

# THE WITTENBERG WAY

## PASTOR'S PAGE



Dear Grace Family,

October is here, which means that Oktoberfest and our celebration of Reformation Day are on the way at the end of the month. While I am grateful to be a pastor in our blessed Lutheran tradition, I also approach Reformation Day with a bit of sadness. I always feel reluctant about "celebrating" this day, because it forced a major split in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

I think the great church historian, Jaroslav Pelikan, got it right when he called the Reformation "a tragic necessity." As he explains:

"The tragedy of the Reformation consists in the loss by both sides of some of the very things each claimed to be defending against the other; its final outcome was not what either Rome or the reformers had wanted. Yet the necessity of the Reformation consists in the loyalty of the reformers to the best and highest in Roman Catholic Christianity and their obligation to summon Rome back to it. Partisans on both sides have difficulty acknowledging that the Reformation was indeed a tragic necessity. Roman Catholics agree that it was tragic because it separated many millions from the true church, but they cannot see that it was really necessary. Protestants agree that it was necessary because the Roman church was so corrupt, but they cannot see that it was such a great tragedy after all." (*The Riddle of Roman Catholicism*, 46)

That evaluation of the Reformation is as precise and concise as it gets. But any of us who takes our Lord's prayer on the night before He went to the cross seriously, "that the Church may be one" (John 17:21-22), cannot gleefully overlook the tragedy. So, what are we to think of the Reformation, and should we "celebrate" it? I would assert that there were two great recoveries for the Western Church which came from the Reformation—that are worth celebrating.

First, there is the recovery of the Bible through translation into languages so that everyone can hear and understand the Word of God. William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale worked tirelessly in the 16th century to translate the Bible into English—and Tyndale gave his life for it. Luther translated the Bible into German and many others did accordingly in their own native languages. We do not realize how blessed we are to have Bibles in our homes and churches that we can read and comprehend. It should be noted that the Roman Church came around on this issue (finally!) and they are now encouraging their laity to read and study the Scriptures in their own languages.

A second recovery that came about as a result of the Reformation is the doctrine of justification by faith alone. We are diving deeply into this doctrine during the adult Sunday School as we look at Galatians. St. Paul wrote in his magnum opus, "we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified" (Gal 2:16). That was the message that gripped Luther, and so many others during the sixteenth century. How comforting it is to know that we have a right standing before God not on account of our works but on account of faith in Jesus Christ, who "died for our sins and was raised for our justification" (Rom 4:25).

While I mourn the loss of our unity, I also gladly celebrate the courage of men and women (past and present) that uphold the sacred teachings of Holy Scripture at all cost. We stand upon their shoulders as we faithful confess and pass our great heritage down to the next generation. I hope you will join us to remember and confess our holy faith this Reformation Day.

Prayerfully Yours,



Rev. Brian W Thomas

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# Reformation Redux: Keeping our Tradition Alive

by Pr. Brian W. Thomas

The events of the Reformation did not reveal anything new. They only uncovered what was part of the Christian faith that had long been forgotten or hidden over the years by corrupt church practices and poor leadership. Martin Luther pulled back the curtain on what the Scriptures actually said and what the early Church fathers had extolled in word and deed. Though revolutionary for their time, the tenets of the Reformation are integral parts of the life of our church today. One of the popular mottos of the Reformation was "Ad fontes," which mean, back to the beginning. My fear as a pastoral theologian is that things recovered during the Reformation are slowly being forgotten again, which calls for continual renewal and reformation as we are heirs of this great tradition. Ad fontes!

## CONFESSION

The act of confessing sins to God is a personal act between you and God that is not necessarily something that needs to be done in a formal way in the church. Whether at home or in the car or at work or school, you can confess your sins to God and He will grant you full forgiveness. With this said, Luther did not throw the baby out with the bathwater. He retained both corporate confession in the liturgy as well as private confession and absolution as part of the pastoral care that parishioners often need.

*As St. John puts it: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9)..*

## THE HOLY BIBLE

In the time of the Reformation, only those in sacred vocations read and had access to the Bible. Parishioners only listened to their priests read it aloud in Latin, which very few could understand. Martin Luther translated the Bible into German and copies were quickly printed and distributed so that people in the German lands could read the Bible on their own in their own language. Other translations soon followed and people's understanding of the faith grew. Today we are blessed with a variety of good translations in English and have been given the opportunity to know the "old, old story" like never before.

