



*A family of God sharing Jesus  
and serving Him faithfully*

**October 2017**

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**Our Mission Statement**

As members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church who have been granted eternal life through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, we worship Him as our Lord and seek to further His work of salvation through word and sacrament ministry in our community and world toward the goal of creating and strengthening personal faith in Him.

# The Bethlehem Record

*The Official Newsletter of Bethlehem Lutheran Church*

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**The Pastor's Page**

The 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation is right around the corner. As I'm sure many of you know, Bethlehem will be hosting a celebration along with St. John's in Lincoln and St. Paul's in Westfall. In fact, we're hoping that all the Circuit 13 congregations will be able to join us, and make it a day that is fun and helpful in reminding us about what the Reformation really was about.

As we get closer to Reformation Day, you're probably going to start seeing all sorts of different people and groups try to tell you what the Reformation was about. Some will tell you it was about escaping the oppressive regime of the Roman Catholic Church. Others will tell you it was about discovering that there was more than one way to interpret the Bible. I'm sure that you'll see many and various other thoughts on why the Reformation is worth celebrating.

The question is why do we, as Confessional Liturgical Lutherans celebrate the Reformation. We remember that Luther wasn't trying to break away from Rome, and that Luther strongly opposed some of the 'new' interpretations that were popping up. So, why did Luther spark the Reformation? What was important enough for him to break away from Rome, while also still debating and often

condemning other new reformer's theology?

The answer, is what we Lutherans would call the Chief Article, or the Gospel in the narrow sense. Simply put, Luther rediscovered the teaching 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)

The Reformation happened because Luther discovered that Rome had been teaching a false doctrine of salvation. He found out that the Bible speaks of salvation not as our work, but rather as THE work of Christ. That it is through faith that we believe and are justified. That even that very faith that saves us is created inside of us by God Himself.

As we celebrate half a millennium of the Reformation, recognize that what we are truly celebrating is half a millennium of salvation by faith alone. Five hundred years of the Gospel being in the light of day. May God continue to bless us, and let us have another five hundred years of the truth about Christ being told freely and openly across the world.

May God bless you all,

*Pastor Chris Craig*

## LCMS Stewardship Article October 2017

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We are nearing the 500th Anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation, All Saints' Eve, 1517, when Martin Luther posted the Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. So, let's hear from Luther himself on the topic of giving and stewardship.

In the Small Catechism under the Table of Duties, Martin Luther gives specific Bible passages to help Christians know their duty in their various vocations as members of their family, society at large, and in God's family, the Church. Under the heading "What Hearers Owe Their Pastors," Luther lists five passages from the Bible, three of which have to do with giving to your local congregation. They are these:

"The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:14).

"Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows" (Galatians 6:6-7).

"The elders [presbyters, i.e., pastors] who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The worker deserves his wages'" (1 Timothy 5:17-18).

Luther comments on these passages in his 1535 Lectures on Galatians. He wrote:

When Paul says "all good things," this is not to be taken to mean that everyone should share all his possessions with his preacher. No, it means that he should provide for him liberally, giving him as much as is needed to support his life in comfort. . . . The apostle is so serious in advocating this topic of support for preachers that he adds a threat to his denunciation and exhortation, saying: "God is not mocked." . . . All this pertains to the topic of support for ministers. I do

not like to interpret such passages; for they seem to commend us, as in fact they do. In addition, it gives the appearance of greed if one emphasizes these things diligently to one's hearers. Nevertheless, people should be taught also about this matter, in order that they may know that they owe both respect and support to their preachers. Christ teaches the same thing in Luke 10:7: "Eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages"; and Paul says elsewhere (1 Cor. 9:13-14): "Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the Gospel should get their living by the Gospel." It is important for us who are in the ministry to know this, so that we do not have a bad conscience about accepting for our work wages . . . it happens when those who proclaim the glory of God and faithfully instruct the youth derive their livelihood from them. It is impossible that one man should be devoted to household duties day and night for his support and at the same time pay attention to the study of Sacred Scripture, as the teaching ministry requires. Since God has commanded and instituted this, we should know that we may with a good conscience enjoy what is provided for the comfortable support of our lives from church properties to enable us to devote ourselves to our office. (LW 27:125-126).

In other words, pastors are not to suffer from low wages just because they are servants of Christ and the Word. They are to share in the livelihoods of all to whom they preach the gospel and instruct in the faith, so that the Word can be proclaimed and the faith carried from one generation to the next.

## Baptismal Birthdays in October

God's blessings to you for all His gifts of grace that you have received, and we pray for many more blessings for Jesus' sake!



