" as an appendix to the six chief parts of the Small Catechism to demonstrate where it is that the Christian empties himself to live a life of love, not for the sake of salvation but for the sake of the neighbor.

There is no better summary of this understanding than in the conclusion of Luther's *The Freedom of a Christian*: "We conclude, therefore, that a Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor. Otherwise he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love. By faith he is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor" (AE 31:371). Now Luther gives this theological insight liturgical expression in the post-communion collect which he prepared for the 1526 German Mass and which has found a place in nearly every Lutheran order:

We give thanks to you, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore you that of your mercy you would strengthen us through the same in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever (LW, 153)

The holy gifts -the forgiveness of sins, the life, and the salvation-which we receive in the Divine Service hallow us for they are the fruits of Christ's redeeming sacrifice. Here we see the heart of the Lutheran understanding of liturgy. Liturgy is not our response to God. It is not the "work of the people" as the Second Vatican Council defined. Liturgy is divine service, God's service, Gottesdienst. Faith receives all that Christ gives in and through His words and supper. The liturgy, in fact, draws us outside of ourselves to live in Christ by faith alone.

Our vocation in the world is an extension of Divine Service. The Lord's gifts bear fruit in lives which are lived in fervent love for the neighbor. The Introduction to Lutheran Worship puts it like this, "Finally his blessing moves us out into our calling, where his gifts have their fruition" (LW, 6). Carter Lindberg has noted that Luther re-located the sacrifice, moving it from the chancel and putting it in the world. This is in keeping with Romans 12:1 where the Apostle writes "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

Anyone who would have read or heard these apostolic words in their original setting in the first century would have been jolted. Paul writes of a "living sacrifice" and everybody in the ancient world knew that sacrifices were dead! Jerusalem's temple resembled a slaughter house more than a church and the priest looked more like a butcher than a proper clergyman. Paul writes that Christians are to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God because the death has already taken place. Christ has died as the one atoning sacrifice. His blood is the propitiation for the sin of the world (Rom. 3:24-25). His death was a death for sin. In Holy Baptism we have been joined to that death. Baptism is not a death for sin but a death to sin. Listen to the Apostle in Romans 6 "Or do you not know that as many of us were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life."

This understanding of vocation is grounded in the liturgy where our holy God first serves us with His holy gifts. Here God bends down to us sinners to bestow on us the righteousness won for us by the obedient life and atoning blood of His Son. Salvation was accomplished on the cross but it is distributed to us in the preaching of the Holy Gospel, Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, and the Holy Supper. It is only through these holy gifts which are received in faith that we have access to the holiness of God.

When we come to church we set foot on holy ground. Not in a magical sense, but because here in this place the same God who appeared to Moses on Horeb in the burning bush is coming to us in His Word and Supper and where He makes Himself present, there is holy ground. We come with the Prayer which the Holy Son of God Himself has taught us to pray: "Hallowed by Thy name," knowing that "God's name is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may be holy among us also." And then remember the Catechism goes on to answer the question "How is this done?" saying: "When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as the children of God, also lead a holy life according to it. This grant us, dear Father in heaven. But he that teaches and lives otherwise than God's Word teaches, profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us, Heavenly Father."

Moses took off His shoes to stand in the presence of God. We do not take off our shoes, but we do lay aside our sin. And laying aside our sin, we come to this Holy Communion to receive the holy body and holy blood of the Lamb of God who makes us holy people. We are standing on holy ground in the companionship of angels, archangels, and the whole company of heaven.

We conclude with a pastoral word from Hermann Sasse: "We can desire nothing more beautiful and greater for our parishioners than that they be present when the Holy Supper is celebrated according to the institution of Jesus Christ; when a believing congregation gathers around the altar to receive the true body and blood of our Lord. Only then will the Church, the Gospel, the Church of the pure doctrine remain among us, and only then. But the Church will then remain and the gates of hell shall not overcome her. And especially then, when a congregation is gathered around her altar in the deepest faith in the One who is her Lord and head-because He is her Redeemer-when she begins to sing the Kyrie and the Gloria and lifts up her heart to heaven, and with all angels and archangels and the entire hosts of the heavenly multitude she sings 'Holy, Holy, Holy,' then will the Church truly be a house of God, a place of the real presence of Christ in the midst of a boisterous and unholy world. And then the words will apply to her, 'The Lord is in His Holy Temple! Let all the world be still before Him' (Lutherische Kirche, 1939 -Vol.21, Number 5).

Rev. John T. Pless served as pastor at University Lutheran Chapel in Minneapolis, MN when he presented this paper. He now serves as Professor at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN.



