

THE ST. JOHN NEWS

October 2024

The Doctrine of Justification The Key to Luther and the Reformation

The end of October brings us again to the celebration of the Reformation, a big deal for us as Lutherans. On October 31, 2024, it will have been 507 years since Luther posted the Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenburg, Germany, the key act that sparked the Reformation. What was that moment all about? And what is the Lutheran Church supposed to be all about?

Let's dive in. Martin Luther was a typical German youth who had a few extra blessings. He was able to attend schools at a young age and was well on his way to becoming a lawyer. Two brushes with death altered Luther's direction in life. A knife blade seriously injuring his leg and his encounter with a horrendous thunderstorm were the culprits. Martin Luther was afraid for his earthly life, but even more so he was terrified of his eternal life. What would happen when he died?

Luther was taught, along with all of his fellow Catholics, that only the best Christians attain heaven at the moment of death. Everyone else must pay off penalties for sins in purgatory for an unknown amount of time. While not the same as hell, purgatory was a punishment no one ever wanted. Worse than that, Luther feared his sins were too great for him to work off or for God to ever forgive and he was obsessed with the terror that he could suffer in hell forever.

The Catholic Church had capitalized on this fear for the average Christian and provided ways to alleviate these worries. The Catholic Church had introduced several non-Biblical practices, such as the honoring of relics said to be holy and from the Bible times. Pray over the skull of John the Baptizer and you could be freed from time in purgatory. Pray the Lord's prayer while visiting a splinter of wood from Christ's cross and your punishment would be reduced. Eventually, it got to the point in Luther's day that simply buying an indulgence—a piece of paper authorized by the pope—would release a person, past or present, from purgatory.

What Luther was suffering from was a guilty conscience, and rightfully so. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Paul wrote in Romans 6:23. Knowledge of sin brings the feeling of guilt and terror over sin, especially when there is an understanding that God is perfectly just and must punish sin, as Luther rightly believed. Naturally, we long for a remedy to this sinfulness and daunting reality of eternal punishment. The question is "What is the remedy?" and "How do we get it?" This would become better known as the doctrine of justification. That is, how one is made right before God.

The Church had introduced the practices of penance, relic veneration, and indulgence purchasing in recent centuries. At the point in his life where Luther committed to becoming a monk, he knew of no other options for the remedy to sin and guilt. But then, the best thing happened for Luther. He was assigned to teach books of the Bible at the University of Wittenburg. He was required to read the books of Genesis, the Psalms, Galatians, and Romans. This is where God opened Luther's eyes to the truth of justification. No one is made righteous by their own efforts. It is solely by the grace of God as received by faith that a person is justified before God.

Luther's encounter with the key passage of Romans 1:16 and 17 was crucial. There, Paul wrote, "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. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'" The key points there are the Gospel as the power of God and that in the Gospel the righteousness of God is revealed. These words of Paul demonstrate that the righteousness of God is not attained through any work, but is solely a gift.

Justification then, how a person is made right or just before God, is completely the action of God. The Gospel is the message that states that Jesus Christ suffered and died in our place for the forgiveness of all sin. Christ Jesus has done the work. God tells us simply to believe that truth and that belief is what justifies us. Abraham believed and it was credited to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6). "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Here are a few more key passages upon which the doctrine of justification is founded:

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| Romans 3:21–25 | But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through <i>faith</i> in Jesus Christ for all who <i>believe</i> . For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are <i>justified</i> by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by <i>faith</i> . |
| Romans 3:28 | For we hold that one is <i>justified</i> by <i>faith</i> apart from works of the law. |
| Galatians 2:16 | We know that a person is not <i>justified</i> by works of the law but through <i>faith</i> in Jesus Christ, so we also have <i>believed</i> in Christ Jesus, in order to be <i>justified</i> by <i>faith</i> in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be <i>justified</i> . |
| Galatians 3:11 | Now it is evident that no one is <i>justified</i> before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by <i>faith</i> ." |
| Galatians 3:23 | Now before <i>faith</i> came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be <i>justified</i> by <i>faith</i> . |

Luther's encounter with St. Paul in these works allowed him to see the crucifixion of Jesus in the proper light. No longer did Luther fear Jesus as a harsh judge. Rather, he understood Jesus to be his champion, his Savior, the one who loved him so much that he died for him. Luther became more and more convinced of this doctrine that he rejected the false teachings and prescriptions of the Catholic Church, and it allowed him to stand firm against the pope. Relics, even if real, had no power. Purgatory was a made-up teaching of the church used initially to give hope to weak Christians but eventually utilized to capitalize on their fear of God's punishment. Indulgences were nothing more than worthless scraps of paper, better to be used for any other purpose.

