

REFORMATION 500: 1518 in Review

500 years ago this summer the heresy trial of Martin Luther began in Rome. We will have much more to say of his trial in the coming months. However, it was during these months of 1518 that something far more important was happening. Much is made of the so-called “tower experience”—that as Luther wrestled with the doctrine of Holy Scriptures in his tower study, he finally understood, believed, and began to teach that God justifies the sinner by His grace through faith in Christ.

Luther had clearly made much progress in understanding the Holy Scriptures, as we see in his Ninety-Five Theses. Luther was teaching that man is a sinner, and that man the sinner must justify God—reckon and declare God to be righteous—by confessing his sin and becoming humble before God. But, as Luther later confessed, such a God was a God of the Law, a God who terrified him and gave him no comfort or joy.

The discovery of 500 years ago was a recovery of the teaching of Scripture that God justifies the sinner through faith in Christ. That is, God reckons and imparts to the sinner His own righteousness, for Christ’s sake. “For the righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel from faith to faith, just as it is written, ‘He who is righteous by faith shall live’” (Romans 1:17). The righteousness of God is the righteousness won for man by the God-man Jesus Christ in his atoning death and resurrection, the righteousness which becomes ours by believing this very Gospel of Jesus that is preached to us.

Philippians Workshops for Stewardship

Rev. Heath Curtis from LCMS Stewardship Ministry is presenting Philippians Workshops to help with teaching stewardship: Immanuel, Alliance on July 31 and Our Savior, Cheyenne, on August 1. See wylcms.org/events for more information.

Lander Camp August 5–9

All youth ages 10–18 are invited to the annual Lander Youth Camp August 5–9. Information and registration is found at wylcms.org/events.

Teacher Search

Trinity Lutheran School, Riverton, is searching for a 1st Grade teacher for the 2018–2019 school year. If you are interested or have a candidate to recommend, please call 307-857-5710.

NEXT ROUNDUP...

... will be delivered to congregations around July 20 (August 2018 issue). Watch for it!



WYOMING DISTRICT ROUND-UP July 2018

District Website: www.wylcms.org

The Year of the Formula of Concord

“...REMEMBERING YOU IN MY PRAYERS...” (Eph. 1:16)

For **Krista Grams**, daughter of Rev. Jeff and Kim Grams. Her persistent headaches continue, but a new diagnosis and treatment has resulted in great improvement.

For **Rev. Claude and Deloris Constable**, who are in assisted living with health issues.

For **Rev. Phil Grovenstein**, undergoing treatment for cancer.

For **Rev. Jeffery Grams**, in thanksgiving for his healing and returning strength and stamina.

PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS

Trinity, Rock Springs and **Emmanuel, Green River** are nearing completion of a multi-point parish agreement. Trinity is being served by **Rev. James Martin** (Emmanuel, Green River) during the vacancy.

St. James, Scottsbluff and **Mount Calvary, Bayard** have formed a multi-point parish. St. James, who has been served by **Rev. Kenneth Humphrey** (Trinity, Morrill) during the vacancy, has called **Rev. George Naylor (Mount Calvary, Bayard)**, to serve as their pastor in the dual parish.

The parish of **Zion, Grover** and **Grace, Pine Bluffs** are working their way through the pre-call process and are considering their options. The parish is being served by **Rev. Richard Boche** during the vacancy period.

Rev. Daniel Hinton (Trinity, Cheyenne) is considering a call to Christ Lutheran Church, Lubbock, Texas.

THE BRIDE CONFESSES CHRIST: THE FORMULA OF CONCORD

Article Six of the *Formula of Concord* (on **The Third Use of God's Law**), warns against an error that “harms and conflicts with Christian discipline and true godliness” (FC Ep.8). This error is displayed today when Christians or churches reject or change clear teachings of God's commandments, or when they dismiss them as unimportant in their own lives and congregations. We confess here that “the Holy Spirit uses the written law for the instruction” of Christians. “By this [written Law] the truly believing also learn to serve God, not according to their own thoughts, but according to His written Law and Word. This is a sure rule and standard of a godly life and walk.” We further confess that God's Law is not a random collection of arbitrary rules, but that it is “God's eternal and unchangeable will” (FC SD VI.3).

Status of the Controversy

“The Law was given to people for three reasons: (1) that by the Law outward discipline might be maintained against wild, disobedient people [curb]; (2) that people may be led to the knowledge of their sins by the Law [mirror]; and (3) that after they are regenerate and the flesh still cleaves to them, they might on this account have a fixed rule according to which they are to regulate and direct their whole life [rule or guide]. A dissension has arisen between a few theologians about the third use of the Law, namely, whether it is to be taught to regenerate Christians. The one side has said Yes; the other, No.

Theses (Affirmative Statements): The True Christian Teaching about This Controversy

“1. We believe, teach, and confess that, even though people who are truly believing in Christ and truly converted to God have been freed and exempted from the curse and coercion of the Law, they are still not without the Law on this account. They have been redeemed by God's Son in order that they may exercise themselves in the Law day and night. Even our first parents before the fall did not live without Law. They had God's Law written into their hearts, because they were created in God's image.

“2. We believe, teach, and confess that the preaching of the Law is to be encouraged diligently. This applies not only for the unbelieving and impenitent, but also for the true believers, who are truly converted, regenerate, and justified through faith.

“3. Although believers are regenerate and renewed in the spirit of their minds, in the present life this regeneration and renewal is not complete. It is only begun. . .

“6. The Law is and remains—both to the penitent and impenitent, both to regenerate and unregenerate people—one and the same Law. It is God's unchangeable will. The difference, as far as obedience is concerned, is only in the person. For one who is not yet regenerate follows the Law out of constraint and unwillingly does what it requires of him (as also the regenerate do according to the flesh). But the believer, so far as he is regenerate, acts without constraint and with a willing spirit to do what no threat of the Law (however severe) could ever force him to do.” (FC Ep.VI)

Next month we will look at our theses and antitheses for **Article Seven, The Holy Supper of Christ**. In this article we recognize and confess that the devil and world and our own sinful flesh rage against the Lord's Supper and seek to deny it, destroy it, or tear it away from us by false teaching and false faith. To our great sorrow, we have all seen this among those of our family and friends who do not know or believe what Jesus teaches and gives in His Supper.

Status of the Controversy

“Question: In the Holy Supper, are the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ (a) truly and essentially present, (b) distributed with the bread and wine, and (c) received with the mouth by all those who use this Sacrament—whether they are worthy or unworthy, godly or ungodly, believing or unbelieving? Are they received by the unbelieving for consolation and life, but by the unbelieving for judgment? The Sacramentarians [i.e. those who oppose the Lutheran doctrine] say No. We say Yes.

“To explain this controversy, it must be noted in the beginning that there are two kinds of Sacramentarians. Some are openly crass Sacramentarians. They declare in plain, clear words what they believe in their hearts, that in the Holy Supper nothing but bread and wine is present, distributed, and received with the mouth. Others, however, are crafty Sacramentarians. They are the most harmful of all. In part, they talk very fancy, using our own words. They pretend that they also believe a true presence of the true, essential, living body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper. However, they say that this happens *spiritually* through faith. Nevertheless, under these fancy words, they hold precisely the former crass opinion, namely, that in the Holy Supper nothing is present and received with the mouth except bread and wine.” (FC Ep VII.2–5)