Reformation Day Sermon

Rev. Larry L. Beane II

28 October 2007

Salem Lutheran Church, Gretna, LA

Text: John 8:31-36 (Jer. 31:31-34, Rom. 3:21-28)

In the name of + Jesus. Amen.

There is a famous proverb: "The best things in life are free." You won't find it in the Bible, but it is a conclusion we can draw from Scripture – especially from our epistle reading. "Being justified freely by His grace" is how St. Paul sums up the Christian life.

To be "justified," as St. Paul explains it, to partake in "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," to receive the "propitiation by His blood," to benefit from having our "previously committed" sins "passed over" is not just one of the "best things in life" it is the one very best thing in life. It is life itself. And it is free.

This forgiveness, this righteousness, is not for sale at any price. It is purely offered to us gratis, by grace, at no charge. It is received by faith, by belief. It is never purchased by gold or silver or earned by the sweat of the brow. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law."

The very best thing in life, life itself, eternal life, is free.

And this is good news indeed. It is "the" Good News, the Gospel so often spoken of in the Word of God. This gift has been given away by the Christian Church since the days of the apostles – who were given the authority and the duty to give away this Gospel freely through preaching and the administration of the sacraments.

But in every human endeavor, con men and racketeers will make their appearance. The greatest of all con men are the ones who can extract payment for that which is free in the first place. For they pay nothing for the commodity they vend, but they charge a lot of money to distribute it. Fortunes are amassed this way – and sadly, the Church in the middle ages was chock full of such flimflam men.

The medieval church was rife with corruption: bishops bought and sold their offices, popes routinely broke canon law and acted as tyrants, church and state conspired together to enrich nobles on the frightened backs of pious peasants. But worst of all, the Gospel, Christ's Gospel, the very reason the Church exists at all – was being

sold like trinkets and baubles. What the Church was given to give away became a racket to enrich both popes and princes.

We might wag our heads and express shock that this happened. But the medieval churchmen were no different than the believers in Christ in today's gospel. For the notion that the truth could give them freedom was offensive to them. And that implied that they were in need of release. "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone." Not only were they offended at the Gospel being offered for free to anyone (given that they felt a sense of entitlement, being sons of Abraham), they were offended that Jesus was offering it to them.

Jesus is offering them freedom with no strings attached, no charge, not even an obligation to earn it. And this is offensive.

That's our sinful nature. We know the offer must be too good to be true. For in this sinful life, nothing is free. According to our worldly "wisdom," the old Latin saying: "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts" applies not only to armies with big wooden horses, but also to a Hebrew Preacher offering eternal life. Thanks to our natural distrust, rather than depend on someone's mercy, someone's grace, we'd rather make a purchase and save the receipt. Thanks to our sinful pride, we would rather earn than beg.

The medieval churchmen knew people would pay dearly for justification, for everlasting life, for making peace with God. And so hucksters and hawkers went far and wide, selling indulgences and filling chests with ducats and florins, shiny coins of gold and silver. The people were being taken advantage of by ruthless marketers, but they were also to blame. For they liked buying a piece of paper that absolved them from even coming to church, to make confession, to receive the body and blood of Christ. They liked being able to point to their own money and their own labor for their place in heaven they think they earned. They were content to play the game and purchase these certificates for family and friends – even the dead.

But it was all a lie.

The pious and godly priest and scholar, Dr. Martin Luther, and his fellow theologians from Wittenberg - told the truth. They studied Scripture inside and out. They knew the history of the Church, and grasped what she had taught in times past. They also understood sin. It sim-

ply can't be atoned for with filthy lucre or a babbled quota of prayers.

As a result, the Gospel was once more given free reign. But that part was not without price. The red in our sanctuary today is a somber reminder of the martyrs who gave their lives for the sake of the free Gospel. This time, it was not pagan Roman emperors spilling Christian blood, but Christians in Rome that assumed the role of the tyrant.

But lest we become too proud of ourselves, let us remember that we too are sinners. We also have our pride and spurn the grace of God by sinfully thinking highly of our own deeds and doctrines. We too shun the free Gospel by sinfully putting our trust in our intellectual ability to articulate doctrines, in our denominational and synodical affiliations, in our sharing a name with Martin Luther.

But as Luther pointed out, Luther did not die for our sins. And as the 4th century church father St. Ambrose of Milan wrote, we are not saved by cleverly arguing doctrine. Nor are we saved by our hearty Lutheran hymns, our rigorous Lutheran theology, or our Lutheran tradition of beauty in liturgy and church architecture. We are freely saved because the Son Himself makes us free. We have been redeemed not by our own blood and sweat, but rather by the death and suffering of Christ alone.

