



St. John's First Ev. Lutheran Church
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The Augsburg Confession: This we teach, this we condemn

This month will mark the 496th anniversary of the Reformation which marks Luther's presentation of the Ninety-Five theses. The fruit of the debate that ensued from those theses was the Augsburg Confession presented to Charles V in 1530. This Confession laid out what the pastors in the German churches were now preaching and teaching. The reformers made a bold claim against the established Roman Catholic church that what they believed, preached, taught, and even practiced was the holy, catholic faith. And that in many doctrines and practices the Roman Catholic church had erred and departed from the catholic faith.

Chief among the errors of the Roman Church was on the nature of grace. Was it received by faith alone as a gift? Or was it aided by man's reason and works? In the article on justification the Augsburg Confession confesses that justification, that is how a sinner can stand in God's presence, is solely and freely given on account of Christ's death for sin. This is the article by which the church stands or falls. Either Christ is savior or He is not. If He is not the savior, then the church is a collection of bean counters determining how many and what types of works are pleasing to God. If He is the savior then God does all the accounting for sin and He puts it on Christ's account. Meaning He alone suffers God's wrath for all sin. And the apostolic witness of scripture is that Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God in the flesh, who died on the cross for the forgiveness of sin. Therefore, the church can confidently proclaim with all certainty that Christ crucified is the savior of sinners. And faith is the free gift of God by which we can cling to Christ and obtain His righteous merit before God. The Roman Church had denigrated Christ's work by adding man-made works to Christ's sacrifice. Indulgences, directing people to monasteries for salvation, purgatory, penance for sin, and other teachings and practices turned Christ into a terrible judge instead of savior. The reformers held up what had been there all along, that faith in Christ was a free gift by which sinners knew they were in God's good graces.

And by the time the Augsburg Confession was published some new sects riding the coat tails of the Reformation cropped up teaching both old and new heresies. So in addition to proclaiming their doctrine over and against the Roman Church's teaching, the Reformers condemned teachings of these sects. And they named names. This was not vindictive. It is part and parcel of proclaiming the truth of God's Word. From the very beginning God has named names on who is not teaching the truth. The devil was cast from God's presence for he taught falsely. Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden for not holding to God's truth. All but eight were drowned for not holding to God's truth.

His Word is life for His creation. To speak a lie is to invite death, which is against God's intent for creation. So, when someone preaching in Christ's name preaches or teaches falsely the church rightly condemns that teaching. The church is not to go on a witch hunt for false teachers, but when someone publicly teaches contrary to the Word of God it is obligated to condemn such teaching. It matters what you believe about God and the person through whom God is revealed, His Christ. Through Christ we see God's will for sinners and that is eternal life. The true church will do nothing to hinder God's elect, but rather proclaim what is right and true for their salvation.

This might not sit well with you to condemn the teachings of others. But if Arius, a third century heretic, who denied that Jesus was very God of very God, had not been condemned who knows what Christendom would look like today.

And his teaching was flourishing at the time it was condemned. But thanks be to God that Arius' teaching was condemned, otherwise many would be robbed of the comfort of Christ. The reformers, along with the historic, catholic church condemned this error in the first article of faith concerning God. So, we too, today condemn any teaching which denies Jesus' divinity. Such as is taught by Jehovah's Witnesses, Islam, and lodges for they do not speak of God as Trinity. For in Jesus we have the heart of God made flesh for us. That we may have the comfort of the God for us.

The Augsburg Confession and the other confessions of faith included in the Book of Concord will remain relevant to the day of Christ's return for they are in accord with the truth. On that day there will be no disunity. But until then we must be on our guard to hold fast to what is true. May Christ have mercy on us in this task. Amen.

Pastor Gary Hall

Notes & Happenings

LYF will meet on the second Sunday of each month, 6:00-7:30, in the Friendship Room with the exception of special planned events. While it has been over 8 years since there was a formal and regular meeting of LYF, we are certain that God has brought us to this new time and place for the purpose of forming relationships that will encourage faith and servanthood! Please pray for this aspect of ministry and for all of the youth of St. John's. **Don't miss out on the fellowship and fun, Sunday, October 13, 6-7:30 pm!**

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16TH, 6-7:00 PM, Work party to sort and package food items for the Saturday, September 21, distribution for the Food Bank Ministry opening (All Members encouraged to assist, including St. John's Youth)

FOOD BANK MINISTRY DISTRIBUTION DATE: Saturday October 19, 9-11:00 am. Persons are needed to assist with distribution by serving as: greeters (practicing Christian hospitality), registrants, and runners. Please speak with Robert Hulitt if you are willing to serve in Jesus' name.

