Justification: It ***Still*** Matters

The 2,000 year history of the Church might be divided into three broad, but critical questions: Who is God? How is man saved? And who is man? The Church in its early centuries, responding to theological heresies espoused by the likes of Arius and Nestorius,[1] produced the three ecumenical creeds (Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian), succinctly and powerfully confessing the triune nature of God and the divine and human natures of Jesus. In its medieval period, the reformers, seeing false teaching in matters of soteriology (matters of salvation) penned confessions (such as The Augsburg Confession, The Apology/Defense of the Augsburg Confession, and The Formula of Concord) to return the Church to the Gospel of justification by grace alone through faith alone on account of Christ alone.

Today the Church is wrestling with the question of what it means to be a created being of God, specifically, what it means to be male or female (so anthropology). In previous newsletters (and in ones to come) we have addressed and will address the question of our age. In this article, since this month we are celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we are going to discuss the ongoing significance of the Lutheran reformers' answer to the question of how man is saved.

For Luther and his fellow reformers, the answer to this question was clearly taught in Scripture. So, they confessed in The Augsburg Confession,[2]

> [We] teach that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God through our merit, work, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God out of grace for Christ's sake through faith when we believe that Christ has suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us. For God will regard and reckon this faith as righteousness in his sight, as St. Paul says in Romans 3 and 4.

The Roman Catholic Church roundly condemned this confession (along with most of the rest of the Augsburg Confession).[3] So the Lutheran reformers, because they believed that this question "deals with the most important topic of Christian teaching which, rightly understood, illumines and magnifies the honor of Christ and brings the abundant consolation that devout consciences need," penned The Apology/Defense of the Augsburg Confession in

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[1] Arius taught that "there was a time when the Son was not." In other words, Jesus was not God in the flesh, but a creation of God. This heresy lives today in the Jehovah's Witnesses who reject the divinity of Jesus and claim Him to be a creation of God. Nestorius rejected the hypostatic union of Jesus. That is, he rejected that Jesus is God and man in one person. This heresy is alive today in the New Apostolic Reformation, which claims that Jesus performed His miracles as a man (not as God) fully submitted to the Father. As a result, they teach that if we fully submit ourselves to the Father that we will be able to do even greater miracles than Jesus.

[2] Holy Roman Emperor Charles V requested the Lutheran reformers present their confession before a meeting of church officials in Augsburg Germany. This written confession became the cornerstone for a collection of confessional documents known as The Book of Concord.

[3] The reformers write, "The Roman Catholic Church leaders] condemn us for teaching that people receive forgiveness of sins not on account of their own merits but freely on account of Christ, by faith in Him. They condemn us both for denying that people receive the forgiveness of sins on account of their own merits and for affirming that people receive the forgiveness of sins by faith and are justified by faith in Christ."

which they carefully and clearly detail exactly what they believe, teach, and confess about God's justifying work for man.

So they write, "*to be justified* means that out of unrighteous people righteous people are made or regenerated, it also means that they are pronounced or regarded as righteous." This happens, as they explain, by faith: "by faith itself we are regarded as righteous for Christ's sake, that is, we are acceptable to God." Our works have nothing to do with it.

They turn to Scripture to make their point:

- "For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law…" [Rom. 3:28]
- "It is a gift of God – not the result of works, so that no one may boast…" [Eph. 2:8-9]
- "…justified by his grace as a gift…" [Rom. 3:24]

Notice the language: "apart from works prescribed by the law," "gift of God," and "not the results of works." Simply put: we do not contribute to our salvation. Our works do not merit our salvation. Our works do not justify us, that is, make us righteous before God. Only faith justifies, because as the reformers confess, only faith "receives the benefits that God offers."

This is a critical point for the reformers for two reasons (as mentioned above). First, anything short of this confession detracts honor and glory from Christ by demoting Christ from Savior to assistant. If Christ's work didn't make full satisfaction for sin, but has to be supplemented by our works of satisfaction for sin, then Christ isn't a Savior in the fullest sense of the word; He is merely an assistant. And God's grace isn't His undeserved favor whereby He, for Christ's sake, reconciles us to Him and declares us righteous; it is merely His kindly assistance on our path to meriting salvation through our works.

And this highlights the second reason the Lutheran reformers insisted on keeping justification by faith alone at the center of their confession: anything less left sinners uncertain of salvation and uncomforted by the Gospel. The Roman Catholic Church taught that God gave grace to help people become righteous, and thereby, merit justification (understood as God's acknowledgment of what man had achieved through his grace assisted work).

The Lutheran reformers insisted that Scripture taught otherwise. God, in Christ, had demonstrated His grace by sending Christ to make full atonement for sin, full satisfaction for sin, and because of Christ's work, we are declared to be righteous before God; we are justified by God's grace in Christ. Faith believes this and is regarded as righteousness before God. In this way, God's makes unrighteous people righteous before Him.

In order to teach this to the Church, Luther and his fellow reformers wrote hymns. Consider but two verses of Luther's hymn "Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice" (*LSB* 556):

My own good works all came to naught,
No grace or merit gaining;
Free will against God's judgment fought,
Dead to all good remaining.
My fears increased till sheer despair
Left only death to be my share;
The pangs of hell I suffered.

God said to His belovèd Son:
"It's time to have compassion.
Then go, bright jewel of My crown,
And bring to all salvation.
From sin and sorrow set them free;
Slay bitter death for them that they
May live with You forever."

Take note of Luther's emphasis on the insufficiency of our works in the first verse and then his highlighting of God's work in Christ in the second verse. In masterful verse Luther has captured the essence of Scripture's beautiful teaching on salvation. We are privileged to sing these words and confess Scripture's truth still today because of the work of Martin Luther and the reformers. Their work and Scripture's truth still matters. – Pastor Conner

Ministry Apps

Applying the Gospel to Hearts and Homes (October 2017): Zion and Trinity Lutheran

"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth." Jn. 17:17

Wouldn't an app for "truth" be wonderful? One could quickly and easily discern whether the response from a child was the truth or a lie. The advertised claims for a product or service could be verified. While "truth" should always be true, it is increasingly confusing and subjective. While *The New York Times* is not my daily reading, the paper was in my hands on September 1. Dominantly printed was a listing about truth: truth is hard; truth is hidden; truth is hard to hear; truth isn't so obvious, truth has no agenda; truth pulls no punches; truth is under attack . . . and a dozen additional descriptions.