Just as the church at Rome in St. Paul's day needed to be reminded of the Gospel, and just as the Church of Rome in Blessed Martin Luther's day needed to hear the good news anew, so do we, dear brothers and sisters, so do we!

In this day and age where Lutherans around the world now have contact with one another, we're finding out that not everyone shares our American customs – which we too often equate with what it means to be Lutheran. For example, our brethren in Africa and Scandinavia have retained bishops, their pastors are still referred to as priests, the people address their pastor as "father," and the faithful still kneel and genuflect when the bells ring and the incense smoke wafts heavenward at the Sunday High Mass. Some in America charge these faithful Lutherans with "Romanizing" as though the reformation were fought over such things as bells and terminology.

In the early days of the Missouri Synod, the first president C.F.W. Walther had to deal with the charge of "Romanism" because our churches used candles and cru-

cifixes, our pastors wore vestments and chanted, and our services followed the ancient liturgical form of the Western Mass.

To toss around the term "Romanizing" over such things is sadly to miss the whole point of the Reformation. Though the Reformation did of necessity address such topics as the role of the papacy and bishops, the place of Scripture in the rule of faith, and the role of tradition in the life of the Church; the issue that ties it all together is the free Gospel.

The issue of the Reformation is the Gospel. It is free, because God's Word says it is. It is by grace, because our loving God wants to rescue us solely by his mercy. It is not a matter of ancestry or tribe – for those who sin are slaves, regardless of ancestry, and it is the Son who makes all believers sons – Jew and Greek, male and female. It is not a matter of labor. Working by the sweat of the brow is a curse of sin, not a solution. It is not a matter of obeying the law, for "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

For even in the days of Jeremiah, the Lord sums up the meaning of the covenant He has with His people in this way: "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

That, dear brothers and sisters, is good news. That, dear friends, is the Gospel. The Lutheran martyrs gave their blood and the Reformers gave their sweat so that we might remember that neither our blood nor our sweat can earn that which is free, that which is a gift.

But lest we think free grace is cheap grace, let us heed the preaching of another Lutheran martyr, one from the last century, Dr. Dietrich Bonhoeffer. We cannot buy or earn God's mercy. But Someone did. Our Lord Jesus Christ shed the blood and the sweat, He earned and purchased us, He redeemed us, "not with gold or silver," as Luther says in his Small Catechism, "but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death."

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded." Neither being a son of Abraham, nor holding a papal indulgence, nor calling oneself a Lutheran is cause for boasting. For the best things in life are free. Eternal life is free. "If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." This is most certainly true!

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Synopsis of July 20, 2008 Voters' Assembly Minutes

Call To Order & Opening Prayer

- Vice President Ortiz called the meeting to order at 11:09am. 22 members were present. Pastor Messer led the opening prayer.

Approval of Agenda

- Motion by Bill Harmon, supported by Financial Secretary Miller to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by Bill Harmon to approve the minutes from April 27. Motion carried unanimously.

Report(s)

- **Pastor:** Pastor Messer presented his report informing the Assembly that he will be on vacation for two weeks beginning July 25. The Elders will lead services in his absence. It was received into record.
- **Officers: Treasurer** – Treasurer Zeile presented the attached report. It was received into record; **Financial Secretary** – Financial Secretary Miller presented his report informing the Assembly that quarterly statements were now available.
- **Boards: Elders** – Chairman Larry Elliott presented the Board's report informing the assembly that the Elders were continuing to visit shut-ins and the new communion practice; **Trustees** – No report was presented; **Christian Education** – Chairperson Greening presented the Board's report informing the Assembly of this year's VBS and a scheduled meeting to discuss the upcoming Sunday School year; **Evangelism** – Chairperson Andrea Elliott presented the Board's report informing the Assembly of the 2nd Time Around Sale, Relay for Life, Troop Support and the Camping Trip scheduled for August 15-17; **Stewardship** – This Board is still getting organized and is looking for members.
- **Organization and Committee Reports: Peace Lutheran Ladies Guild** – Treasurer Zeile informed the Assembly of the new officers and reminded all in attendance about lunch following the meeting; **Peace Youth Group** – No report was presented; **Budget & Finance** – No report was presented.

Business

- There was no business to discuss.

Adjournment & Closing Prayer

- Motion made by Bill Harmon, supported by Financial Secretary Miller to adjourn at 11:39am. Motion carried unanimously. Pastor Messer closed with the Benediction.