FOOD BANK ITEMS NEEDED The following items are considered to be staples for St. John's food bank of which we are in dire need to support this outreach ministry of Christ's Church through his congregation at St. John's First Ev. Lutheran Church. Items can be brought to worship and placed in the "Friendship Room."

Non-refrigerated Milk (Cartons or cans), Cereals, Complete Pancake Mix (Only need Water), Syrups
Peanut Butter, Jelly/Jam (Grape or Strawberry), Canned Soups (Low Sodium): Tomato, Chicken Noodle,
Vegetable, Vegetable Beef, Stews, Pasta, Pasta Sauce, Tuna Fish, Canned Chicken, Canned Fruit,
Complete Food Meals, Canned Vegetables

A SPECIAL CHRISMON "CLASS" Saturday, October 19, 9-11 am, Margaret Johnson will lead interested persons in a session for making beaded Chrismons for our tree. Please let Margaret know of your commitment to be present so that she can make ample kits. Thank you for your support of this special witness/proclamation of Jesus' name! during the season of Christmas!

THANKSGIVING BASKETS: As you are Led by prayer and Spirit, Please use the sign-up sheet to provide food items for 5 baskets for families in need. Non-perishable items made be brought to worship and placed in the Friendship Room or Undercroft, separate from Food Bank Ministry items. All items need to be brought by Sunday, November 24 for distribution.

MISSION STATEMENT: As a result of our planning meetings we have proposed for adoption the following mission statement: "In grateful response to God's grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments, the mission of St. John's is to vigorously make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our church and out into our community."



Pray For Us Calendar

These prayer requests were submitted by coworkers in the Lord's mission.

Congregations and individuals are invited to copy these pages for newsletters or other distribution. Download at www.lcms.org/prayforus or call 888-843-5267 to request a copy.

OCTOBER

PRISON AND JAIL MINISTRY — OCTOBER 1-31 In keeping with God's Word, pastors, deaconesses and laity in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) have been visiting the incarcerated and encouraging those who serve them for more than 100 years. To educate and support these volunteers, the LCMS has co-sponsored two synodwide prison/jail ministry conferences in partnership with the LWML and the LCMS Southern Illinois District in 2005 and 2012. These entities also have provided grants to encourage more LCMS personnel in starting up prison and jail ministry programs in their area. In addition, the LCMS has helped to produce several devotionals for prisoners.

In 2013, the Synod in convention asked that each district assign a prison/jail ministry coordinator so that God's Word can continue to change the hearts and minds of those behind bars.

Remember God's work through LCMS volunteers and church workers as you pray:

- 1.** for judges and all those in the court system, that they might make wise judgments with justice and mercy.
- 2.** for all those who are unjustly held in jail and prison, that they will be released, their names cleared, and their lives and relationships restored to the glory of Your holy name.
- 3.** for the guilty in prison, that they might be brought to repentance and amendment of life.
- 4.** for incarcerated unbelievers, that they be brought to a repentant faith so that they may experience the true freedom that only Christ can give as they serve out their sentences.
- 5.** for all prisoners, that they would make use of and profit from sound Bible studies, worship services, educational opportunities, physical training and enforced discipline in prison so that they might become more hopeful, productive and helpful upon their release.
- 6.** for those in jail, that they might use their time wisely to read, learn and inwardly digest God's Word so that they might learn to live in His will and have peace with whatever verdict they receive.
- 7.** for those in youth detention, that they might be taught godly wisdom and discipline while they are young so that they may grow in the fear and knowledge of our Lord, Jesus Christ.
- 8.** for families and friends of inmates, that they might turn to Christ as their help and stay in time of need.
- 9.** for caretakers of prisoners' children, to bring those children up in the knowledge and admonition of the Lord.
- 10.** for prison chaplains, that they might be nourished in God's Word daily so they continue to give those gifts that lead to life and salvation.



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An LCMS chaplain leads a bible study with prison inmates.