Not surprisingly Biblical descriptions of truth were not included. Jesus said, "I am the truth," (John 14:6); "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free," (John 8:32); "Your word is truth," (John 17:17).

Luther lived in a time of lies: lies about the power of the church, the forgiveness of sins, the certainty of salvation, the message of Scripture. God used His servant Luther to take the church and the world to the Truth of Jesus. The lies continue: truth is relative; the church is irrelevant; destiny is self-directed. Sometimes we believe the lies about our own worth to God. The Reformation Truth is God's Word of Truth. God in Christ has forgiven our sins and claimed us as His own.

Teaching the Truth

Zion is blessed with a dedicated Sunday school staff who each week teach the truth of God's Word to our children. Lessons the first quarter take children to the Old Testament stories of kings and prophets. When the lies of the idols distracted kings and the people of Israel, God sent His messengers of truth who shared the promise of the Messiah. Make weekly worship and Sunday school a family priority. Give your children the Truth.

The Truth about Suffering

Friends of Job—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—gave their limited human perspectives (and lies) about Job's suffering. In the midst of his suffering Job continued to trust in the promises of God. Whom do you turn to in times of suffering? The Monday morning (9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.) Bible study explores the topic of suffering. Everyone welcome!

Following the Truth

Like a "school" of fish, our preschool children have been following their Leader, Jesus. Celebrate with our preschool families at a special worship service on October 22 (8 a.m.). Join them in enjoying the Pancake Brunch after the service. Thanks Zion family and Manning community for your support of Zion preschool.

Seeing the Truth

It's Truth time. As I traveled through Europe and saw places of ancient, medieval, and world war history, I often reflected, "I wish I would have been more attentive in school history classes." The 500th anniversary of the Reformation is a teaching time. It's a time to see how God worked through history to share His truths. The Sunday morning adult class looks at "The Man Named Martin." Sunday, October 15 brings a special viewing of the new Reformation movie. It's family friendly!

Celebrating the Word of Truth! Pastor Riggert

Celebrate Vocation!

The Zion Fellowship Club celebrates vocation—God's calling in the careers and roles for which He has equipped us. The Reformation brought a renewed appreciation for the laity in church and community. The group will meet on Monday, October 16 at the home of Howard and Audrey Roe (404 4th Street). Howard will share the joys and challenges of a career in banking. September's special presenter was Dr. Rexanne Struve who shared her vocation as a veterinarian. Guests welcome!

ON THAT NOTE

Treasuring our Musical Treasure

Some men change the world with a sword; Martin Luther (1483-1546) did it with a pen. Beyond his Reformation-igniting 95 Theses, numerous theological treatises, Biblical commentaries, topical essays, and sermons, which continue to influence minds and shape the church and world, Luther penned hymns – dozens of them. And, in contrast to how many today think of music – as entertainment or mood modifiers – Luther saw music as a servant of the Word of God (and, despite popularized rumors, he didn't modify bar tunes for his hymns!). As such, his hymns were written not merely to create a feeling or to convey personal emotion; his hymns were written to communicate a message, a message centered in the objective work of God in Jesus. They were meant to draw a person outside of himself into the work and word of Christ, to help him understand who God is and what He had done for sinful man.

Luther understood this simple axiom: hymns teach. Music may do far more than teach (as Luther heartily acknowledged), but hymns were designed to teach Christians the content and substance of the faith they confessed. We see this teaching in action this month as we consider what is perhaps Luther's most famous hymn: A Mighty Fortress is Our God. Our hymnal contains two arrangements of this hymn (656 and 657). We will consider the first of the two (as the original tune of the two), although it is the second tune that most will more readily recognize.

A mighty fortress is our God,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He helps us free from ev'ry need
That hath us now o'ertaken.
The old evil foe
Now means deadly woe;
Deep guile and great might
Are his dread arms in fight;
On earth is not his equal.

"The God of Jacob is our fortress." Thus ends Psalm 46 and thus Luther begins his hymn based on this psalm. Just as the psalm centers on the person and work of God – God works, God brings desolations on the earth, God makes wars cease, God breaks the bow, shatters the spear, and burns the chariot with fire, Luther's hymn turns our attention away from us to God our mighty fortress. God is our fortress. God is our shield. God is our weapon. God helps us in every need.

So when Luther introduces our old evil foe, Satan, to the hymn, we are unafraid. Despite Satan's deep guile and great might and despite him having no rival on earth, we are emboldened because we have just finished confessing that our mighty fortress, shield, and weapon is with us to help us.

ON THAT NOTE

With might of ours can naught be done,
Soon were our loss effected;
But for us fights the valiant One,
Whom God Himself elected.
Ask ye, Who is this?
Jesus Christ it is,
Of Sabaoth Lord,
And there's none other God;
He holds the field forever.

Verse two introduces a battle scene. We stand on the battlefield against Satan. And Luther reminds us: "With might of ours can naught be done…" In other words, our might can accomplish nothing (naught) against Satan. If we stand alone against this foe, our loss will soon be effected; it will soon be brought to pass.

But we don't stand alone! The valiant One, the One God elected from eternity past, stands before us. Who is this valiant soldier? Jesus Christ "of Sabaoth Lord." This is a Hebrew phrase communicating rule of the Heavenly armies. So: Jesus Christ, Commander of the Heavenly Armies! That's who stands between us and Satan. He's our God, the only God, and He holds the field victoriously forever.