Synopsis of September 2, 2008 Church Council Minutes

Call To Order & Opening Prayer

- President Brown called the meeting to order at 7:01pm and led the opening prayer. The following members were present: Chris Brown, Carol Zeile, Gary Miller, Megan Brown, Sharyn Greening, James Sager and Larry Elliott.

Approval of Agenda

- Motion made by Councilmember Sager, supported by Financial Secretary Miller to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by Treasurer Zeile to approve the minutes from August 5. Motion carried unanimously.

Report(s)

- **Pastor** – No report; **Treasurer** – Treasurer Zeile presented the attached report. The FY2009 budget process and timeline were also discussed; **Financial Secretary** – No report; **Boards: Elders** – No report; **Trustees** – No report; **Christian Education** – Councilmember Greening presented the attached report; **Evangelism** – No report; **Stewardship** – No report; **Organization and Committee Reports: Peace Youth Group** – No report; **Budget & Finance** – No report.

Business

- There was no business to discuss.

General Comment

- Councilmember Greening requested from Council that information be displayed regarding a food drive conducted by Weight Watchers. Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by Councilmember Elliott to allow information to be displayed in an appropriate location. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment & Closing Prayer

- Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by President Brown to adjourn at 7:39pm. Motion carried unanimously. The Council prayed the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Brown, Secretary

OCTOBER IS PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (ESV)

Thank You

The Peace Lutheran Church Council requests your participation in our celebration of Pastor Appreciation Month. **A dinner in honor of Pastor Messer and his family is planned for Sunday, October 12 (Pastor Appreciation Day), following Divine Service.** Please join us and express your appreciation to Pastor Messer for his work among us. Chicken will be purchased by the Ladies Guild, and coffee, tea, soft drinks, plates and utensils will be provided. The rest of the meal will be potluck. Please bring a dish to pass (salads, potatoes, vegetables, desserts). As a gift to Pastor and Lisa, there will be a basket in the fellowship hall for cards. Our love and support is an integral part of the ability of our pastor to serve us effectively. Please consider showing your appreciation through a written message and/or a monetary gift.

Although we are setting aside this time to specifically recognize Pastor Messer and his family, pastor appreciation is a year-round activity. Ultimately, pastor appreciation by a congregation is thanking God for sending His servant to us. Loving and appreciating our pastor shows that same love and appreciation to God and reveals more about the congregation than it does about the pastor. Leadership in any organization requires risk. Pastors risk being emotionally hurt when they open up to us and love us unconditionally. Pastors risk being disliked if they make an unpopular decision. Pastors risk criticism for nearly every choice they make, every sermon they preach and every person they love. And, pastor appreciation encourages him to continue to make the difficult choices and to risk loving people who might criticize him in return. There is no way that we can completely understand the trials of our pastor, but we can tell him that we appreciate his dedication to our Lord and to us.

Following are a few examples of things that all of us can do to show our appreciation throughout the year.

1. Tell him you appreciate him and why. And, if you have a concern or complaint, speak directly to him about it.
2. Consider your commitment of time and talents and do something to assist the work of the church.
3. Support your church financially.
4. Stop in during his office hours just for a friendly talk.
5. Ask him how you can help him and then do what he asks.
6. Take him golfing.
7. Smile a little during his sermon.
8. Remember him in your prayers, just as he remembers you in his.
9. Give him a hug and tell him that you love him.

Please share the same love and appreciation to Lisa. Her support is important to Pastor and to the congregation.

PASTOR APPRECIATION DAY

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12

*A Dinner honoring Pastor Messer and his family
following Divine Service*

PEACE NEWS & NOTES

TABLE TALK



Our Table Talks are informal and informative discussions with Pastor Messer on various topics decided by the group in attendance. Our next Table Talk will take place **Thursday, October 30 at 7:00 p.m.** at the church. All are invited to attend! Hope to see you there!

Come join us on the Trail!

The Wittenberg Trail is the online community for people exploring and confessing the Lutheran faith. To join the community, go to:
www.wittenbergtrail.ning.com



To join our Peace Lutheran group on the Trail, go to:
www.wittenbergtrail.ning.com/group/peace-lutheran-alma-mi

ADVENT TEA

Our Advent Tea will take place on **Tuesday, December 9, 2008**. Please consider serving as a hostess. A sign-up sheet is posted on the S.A.L.T. bulletin board. There is an additional sign-up sheet for anyone who would like to attend but does not want to host a table. Our color this year is green. If you would like to help organize the tea, please see Lisa Messer.



Thank you all so much for helping to send Zane to speech camp again. It has helped his speech tremendously and we couldn't have sent him without your help.