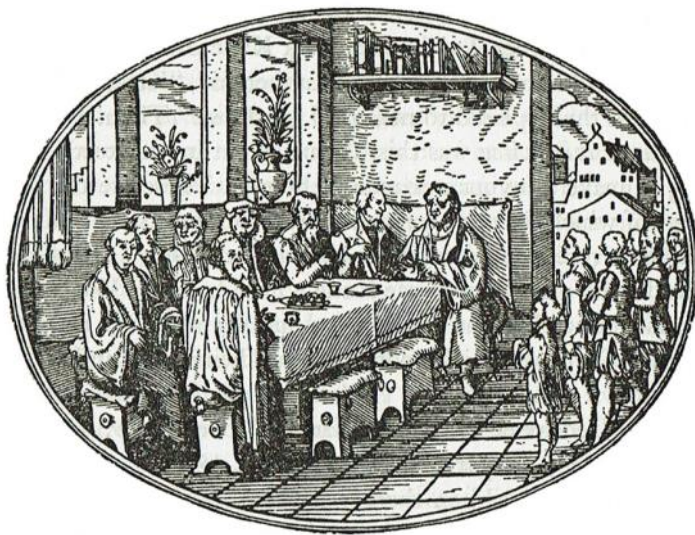
## MUSIC

The Reformation brought music and singing to the people in the pews. As with Bible reading, corporate singing had been relegated to the church "professionals,"

who mainly chanted in Latin. Martin Luther composed 36 hymns that were based on folk melodies people knew and published a hymnbook for use in church and home. Luther additionally supported gifted musicians who were given encouragement to write music that would carry a congregation's melodies with rich biblical content throughout the varied seasons of the church year. The practice continues to this very day in keeping with the psalmist: "I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations" (Ps 57:9).

## TABLE TALK

When Luther served as a professor at Wittenberg, he did not leave the teaching in the school buildings but invited his students to join him around the dinner table with his family to talk about issues related to Christian life. His students often took notes and, eventually, these collections were published as Luther's Table Talks. His theology, love, feistiness, and humor come through these devotional notes. Today the practice of having devotions and prayers around the dinner table is very common among Christian households, and we are grateful to continue this practice.



THE LUTHER HOUSEHOLD AT TABLE

## CATECHESIS

When Luther traveled around to other churches, he was surprised to discover that many people were ignorant of the most basic teachings of the Christian faith. In response, he wrote the Small Catechism for parents to use in their homes to teach their children these six chief parts: (1) The Ten Commandments, (2) The Apostles' Creed, (3) The Lord's Prayer, (4) Baptism, (5) Confession,



# Reformation Redux: Keeping our Tradition Alive

and (6) The Lord's Supper. Here Luther was helping families fulfill the wisdom of Proverbs: "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it (Prov 22:6). Today we honor this tradition by using Luther's Small Catechism in the home and in more formal catechesis like confirmation with our children.

## VOCATION

In the sixteenth century, there was a hierarchy in the work that people did. The clergy were at the top rung of society because of their "sacred callings." Those who were in "blue-collar" jobs, as we would call them today, were at the bottom in their "secular callings." Luther explained that in the eyes of God, all people were equal, no matter what their occupation. We are all part of the "priesthood of believers" that God works through in society, home, and the church. This idea of a "calling" in the name of Christ elevated the status of the common laborer and brought about a greater sense of the inherent worth of a person that was independent of their actual job.

As you reflect on our faithful tradition this month, take a moment to pray the collect for Reformation Day:

Almighty and gracious Lord, pour out Your Holy Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep us steadfast in Your grace and truth, protect and deliver us in times of temptation, defend us against all enemies, and grant to Your Church Your saving grace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



## GRACE LUTHERAN'S OKTOBERFEST



Saturday Oct. 30

2—5 pm

### Catered Menu

Plump Bavarian Bratwurst with fresh rolls  
Hot German Style potato salad  
Sauerkraut, grilled onions, light & dark mustards  
Bavarian Style soft pretzels  
Dessert from Grace's Cake Baker, Amy Russert

### Music and Games

Tom Eskola and the Our Song Oompha Band  
will treat us to traditional German music  
and Oktoberfest games!

*Grace Church Courtyard at 3967 Park Blvd. SD*

*RSVP by signing-up at the Welcome Desk!*



# FUN FACTS ABOUT OKTOBERFEST

Oktoberfest has always been a party, but here are a few things you may not have known about this German tradition:

1. *Oktoberfest* – or “*Wies’n*” as the citizens of Munich call it, is short for Theresienwiese, which translates to (“Theresa’s fields”). “Theresa” refers to Princess Therese of Saxony-Hildburghausen who married Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig on October 12, 1810 in Munich. The event started to honor the Royal Couple.