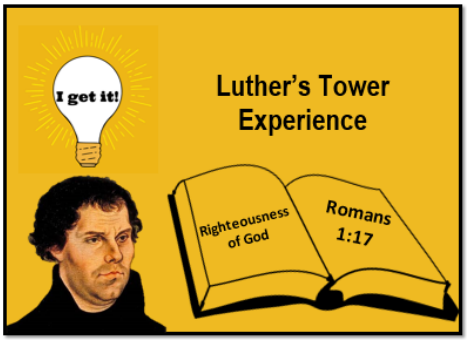
Though devils all the world should fill,
All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill;
They shall not overpow'r us.
This world's prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none.
He's judged; the deed is done;
One little word can fell him.

Verse three broadens the battlefield to the world as it paints an initially terrifying scene: the world teeming with demons bent on defeating and devouring us. Yet, even then we are unmoved. Fear does not possess us. Satan can scowl. He can roar. He can threaten. But he cannot harm us. He stands condemned. The deed of the cross and resurrection is done. "It," as Jesus proclaimed from the cross, "is finished." Satan can fill the world with demons and cause as much mayhem and mischief as he will, one little word – Jesus – defeats him.

The Word they still shall let remain
Nor any thanks have for it;
He's by our side upon the plain
With His good gifts and Spirit.
And take they our life,
Goods, fame, child, and wife,
Though these all be gone,
Our vict'ry has been won;
The Kingdom ours remaineth.

Verse four highlights the permanence of God's Word. It, despite the collapse of all things earthly, will remain. And through all things, God remains by our side giving His gifts of forgiveness, grace, and life as well as His Holy Spirit. And even if Satan were to take our life, our property, our reputation, our children, or spouse, even if everything we hold dear were taken away, Christ's victory over sin, death, and the devil would remain and His Kingdom of God would forever be ours.

These are words of bold confidence centered in the objective work of God in Jesus and this hymn presents firm teaching on the victory of Jesus and the confidence it instills in Christian living. May we continue to sing it with gusto!



Martin Luther, the man credited with sparking the Reformation with his 95 Theses and fueling it with over 130 volumes of theological writings from sermons to confessional documents and from commentaries to catechisms, once quipped in a sermon, "I did nothing; the Word did everything."

There was a time, however, when Luther wrestled mightily with the Word, when the Word was opaque and closed to him, a time when He even despised and resented the God who had spoken that Word. That was until the Spirit opened that Word to him to reveal its truth and sweetness. The following paragraphs are excerpts from Luther's personal account of his struggle, a struggle that centered in one particularly significant passage: Romans 1:17. It reads: "For in [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'" Let's listen to Luther:

"I had indeed been captivated with an extraordinary ardor for understanding Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. But up till then… a single word in Chapter 1[:17], "In it the righteousness of God is revealed," … stood in my way. For I hated that word "righteousness of God," which, according to the use and custom of all the teachers, I had been taught to understand philosophically regarding the formal or active righteousness, as they called it, with which God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner.

"Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that he was placated by my satisfaction [penance]. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God, and said, "As if, indeed, it is not enough, that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity by the law of the decalogue (Ten Commandments), without having God add pain to pain by the gospel and also by the gospel threatening us with his righteousness and wrath!" Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience. Nevertheless, I beat importunately upon Paul at that place, most ardently desiring to know what St. Paul wanted.

"At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, "In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'" There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the Scriptures from memory. I also found in other terms an analogy, as, the work of God, that is, what God does in us, the power of God, with which he makes us strong, the wisdom of God, with which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God.

"And I extolled my sweetest word with a love as great as the hatred with which I had before hated the word "righteousness of God." Thus that place in Paul was for me truly the gate to paradise…" (LW 34, 336-337).

REFORMATION 2017 It's *Still* All About Jesus

On October 31, 1517, in Wittenberg, Germany, Martin Luther posted his thoughts about some theological topics and the practices of the Church. That simple action began the Reformation — a movement that changed Western society.[4]

One man stood against the corruption of the establishment. Luther's fight was, of course, one of theology. But it was still one man, a monk, against the massive Holy Roman Empire. Luther was threatened, exiled, condemned and labeled a heretic. But his teaching grew in popularity throughout his life.

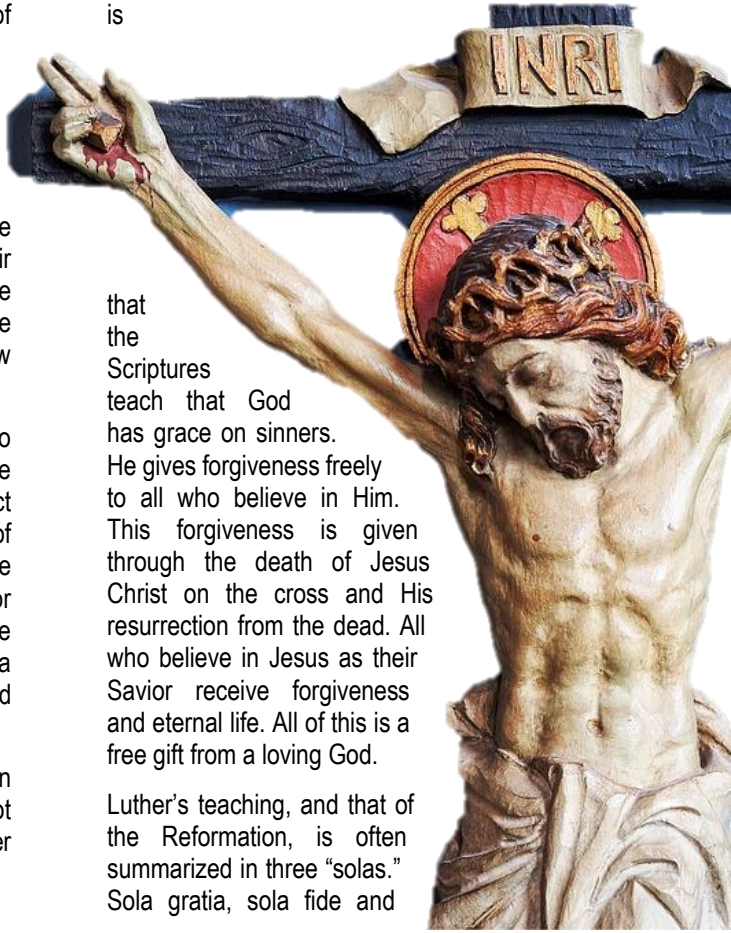
Those who follow Luther's teachings number in the millions. Most Protestant churches today trace their lineage, in some part, to the teachings of Luther. The German language exists as it does today in large part due to Luther's translation of the New Testament.