Mike and Andrea Luplow

(Responding to the Zane Luplow Fundraiser of July 20.)

EXTRA! EXTRA! We seem to have an extra rocking chair in the nursery. If you are interested in taking it home, please see Marilyn Oswald or Beth Brostrom.

GOTTESDIENST

Gottesdienst is an excellent theological periodical published quarterly. Go to www.gottesdienst.org or see Pastor Messer if you are interested in learning more or to subscribe.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF BOXCAR LOADING 2008

We can spread God's love in a tangible way to a world that is in need! Our Ladies Guild has chosen to focus Lutheran World Relief collection this year on Health Kits.

PLEASE HELP US BY CONTRIBUTING THE FOLLOWING:

hand towels, washcloths, bath-size bars of soap (new bars in wrappers), toothbrushes (NO toothpaste), combs (wide tooth preferred), metal nail files or nail clippers with file attached, band-aids (1/2" to 3/4"). A box is located by the coat room. Collections will be received up to **Sunday, October 5.**

WHY DO WE NEED TO SIGN ATTENDANCE SHEETS?

Filling out the pew Record of Fellowship sheets is part of the function of the church's responsibility of care and nurturing of its members and attention given to visitors. Church records properly kept include the recording of member attendance at worship services.

We would appreciate it if you would please take a moment during the collection of the offering to sign your name and complete the form, pass it on to the person next to you, and leave it at the end of the pew at every service. Thank you.

EUCHRE NIGHT!

To take us beyond the presidential election, our next Euchre Night will be **Friday, November 7 at 6:30 p.m.** Everyone is welcome to come and have fun playing the great game of euchre. Please bring a refreshment to pass - and a friend. See you there!



PEACE NEWS & NOTES Cont'd



Issues, Etc.TM
Christ-Centered Cross-Focused Talk Radio

Issues, Etc. CDs Available Soon!

S.A.L.T. has undertaken the project of recording episodes of *Issues, Etc.* onto CDs, so that any member of our congregation may check them out and listen to them at their leisure. This project is already well underway and the CDs should be available within the next couple

of weeks. Every episode of *Issues, Etc.* since the show returned to the air on June 30, 2008 will be made available. Cases with the recorded CDs will be located in the Adult Bible Study area, along with instructions on how you can check the CDs out. A log of each show's date, guests, and subjects will accompany the cases of CDs to allow you to choose specific shows you would like to listen to. We hope that providing these CDs will enable more of you to listen to this excellent, Christ-Centered, Cross-Focused broadcast. If you have any questions about this, please see Pastor Messer.

2008 PEACE ELECTIONS

Anyone interested in being nominated for any of the following church offices, please make your desire known to one of the members of the Nominating Committee, consisting of Pastor Messer, Chris Brown, Larry Elliott, and Jim Sager:

Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

Elder

Trustee

Board of Christian Ed.

Our annual election of church officers will take place during the Voters' Assembly on Sunday, October 26.

Also, anyone interested in being considered for the following appointed offices, please see Chris Brown or Pastor Messer:

Stewardship Chair

Budget/Finance Committee

ANNUAL VOTERS' ASSEMBLY

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26

11:00 A.M.

From the Lighter Side . . .

A priest and pastor from the local parishes are standing by the side of the road holding up a sign that reads, "The End is Near! Turn around before it's too late!"

"Leave us alone you religious nuts!" yelled the first driver as he sped by.

From around the curve they heard screeching tires and a big splash. "Do you think," said one clergy to the other, "we should just put up a sign that says 'Bridge Out' instead?"



PEACE MOVIE NIGHT!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25

Meet at the church at 6:00 p.m.

In honor of Reformation Day, we will watch

Luther (showing at 6:30 p.m.)

A discussion about the movie will follow.

Pizza, chips, and pop provided courtesy of S.A.L.T.

Bring your own snacks if you wish

Bring your own comfy chairs if you wish

A freewill offering will be collected to support future movie nights. Hope to see you there!

PEACE NEWS & NOTES Cont'd

PEACE LUTHERAN LIBRARY

Donations are always welcome!



If you are thinking about donating one or more books to our library and are not sure what to be looking for, we have a "wish" list of suggestions in the church office. Prices and books can also be found in the CPH catalog, also in

the church office.

We would like to encourage people to use our Church Library more often. If you have read a book from our library that you enjoyed, or that inspired you, and you would like to share it, please contact Beth Bros-trom or Cooline Luplow.

PYG NEWS

October Events

Monthly Meeting - (10-19) - Noon - 2:00 pm

Greetings in Christ,

We are just getting started with another year of the Peace Youth Group. We are planning to have some changes and we hope to have increased participation and activity. Participating youth will have a larger involvement in the planning and completion of activities and events.



