

THE ST. JOHN NEWS

October 2022

The Spark that Sparked It All

A Glance at Several of the Ninety-Five Theses

Just a few days shy of his 34th birthday, a doctor of theology and professor at the University of Wittenberg stood before the door of the Castle Church. Nail holes pockmarked the surface of the wood as evidence of the door's influential use as a bulletin board for the community. Flyers for various events remained attached to the door, no doubt including the highlighting of the display of Elector Frederick's vast collection of relics to take place the very next day.

The day was October 31 in the year 1517, just one day before the high celebration day of All Saints. Many Christians would enter the small village to admire Frederick's collection and to receive reprieve from various sins by praying before the alleged Biblical artifacts. Steadying his own announcement with a nail in his hand, the university professor proceeded to fix his handiwork to the church door. These were the words written in Latin by Dr. Martin Luther, introducing his ninety-five points of discussion:

Out of love and zeal for truth and the desire to bring it to light, the following theses will be publicly discussed at Wittenberg under the chairmanship of the reverend father Martin Lutter, Master of Arts and Sacred Theology and regularly appointed Lecturer on these subjects at that place. He requests that those who cannot be present to debate orally with us will do so by letter. In the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

As the story is so often told, *The Ninety-Five Theses* of Dr. Martin Luther, did not remain on that door for very long. By the grace of God, those statements were removed by those who sought to promote them, not hinder them. These points of discussion were translated from their original Latin into German and then taken to the printing press. Numerous copies were made in both languages and spread throughout the region. And so, the spark to ignite the Reformation had been struck.

As was clear from his introduction, Luther was not seeking anything more than a conversation or debate. As a professor of theology, he had every right to call such a gathering. Dr. Luther had been charged with the task of teaching several Biblical books at the university in Wittenberg. These studies of God's Word shaped his recent profound meditations upon life and death and righteousness before God. Luther was racked with guilt and shame over his own sinfulness, even as an extraordinarily pious monk. Nothing that was said to him could alleviate his guilt. The belief persisted within him that God was angry with him for his sins and that even his best efforts only served to fuel God's wrath.

With his spiritual father guiding him, Luther ever-so-slowly began to hear the message of the Gospel, that Christ was his Savior first and foremost, not his harsh judge and taskmaster. While studying the Psalms and preparing lectures on Genesis and Romans, Luther's view of the Gospel focused in on God's grace in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit was working through this very Word to sharpen Luther's understanding of God's righteousness given to sinners as a gift. It was about three years prior to his publication of *The Ninety-Five Theses* that Luther had his eyes opened by many Biblical passages that taught him about the righteousness of God that sinners receive through faith in Jesus Christ.

Unimaginable joy and enthusiasm filled Luther as he made this rediscovery known to friends and fellow professors. Many were influenced by Luther's words and agreed with his interpretation. With the support of many Wittenberg faculty members, Luther ventured to make his views public. To do so, he noted ninety-five different points of discussion dealing with repentance and indulgences. What burned underneath Luther's thinking was the relationship between repentance as caused by the Gospel and indulgences as works sinners could do to earn forgiveness. How did the two connect? Luther struggled to see any common ground between the two and longed to have an answer given by those who shared the Christian faith.

Space does not allow an examination of each thesis of Luther. A few shall be highlighted here, and you are invited and encouraged to read them all at your convenience. A copy can be found next to my office door in the church hallway.

Thesis 1: When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "Repent" [Matt. 4:17], he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.

Right away, this thesis strikes against a major issue. The purchasing of indulgences, especially those that granted full remission of sin, even all future sin, led many Christians to lives free of repentance. Repentance certainly occurs at the initial moment of conversion. But, as Luther would later elucidate, the Christian remains a sinner in this life, and has much need of daily repentance.

Many of the following theses center on the pope and his ability to remit sins of those who are in purgatory, a belief Luther still held at the writing of the *Theses*. Luther was beginning to question the limits of the pope's power, as seen in the following theses:

Thesis 20: Therefore the pope, when he uses the words "plenary remission of all penalties," does not actually mean "all penalties," but only those imposed by himself.

