

"To know Him and make Him known"

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**Newsletter
Submissions for the
June issue are due
August 24th**

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

REFORMATION TIME MACHINE: THE SYNOD OF DORT

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of Wittenberg Castle in Germany, essentially beginning the Protestant Reformation. One hundred years later, the battle to contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints continued, this time in the Netherlands with the Synod of Dort. The works of the Dutch Reformed Ministers gathered for this assembly in Dordrecht protected and preserved the purity of the gospel that men like Martin Luther in Germany and particularly John Calvin in Switzerland had been fighting for the past one hundred years. This series of articles aims to explore this moment in church history and assess the theology that comes to us from the Canons of Dort, as well as its impact on the church today. This month, we'll examine the events that led to the Synod being called and why it was necessary.

THE ROAD TO DORT: THE MINISTRY OF JACOBUS ARMINIUS

Reformation theology took root and flourished in the Netherlands during the mid-sixteenth century. We should note that at the center of this theology were several key doctrines that pushed back against Roman Catholic theology, including the Doctrine of God, particularly the sovereignty of God, the Doctrine of Scripture, particularly its sole authority as the word of God, and the Doctrine of Salvation. Many are familiar with the five Solas that originated from this period in history and summarize key points of Reformed Theology: **Sola Scriptura** (Scripture Alone) - The Bible is the sole infallible and final authority for Christian faith and practice. **Sola Fide** (Faith Alone): Salvation and justification are received through faith in Jesus Christ alone, without relying on human efforts or good works. **Sola Gratia** (Grace Alone): Salvation is an unearned gift from God, solely by His grace, and not based on any human merit or works. **Solus Christus** (Christ Alone): Jesus Christ alone is the mediator between God and humanity and the exclusive source of salvation. **Soli Deo Gloria** (To the Glory of God Alone): The ultimate purpose of creation, salvation, and all aspects of life is to glorify God alone.

As the Reformation gained strength in the Netherlands, it also sparked controversy through the preaching and teaching of one reformed minister, Jacobus Arminius. Arminius was born in the Netherlands in 1560. His father died when he was young, leaving his family very poor. Yet, he was allowed to study for the ministry at the University of Leiden. Arminius was an exceptional student and went on to study in Geneva, Switzerland, under the instruction of Theodore Beza, the successor of the influential reformer John Calvin. When he returned to the Netherlands, Arminius soon found himself at the center of a theological controversy. While preaching a series of sermons on Romans, Arminius proposed several eye-raising interpretations on the effects of the fall, man's free will after the fall, and the biblical doctrine of predestination.

Things came to a head in 1608, when Arminius was called to give account and justification for his views; he did so in his *Declaration of Sentiments*. While his positions caused a great stir in the Reformed Church, it became difficult to continue the investigation due to Arminius's declining health. He died in 1610, without any of his works or his declaration ever being published.

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Arminius and his teachings gained more fame after his death than at any point in his life. Forty-two ministers in the Dutch Reformed Church adopted Arminius's beliefs, knowing they were at odds with Reformed orthodoxy and likely to result in church discipline. To avoid this, these ministers drafted the Remonstrance of 1610. This document contained five articles outlining their beliefs, which were inherited from Arminius, and requested that the civil government protect them from church action.

This act won them the name Remonstrants from their opponents. We would know them today as Arminians, Methodists, Pentecostals, Nazarenes, Free Will Baptists, and many evangelical, non-denominational churches still teach their beliefs.

The Synod of Dort was convened to systematically address the five articles presented by the Remonstrants, identify their errors, and provide a biblically orthodox response. When the modern church looks back on the councils, synods, and assemblies of church history, we should ask the question, *"What was at stake? Why did these men feel so compelled by the Holy Spirit to meet around the word of God to hash out these theological misunderstandings?"* One day, we may have the chance to sit and speak with these men in a corner booth of a coffee shop in heaven, and if we asked them what was at stake, I believe they would respond, *"The gospel and the purity of the gospel"*.

WHAT WAS AT STAKE?

In the words of holy Scripture, God gives us the gospel of His dearly beloved Son. This gospel must be precious to us, for it shows us the only way that sinners can be made righteous before a holy God. This is the gospel that the Lord Jesus came to proclaim, *"For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."* (Lk 19:10) *"That whosoever believes in him would not perish but have eternal life."* (Jn 3:16). The Apostle Paul writing to Timothy tells him not to be ashamed of this gospel (2 Tim. 1:8), to follow the pattern of sound words laid out in the gospel (2 Tim. 1:13), to guard this gospel (2 Tim. 1:14) and to entrust it to faithful men who themselves will not be ashamed, who will follow God's sound words, who will guard the gospel, and teach it to the coming generations (2 Tim. 2:2).