Monthly meeting agendas will be changing and beginning with a planned activity, then refreshments, followed by a short Bible study/service, and concluding with a planning meeting. Additional activities may be planned or occur after the meeting.

All Youth interested in attending Higher Things next summer need to be involved in the planning and fund-raising activities. We want everyone to be able to go who is eligible.

Thank you again to everyone who is supporting the youth with our can drive, the Spartan label drive and all our other funding projects.

May the Spirit of the Lord be with you.
Jonathan Penzien

... a Note from the Church Secretary (AA)

First of all, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has helped to get the church office off the ground toward being a working office that is open to staff and members of the congregation as well as serving our pastor. The goal is to make it a cheerful, shared office - welcoming all whom it serves.

It seems that a question has arisen about how newsletter deadline dates are chosen. Let me explain. A "deadline" date is a target date. It does not mean that articles will not be accepted after that date, but that notice needs to be given by the deadline date that an article is in process and when it may be expected. Space can then be set aside for that article. The newsletter takes about 4 days to compile, compose, arrange typeset placement on the page, proofread, edit, receive approval from pastor and then printed for distribution. When the date of distribution is established for a Sunday, the "deadline" date needs to be set for the prior Monday to allow time for printing on Friday before distribution. This may make the "deadline" appear a little early by calendar date, but will be consistent with publication dates.

The same is true of bulletin "deadline" dates. Time needs to be allowed for compiling and setting the articles up on a page and submitting it to pastor for approval for printing on Friday.

Since the position was established as a part-time, 4-hour-a-day position, it takes a great deal of efficiency to accomplish the tasks which would normally take an 8-hour-a-day, 40-hour week to accomplish.

The importance of establishing consistent deadline dates is needed as more and more of pastor's clerical functions are turned over to the administrative assistant's responsibility and report requests come in from the Church Council and Boards.

Whatever help you can give in complying as closely to deadline dates as possible would be a great help and I would sincerely and heartily appreciate any effort that is given. I, in turn, will be glad to help in any way I can in preparing your article for the newsletter. It is my intention to maintain the method of choosing deadline dates as consistently as possible. Thanks so much!

With Love, Mary

LADIES & ALTAR GUILD

Ladies Guild Meeting

Our Ladies Guild next meets on Monday, **October 6 at 7:00 p.m.**, hostess is Coaline Luplow. All Ladies of the congregation are invited to attend our Guild meetings. If you are a confirmed female member of Peace, you are a member of Guild. We would sincerely encourage you to participate and be an active member of the Guild.

PLC Women's Prayer Chain

If you wish to be added to the prayer chain as a caller, see Carol Durst or Beth Brostrom. If you wish to have yourself or someone else "sent through the chain," call Carol Durst at 463-2270.



Altar Flowers

There is a Flower Calendar for 2008 posted on the fellowship hall bulletin board. If you wish to place flowers on the altar sometime during the year, please fill your name in on the calendar and contact the church office with any information that you wish to have included in the bulletin. A bouquet usually lasts about one (1) month. **We would like to encourage 2 persons (families) to purchase flowers each month, one for each plant stand.** Checks may be made payable to Peace Lutheran, marked "Flower Fund," and placed in the offering plate or in the Financial Secretary's inbox in the church office. Thank you for helping to beautify our chancel. Questions? See Beth Brostrom, Cheryl Henry or Marilyn Oswald.



Ladies Guild Sponsored Ft. Wayne Concordia Theological Seminary Student

Please check the bulletin board in the fellowship hall for the recent letter we received from Tim Lorenz, our seminary student, and his wife, Kristin. Tim began serving his one-year vicarage in Gresham, Oregon. They tell about their trip west and of their early experiences

ALTAR GUILD DUTY

October

Carol Zeile

November

Cheryl Henry

December

Cheryl Henry



COFFEE HOSTESSES

October

5 Janice Sager
12 Jenny Baughman
19 Lisa Messer
26 Coaline Luplow

November

2 Carol Zeile
9 Dorothy Trgina
16 M. Isaksson/H. Meyers
23 Mary Jakolat
30 Gretchen Harrison

December

7 Jo Wendt
14 Carol Durst
21 Sue Ortiz
28 Carol Zeile



Ladies Lunch Bunch

Our next luncheon will be at the Alma Big Boy Restaurant on Tuesday, **October 21, at 1:30 p.m.** All ladies of Peace are welcome and also may invite a guest—someone without a church or someone living alone. Please join us!



