

REFORMATION 500: 1518 in Review

The beginning of a new school year reminds us of important Reformation changes at the University of Wittenberg 500 years ago. In March of 1518, Luther and his colleagues discussed the need to abandon scholasticism and return to an emphasis on Scripture and the Church Fathers. Among the reforms that followed, lectures on Greek and Hebrew were added to the curriculum, marking a return to the original sources of the Bible and other classic texts. Luther called for a professor to be appointed to fulfill these new requirements, and his request was answered in the person of Phillip Melanchthon. Melanchthon had received a thorough education in the classical liberal arts. In time he would become Luther's most important academic, theological, and ecclesiastical colleague.

Melanchthon arrived at Wittenberg August 25, 1518 and on the 29th gave his famous inaugural lecture on the improvement of academic studies. He spoke about education and the arts, emphasizing especially the importance of Greek. He quickly became a popular teacher with a full lecture hall.

Save the Dates...

-October 14, 4:00 PM, at Trinity Lutheran Church, Riverton: The district is invited to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the ordination of President Emeritus Robert Oberheu.

-October 21, 2:00 PM, at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Potter, NE: The congregation is celebrating its 100th Anniversary at Vespers.

NEXT ROUNDUP...

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



WYOMING DISTRICT ROUND-UP SEPTEMBER 2018

District Website: www.wylcms.org

The Year of the Formula of Concord

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

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

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

For **Nelda Simonson**, wife of Rev. Duane Simonson, who is mostly homebound and in the advanced stages of cancer.

PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS

Trinity, Rock Springs and **Emmanuel, Green River** has received approval for their multi-point parish agreement. Trinity will soon hold a voters' meeting to call **Rev. James Martin** (Emmanuel, Green River), who has also served them during the vacancy.

The parish of **Zion, Grover** and **Grace, Pine Bluffs** met August 19 and are exploring alternative parish arrangements for ministry. The parish is being served by **Rev. Richard Boche** during the vacancy period.

Trinity, Cheyenne is being served by **Rev. Marcus Baikie** (Our Savior's, Cheyenne) during its vacancy.

Rev. Brad Heinecke (St. Paul's, Sidney, NE) has retired, effective August 19 as his last Sunday. He and Debbie will be moving to their home in Florida. **Rev. Allen Strawn** (St. Paul's, Bridgeport) has been elected to serve St. Paul's during the vacancy.

THE BRIDE CONFESSES CHRIST: THE FORMULA OF CONCORD

This month and next we survey the Formula of Concord, Article Eight, "The Person of Christ." In the previous article on "The Holy Supper of Christ," we confess that Christ gives us His true body and blood with the consecrated bread and wine. In the debates with those who denied Holy Scripture on this teaching, the Lutherans discovered that their opponents were also denying a very important part of the doctrine concerning our Savior, Jesus Christ. They taught that Christ could not give His body and blood in the Lord's Supper because of the limitations of His human nature.

Here we see that the teachings concerning the Lord's Supper and the Person of Christ are intertwined. For it is the eternal and almighty God who speaks and gives the Words of Institution in the Lord's Supper. And Jesus who gives His flesh and blood in Communion as a Man is also the eternal God. For in the Personal Union of God and Man in Christ, these two natures are inseparably joined, so that the man Jesus shares in and exercises the almighty power of God, and God the Son suffers and dies for all men, shedding His blood for us and giving us His blood in Holy Communion. We confess, "Christ is and remains to all eternity God and man in one undivided person. Next to the Holy Trinity, this is the highest mystery, upon which our only consolation, life, and salvation depends, as the apostle testifies in 1 Timothy 3:16" (FC Ep VIII.18)

Status of the Controversy

"From the controversy about the Holy Supper a disagreement has arisen between the pure theologians of the Augsburg Confession and the Calvinists. The Calvinists have also confused some other theologians about the person of Christ and the two natures in Christ and their properties.

"The chief question, however, has been this: Because of the personal union, do the divine and human natures [of Christ], and also their properties, really have communion with each other? In other words (in deed and truth), do the divine and human natures commune with each other in the person of Christ, and how far does this communion extend?

"The Sacramentarians have asserted that the divine and human natures in Christ are united personally in such a way that neither one has real communion. This means (in deed and truth) that they do not share with the other nature what is unique to either nature. They share nothing more than name alone. For they plainly say, "The personal union does nothing more than make the names common." In other words, God is called man, and man is called God. Yet this

happens in such a way that the divine has no real communion (that is, in deed and truth) with humanity. And humanity has nothing in common with divinity, its majesty, and properties. Dr. Luther and those who agreed with him have contended against the Sacramentarians for the contrary teaching.

Theses (Affirmative Statements): The Pure Teaching of the Christian Church about the Person of Christ

"To explain this controversy and settle it according to the guidance of our Christian faith, our doctrine, faith, and confession is as follows:

"1. The divine and human natures in Christ are personally united. So there are not two Christs, one the Son of God and the other the Son of Man. But one and the same person is the Son of God and the Son of Man.

"2. We believe, teach, and confess that the divine and human natures are not mingled into one substance, nor is one changed into the other. Each keeps its own essential properties, which can never become the properties of the other nature.

"3. The properties of the divine nature are these: to be almighty, eternal, infinite, and to be everywhere present (according to the property of its nature and its natural essence, of itself), to know everything, and so on. These never become properties of the human nature.

"4. The properties of the human nature are to be a bodily creature, to be flesh and blood, to be finite and physically limited, to suffer, to die, to ascend and descend, to move from one place to another, to suffer hunger, thirst, cold, heat, and the like. These never become properties of the divine nature.

"5. The two natures are united personally (i.e. in one person). Therefore, we believe, teach, and confess that this union is not the kind of joining together and connection that prevents either nature from having anything in common with the other personally (i.e. because of the personal union). It is not like when two boards are glued together, where neither gives anything to the other or takes anything from the other. But here is described the highest communion that God truly has with the man. From this personal union, the highest and indescribable communion results. There flows everything human that is said and believed about God, and everything divine that is said and believed about the man Christ. The ancient teachers of the Church explained this union and communion of the natures by the illustration of iron glowing with fire, and also by the union of the body and soul in man."