Thesis 21: Thus those indulgence preachers are in error who say that a man is absolved from every penalty and saved by papal indulgences.

Luther was not yet against the sale of indulgences or the concept of purgatory. However, the theology professor was interested in hearing the church's defense of the sale of indulgences and the belief in purgatory. In his study of the Bible, he had yet to find texts to support this belief and practice.

With Thesis 27, Luther begins to shed light on the errors attached to indulgences and continues by introducing his newfound biblical understanding of righteousness through faith in Christ.

Thesis 27: They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory.

Thesis 30: No one is sure of the integrity of his own contrition, much less of having received plenary remission.

Thesis 36: Any truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without indulgence letters.

Thesis 37: Any true Christian, whether living or dead, participates in all the blessings of Christ and the church; and this is granted him by God, even without indulgence letters.

The challenge to the role of indulgences continues from Luther's pen as he suggests that truly Christian works in service to the neighbor in need are better than buying indulgences.

Thesis 43: Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better deed than he who buys indulgences..

Luther presses on by arguing that the purchasing of indulgences should not replace the acts of kindness Christians are called to perform. He recognizes that love for the neighbor grows as that love is expressed in acts of service. Likewise, the purchase of indulgences is to be seen as completely voluntary, not commanded. This countered the sellers of indulgences who pressured unsuspecting Christians into these purchases.

The good doctor also reveals his naivete about the pope, expressing his belief that the pope is not aware of all that is going on with the sale of indulgences.

Thesis 50: Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the indulgence preachers, he would rather that the basilica of St. Peter were burned to ashes than built up with the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep.

Thesis 53: They are enemies of Christ and the pope who forbid altogether the preaching of the Word of God in some churches in order that indulgences may be preached in others.

As he has found more comfort in the Word of God, Martin Luther assumes that the pope still desires for the Word of God to have more power and sway in congregations than the sale of indulgences.

In the remaining theses, Dr. Luther extols more and more the value of the cross of Christ and begins to put the view on indulgences in its proper place.

Thesis 77: To say that even St. Peter, if he were now pope, could not grant greater graces is blasphemy against St. Peter and the pope.

Thesis 79: To say that the cross emblazoned with the papal coat of arms, and set up by the indulgence preachers, is equal in worth to the cross of Christ is blasphemy.

With so much emphasis having been placed on indulgences, a negative light had been cast on the pope, which Luther viewed as a great travesty at that time. Such theses that reveal this are written from the view of the laity, who would not understand why the pope would allow such actions that made him look so bad.

Thesis 82: "Why does not the pope empty purgatory for the sake of holy love and the dire need of the souls that are there if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a church? The former reasons would be most just; the latter is most trivial."

Thesis 86: "Why does not the pope, whose wealth is today greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build this one basilica of St. Peter with his own money rather than with the money of poor believers?"

By God's good grace, Martin Luther had been led to see the glory of Christ as Savior, rather than as harsh judge. As a result, Luther concludes his statements with Christ Jesus as the focal point for all hope and peace for the Christian.

Thesis 94: Christians should be exhorted to be diligent in following Christ, their head, through penalties, death, and hell;

Thesis 95: And thus be confident of entering into heaven through many tribulations rather than through the false security of peace [Acts 14:22].

Seeing through the façade of overemphasizing indulgences, Luther decries the notion that there can be true peace with God in anyone or anything other than Jesus Christ and him crucified. He is here beginning to realize the beauty of the Gospel and how God wants it given to all freely.

Sadly, no formal debate ever took place over *The Ninety-Five Theses*. Luther had even sent a copy to the pope, believing that he would agree with Luther's points and help to reclaim the purity of the Gospel. Instead, the pope and the vast majority of the church in Luther's day viewed the *Theses* as heretical, contradicting the very pope himself, whom they viewed as Christ here on earth.

Thankfully, Luther was not merely toying with an idea that he would easily discard. The reaction of the pope and the church to his claims, which were simply the claims of the Scripture, and thus God himself, only drove Luther to hold on to the truth even tighter. Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, Luther resisted all of the temptations to compromise the Gospel, and he would have been glad and willing to die for the cause.