Luther's writings on the freedom of the Christian to serve the government, and the role of the government to establish justice and to protect citizens, have greatly influenced our view of authority. Though he was a theologian, Luther wrote and thought about all of life. He was concerned for the children in his town. He was involved in the politics of his day. He was an academic. He was a family man. He was a revolutionary. He was involved in the lives of the poor and the common man.

Yet this Reformation anniversary is not a celebration of Luther. Even the Lutheran church does not celebrate Luther. Lutheran does not mean a follower of Luther, but of his theological teachings.

Luther and the other Reformation theologians believed that all mankind is sinful, that everyone is guilty of error in God's sight. They also believed that God will punish those who do what He forbids. The problem is not only that everyone sins, but that mankind's sinful condition means there is no way to do enough good things to earn God's love.

The Reformation proclaimed that the solution to the problem is not in man, but in God. Luther and his followers taught that the Bible teaches salvation by God's grace, through faith, because of Jesus. The message of the Reformation is that the Scriptures teach that God has grace on sinners. He gives forgiveness freely to all who believe in Him. This forgiveness is given through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. All who believe in Jesus as their Savior receive forgiveness and eternal life. All of this is a free gift from a loving God.



Luther's teaching, and that of the Reformation, is often summarized in three "solas." Sola gratia, sola fide and

[4] This article is available online at www.lutheranreformation.org along with numerous other resources related to the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation.

sola scriptura — by faith alone, by grace alone and by Scripture alone. The key to Reformation theology is found in God's love for people.

By grace alone means that God gives His love freely. People can't earn God's love. People can't earn forgiveness. God's love is not gained by human efforts, but given freely by God's grace.

By faith alone means that those who believe in Jesus as God's Savior for all of mankind receive forgiveness and eternal life. Faith is something God gives to people through His Holy Spirit, working in the Word of God and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper. People do nothing to earn God's love, but receive it by grace through faith.

By Scripture alone means that God has revealed His truth through the Holy Bible. Scripture is the one trustworthy source for the truth about God. The Scriptures are properly read in light of Jesus as the Son of God in the flesh. The Bible teaches that His death and resurrection is the key event in all of history, because there, Jesus died to gain the forgiveness of everyone's sins. This does not mean that Christians should only read the Bible. Sola scriptura means that the Bible is the only trustworthy source for doctrine and life.

The three solas, by grace alone, by faith alone and by Scripture alone, are all summarized in one more phrase from the Reformation, solus Christus — through Christ alone.

This is really the focus of the Reformation. God's grace, our faith and the Scriptures are all focused on Jesus Christ. The Reformation moved the focus from the Church to Jesus. Luther and the reformers taught that Jesus is how God relates to us and how we relate to Him. The reformers taught that Jesus is our salvation, that Jesus is the way that God loves.

When Martin Luther understood Jesus as the center of all of Scripture and man's relationship to God, he saw everything in light of this relationship between God and man. This moved him to teach about the Christian's role in society, the role of the government, and how individual Christians live out their faith.

Luther cared for the people in his town and worked to provide materials for them, writing the *Small Catechism* to teach the basics of the faith, and translating the Bible into German so that everyone could read the Word of God.

Martin Luther posted the 95 Theses in Wittenberg, Germany, 500 years ago. Much has changed since then. Many things we encounter daily were influenced by the Reformation. The heart of the Reformation was theology. It was a return to God as the source of mankind's salvation. It was a focus on God's love. 500 years later, Lutherans still teach this theology, and rejoice in God's love.

95 Theses to Elucidate the Truth

Martin Luther could remain silent no more. Truth was being trampled and souls were being misled – *by the Church*. Through the sale of indulgences, money and religion were being mixed in a toxic way, poisoning the Gospel and the faith. The Church taught that Christians were expected to demonstrate contrition (sorrow or regret) for their sins, confess them to a priest, and then to do penance (also called "works of satisfaction") to make satisfaction for their sins and complete the work of absolution. Indulgences involved a complicated system of merit sharing in which a penitent sinner could purchase merits from a heavenly treasury of merits that could be applied to his personal account or to a loved one's. These indulgences reduced or removed altogether the prescribed works of satisfaction necessary to make up for sin.

Not only was the whole system inherently off track, a point Luther would later realize, it was susceptible to abuse. And that's precisely what happened. In 1515, Pope Leo X commissioned Albert of Mainz to employ the Dominican order of monks to sell special indulgences in Germany, a sale that would benefit Albert and Leo. Albert owed a significant sum of money to the Church for having being granted (because of a significant monetary contribution to the Church) a special allowance to be the ecclesiastical prince of three German territories (a position that brought power and influence). Albert had borrowed money from a wealthy banking family in Germany to make this contribution, so he was in significant debt. So Albert commissioned the Dominican monk John Tetzel to sell indulgences in Germany with half of the proceeds going to the banking family and half going to Pope Leo.

Tetzel embraced his commission with gusto. As he approached a town, he would send ahead several horsemen, drummers, and trumpeters to announce his coming. Tetzel would then arrive accompanied by an armed guard under grand symbols of the papacy and Pope Leo X's coat of arms. Then, attached to a large cross would be a copy of the indulgence Tetzel was selling. And he would preach, "Will you not then for a quarter of a florin receive these letters of indulgence through which you are able to lead a divine and immortal soul safely and securely into the homeland of paradise?" Finally, Tetzel, standing next to a large treasure chest, would build his sales pitch to its climax and announce, "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs."