Bayleigh Broeckelman	Bianca Broeckelman
Brandon Broeckelman	Vance Dohl
Louise Feldkamp	Lisa Gier
Russell Frederking	Coyla Heine
Isaiah Montiel	Shirley Krueger
Morgan Kubick	Kyle McCary
Brian Meitler	Cheyenne Meyer
Kilby Meyer	Danyelle Murray
Kolton Meyer	Broderick Schofield
Jennifer Olsen-Dohl	Jacob Schultz
Kirk Schulteis	Hannah Wolting
Rachel Sebesta	Lois Walter
Malcolm Ulrich	Rhonda Watson
	Donald Weseloh

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## Acolyte Schedule

October- November 2017

### October

- 1 Kaden Gier
- 8\* Valden Dohl
- 15 Vance Dohl
- 22\* Jacob Schultz
- 29\* Rylan Gier

### November

- 5 Aubrelle Hurlbut
- 12\* Eli Schultz
- 19 Issac Schultz
- 26\* Kale Sorensen

\* Communion service



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Pastor Gary Wolfe has accepted a call from Concordia Hoisington, Kansas, installation is pending.



## LWML Flower Committee

October

Emilie Wacker, Shirley Krueger

November

Lois Walter, Euni Thaemert

## The BOCL

The BOCL met on Tuesday, September 12 at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Ronda Watson, Trey Watson, Lloyd Gier, Dena Sorensen, Kylie Ehrlich, Tyler Gier, Tara Kubick, Brock Mueller, Ruth Mueller, and Pastor Craig. Pastor led with devotions and a prayer.

Dena Sorensen moved to buy the pamphlet (Explanation of Christianity) to add to our guest gift bags. The cost is \$9.99 per 20 packs. Two packs are being ordered. Tara Kubick seconded, motion passed. Payment will be made out of the peach cobbler stand.

The Reformation celebration committee asked the BOCL to help set up tables for the event. Set up of tables is scheduled for Oct. 26 at 6:00 p.m. Chairman Organizer Shelly Keller will contact us of any changes.

The purchasing of bottled water has been tabled for now.

Blood Drive is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 25, noon to 6:00 p.m. Ruth M. will assist. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 5 at & 7:00 p.m. Pastor closed with a prayer. Respectfully submitted Ruth Mueller

**"Pastor Appreciation Month."** While we can encourage and thank our Pastor throughout the year, October is set aside as a specific time to express our gratitude towards him.

The Board of Elders would like to collect a donation to apply toward Pastor's student loans. A box will be located in the Parish Hall throughout the month of October for donations. In November the donated total (one check) will be written by the church and applied toward Pastor's student loan. Checks should be written to the church.

Pastor Appreciation can be shown in many ways. We know members have their own way to show their appreciation toward Pastor. As a congregation, we are to pray for and support our Pastor.

**LCMS Kansas District Circuit 13  
Reformation celebration 500<sup>th</sup>  
The Reformation**



Plans for a celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation have begun and we are excited for everyone to be a part of great event! A hymn sing and worship service, activities, and a meal are being planned, and we would love for all the circuit congregations to join us on Saturday, October 28, at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Sylvan Grove. The festivities will begin at 1:00 p.m. with choir practice. Anyone wanting to sing in the choir at the worship service is welcome to attend. A Martin Luther hymn sing will begin at 1:30 p.m. and the worship service with Holy Communion will begin at 2:00 p.m. Following worship, special guests Martin and Katie Luther, will speak to us about their lives. Various activities will begin at 3:30 p.m. A Reformation Walk will be sponsored by Bethlehem Lutheran Church members, which will be an interactive tour of the life of Martin Luther. We would like to encourage each congregation to host an activity for children and/or adults that is related to something about the Reformation or the life of Martin Luther. At 5:00 p.m., a Brats and Sauerkraut meal will be served. The brats, sauerkraut, mashed potatoes, buns, drinks, and table service will be provided. We are asking for side dishes of salads and/or vegetables. A love offering will be taken to help with any expenses. After the meal, everyone can enjoy a Reformation Ice Cream Sundae and Dessert Bar.

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**Missions and Stewardship**

**Concordia Church Plant Holds First Service  
(Taken for LCMS Kansas District Workers Together)**

After a summer of Bible studies, the church plant in Concordia Kansas held its first service on Sunday, October 1, with Rev Luke Brown presiding. In the coming weeks, services will be conducted by pastors involved in the project on a rotating basis. Please keep this church plant in your prayer! The Concordia group began exploring a possible church plant in April. The area includes many Lutherans, but there are no LCMS churches within a 35 mile radius of Concordia. If you know of anyone who might be interested in attending, contact Rev. Jason Toombs of Zion Downs.