We rejoice with Martin Luther and all who are his true theological descendants for the proclamation of the pure Gospel, given to us through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. We stand united with all who have shared the one true faith before us, as we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:2).

The Lord bless your celebration of the Reformation and your continued life in his precious Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor Caithamer

Let Us Pray

For Healing and Recovery: Bill Densmore— father of Faith Block, Kathy Slaughter, Herb Krueger, Charlene Tengwall, Gary Hedge, Judy Funderburg, Roger Eshelman—father of Stephanie Middendorf, Brian Hagler, Larry Riffel, Teresa Newbold—godchild of Bob & Joan Arnold, Barbara Hamblin—family friend of Bob & Joan Arnold, Karla Fisher, John Lynch, Hendricks Hartman—grandson of Dan & Joanie Wheatman, Maria Stifanos, Merv Strom, Rebecca Chizzo—daughter of Marvin & Esther Blanton, Roy Johnson— father of Anne Wright, Todd Hempel—grandson of Harold Hempel, Brett Veland—cousin of the Kindts'

For Successful Treatments: Dan Wheatman, Nancy Freeman, Barb Marcellus, Luke Armstrong, Earl Roppel, Linda Kovell, Joan Arnold, Jeanette Williams, Nancy Schwalbe

For our Military: Adam Thompson, Nick Finke, Andy Carmichael, Brandon Kovell, Zachary Carr, David Carr

For our Missionaries: Pastor Randrianasolo Dembiniana Havanjanakary and the Madagascar Lutheran Seminary, Pastor Magnus Bengston and Lielsalaca Lutheran Church in Latvia, Pastor Obot Ite and the Lutheran Mission in Kingston, Jamaica



Acts 2:1 – "When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place." Pentecost was the Old Testament harvest festival – a time of thanksgiving, bounty, and the giving of gifts. How appropriate that the New Testament takes on the meaning of a new harvest – the ripe fields of the nations. This includes bringing in the elect of every tribe and tongue to sing the Lord's praise. Every farmer knows that it is God who gives the increase and that the harvest calls for thanksgiving.



October Music Notes



Hymn Sing encore! Everyone continues to enjoy singing hymns together, so once again we will make an occasion to do so. **Sunday, October 23** we will have a hymn sing as the Prelude for both services. There will be request forms in the narthex, or you may email Keith with your favorites.

Recently one of the verses of a hymn struck me as the perfect recruitment text:

Joyfully, heartily resounding, let every instrument and voice

Peal out the praise of grace abounding, calling the whole world to rejoice.

Trumpets and organs, set in motion such sounds as make the heavens ring;

All things that live in earth and ocean, make music for your mighty King.

Do you know from which hymn this verse comes? Would you like to learn more about hymns, and church music in general? Come join us – Wednesdays at 6:00 for Handbells, Thursdays at 6:00 for singing choirs, and instrumentalists as fits our schedules.

Tentative schedule for October-

Sunday, October 2	Men's Choir
Sunday, October 9	Instrumentalists
Sunday, October 16	Alleluia Ringers
Sunday, October 23	Hymn Sing (and ?)
Sunday, October 30	Reformation – Singers and Instrumentalists

Here at St. John, we usually alternate among Divine Service I, II, II & IV, depending on which Sunday of the month it is. Reformation is an occasion on which we often use Divine Service V, which is also called the Luther Hymn Service, because it includes hymns by Luther or from his time for the ordinary (*Kyrie, Gloria, Creed, Sanctus & Agnus Dei*).

2022 is the 200th anniversary year of the birth of the great French composer, Cesar Franck. He is perhaps best known for his magnificent major organ works, of which only 12 were published in his lifetime. Franck was organist the Parisian church of St. Clotilde, and also taught at and served as Director of the Paris Conservatory. Some his his choral and organ works will be presented in church between now and the end of the year – stay tuned!

Soli Deo Gloria,

Keith

Fellowship Board—The Fellowship Board will not meet in October.