Luther could not tolerate the abuse. So, "out of love for the truth from desire to elucidate it," he picked up his pen and called for a public disputation on 95 statements or theses on the power and efficacy of indulgences. He posted them on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. Being All Hallows Eve, the day before All Saints' Day, Luther knew large crowds would attend worship the following morning and he hoped a public disputation over the matter would soon be scheduled.

The disputation never happened. What happened was the Reformation. This year we mark the 500th anniversary of the initiation of that event. And while most people have heard of the 95 Theses, few have read them. Included below, then, is a selection of Luther's 95 Theses to give you an appreciation for the substance of his critique and for the spark that ignited the Reformation.

1. When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ``Repent'' (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.
2. This word cannot be understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, that is, confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy.

21. Thus those indulgence preachers are in error who say that a man is absolved from every penalty and saved by papal indulgences.

27. They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory.

32. Those who believe that they can be certain of their salvation because they have indulgence letters will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.
33. Men must especially be on guard against those who say that the pope's pardons are that inestimable gift of God by which man is reconciled to him.
34. For the graces of indulgences are concerned only with the penalties of sacramental satisfaction established by man.
35. They who teach that contrition is not necessary on the part of those who intend to buy souls out of purgatory or to buy confessional privileges preach unchristian doctrine.
36. Any truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without indulgence letters.
37. Any true Christian, whether living or dead, participates in all the blessings of Christ and the church; and this is granted him by God, even without indulgence letters.

43. Christians are to be taught that the pope does not intend that the buying of indulgences should in any way be compared with works of mercy.
44. Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better deed than he who buys indulgences.
46. Christians are to be taught that he who sees a needy man and passes him by, yet gives his money for indulgences, does not buy papal indulgences but God's wrath.
47. Christians are to be taught that, unless they have more than they need, they must reserve enough for their family needs and by no means squander it on indulgences.
48. Christians are to be taught that they buying of indulgences is a matter of free choice, not commanded.
49. Christians are to be taught that the pope, in granting indulgences, needs and thus desires their devout prayer more than their money.
50. Christians are to be taught that papal indulgences are useful only if they do not put their trust in them, but very harmful if they lose their fear of God because of them.
51. Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the indulgence preachers, he would rather that the basilica of St. Peter were burned to ashes than built up with the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep.
52. Christians are to be taught that the pope would and should wish to give of his own money, even though he had to sell the basilica of St. Peter, to many of those from whom certain hawkers of indulgences cajole money.
53. It is vain to trust in salvation by indulgence letters, even though the indulgence commissary, or even the pope, were to offer his soul as security.
54. They are the enemies of Christ and the pope who forbid altogether the preaching of the Word of God in some churches in order that indulgences may be preached in others.
55. Injury is done to the Word of God when, in the same sermon, an equal or larger amount of time is devoted to indulgences than to the Word.

62. The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.

81. This unbridled preaching of indulgences makes it difficult even for learned men to rescue the reverence which is due the pope from slander or from the shrewd questions of the laity.
82. Such as: ``Why does not the pope empty purgatory for the sake of holy love and the dire need of the souls that are there if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a church?" The former reason would be most just; the latter is most trivial.

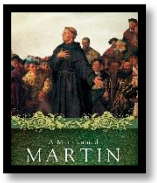
84. Again, ``What is this new piety of God and the pope that for a consideration of money they permit a man who is impious and their enemy to buy out of purgatory the pious soul of a friend of God and do not rather, because of the need of that pious and beloved soul, free it for pure love's sake?"

86. Again, ``Why does not the pope, whose wealth is today greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus (a wealthy Roman nicknamed “Fats” who died in 53 BC), build this one basilica of St. Peter with his own money rather than with the money of poor believers?"
88. Again, ``What greater blessing could come to the church than if the pope were to bestow these remissions and blessings on every believer a hundred times a day, as he now does but once?"
89. ``Since the pope seeks the salvation of souls rather than money by his indulgences, why does he suspend the indulgences and pardons previously granted when they have equal efficacy?"
90. To repress these very sharp arguments of the laity by force alone, and not to resolve them by giving reasons, is to expose the church and the pope to the ridicule of their enemies and to make Christians unhappy.
91. If, therefore, indulgences were preached according to the spirit and intention of the pope, all these doubts would be readily resolved. Indeed, they would not exist.
92. Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, ``Peace, peace," and there is no peace! (Jer 6:14)
93. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, ``Cross, cross," and there is no cross!
94. Christians should be exhorted to be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, death and hell.
95. And thus be confident of entering into heaven through many tribulations rather than through the false security of peace (Acts 14:22).

Much to Luther’s surprise, his theses ignited a firestorm. Not only did Albert and Leo fail to correct the abuses, as Luther naively believed they would, they turned their ire against Luther! Luther faced increased pressure to recant of his writings and to refrain further public teaching on the matter. Luther offered to comply if Roman Catholic leaders could simply show him from Scripture or plain reason where he was in error. They didn’t and Luther didn’t comply.

And the story only gets more interesting and nail biting from here, including a clandestine escape through a hole in the city wall, a rigged trial, a bold stand and confession, a staged kidnapping, and a temporarily assumed alternative identity. Want to find out more? Check out www.lutheranreformation.org, ask Pastor Conner about excellent books on the subject, join the family Bible hour on Sunday for our study of Luther and the Reformation, join the Zion family for our Luther Movie Night on October 15, or stop in to visit with Pastor Conner.

UPCOMING EVENTS @ ZION & TRINITY



Ongoing

A Man Named Martin (Zion)
Appreciate how Martin Luther changed history and freed the Gospel from its bondage to false teaching in this incisive DVD and discussion series. Sessions begin during Family Bible Hour on September 10

FINANCIAL Peace UNIVERSITY

Ongoing

Financial Peace University (Zion)
Journey with financial expert Dave Ramsey through nine weeks of fast-paced, information-packed financial counseling that will help you dump debt, make a financial plan, and change your future. Call 655-2352 to register and purchase your participation kit.