For Luther and his fellow reformers, the doctrine of justification was everything. It has been said that the Christian Church rises and falls on the doctrine of justification. When Christians get this teaching right, there is great comfort and peace and joy, beyond compare and the Gospel of Christ is held in its proper place. When this teaching is wrongly understood, the rest of Christian faith is skewed as well. Because of justification by faith, we can rightly see the Sacraments as gifts of God that give faith and that we receive by faith. Gifts can be given to and received by anyone, and that is what God offers through his grace. If we are seen to play any role in our justification, then the Gospel is lost and the view of the Sacraments is corrupted. Baptism and the Lord's Supper become works we must perform, but are not seen as gifts and thus do not give grace, which is completely the opposite of what the Scriptures teach (Acts 2:38-39; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

To sum it all up, we use the words of Luther's explanation of the Creed, the beginning lines of each article:

I believe that God has made me and all creatures...

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death...

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him, but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith...

The doctrine of justification keeps Christ at the center and gives all glory to God. That is the key to understanding Luther, the Reformation, and Christianity in its purest form.

Blessed to be catechized and to teach in this sacred doctrine,
Pastor Caithamer

Let Us Pray

For Peace and Comfort: the family of Alice Bokenkamp at her death

For Healing and Recovery: Herb, David, Karla, Jon, Mary Jane, Kim, Terry, Merv, Danny-brother of Fawn, Mark, Robin, Patty, Kaylianna -great granddaughter of Bob & Joan, Charlene, Brian, Teresa - godchild of Bob & Joan, Barbara -family friend of Bob & Joan, John, Hendricks -grandson of Dan & Joanie, Maria, Roy - father of Anne, Todd- grandson of Harold, Brett -cousin of the Kindts'

For Successful Treatments: Nancy , Barb, Earl, Linda, Joan , Jeanette

For our Military: Nick, Nick, Andy, Brandon, Zachary, David

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



Pastor Appreciation Day – As members of St. John, let's show our appreciation by coming to an October 13th luncheon following the 10:45 service. A member sign-up sheet is available by the church office. Please bring a dish to share. The meat and dessert will be provided.

LWML Sunday is celebrated during our October 6th services. Last day to drop off in the Coat Room Orphan Grain Train School supplies is October 21. LWML meeting Tuesday, November 19th, at 5:30pm in the Conference Room

Trunk or Treat – Our annual Trunk or Treat will be held on Sunday, October 27th from 2:30-4:30. Sign-up sheets and donation slips are located on the bulletin board by the Fellowship Hall. We need volunteers to decorate their trunks and pass out candy. We also need members to donate candy or treats.

Donations can be placed in the coat room. If you have any questions, please contact Sara.



LWML is collecting School Supplies this year for Orphan Grain Train. The school supplies are sent where needed around the world, but school supplies do not need to be packed in back packs. A list of supplies needed can be found on the narthex table. Please put your School Supplies in the LWML box in the coatroom by October 21, 2024. Questions contact:

Donna E or Jan

. Thanks for helping children here and around the world. St. John LWML

Young Adults Group meets once or twice a month as a way for individuals between the ages of 18-40 to spend time with people of the same age.

Outings have included going to the EAT Nights each month, having a potluck at the church, and going to various events in the community. We are busy making plans for October and beyond. If you are interested, or have any questions, please contact Sara.



October Music Notes



Here is the October performance schedule for our adult choirs.

Sunday, October 6	Alleluia Ringers
Sunday, October 13	Adult Choir
Sunday, October 20	Day School 4-5 choir
Sunday, October 27	Reformation Festival Services - Choirs, Alleluia Ringers and Brass!

Handbells will continue rehearsals on Wednesdays at 6:00 pm.

Adult choir will continue rehearsals on Sundays at 10:00 am. There may be a Thursday evening rehearsal on October 24 – stay tuned!

Looking ahead – future dates for singers and ringers

Handbells 11.24, 12.15, 12.24

Choirs 11.10, 11.24, 12.8, 12.22, 12.24

Beginning on October 6 the Sunday School will start rehearsing a song to sing on Reformation Sunday. We will work on this song together at the opening each week during October, and sing it at the beginning of both the 8:00 & 10:45 the services on the 27th.

Anyone who is interested in playing instruments for Reformation please be in touch with Keith.

Soli Deo Gloria,
Keith



E.A.T. Night - E.A.T. @ Texas Roadhouse on Monday, October 14th, 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.stjohnls.com. This fundraiser applies to dine-in and carry out purchases. Thank you for your continued support of these events.

Sales Begins October 21!

Order forms will be available on the narthex table.

Return order forms to the school office by Monday,

November 4. Dough-livery date is Wednesday,

November 13. Proceeds from this fundraising will go towards the 7th & 8th grade class trip.



Come out for the 3rd Annual St. John Car Show!

Bring your car and enjoy a wonderful fall day with other car enthusiasts!



- No registration fee
- Please contact the school office if you plan on attending so we can reserve a spot for you.

[kschmidt - at - stjohnls.com](mailto:kschmidt@stjohnls.com) or (217) 359-1714
(Drop-ins are welcome.)



Sixth Annual 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. La Paloma Food Truck, featuring breakfast and lunch items, will be on site. 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 on the narthex table or 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 for images and flyers to share.