**Success or failure?**

(Article from A newsletter of  
LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission)

This question is one we often ask ourselves in our daily lives, in our work and even in the church (not surprisingly). Is this congregation successful? Was this program or that event a success? How can we be more successful? These aren't the worst questions we could ask ourselves in our ministries. However, we need to first answer this question: how do we define success? Certainly, the world has a measure for success: Did it earn what you thought it should? Were there enough people there for it to be considered a success? Is there numerical growth? Was the outcome exactly as we anticipated it would be? If no, then it was unsuccessful. However, I contend that success is much more than its earthly standard, especially as we go about our work and service in the church. Even Thomas Edison, when asked about his 1,000 failed attempts to produce a light bulb, answered, "I didn't fail 1,000 times; the light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps." What if we employed a more "sanctified" measure of success? Not necessarily accounting for our numbers or dollars but for our faithfulness to God's mission for us and our willingness to learn from our experience. King David gave this advice on success to his son Solomon, "... and keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and keep in his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn, that the LORD may establish his word that he spoke concerning me..." (1 Kings 2:3-4a). In this edition of our newsletter, you will find an account of such a success. Three congregations who are faithfully seeking to do the work of the Lord in their respective communities. It certainly isn't your typical feel-good, happy ending success story. But I truly believe it was a success! *Pastor Todd*

## **News from Rev. Eric & Johanna Stinnett serving in Ethiopia**

With the move from August to September, the fall semester is now in full swing and it has been a busy month. Both my teaching and advising load has doubled from last fall. I am teaching four classes at the MA level; Personal Development, Worship: Theory and Practice, Theology and Doctrine of Sacraments, and Practical Theology. Personal Development and Worship: Theory and Practice are both classes I taught last year, so this time around, I feel better prepared to anticipate the areas where the students will have questions or difficulty. The Sacraments class is a new class just added to the curriculum this year. I am enjoying the experience of designing a new class from the ground up...especially one on such an important subject. The Practical Theology class was a surprise. Someone else was scheduled to teach it, but the week before classes started, he found out he was leaving, so I was asked to take the class on five days' notice. This class addresses practical issues and concerns in the parish in areas of worship, education, counselling ethics, etc. Thankfully, my years in the parish gave me plenty of practical experience to draw on (even if much of it needs to be carefully translated to another cultural context). In addition to my classes, I also have four students I am advising on their Masters Thesis papers and one that I am advising on his BTh Thesis paper. I will meet with each student for about an hour every couple of weeks to assess and give guidance on their research work and writing. The students I have been assigned are academically strong and have chosen interesting topics to research, so I am looking forward to spending the year working with them. If the first month is an accurate indicator (and I believe it is) this will be a very good year. In the second-year class I can see a theological maturity and depth of understanding that they didn't have as first-year students. The new first-year students are eager to learn and already asking good questions. The students are all focused, hardworking and committed to being the best workers they can for the church. I pray with confidence that they will be.

**Please Pray for:** -continued language classes - Eric's classes—the schedule changed and he

has four Master's level classes -the student dining hall which is flooded on campus -Ethiopia's peace and safety -funding for visiting professors to teach here at MYS -wisdom in serving the people of God here at the MYS -the Seminary faculty—10 members are on leave right now

**Give thanks for:** -healing for Luke and Johanna—we are better! -the many encouraging emails we received this last month -the new Master's I students who are studying at MYS

**Praise God for:** -the many opportunities to tell others about God -beautiful celebrations for the Ethiopian New Year -the Rabe family here with us in Ethiopia -our family continuing to be content here in Ethiopia

**Happy New Year!** It is now the year 2010 here in Ethiopia. Followed closely by Meskel, which is the Orthodox celebration of the “true finding of the cross”, these two holidays dominate September in Ethiopian culture. There is much celebrating, food, dancing, and visiting going on between family and friends. We were also told that in the Southern Nations people of Ethiopia, that this often means 3 weeks of holiday and visiting. Many people choose to get married at this time. For some, this will be the one time in the whole year when they can afford to eat meat

**Did you know . . . ?** Ethiopia has been a country since 980 BC. That means that she is coming up on her 3,000th birthday in 2020! It serves as a symbol of independence in Africa and has the United Nations HQ located in Addis Ababa.

FACEBOOK: We are on Facebook, although consistent internet is a struggle. See our archived newsletters and feel free to share the work God is doing here with others. God is good!

The Evangel in Ethiopia Amharic—this is the language we are learning. To say: “Okay!” you would say (i-shee). It also commonly used to soothe children when they fall or are crying.



# Coming Events at Bethlehem

*Also available online at [www.BethlehemSylvanGrove.org](http://www.BethlehemSylvanGrove.org)*

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- Oct 16      7 p.m. Church Council Meeting
- Oct 22      Quarterly Voters meeting following worship service
- Oct 28      500<sup>th</sup> Reformation Day Celebration

## *Our Weekly Worship schedule:*

*9 a.m. – Sunday School and BLTeens Bible study (school)*

*9 a.m. – Adult Bible study (Parish hall)*

*10 a.m. – Worship Service (Holy Communion on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays and some festivals)*

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