2. *The original Oktoberfest ended* with a horse race that was so popular the races continued until 1960.

3. *Oktoberfest starts in September*. It was moved up to the third week of September to take advantage of more favorable weather.

4. *Agriculture is still a big part of the festival*. The agricultural show first held in 1811, Bayerisches Zentral-Landwirtschaftsfest, is still held every three years.

5. *Yes there is beer, but it is special beer*. Oktoberfestbier is the equivalent of eight shots of Schnapps. It’s specially brewed by Munich’s finest breweries for the occasion and is on average about 6% Alcohol by Volume.

6. *It’s about the food too*. Bratwurst of course, but more Hendl (roast chicken) is sold than Brats. There is also Steckerlfisch (grilled fish on a stick), Schweinsbraten (roast pork), Haxn (pork knuckle), Wurstl (sausages), Brezn (pretzel), Knodeln (potato or bread dumplings), Kaasspotzn (cheese noodles), Reiberdatschi (potato pancakes), Sauerkraut or Rotkraut (pickled red cabbage), Obatzda (a fatty, spiced cheese-butter concoction), and Weisswurst (white sausage).

7. *Beer tents started small*, but have now grown to the size of the Hofbräu-Festhalle, which seats almost 11,000 people.

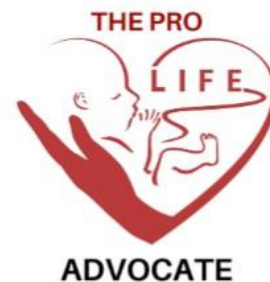
8. *There is a lost and found* at Oktoberfest because alcohol causes people and things to wander off.

9. *German efficiency extends to Oktoberfest*. Most bartenders can fill a liter of bier in 1.5 seconds.

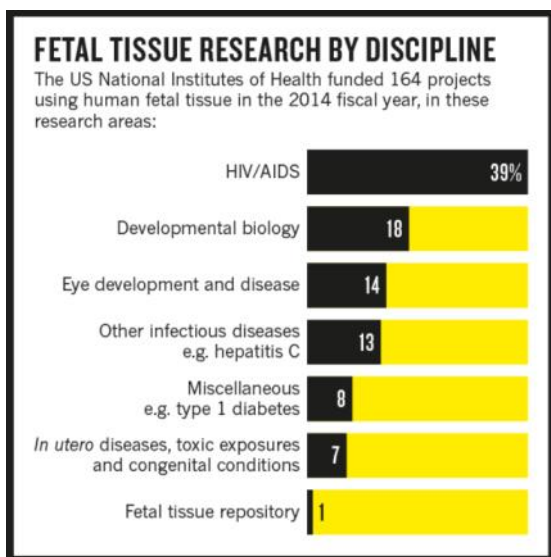
10. *There is a wine tent at Oktoberfest*, but beer is still the more popular option.



Last November a group of pro-life activists was arrested outside Zuckerberg Hospital, a UC San Francisco teaching facility. They were peacefully protesting research that involved the harvesting of fetal tissue and organs. Why? Because the research samples were obtained from women with normal pregnancies prior to elective abortion. Because the babies were healthy and often over 21 weeks' gestation. Because in some instances their fetal intestines and reproductive tracts were transplanted into lab rats. (Source: The Federalist 12.1.20.)



Under what circumstance could a civilized society condone this, let alone arrest people for objecting to it? If you can't think of a single acceptable circumstance, good for you. **By Shannon Carreiro**



But what if I told you the purpose of such research is to eventually grow replacement body parts—arms and legs and spinal cords? What if it could lead to a cure for Alzheimer's or an effective vaccine against a deadly virus? Would that make it more palatable?

Many people--compassionate, well-meaning people--are swayed by such arguments. And the Culture of Death knows it. That's why their propaganda always emphasizes the "hard cases" to justify whatever ethically or morally challenging proposition they're pushing. In this case it's the slaughter of babies for the greater good. Object to that and you are, de facto, indifferent to the pain and suffering of your fellow human beings.

This tactic helped legalize abortion, and continues to help expand it. The "hard cases" used to soften us up are the victims of rape and incest. After all, what heartless person would force a young woman to give birth to a child produced by a violent act? It doesn't seem to

matter that the baby is still a baby, despite the circumstances of its conception. Many well-meaning, compassionate people who say they are pro-life draw the line in cases of rape and incest.

