

PASTOR'S PAGE

REFORMATION DAY

By author Scott Keith 1517.ORG 10/30/2022

In celebration of Reformation Day, here are three ways the Reformation reformed emerging western culture.

1. The Reformation rediscovered the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, on account of Christ alone.

It is surely true that the doctrine of salvation by God's grace alone (his undeserved favor), through faith alone (heartfelt trust), on account of Christ alone was present before Martin Luther's early 16th-century rediscovery. We can see this doctrine explained clearly by the Apostle Paul in well-known verses like Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." And also in Romans 5:1: "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Yet, it is also true that by the time Luther had his "evangelical discovery" this doctrine, while not totally lost, had been obscured. The obscuring may not have even been intentional. The Roman Catholic church of his time, and earlier, too often focused its teaching and practice on a system of salvation "through the church" rather than exclusively on account of Christ alone. Rather than man's work, that when added to faith, would possibly earn God's favor, Luther's rediscovery brought back to the fore God's work on behalf of the sinner.

Luther, his collaborator, Philip Melancthon, and others believed the Roman Catholic system led to doubt on behalf of the believer as to whether they were, or even could be, truly saved. In contrast, when the Reformers read the Bible (especially when studied in the original languages), they found a God who was gracious and merciful for the sake of Christ. This God required faith but gave that required trust through the preaching of the Gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, by 1530 the Evangelicals (the original term used to describe Lutherans) made the seminal statement regarding justification in Article Four of the Augsburg Confession. "Also, they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4." Thus, the rediscovery of the gospel of Christ Jesus was complete, and the Church could and would once again confess justification by grace alone, through faith alone, on account of Christ alone as the article of faith upon which the Church of God stands or falls. [1]

2. The Reformation gave us the doctrine of Christian Vocation.

Prior to the Reformation, the aforementioned "system" of the Church of Rome also taught that only vocations within the Church were holy or divine. These vocations included those of priests, monks, nuns, bishops, and the like. Thus, if one wanted to serve God in their daily life, one needed to vow to devote that life wholly to God. This service required forsaking the world and its common, carnal, and banal trappings, in exchange for service to God within one of the divine callings of the Church.

As Luther progressed in his theological understanding, though he was a monk and a priest himself, he began to reject this idea. He saw in the Scriptures that God had ordained all work for the purpose of serving one's neighbor. If you desire to serve God, Luther would say, look around you to the people that God has put in your life and find the ways that he has called you to serve them, e.g. by being a good mother or father, husband, or wife, worker, teacher, child, or student. When one fulfills one's vocation to another, one serves God. Luther called this being "little christs" to the world.

In this way, Luther and others taught that ordinary service to others was no ordinary thing at all; it was holy. Every vocation allowed God to use the believer as his hands and gave normal work extraordinary purpose. So, you today, even if you don't work in "professional church work," can say that you serve God in your earthly job because that job helps and serves your neighbor. Through the Reformation doctrine of Christian vocation, Luther brought purpose back to our work and everyday service. [2]

3. The Reformation shaped modern education and improved literacy through the reform of the educational system in Germany (which extended to most of the world).

Before the Reformation, universal education for the young was unknown, and literacy was very low. Perhaps because the Lutheran “gospel rediscovery” came through literacy (specifically in Greek and Hebrew), Lutherans had a high view of the need for education. Melanchthon established something called the Gymnasium—a system of education for young children according to age and ability. Children would progress in levels of education when certain literacy skills were mastered. Students learned to read using the Bible and Luther’s Small Catechism, and they would learn basic skills, as well as some mathematics, history, religion, and philosophy. The system of the Gymnasium was the progenitor of what many students now experience, in various forms, in both public and private primary school education.

Additionally, Melanchthon had a leading hand in the reforming and founding of several German universities. His work developing a curriculum for these universities was the progenitor of what is now advertised as a classical liberal arts university education. His curriculum included studying ancient languages, ancient literature, theology, philosophy, mathematics, and history. His work was so seminal that it was used as the model for developing higher education curricula for over 300 years, and his influence can still be seen today at universities that still include – or are trying to reintroduce – classic liberal arts to their educational curricula. [3]

In Conclusion:

If you worship in a church that preaches that you are saved by God’s good grace alone, through believing in Christ crucified for the forgiveness of your sins alone, not only should you be thankful for it, but you should learn more about the Reformation. If you believe that your work in your profession, or in your home as a husband or wife, father, or mother, is God-pleasing and a real service to your neighbor, you have the Reformation to thank. And finally, if you were educated within the public or private school system and received a good liberal arts education either in high school or at the collegiate level, you can honor that education by studying more about the Reformation.