October 15

Luther Movie at Zion
Celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation at Zion with this gripping movie about Luther and the Gospel of Jesus he powerfully proclaimed.
Movie begins at 6:30 p.m.

October 22

Preschool Pancake Breakfast
Support Zion Lutheran Preschool on Sunday, October 22 from 9:00 to Noon by enjoying fantastic pancakes and giving generously.

October 28

Luther Fest 2017 (Trinity)
Scram Athletic Park in Manilla
4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
See page 10 for more details

TREASURES' WORKSHOP
IOWA DISTRICT WEST

November 4

Iowa District West Treasurers' Workshop (at Zion)
Pastors, treasurers, financial secretaries, and church leadership, take advantage of this opportunity to learn, listen, network and grow from the expertise of our District partners.
Sessions begin at 9:00 a.m., break for lunch, and finish by 3:00 p.m.

Luther Fest 2017

October 28, 4-7 pm
@ Schram Athletic Park in Manilla

What?
A special service held in the park and a special rally day to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation as well as launch our new Christian training program.

Why?

- Show Manilla that Trinity loves its city
- Promote our new worship and Christian training time
- Engage the community and remind people of Trinity's presence and care
- Celebrate GOD's faithfulness for the last 500 years

What's needed?
Promotional supplies, prizes, volunteers, smiles, financial support, games, and prayer. If you're interested in helping please talk to Pastor Johnson, and he can fill you in on what's needed in greater detail.

Why should I be involved?
Because it's time to pass down the faith to more people in Manilla.

Please join us in October whether or not you are able to help out.

HERO
GREATER. BETTER. TRUE

High School Gathering—November 17-19
Embassy Suites, La Vista, Nebraska
Cost $135 per person, plus lodging
Go to www.ndlcms.org/youth-gathering/ for more!

Bible story banners for Children

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
MANNING, IOWA
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love

Zion's Board of Education is dedicated to sharing God's Word with children through teaching, singing, and now art. You have the opportunity to help. Included in a booklet available at the resource center or in the church office are several beautiful banners depicting significant Biblical events, from creation to the cross and resurrection. Each banner is $100 and can be funded by individuals, groups, or families. To select your banner for Zion's Education Wing, visit with Pastor Conner or Shelly Gruhn (Board of Education Chairperson).

Ladies Guild of Zion
September 13, 2017

Pastor Conner led the opening devotion referencing I Cor. 12 with emphasis on the 27th verse, "Now you are the body of Crist and individually members of it." Pastor emphasized the word ARE. Our membership in the Church was given when we were baptized and worship is primary to being a part of the body. Pastor closed the devotion with prayer.

The LWML pledge was recited by the 14 members in attendance. Bev Grundmeier supplied the Christian Life devotion, "The Glad Game," which Susie Schilling read. The mite box prayer supplied with the current list of mission projects for the 2017-19 biennium was recited. President Buhr called the meeting to order in the name of the Triune God. Roll call was taken with members sharing a favorite childhood memory. Sandra Vahl read the minutes of the August meeting along with thank you notes from Lee Ann Musfeldt and the Priscilla Guild from Trinity, Manilla.

The financial report was given by Marie Grimm and Janet Gruhn gave the Kitchen treasury report for Darlene Vollstedt. Audrey Roe, the human care chairman, reported that sewing will start on September 14 at 1:00. Becki Ehlers, the sunshine, chairman, will give a report next month.

Circle 1 is doing fellowship coffees for September. Circle 2 will host the fellowship coffees for the first and third Sundays in October. Circle 3 will be in charge of the next funeral luncheon.

The August meeting, which was our guest day, had 45 participants. A group from the Guild served 75 people on August 16th at the Hausbarn. Under old business, the members in attendance agreed to have the circles host the first and third Sunday fellowships, with other groups or Thrivent Action Teams hosting the remaining Sundays. Sandra Vahl agreed to continue coordinating the fellowship times.

The new business of the day started with reminding the members that the Carroll Zone fall rally will be help on September 16 at Trinity, Coon Rapids, with Rev. Jeffery Keuning presenting a talk on the Reformation. There was a request for the Guild to host a luncheon for 100 people at the Hausbarn on September 26. Cheryl Buhr will coordinate this event with other members agreeing to work. A sign-up sheet for workers, salads, and desserts was passed around.

LWML Sunday will be held on October 1. There will be a special worship service coordinated by Pastor Conner. A noisy offering for mites will be taken after the regular offering. Ushers for that event will be Susie Schilling, Mary Grimm, Monica Christensen, and Bev Grundmeier. Susie Schilling made a motion and Mary Grimm seconded it to continue purchasing 10 LWML Quarterlies. Hostesses for the next meeting on October 11, at 1:00 will be Susan Schilling and Carol Kahl. The business meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer. Hostesses for the day were Janet Gruhn and Becki Ehlers.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Vahl, Secretary Pro Tem

For seven years the C-3 (Christ + Community + Celebration) group has been a blessing to the Manning community offering a summer Christian concert, hosting a food pantry, and addressing world hunger through the Wolf Pack for Hunger event. The annual planning meeting will be Sunday evening, October 1 at Zion. Interested community volunteer leaders are welcome. Thanks to Zion for being a consistent and strong supporter of this community outreach.

Preschool Praises for September 2017

First of all, I wanted to thank everyone for the donations that we received from the giving tree that was posted in the fellowship hall! We were able to get a scholastic magazine for each child and new baby dolls and smocks! We should be set on glue sticks, tape and cups for more than a little while as well! Your support is much appreciated.