The Synod of Dort is but a blip in the church's history, yet an important one that reminds us we too need to care about the purity of the gospel and ask ourselves, "What is at stake today?" In a world that is perishing, why must we protect and preserve the purity of the gospel? Because it is the trumpet blast of hope for an otherwise hopeless humanity. Jesus Christ has come to save sinners from sin, death, and damnation by his grace alone: no strings attached, no fine print, no loopholes. Jesus calls to us, come to him, to believe, promising that he, and he alone, will give us rest, will make us new, and give us an eternal home with God. Over the coming months, we will examine the five articles presented by the Remonstrants and the responses provided by the ministers gathered at the Synod of Dort, with the hope of understanding why theology matters in upholding the purity and beauty of the gospel of Christ.

What a wonderful turn-out for this year's Organ Concert.



Thank you to the Hastings for hosting a wonderful pool party.



AUGUST

2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship COMMUNION	4 NO Trustee Mtg.	5 VBS 9:00am - NOON	6 VBS 9:00am - NOON	7 VBS 9:00am - NOON	8	9
10 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship	18	19	20 7:00 Session Mtg	21	22	23
24 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

FOOD BANK

Triscuits and Wheat Thins, fruit cups, pudding cups, snack crackers (packs), tomato soup (10 oz size), chicken noodle soup (10 oz size), seafood chowder/soup (can), green beans (can), corn (can), spaghetti noodles(box)

Backpack/School Supply list is on the back page. Please have items to the church by Sunday, August 10th.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Giving for June: \$19,308

June Expenses: \$17,953

Year-to-Date: \$86,236

Year-to-Date: \$83,800

Roof replacement on new building: \$47,000 paid from building fund

Avg. Attendance: 60

Sunday School collection for the Glovers: \$20



- 3 Nancy Hastings**
- 4 Angela White**
Sharon Adams
Sandy Stewart
- 6 Sarah Jane Mullins**
- 9 Scott Shoemaker**
Linda Brown
- 12 Faye Wade**
- 13 Randy Adams**
- 14 Ken Graver**
- 17 Carol Oswald**
Dylon Supplee
Anthony Isaiah Thomas
- 20 Bryan Hastings**
- 23 Dina Shoemaker**
- 25 William Noonan**
- 27 Debbie Hash**
- 28 Christine Ambler**
- 30 William Ray**
Eileen Scotten
Barry Bard

LECTIONARY PASSAGES

August 3rd

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hosea 11:1-11; Psalm 107:1-9, 43;
Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21

August 10th

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 1:1, 10-20;
Psalm 50:1-8, 22-23; Hebrews
11:1-3, 8-16; Luke 12:32-40

August 17th

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19;
Hebrews 11:29-12:2;
Luke 12:49-56

August 24th

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6;
Hebrews 12:18-29;
Luke 13:10-17

August 31st

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah 2:4-13;
Psalm 81:1, 10-16;
Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16;
Luke 14:1, 7-14

GREETERS

- 3 Larry & Colleen Sheaffer**
- 10 (OPEN)**
- 17 (OPEN)**
- 24 (OPEN)**
- 31 (OPEN)**

THANK YOU

Thank you for your prayers, cards, and calls in the passing of my brother, Les. ~ Dan & Pat McCardell

Dear Union Church Family, we thank you for the beautiful flower arrangement. It is very much appreciated in celebration of our 60th anniversary. Much freshness was added to the air amid all this heat! ~Bill & Trudy Bard

Union Congregation Family, Dwight and I want say thank you for the many cards and prayers we received for my mother's illness and passing. We think of all of you often! ~Cheryl & Dwight Wallace

Union Presbyterian Church
5637 Street Road,
Kirkwood, PA 17536



Backpack/School Supplies

We are in need of donations of: Backpacks (for all grade levels), Spiral notebooks, 3-ring binder notebooks, Notebook paper, Pencils, Pens, Composition books, Notecards, Pocket Folders, Colored markers, Highlighters, Colored pencils, Glue, Rulers, Pencils, Erasers, Crayons, Small hand sanitizer, Small packs of Kleenex tissues, Small kid-sized toothbrushes, small kid-friendly toothpaste, NEW bags of boys/girls socks NEW bags boys/girls underwear. **Please have items put in the cart at church by Sunday, August 10th.**



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