Whether you do or don’t, do know this: God loves you and justifies you because of the death and resurrection of his Son. He died and rose again for you. His preached Word creates faith in your heart, and you are now his own dear child. Once this miracle has taken place, you will love and serve (though imperfectly) those he has put into your life. He will make you his hands and his mouth. The Gospel truly is the power of God unto salvation for all those that believe – Christians included, and you included! Reformation Day to God Be the Glory!

[1] For more on the Augsburg Confession, see Mark Mattes, *The Augsburg Confession: A Guide for the Perplexed* (1517 Publishing, 2022).

[2] For more on Christian Vocation, see Michael Berg, *Vocation: The Setting for Human Flourishing* (1517 Publishing, 2021).

[3] For more on the Lutheran influence on liberal arts education, see Scott Ashmon and Scott Keith, *To Be a Student* (1517 Publishing, 2018).

CHARITY OF THE MONTH FOR NOVEMBER/DECEMBER



During the months of November and December, any money received in the “Designated Offering” contribution envelope, will go to **Lutheran World Relief**. Their development projects focus on issues at the root causes of poverty. These debilitating causes tend to domino into more and more problems that trap people in poverty. By the same token, attacking just one of these issues can help break the cycle, making people’s lives better and freeing them from suffering in many ways. Lutheran World Relief helps by implementing projects all over the world that help with water purification, aiding in emergencies, agriculture, climate, health & livelihood and civic participation. To learn more visit www.lwr.org

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

November is when we hold our annual voters' meeting. We are planning to hold it on Sunday, November 12th after the service. I encourage you all to attend and provide your feedback on our budget. The council and boards have worked hard to try to minimize the increase, but rising costs of so many expenses made it difficult to hold flat or make a reduction. Please make sure to grab a copy of the budget on the table in the narthex and review it prior to attending.

I'd like to thank all the individuals who agreed to fill the open spots on some of our boards. I'm happy to report that they have all been filled! We could always use an extra elder or two, so if you are interested, please see Gerry Luebke or myself.

Last, but not least, Gina and I had the opportunity to attend the Love INC fundraising dinner last Saturday night. This was our first time attending and it was a wonderful experience! We got to hear, firsthand, a very heartwarming story of how one woman's life was turned around by this organization. They do amazing work, and it is done in the name of Christ. What a blessing to our community! As we approach the season of giving, I encourage you to consider this charity. I'd also like to thank those who donated tools to the raffle basket that was given on behalf of Bethany. Your generosity helped a worthy cause!

Yours in Christ,
Andy Fibiger

BETHANY'S 2023 ANNUAL VOTERS' MEETING **Sunday, November 12, 2023**



The voters' meeting will be held immediately after the service on Sunday, November 12. Part of the agenda includes approving the 2024 budget as well as the minutes from last year's Voter's Meeting. Both the proposed budget and meeting minutes can be found in the back of church for your review prior to the meeting.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

11-2: Aidan Brooks
11-5: David Hummitzsch
11-7: Peter Welsh
11-8: Ashleigh Wychesit
11-10: Steven Marotz



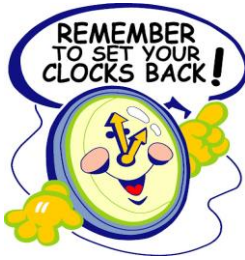
11-14: John Keller
11-18: Judi Strenger
11-21: Lauren Welsh
11-24: Karen Wuerzberger
11-25: Ryan Johnson
11-29: Mary Hummitzsch



NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

11-9: Karl & Barb Kaeppler

**Daylight Savings Ends November 5.
Don't forget to turn your clocks back
one hour Saturday, November 4**



**Our Thanksgiving Eve service
will be held on Wednesday,
November 22 at 6:00pm**



✚ ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

All Saints Day is November 1. During our service on November 5th, we will remember all the saints that have gone to their eternal resting place. We will especially remember those from our congregation that have faithfully departed since our last All Saints Day – Donald Weber and Jonathon Albert.



SUNDAY SCHOOL SHOPPING TRIP

The Sunday School students will be taking a shopping trip on Saturday, November 11 to purchase items to fill our shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Anyone able to attend should meet at church at 9:30am to work out the carpool arrangements. We have 12 shoe boxes to fill and thanks to our Sunday School offerings, and some generous congregation donations, we will not have a problem filling all of them. Thank you for your support!