Ladies' Lunch Bunch

Peace Lutheran Church Ladies' Guild Minutes

September 8, 2008

Meeting was called to order by: President Brostrom at 7:05 p.m. 8 members were present.

Devotions: Beth Brostrom read the Labor Day devotion from Portals of Prayer.

Mite Box Collection: Mite money is being collected at our monthly meetings. This money is used toward the support of seminary student Tim Lorenz. Contributions are welcomed.

Secretary's Report: Was approved as presented.

Treasurer's Report: Savings - \$560.17 / Checking - \$746.96. Transactions- transfers from Speech Camp dinner, payments to Concordia, confirmands boutonnieres, money for Sunshine committee(card/stamps).

Committee Reports:

Altar – Nothing to report.

Banner – Need someone to put up rods for banners. Will check with Mr. Sager/Mr. Henry.

Kitchen – Marilyn reported \$65.50 in fund. Need juice cups. Beth has some supplies that she will donate.

Library – Nothing to report.

Nursery – We will assist in keeping it clean and tidy.

Sunshine – There are enough stamps and cards. Thanks to all who have donated cards.

Special Events – Nothing to report.

Comments by Pastor: Not in attendance for this meeting.

Seminary Student Report: Any letters/notes have been posted on the bulletin board.

Guild Projects: Check on film for the windows to help with glare.

Old Business:

Luplow Benefit – Brought in \$306 and \$250 from Thrivent. Guild donated \$250.

Paid for speech camp and gave money to Andrea and Larry for transportation costs.

We received a Thank You note from Zane's parents for sending him to camp.

We will be looking at the Coffee List to make adjustments as needed.

Jar for Christian Care Fund is needed. Marilyn will provide a new jar.

New Business:

Cookie Walk – Getting calls for tables. Prices were discussed as follows - \$20 per table in main hall/ 2 for \$35/ 3 for \$55. Back room - \$15 per table/2 for \$25. Space- \$20. Suggested to have payment by 15th of November, so if there is a cancellation then another person may be called from waiting list. Crafts only (products are sold at the Youth Group sale in March).

Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Fraternities of America – We seem to receive these letters requesting assistance with little time to prepare donations.

Beth is making recommendation to form a committee to work on these requests throughout the year. This year we have decided to concentrate on two of the kits that have been requested (bars of soap and health kits).

Guild Constitution – Beth has provided a copy of the Guild constitution and asked that members write down any suggestions for changes/additions/deletions. This will be an ongoing task for the guild this year.

Update Special Events Handbook – Beth provided members with a copy of the handbook and recommended that Guild will make that current, as well.

Beth will be speaking to each of the current Committee chairs to see if they would like to continue chairing that committee. She will report her findings at the next meeting.

Next Meeting: will be Monday, Oct. 6th, 2008; Hostess is Coaline Luplow.

Meeting Closed: with the Lord's Prayer at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cheryl Henry, Recording Secretary

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT PEACE

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class

- Sunday School meets at 11:00 a.m. every Sunday. There are four Sunday School Classes this year (Pre-K-2nd Grade; 3rd-5th Grade; 6th-8th Grade; 9th-12th Grade).
- Adult Bible Class is offered **every Sunday at 11:00 a.m.** for all adult members of Peace and guests. We are currently studying the **Book of Concord**, which contains our Lutheran Confessions. This is an excellent opportunity for you to come and learn what we Lutherans truly confess and believe. So, come and learn!
- A make-up class is offered on **Tuesday mornings** for those who were unable to attend the Sunday Adult Bible Class. They are scheduled for the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month at 10:00 a.m.

Youth Confirmation Class

- Youth Confirmation Class - We have two 1st-year Confirmands this year and no 2nd-year Confirmands

Together in the Word

- Our *Together in the Word* Bible Study meets on **Thursday mornings at 10:00 a.m.** All men and women of Peace who are available at that time are encouraged to join us. Guests are always welcome as well. We are currently studying the book of **Exodus**. Please plan on joining us soon.

“It’s All Greek to Me”

- *It’s All Greek to Me* - watch for announcement in the Sunday bulletin.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Birthday to:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Marlene Wiltshire | 13 Jordan Henry |
| 3 Jack Lesinger | 15 Lucille Slick |
| 4 Dick Kohler | 23 Dale Palmer |
| 4 Vicki Gamez | 24 Jayce Kuehnlein |
| 7 Charlotte Dargie | 27 Darlene Palmer |
| 12 Brent Meyers | 28 Burt Henry |
| | 30 Myka Luplow |

Happy Anniversary to:

- 14 Gary and Marlene Miller



PAROCHIAL REPORT

(as of 9/21/08)

Membership at Peace

Baptized - 149 ; Confirmed - 132

Membership gains: 0

Membership losses: 0

Financial Report

YTD Receipts: \$74,543.90

YTD Budgeted Needs: \$84,930.00

PEACE OFFICE HOURS

Monday—Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Pastor Messer’s Office Hours

Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.