The Culture of Death knows a winner when they see one. So they've employed the tactic once again to evolve public opinion about euthanasia. It was initially positioned as a merciful act reserved for the most extreme cases of suffering and then only with the patient's full consent. But, re-packaged as "physician-assisted suicide," the reasons to use it are morphing. In The Netherlands euthanasia is now acceptable for depression, chronic ringing in the ears, and people who just don't feel much like living anymore. Worse, the more radically progressive elements in that country favor allowing the physician to execute the operation, with patient consent neither needed nor sought.

Sadly, euthanasia and abortion are increasingly put forward as enlightened, progressive policies that benefit society. In Denmark pregnant women are given free fetal testing for Down Syndrome. If the test is positive they are encouraged and often shamed into having abortions for the good of society, as if society can't be good if there is something less than perfect in it.

There is a history lesson in all this that we've apparently forgotten. Between 1943 and 1945 horrific experiments, including vivisection of living pregnant women, were conducted for the good of society. They were performed at Auschwitz by a fellow named Josef Mengele for the benefit of Hitler's Master Race.



**CAPS URGENTLY NEEDS NEW TEAM MEMBERS** — Part-time, non-medical Team members and Administrative Assistant are needed. Please submit resume to: CAPS Pregnancy Clinics PO Box 15115 San Diego, CA 92175.



St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians is a tour de force of certainty for every Christian. It both describes and produces certainty in the Gospel of free forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Christian certainty is not found in persons, feelings, sentiments, reason, positions, human actions, laws, social arrangements or even the Ten Commandments. These all must serve the Gospel. They remain in their own created domain, functioning as God intended them to function. They have no claim on the Christian conscience. And they certainly were not intended to — nor in fact have any right to — be the source of certainty in our relationship with Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As soon as they make any claim for or against our eternal salvation, they must be put back in their place, even ignored. Why?

St. Paul gets to the crux of the matter at Galatians 2:16: "A person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ." On this verse, Luther commented: "A Christian is not someone who has no sin or feels no sin; he is someone to whom, because of his faith in Christ, God does not impute his sin." Luther continued, "The first step in Christianity is the preaching of repentance and the knowledge The Certain Gospel of oneself. The second step is this: If you want to be saved, your salvation does not come from works; but God has sent His only Son into the world that we might live through Him. He was crucified and died for you and bore your sins in His own body" (LW 26:133, 126).

*Can and should a Christian be absolutely certain of God's favor today, in this life, here and now?*

Can and should a Christian be absolutely certain of God's favor today, in this life, here and now? And can and should a Christian also be absolutely certain that upon death, the soul of the believer is in the presence of Jesus to await a bodily resurrection, including a new heaven and a new earth? Absolutely yes!

We need only read the first few verses from Paul's letter:

"Paul, an apostle — not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead — and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia ..." (Gal. 1:1–2).

Over against those troubling these Galatian Christians by asserting that to be saved, all non-Jewish Christians had to believe in Christ and keep the laws of Old

Testament Judaism (including the Ten Commandments) and be circumcised — over against all of this, Paul drew a firm line in the sand: It was either all Christ, or it was nothing. It is not Christ plus the Law that obtains salvation. In fact, anything other than Christ alone damns (Gal. 1:6–9.) By what authority did Paul claim this? The authority of the risen Savior, Jesus Christ, through God the Father. Paul received this Gospel from Jesus by revelation, and he was mandated to preach it.



"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen" (Gal. 1:3–5).

"Grace and peace." Paul writes to the troubled Galatian churches. Paul does not say, "Do good works and feel holy enough to please God." That would only bring uncertainty or damnable self-righteousness. Grace is God's free favor toward us because of what Jesus has already done for us. The "art" of being a Christian is the realization that sins constantly plague me, and that I constantly need Jesus.

Do you want certainty? Then look to Jesus. "For until our death, Satan will never stop attacking all the doctrines of the Creed in us ... . Begin where Christ began — in the Virgin's womb, in the manger, and at His mother's breasts. For this purpose, He came down, was born, lived among men, suffered, was crucified and died, so that in every possible way He might present Himself to our sight. He wanted us to fix the gaze of our hearts upon Himself and thus to prevent us from clambering into heaven and speculating about the Divine Majesty" (LW 26:29, 31).