What a wonderful month September has been! The weather was perfect for the children to be able to play outside and enjoy God's creation! In fact that is what we have been focusing on during Jesus Time as we learn what God created and we have been putting it to song for each day of creation. We look forward to sharing this song with you during the upcoming Pancake Breakfast (on Sunday, October 22)!

The first week in September we focused on friends: what a friend is, how to be a good friend, who can be a friend, etc. We enjoyed making a picture of our hand print next to our new preschool friends' hand print. This activity helped each child see that they have at least one friend in preschool. We learned how to use a scissors, which can be pretty tricky! We also discussed colors and sorting them.

The second week we talked about feelings and began choosing each day what we feel and posting it up for everyone to see. We discussed and sorted shapes and also got to cut shapes out of the new cherry scented play dough! We practiced our new cutting skills this week as well. They really did a great job - I still have all of my fingers and no one got new hair cuts!

The third week we discussed jobs and now we each have different jobs each day varying from flag holder, bell ringer, line leader, snack clean up, etc. A big "Thank You" to Mike Gore, Pastor Conner, Jamie Blum, Kristin Webb, Kari Nuzback and Jill Arp for coming in and sharing their favorite book and talking about their jobs. The kids loved having someone new come in and talk with them and enjoyed seeing some of the special "tools" that they use for their jobs. It is wonderful to have this kind of support from our parents and community! We also worked on sorting by size and enjoyed using tweezers to sort different sized pompoms into buckets.

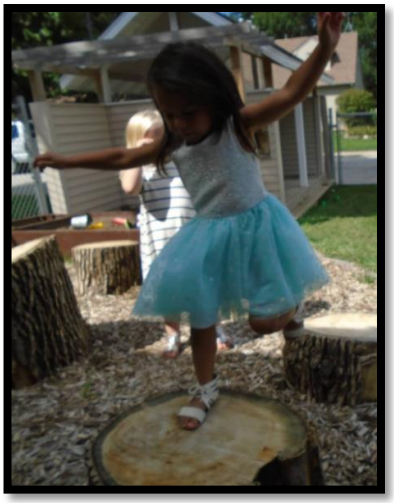
I'm writing this letter as we are going into our fourth week and we will be discussing family. Each child brings a picture of themselves and their family to be shared with the class and to be posted in the room for the remainder of the school year. This is a great lesson to show that everyone's family is different, but that we have a lot of similarities as well. We will learn how to draw a person and make our first self portrait and work on the concept of same and different. Mom's Night will be on Wednesday and I look forward to sharing a fun night with the children and their moms as we read a book, sing and make scrapbook pages so we can share a little bit about ourselves with everyone else. I will have a special guest come in on Thursday morning, Nadine Ehlers, my mom! She will read an adorable book and I will be able to show 3 generations to the class as my daughter, Evelyn, is also in the morning class.

As always we have had a super busy month and we are so thankful for all the blessings that God has given us throughout it!

Praising Him,
Mrs. Gore and Mrs. Nemitz

See pictures on page 16!

ZioN Lutheran Preschool
Manning, Iowa
Christ Centered... Child Focused... Family Connecting



Zion
Lutheran Preschool
Manning, Iowa
Christ Centered... Child Focused... Family Connecting

!Amigos En Cristo!
News from ***La Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Amigos en Cristo:*** *Friends in Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church:* **Pastor Daniel Vogel**, Denison, Iowa

Iowa District West, LCMS
Year 13, Issue 10, October 2017

New Members: This month we began new member/confirmation classes for a young family. They have two small children and are excited to learn about the faith and become part of the church. We give thanks to God for bringing them to us.

Bible Studies: One of the most important aspects of the ministry is catechesis. We currently have three Bible studies a week. We are studying the Small Catechism, Acts, and Paul's letter to the Galatians. It is wonderful to see the members eagerly hearing and receiving the Word of God. Plans are also underway for adding a weekly evening worship/prayer service.

Find us on Facebook: Amigos en Cristo is now on Facebook. Here you will see photos of the congregation and other events. In addition it will be a place for devotional resources in Spanish. Expect to see more activity on the page in the near future. www.facebook.com/amigosdenison

Please Pray: + For Grace Hispanic ministry in Storm Lake as they consider future pastoral leadership. + For Wendy and Antonio who have begun new member/confirmation classes in Denison. + Thanksgiving for the many individuals and congregations of Iowa District West who support the Lord's work among Hispanic immigrants.

***Please Continue to Support* our new church**: For our mission friends financial support checks should now be sent to: Amigos en Cristo Lutheran Church, 1004 1st Avenue South, Denison, Iowa, 51442

CONTACT:
Pastor Willie Grills
1004 1st Ave. South Denison, Iowa 51442
Church: 712-263-2235 Pastor's Cell: 606-225-2122
pastorgrills@gmail.com

SERVING THE LORD IN

PANAMA

NEWS FROM THE GAUTHIER FAMILY

September 2017
Vol. 2 Issue IX

Greetings in Jesus! August, September, October, November, and December have turned out to be quite celebratory for the Lutheran Church in Panamá. At the end of August, the congregation Dios Es Grande in Loma Cova, celebrated their 25th anniversary of ministry. The occasion began with a Divine Service to which all members of the Lutheran Church of Panamá were invited and concluded with a traditional meal of arroz con pollo (rice with chicken). Children also shared their talents in song and dance.

In the middle of September, the congregation of Emanuel in Sorá celebrated its 15th anniversary of ministry. All members of the various Lutheran churches were invited to the Divine Service. A big lunch of Sancocho con carne followed with various presentations of songs and dances by the children of the congregation. Participants also got to watch a video highlighting the previous 15 years, enjoyed cake, and had a light supper before heading home.

On the final Sunday of October, all of the congregations are invited to a Reformation Divine Service and a meal at Del Redentor in Balboa. This celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation will mark the third straight month where the entire Lutheran Church is invited to worship, commune and share a meal together in the newly renovated and decorated fellowship hall in Balboa. In November, members from partner congregations and organizations in the US will join the Panamanian Lutheran Church for their fall FORO meeting. Finally, on December 16 all the congregations are invited to the Christmas concert at Dios Es Grande, a tradition that rotates among the congregation each Christmas.