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
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| 1 Dan, Marissa | 22 Geneice, Ethan |
| 2 Lauren | 23 Selam, Tracy, Greg, Alexa |
| 3 Lance, Jake, Brandon | 24 Rita, Curt, Kaya, Jeff |
| 4 Rebecca, Jean, Connor, Aleace, Annabel | 25 Claire, Catherine, Jordan |
| 5 Diane, Rachel, Kathy | 26 Linda, Alayna |
| 6 Gail | 28 Patty |
| 7 Daniel | 29 Karen, Joe , Trent |
| 8 Alexis, Rex, Caroline, Leslie, Michael, John | 30 Pat, Ronda, Owen |
| 9 Terra, Spenser, Ashley, Kara, Walter, Jay | 31 Sue , Kendra , Max, Robert, Dorothy |
| 10 Nathaniel, Tinley, Duane | |
| 11 Bryce , Delores | |
| 12 August , Sandy | |
| 13 Ben | |
| 14 Randy | |
| 15 Will, Nicholas, Gabriel, Kyle, Julie, Nick | |
| 16 Alex | |
| 17 Jan, Terry, Ryan | |
| 19 Roger, Bailey | |
| 20 Wally, Christina, Anthea, | |
| 21 Ruby , Linda | |

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Tyler & Rachel (2); Rev. Jeff & Katie Caithamer (19) | 18 Curt & Paula 38) |
| 2 Laran & Erin (14) | 21 Raymond & Judy (57); |
| 4 John & Lisa (21) | Mike & Maxine (35) |
| 5 Daniel & Laura (11) | 24 Steve & Nancee (43); Richard & Barbara (54) |
| 6 Lee & Judy (51) | 26 Tom & Peggy (56) |
| 7 Rene & Nicole (24) | 30 Luke & Lily (3) |
| 8 Rev. Don & Mar Ehlers (64); John & Cheryl(58) | 31 Jon & Susan (26); |
| 9 Martin & Beth (30) | Alvin & Beverly (55) |
| 10 Curtis & Lori (43); Gerald & Linda (51) | |
| 11 Ryan & Amy (21); David & Kristina (27) | |
| 13 Derek & Jamie (12) | |
| 14 Chad & Tracy (18); Arnold & Myla (52) | |
| 15 Andy & Cindy (58); John & Marissa (3); Jim & Fawn (8) | |
| 16 Tony & Jennifer (31) | |
| 17 David & Lisa (26); Roger & Norma (26) | |

Orphan Grain Train +

CHAPEL OFFERING for 2024-2025

This year, St. John Lutheran School will support Orphan Grain train with their weekly chapel offering.

Follow us on Facebook!

"Like" our posts and share with your friends and family!

<https://www.facebook.com/St.JohnLS>



Save the Date!

Friday, February 22, 2025


More information will be announced





We know 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.
Galatians 2:16

2024

Sun	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 10:00 Adult Bible Class 5:15 Fellowship Board 6:00 Trustees, School Board	2 8:08 Chapel 5:45 Midweek School, Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Holy Communion	3 10:00 Lifelight	4	5																																																																																																		
6 20th Sunday after Pentecost 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:00 Adult Choirs 10:45 Holy Communion 1:00 New Member Class	7 5:30 Finance Board	8 6:00 Elders	9 5:45 Midweek School, Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Holy Communion	10 7:00 Men's Prayer Breakfast 8:08 Chapel 10:00 Lifelight	11 <i>Day School Closed</i>	12																																																																																																		
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13 21st Sunday after Pentecost 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:00 Adult Choirs 10:45 Holy Communion 12:00 Pastor Appreciation	14 <i>Day School Closed</i> 4:00 E.A.T. Night @ Texas Roadhouse	15 10:00 Adult Bible Class 6:00 Council 6:30 LWML	16 8:08 Chapel 5:45 Midweek School, Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Holy Communion	17 10:00 Lifelight	18 <i>Newsletter Deadline</i>	19 9:00 St. John Arts & Crafts Fair 9:00 Car Show																																																																																																		
20 22nd Sunday after Pentecost 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:00 Adult Choirs 10:45 Holy Communion 1:00 Voter's Meeting	21	22 10:00 Adult Bible Class 6:00 Parish Ed	23 8:08 Chapel 5:45 Midweek School, Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Holy Communion	24 10:00 Lifelight	25	26 																																																																																																		
27 Reformation Day (Obs.) 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:00 Adult Choirs 10:45 Holy Communion 1:00 New Member Class 2:30 Trunk-or-Treat	28	29 10:00 Adult Bible Class	30 8:08 Chapel 5:45 Midweek School, Lifelight 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Holy Communion	31 10:00 Lifelight	<table><tr><th colspan="7">September 2024</th></tr><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr><tr><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td></tr><tr><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr><tr><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	September 2024							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30						<table><tr><th colspan="7">November 2024</th></tr><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1 2</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td></tr><tr><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td></tr></table>	November 2024							S	M	T	W	T	F	S							1 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
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