"Speculation about the Divine Majesty" is all the rage in this world. Just about every other non-Christian I talk with has managed to cook up some sort of homemade religion of their own. The last one I heard was that "God is probably an alien from some other planet." None takes the Law seriously. None has an answer for the depravity and evil of the world. None knows the severity of the demands of the Law. None can give peace to troubled consciences. None knows anything of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

## THE CERTAIN GOSPEL

Luther wrote, “This Wittenberg of ours is a holy village, and we are truly holy, because we have been baptized, communed, taught, and called by God; we have the work of God among us, that is, the Word and the Sacraments, and these make us holy” (LW 26:25).

Paul’s letter to the Galatians shaped the Lutheran Reformation tremendously. The Reformation was about certainty in Christ, over against uncertainty in self-righteousness. And as Paul and Luther clearly taught, such certainty produces a good conscience, faith to fight sin daily, strength to love my family and neighbors, and a compulsion to tell others this marvelous Good News.

“Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified” (Gal. 2:16).

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## FIRST HOLY COMMUNION



After attending catechesis with Pr. Brian on Saturday mornings, Georgia Thompson received her First Holy Communion on September 25, 2020.

## OUR AUGUST 2021 OFFERINGS

August Actual	\$ 23,552	YTD (Jan-Aug 31) Actual	\$163,453	2021 Budget	\$265,000
Budget	\$ 21,972	YTD (Jan-Aug 31) Budget	\$173,996	Amount needed	
Overage	\$ 1,580	<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>\$ 10,543</b>	By 12/31/21	\$ 91,004



3967 Park Blvd.  
San Diego, CA 92103  
619.299.2890  
gracesandiego.com

The Reverend  
Brian W. Thomas  
brianwilliamthomas@gmail.com

Director of Parish Music  
Beth Schleusener  
musicdirector.glc@gmail.com

Church Secretary  
Gretchen Jordan  
gjordan@gracesandiego.com

Sunday Divine Service  
8:00 and 10:30 am

Sunday School  
9:30 to 10:15 am

Nursery available

#### IT'S EASY TO DONATE TO GLC

- Scan the QR code below with your phone
- Text an amount to 84321
- Give through your online banking
- Use your giving envelopes
- Drop your donation in the offering plate.

*Thank you!*



## PRAYERS

### Prayers for Strength

Christy, Walt, Joyce, Dave, Bill, Steve, Michael, Bernie, Morgan, and Paul

### Prayers Awaiting the Arrival of a Child of God

Miriam & Nick, RJ & Christine

### Prayers for our Missionaries

Rev. James May (Kenya), Daniel Conrad (Central America),  
Rev. Dr. Ron & Mary Anne Rall (Papua New Guinea),  
Rev. Dr. John & Melinda Bombaro (Latvia)

### Prayers for our Military Service Members

William Baker, Tajy George, Jack George, Jr., Philip Hawthorne,  
Dylan & Linka Jensen, Josh Martin, Matthew Morgan,  
Heath Russert, Rev. Dave Schleusener, and Holly Schmidt

### Prayers for those unable to attend Services

Lorna Winterstein, Joyce Rochester

## BIRTHDAYS

### OCTOBER

9- Victoria Fullam  
13- Rebecca Kiperts  
14- Cindy Behling-Hansen  
17- Mike Thompson  
20- Zaro Razak  
28- Jeremy Fullam  
17- Wesley Newton

### NOVEMBER

1 - Daniel Lindsey  
11- Spencer Huntley  
11- Luke Rall  
18- Gloria Himmelberger

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### **PENTECOST 20**

Oct 10, 2021  
Psalm 90:12-17

First Reading: Amos 5:6-7, 10-15  
Second Reading: Hebrews 3:12-19  
Gospel: Mark 10:17-22

### **PENTECOST 21**

Oct. 17, 2021  
Psalm 119:9-16

First Reading: Ecclesiastes 5:10-20  
Second Reading: Hebrews 4:1-13  
Gospel: Mark 10:23-31

### **PENTECOST 22**

Oct. 24, 2021  
Psalm 126

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-9  
Second Reading: Hebrews 7:23-28  
Gospel: Mark 10:46-52

### **REFORMATION**

Oct 30, 2021  
Psalm 46

First Reading: Rev. 14:6-7  
Second Reading: Romans 3:19-28  
Gospel: John 8:31-36

### **ALL SAINTS' DAY**

Nov. 7, 2021  
Psalm 149

First Reading: Rev. 7:9-17  
Second Reading: 1 John 3:1-3  
Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

### **PENTECOST 25**

Nov. 14, 2021  
Psalm 16

First Reading: Daniel 12:1-3  
Second Reading: Hebrews 10:11-25  
Gospel: Mark 13:1-13