Altar Guild Ladies—The altar guild will meet Sunday, October 16, 2022 between services at 9:15am in the overflow. If you cannot make the meeting, please contact Jan B.

Ladies' Meeting—We are trying something new. We invite ladies of the church to meet and visit on Wednesday, October 19 at 1:30 p.m. at the church to socialize and have cookies and coffee. There will be no officers and no projects. We hope you will consider joining us.

To my church family,

Tom and I are blessed to have so many friends to pray for us both. Tom is now in his heavenly home free of pain and worries. Thank you for all the support you have given me in the last eight years.

God bless,

Nancy



4th Annual

St. John Arts & Crafts Fair

Shop from hundreds of items from local artists and craftsmen!

Get a fresh cup of coffee and purchase bake sale items. The Bake Sale will include individual items to eat on site and also items to take home. Soup, salads, and sandwiches will be available for lunch.

Contact the school office with any questions.

How you can help to make this event successful:

Be a Vendor – are you a crafter or artist and have personal creations to sell? Fill out a vendor application form, found in the school office.

Be a Shopper – come to the fair and see all the wonderful arts and crafts. Get a head start on Christmas or just buy something for yourself.

Be a Baker – items will be needed for the bake sale. A sign-up sheet will be posted by the fellowship hall.

Be a Volunteer – extra hands will be needed to help with this event. A sign-up sheet is posted by the fellowship hall.

Be an Advertiser – help spread the word! Tell your friends, family, coworkers, neighbors, etc.... Share the flyer on your social media. Post the flyer at your work.

Contact the school office to get a paper or electronic copy of the flyer.



E.A.T. Night - E.A.T. @ Texas Roadhouse on Monday, October 10th, 4-10pm. Texas Roadhouse is giving back at least 10% of our purchases. We will receive a larger percentage with more Dine to Donate patrons, so spread the word. Bring in the flyer or show it on your phone to make sure that the proceeds will be donated to St. John Lutheran School. Flyers are available on the narthex table and on the school website www.stjohns.com. This fundraiser applies to dine-in and carry out purchases. Thank you for your continued support of these events.



Trunk or Treat- The Evangelism Board is hosting a Trunk or Treat on Sunday, October 30 from 2:30 to 4:30. We need lots of volunteers. Please consider volunteering to hand out candy from your trunk or donating candy to help create a bag from the church. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside the fellowship hall for those who will set up a trunk. Donation slips are on the bulletin board too. Donations can be placed in the tub in the coatroom. If you have any questions, please contact Faith

Cross Country Meets

[Saturday, October 1](#) - Lodge Park, Monticello

[Wednesday Oct. 5](#) - CID Meet, Trinity, Bloomington

[Saturday Oct. 15](#) - LSA State, Trinity, Bloomington



CHAPEL OFFERINGS—CAMP CILCA OUTDOOR MINISTRIES

The Central Illinois Lutheran Camp Association (CILCA) sits on 225 acres of woodland and open fields just north of Springfield, Ill., within an easy drive of the popular Lincoln sites in Springfield and historic New Salem. It offers a summer program of week-long camps and outdoor experiences for students of all ages and abilities; Outdoor Education programs for area students; and camping of many kinds for individuals, families and groups. Rustic and all-weather sleeping cabins, campsites for tents, trailers, RV's and pop-ups, swimming lake with beach, athletic fields, Challenge Course, and indoor and outdoor chapel spaces are among the camp's features.

Collected offerings will be used to purchase a canoe or kayak and items from their wish list.