Family Dinner/Movie Night

What: Pizza, popcorn, and the movie "A Turtles Tale" (PG)

Where: The Fellowship Hall at Bethany

When: Friday, November 17

Time: 5:30 - 8:00pm

Who: Everyone! Parents welcome (but not required) to stay.

Details: Bring your blanket, bean bag, pillow etc.



Sign up in the lower narthex or call or email the church to let us know if you can make it. Don't forget to invite a friend!

WEATHER CANCELLATION

With winter just around the corner that means a possibility of church closure due to weather. If you need to know if a church service or activity has been cancelled, please check tv channel **Today's TMJ4** or online at **tmj4.com**. It will also be posted on Bethany's website: www.bethanylutherankohler.org and our Facebook page: Bethany Lutheran Church – Kohler, WI.



Thanks to everyone who helped in any way with the Love INC Living Out Loud Dinner Auction. Happy to report, we surpassed our fundraising goal of \$60,000 by raising over \$72,000!! We are overwhelmed by everyone's generosity and support. May God bless you all!



An extra special thank you to those that helped fill Bethany's tool bag for the silent auction. The winning bid came in at \$380!

~Your friends in Christ at Love INC

Honoring Our Veterans...Veterans Day, November 11, 2023

THANK YOU FOR SERVING



Gary Bartz – Air Force
Ken Buesing – Army
Bruce Fisher – Air Force
Lee Gumm – Army
Paul Havlinek – Army
Bob Kuehlmann – Navy
Steve Marotz – Army
Bob Parnitzke – Army
Steve Perry – Marines
Dave Prange – Air Force
Jerry Sabrowsky – Army
Tom Schnettler – Navy
Russ Sholten - Navy
Ken Thompson – Army
Kevin Werner – Marines
Bob Wuerzberger – Army
Joe Wychesit – Air Force
Shua Yang – Army

ACTIVE

David Hasler - Navy
Aiden Faucher - Marines



When they served, where they served, or how long they served is not what we celebrate....
it is that they served willingly to preserve the freedom we all enjoy in the United States of America.

*If you served but your name is not listed, please contact the church office so we can update our list.
Thank you!*

THOSE SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2023

Sunday, November 5

10:00 a.m.

w/Holy Communion

Elder:	Steve Hazen
Ushers:	Dan Fibiger
Altar Guild:	Shirley & Ray Ottman
Scripture Reader:	Todd Matte
Door Locker:	Ryan Brooks
Streaming:	Grace Matte

Sunday, November 12

10:00 a.m.

Elder:	Todd Matte
Ushers:	Hazen
Altar Guild:	Liz & Ken Buesing
Scripture Reader:	Lee Gumm
Door Locker:	Steve Marotz
Streaming:	Austin Fibiger

Sunday, November 19

10:00 a.m.

w/Holy Communion

Elder:	Gerry Luebke
Ushers:	Ken Thompson, Bob Kuehlman
Acolyte:	Katelynn Regutis
Altar Guild:	Gina & Madison Fibiger
Scripture Reader:	Kelly Paltzer
Door Locker:	Patrick Johnson
Streaming:	Madison Fibiger

Wednesday, November 22

6:00 p.m.

Elder:	Lee Gumm
Ushers:	Steve & Diane Marotz
Streaming:	Steve Perry

Sunday, November 26

10:00 a.m.

Elder:	Shua Yang
Ushers:	Matte
Altar Guild:	Sue & Dave Prange
Scripture Reader:	Steve Hazen
Door Locker:	Ken Thompson
Streaming:	Thomas Yang

NOVEMBER 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			01 6pm Bible Study	02	03	04 Daylight Savings
05 8:45am Sunday School & Confirmation 10am Worship w/HC All Saints Day	06 6:30pm Elders	07	08 6pm Bible Study	09 10am Bible Study	10	11 Veterans Day
12 8:45am Sunday School & Confirmation 10am Worship 11am Voter's Meeting	13 6:15pm Finance 7pm Council	14	15 6pm Bible Study	16 10am Bible Study	17 5:30pm Movie Night	18
19 8:45am Sunday School & Confirmation 10am Worship w/HC	20	21	22 6pm Thanksgiving Service	23 Thanksgiving Day	24	25
26 8:45am Sunday School 10am Worship	27	28	29 6pm Bible Study	30 10am Bible Study		