Other times by appointment

Please note: These are the hours Pastor Messer will regularly be available in his office at the church, but please check the monthly calendar to ensure that he is not tied up elsewhere (wink, conference, etc.). Feel free to pop in on him during these hours, but please know that his duties may call him away from the office from time to time (hospital call, lunch meeting, member visitation, etc.), so if you want to make sure he is there before you come for a visit, call ahead of time. Lastly, please do not hesitate to contact Pastor Messer at any time should you desire or need to speak or meet with him beyond these posted office hours.

Rev. Thomas C. Messer
(989) 463-3093—Home
(989) 388-2037—Cell
pastor@peacealma.org

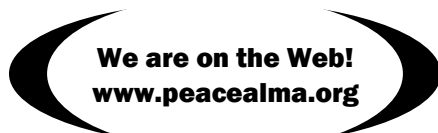
Peace Lutheran Church
325 E. Warwick Drive
Alma, MI 48801
(989) 463-5754
contact@peacealma.org

October 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 10:00 a.m.—Together in the Word 5:00 p.m.—WW	3 	4
5 <i>20th Sunday after Trinity</i> 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 	6 7:00—Ladies Guild	7 10:00—Sunday Bible Study Make-up 7:00—Church Council	8	9 10:00 a.m.—Together in the Word 5:00 p.m.—WW	10	11
12 <i>21st Sunday after Trinity</i> 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—Pastor Appreciation Dinner 	13 <div>Pastor attending Liturgical Conference at St. Paul Lutheran in Kewanee, IL</div>	14	15	16 NO Together in the Word	17	18
19 <i>22nd Sunday after Trinity</i> 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 12:00—PYG 	20	21 10:00—Sunday Bible Study Make-up 1:30 p.m.—Ladies Lunch Bunch	22	23 10:00 a.m.—Tog. in Word 12:00—Divine Service St. James of Jerusalem 5:00 p.m.—WW 7:00 p.m.—S.A.L.T.	24	25 Peace Movie Night <i>Luther</i>  6:00 p.m.
26 <i>Festival of Reformation Day</i> 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—Voters' Assembly 	27 <div>November newsletter articles due today</div>	28 12:00—Divine Service St. Simon & St. Jude 	29	30 7:00 p.m.—Table Talk	31 <i>Reformation Day</i>  "Here I stand!"	

Peace Lutheran Church
325 E. Warwick Dr.
Alma, MI 48801

Church: 989-463-5754
E-mail: contact@peacealma.org
Mary's Home: 989-463-3067
Pastor's Home: 989-463-3093
Pastor's Cell: 989-388-2037



The mission of Peace Lutheran Church is to welcome all people into the fellowship of God's love by proclaiming the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and to nurture our members with God's Holy Word and Sacraments.

SERVING IN OCTOBER

	<u>ACOLYTES</u>	<u>ORGANIST</u>	<u>ELDER</u>	<u>USHERS</u>	<u>GREETERS</u>
OCTOBER					
5 - 9:30 am <i>(20th Sunday after Trinity)</i>	Melanie Penzien Aaron Messer	Beth Brostrom	Bill Harmon	Chris Brown Bill Hendrick	Don and Sue Reithel
12- 9:30 am <i>(21st Sunday after Trinity)</i>	Samantha Messer Rebekah Rodriguez	Mary Jakolat	Terry Luplow	Gary Miller Miguel Ortiz	Charlotte Dargie Marlene Miller
19 - 9:30 am <i>(22nd Sunday after Trinity)</i>	Sarah Messer BJ Henry	Beth Brostrom	Don Reithel	Jim Sager Burt Henry	Carol Durst Marlene Wiltshire
26 - 9:30 am <i>(Reformation Day)</i>	Jordan Henry Ashleigh Rodriguez	Mary Jakolat	Dave Zeile	Curt Oswald Jon Penzien	Bill and Beth Brostrom
NOVEMBER					
2- 9:30 am <i>(All Saints Day)</i>	Tyrel Harwager Natalie Penzien	Beth Brostrom	Larry Elliott	Michael Gilbert Bill Brostrom	Burt and Cheryl Henry

“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men” (Eph. 6:7)

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE—OCTOBER 27