Chapel Offering for the 1st Wednesday of each month will be food items for the St. John Food Pantry. And Round Barn Food Pantry Program.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Dan, Marissa | 16 Alex |
| 2 Lauren | 17 Jan , Terry , Ryan |
| 3 Lance, Jake, Brandon | 19 Roger , Bailey |
| 4 Rebecca, Jean, Luke, Connor, Aleace, Annabel | 20 Wally , Christina , Anthea , Dot |
| Diane, Rachel, Aleace, Kathy, Gail | 21 Ruby , Linda |
| 5 Daniel | 22 Geneice, Ethan |
| 6 Matt, Alexis, Rex, Caroline, Leslie, Michael, John | 23 Selam , Tracy , Greg , Alexa |
| 7 Terra , Genevieve , Spenser , Kara , Walter , Jay | 24 Rita , Curt , Kaya , Jeff |
| 8 | 25 Claire, Catherine, Jordan |
| 9 | 26 Linda r, Alayna |
| 10 Nathaniel, Tinley , Duane | 28 Patty |
| 11 Bryce , Delores | 29 Karen , Joe , Trent |
| 13 Traci , Ben | 30 Pat , Ronda |
| 14 Randy | 31 Sue , Kendra, Max, Robert , Dorothy |
| 15 Will , Nicholas, Gabriel, Kyle , Julie, Nick | |

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Rev. Jeff & Katie Caithamer | 14 Chad & Tracy (16); Arnold & Myla (50) |
| 2 (17) Laran & Erin (12) John & | 15 Andy & Cindy (56); John & Marissa (1); Jim & Fawn (6) |
| 4 Lisa (19) Daniel & Laura (9) | 16 Tony & Jennifer (29) |
| 5 | 17 David & Lisa (24); Roger & Norma (24) |
| 6 Lee & Judy (49) | 18 Curt & Paula (36) |
| 7 Rene & Nicole (22) | 21 Raymond & Judy (55); Mike & Maxine (33) |
| 8 Rev. Don & Mar Ehlers (62); John & Cheryl (56) Martin | 24 Steve & Nancee (41); Richard & Barbara (52) 26 Tom & Peggy (54) |
| 9 & Beth(28) | 31 Jon & Susan (24); Alvin & Beverly (53) |
| 10 Curtis & Lori (41); Gerald & Linda (49) 11 Ryan & | |
| Amy (19); David & Kristina (25) 13 Derek & Jamie (10) | |



¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Romans 1:16

2022

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat																																																																																																		
<i>Church Office</i> 359-1123	<i>School Office</i> 359-1714	<i>Pastor Caithamer's</i> <i>day off: Fridays</i>				1																																																																																																		
2 <i>17th Sunday after Pentecost</i> 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion 1:00 New Member Class	3	4 5:30 Evangelism 6:00 Trustees, School Board	5 8:10 Chapel 5:45 Lifelight 7:15 Holy Communion	6 <i>Day School Closed</i> 7:00 Men's Prayer Breakfast 9:30 Lifelight 6:00 Lifelight	7 <i>Day School Closed</i>	8																																																																																																		
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9 <i>18th Sunday after Pentecost</i> 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion 1:00 New Member Class	10 <i>Columbus Day</i> 4:00 E.A.T. Night @ Texas Roadhouse 6:30 Finance Board	11 6:00 Elders	12 8:10 Chapel 10:00 Adult Bible Clsss 5:45 Midweek School, Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Holy Communion	13 9:30 Lifelight	14	15																																																																																																		
16 <i>19th Sunday after Pentecost</i> 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion 1:00 New Member Class	17	18 10:00 Adult Bible Class 6:00 Council	19 8:10 Chapel 5:45 Midweek School, Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Holy Communion	20 9:30 Lifelight <i>Newsletter Deadline</i>	21	22 9:00 St. John Arts & Crafts Fair																																																																																																		
23 <i>20th Sunday after Pentecost</i> 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion 1:00 Voter's Meeting	24	25 10:00 Adult Bible Class 6:00 Parish Ed 7:00 Youth Board	26 8:10 Chapel 5:45 Midweek School, Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Holy Communion	27 9:30 Lifelight	28	29																																																																																																		
30 <i>Reformation Day (Obs.)</i> 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion 1:00 New Member Class 2:30 Trunk-or-Treat	31		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">September 2022</th> <th colspan="7">November 2022</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td> <td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td> <td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td> <td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td> <td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td> <td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	September 2022							November 2022							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S					1	2	3			1	2	3	4	5	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	25	26	27	28	29	30		27	28	29	30						
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