INVOLVEMENT IDEAS

- Visit www.lcms.org/deaconess to learn more about the role of deaconesses and their work in institutions like prisons and hospitals.
- Learn more about how Specialized Pastoral Ministry equips ordained, commissioned and consecrated persons to reach out to people in their deepest need at some of the most vulnerable moments of life: www.lcms.org/spm.

2013



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- 11.** for all prison workers, that they may be humane and compassionate to those entrusted to their care.
- 12.** for prison/jail volunteers, that they might find joy in bringing God's Word of hope and healing to those behind bars.
- 13.** for probation and parole officers, that they might help offenders find the help they need to become productive members of society.
- 14.** for prisoner re-entry programs, that they might teach and show ex-offenders the love of Christ while helping to meet their practical, social and spiritual needs.
- 15.** for ex-offenders who are now Christians, that they would encourage and share with those who are still in the dark so that they, too, might live in the light of Christ.

- 16.** for those returning home from prison, that they might find the necessary food, clothing, shelter, transportation, relationships and fruitful employment to meet their daily needs and help them stay on the straight and narrow with the help of God.
- 17.** for the victims of prisoners and their families, that they would live in Christ's love and forgiveness as they learn to love and forgive those who have hurt or harmed them.
- 18.** for government officials, that they would make laws that lead to public safety and responsible citizenship.
- 19.** for Southern Illinois District volunteers as they lead the way in bringing God's Word to the incarcerated and explore new ways to help those recently released from prison.
- 20.** for all LCMS districts as they prayerfully consider appointing a prison ministry coordinator for their district.
- 21.** for all missionaries who help the incarcerated around the world.
- 22.** for all pastors, that they might visit their incarcerated members or find a local LCMS volunteer who will tend to their parishioners while incarcerated.
- 23.** for all Christian prisoners, that their light would so shine amongst the lost, lonely, depressed and despairing that others will seek what they have so they, too, can live in peace and hope.

- 24.** for all parishioners, that they might be welcoming to ex-offenders seeking to worship the one true God.
- 25.** for those who write letters, visit, donate Bibles, make religious bookmarks and pray for prisoners and their families.
- 26.** for all those who help and give instruction, aid and gifts to children who have an incarcerated parent.
- 27.** for all those who work in prisons and jails, that the Lord might keep them safe every day as they perform the duties of their jobs.
- 28.** for chaplains who serve alongside law enforcement officers, that they might be a witness and comfort to others even during difficult or dangerous situations.
- 29.** for Hope Halfway House in Novosibirsk, Russia, a transitional housing ministry for those recently released from prison. Hope is a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia, an LCMS partner church body.
- 30.** for the children of prisoners, that they might find good role models who will teach them about God's love and set them on the right path for their lives.
- 31.** for all who commit crimes due to hunger, hopelessness or addiction, that they might receive the freedom from sin and hope of eternal life that only Christ can give.

MISSIONARY & PERSONNEL BIRTHDAYS
Download missionary & other personnel prayer cards from the LCMS website: www.lcms.org/prayercards.

- Oct. 4** Graham Guenther, Taiwan; Lois Mahsman, Germany;
- Oct. 12** Darin Storkson, Southern Asia
- Oct. 13** Cathy Carlos, Guinea
- Oct. 14** Aimee Cima, Southeast Asia
- Oct. 20** Susan Mehl, Hong Kong
- Oct. 22** Arthur Rickman, Latin America
- Oct. 25** Anthony DiLiberto, Peru
- Oct. 26** Amy Johnson, Eurasia
- Oct. 27** A.J. Davis, Slovakia; Stephanie Jones, Germany; Matt Myers, Macau
- Oct. 31** Laurie Schlueter, Singapore

MILITARY CHAPLAINS WITH BIRTHDAYS

IN OCTOBER: Chaplain James Freitag, Fort Jackson, S.C.; Chaplain William Keller, Fort Hood, Texas; Chaplain Mark Moss, Fort Lewis, Wash.; Chaplain Richard Townes, Cary, N.C.; Chaplain Vincent Bain, Ford Leonard Wood, Mo; Chaplain Jon Smithley, Vance AFB, Okla.; Chaplain Quentin Genke, San Antonio, Texas; Chaplain Scott Simpson, Fort Lewis, Wash.