These types of celebratory events are very important as congregations in Panamá are small and can often feel isolated. More than that though, it is a blessing to be able to gather together with brothers and sisters in Christ around His altar to receive his gifts of grace and forgiveness. New Lutherans can stand alongside of Lutherans from previous generations and see how the Lord preserves His Church through difficult times. These events are a testimony to the Lord's faithfulness to His Church and an encouragement to the churches to continue preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments as the Lord instructed. Please continue to pray for the Lutheran Church of Panamá that it remain faithful in its confession and compassionate in its witness.

We would like to give all of our readers a huge thank you for your prayers, emails & cards, and financial support. The transition from the US to the Dominican Republic to Panamá has been both long and tiring, but it gives us great joy and peace of mind to know that over 450 individuals, families, and congregations have been a part of the process to bring a missionary family back to Panamá. We know, of course, that our being here and all of your help in getting us here is only by the grace of our Lord to whom belongs all glory, honor, and praise.

However, we want you to know that we are truly thankful and blessed to have your friendship, prayers, and support, much of which has been done in great faith as we have not met personally, in the flesh. Thank you for your support of LCMS missionaries and missions and your support of the wonderful work at Mission Central. As we begin year 2 on the field, internationally, we invite you to continue supporting the proclamation of the Gospel and the formation of pastors and deaconesses in Panamá with your prayers and financial support through Mission Central and Mission Advancement. We are currently in the process of updating our prayer card and should have that ready to send out to you all in the next newsletter. The Lord Jesus continue to bless you in your corner of the world. You will continue to remain in our prayers!

Zion's Congregational Servants

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Eric Ramsey, Vice Chairman
Jean Ferneding, Record. Sec.
Amber Nuemann, Fin. Sec.
Shannon Walters, Treasurer
Jeff Hargens, CFO

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Don Lamb, Paul Christensen
Floyd Forman,
Stan Baack, Lynn Kruse
Stan Musfeldt

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Ryan Crawford, Larry Mahnke
Richard Zinke, Dan Dawson
Chris Greving

Ladies Guild:
Cheral Buhr, President

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Kevin Grimm,
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Kari Ranniger,
Heather Kusel, Jen Morris
Janet Smith

Stewardship Board:
Rick Lohrmann, Chair

Altar Guild:
Monica Christensen, Director

Choir:
Dr. Tom Ulrickson, director

Children's Choir:
Susie Ulrickson, Jill Arp

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
MANNING, IOWA
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love

Trinity's Congregational Servants

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Gloria Boeck, Treasuer
Sylvia Bandow, Secretary

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Scott Lingle, Mike Lorenzen
Stan Spies, Wyatt Bandow

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Keith Boyens, Joleen Spies,
Marion Drake

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Bricy Lorenzen
Jeff Hargens, CFO

Evangelism
Loretta Arnold

Trustees
Harold and Marjorie Jurgensen

Custodian
Barb Hargens

Pastor's Secretary
Melodie Boell

TRINITY
LUTHERAN CHURCH
MANILLA, IOWA
PROCLAIMING PEACE IN CHRIST'S CROSS

October Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1 Eric Rosener
3 Marcus Borkowski
Chasity Chedester
Alan Morris
2 Ferdonna Zimmerman (T)
Terisa Nelson (T)
3 Lucas Brown (T)
Quentin Brown (T)
4 Amy Dawson
Robert Ehlers
Charlene Hickman
Camden Morris
5 Bennett Riesberg
Katelynn Wittala
Brian Birks (T)
6 Haleigh Alexander
Benjamin Ramsey
Richard Zinke
8 Marlene Borkowski
Juanita Kurth
9 Amelia Vetter
Bonnie Witt
Susan Mahnke (T)
11 Houston Alexander
Kimber Arp
Drew Doyel
Duane Karsten
Lynn Kruse
Skyler Sandage
Rebecca Lingle (T)
12 Justeen Schwieso
Robert Boell (T)
13 Mildred Brus (T)
14 Wendy Ahrendsen
Lance Gruhn
15 Barbara Doyel
Justin Frank
Lori Lenz
Kaylyn Nelson
Jodi Ramsey
Betty Schroeder
15 Sandra Sextro
David Weller
Edna Lohrmann (T)
16 Miranda Benton
17 Pamela Garvis
Phyllis Lamp
Haven Reese
Gordon Schmarzo
18 Kate Greving
Don Lamb
19 Gloria Ewoldt
Sonia Kuchel
Julie Weller
20 Steve Borkowski
Andrea Nulle
Natalie Nulle
21 Rodney Borkowski
Pam Kusel
Nancy Walters
22 Luella Borkowski
Cynthia Genzen
23 Kyle French
24 Diana Eddy
Wyatt Grabill
Jill Mohr
25 Trevor Booth
Nathan Janssen
26 Zach Rasmussen (T)
Brett Saunders (T)
27 Bobby Doyel
Randy Dreher
Lois Peters
Daniel Tibben
29 Melissa Nelson (T)
30 Claire Behrens
Geraldine Stripling
Justin Segebart (T)
31 Garry Gruhn (T)

If we missed or misspelled your name, please inform the church office.

Anniversaries

3 Franklin & Arlene Mohr
9 Ryan & Bobby Doyel
10 Duane & Kay Otto
12 Gerald & Rita Beck
13 Howard & Audrey Roe
14 David & Julie Weller
16 Dale & Karen Reinke

In Our Prayers

Walt Noelck, Dave Grundmeier, Heather Kusel, Sherri Steffes, Jim Deevers, Gabriel Albers (Pastor and Rebecca's nephew), Athena Bess, JoAnn Wittrock, Arlo Damman, Inez Mahnke, Diane Henkleman, Pastor Johnson, Ron Claussen (Laurene Meeves' brother)