



Bethlehem Star

October 2017

Thinking about Reformation 500

First some words from our ELCA website:

About the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with more than 3.7 million members in more than 9,300 congregations across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. Known as the church of "God's work. Our hands," the ELCA emphasizes the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unity among Christians and service in the world. The ELCA's roots are in the writings of the German church reformer Martin Luther.

About the 500th anniversary of the Reformation

Martin Luther posted the Ninety-Five Theses in Wittenberg, Germany, on Oct. 31, 1517, and the resulting debate about Christian teaching and practice led to changes that have shaped the course of Western Christianity for almost 500 years. The Reformation offers to Christians everywhere a liberating way of listening to and sharing the word of God. It teaches that Christ's life flows through faith into a life of service to the neighbor and offers the promise of God's love that makes possible a life of "living, daring confidence in God's grace." ELCA congregations, members, synods and affiliated institutions are observing the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in a variety of events and activities. Many of the local activities reflect the magnitude of work being done on a national and international scale. In all the activities, the ELCA seeks to find in this historic milestone an occasion to give a confident and joyful witness of the life and freedom in Jesus Christ that is for all.

And some words from our global partners, excerpt from the Lutheran World Federation website:

We are liberated by God's grace!

These words go to the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ and to the soul of the Lutheran Reformation. They are linked to Luther's key insight that helped trigger the Reformation – Christians attain salvation only by the grace of God. We call this justification by faith alone.

"Liberated by God's Grace" is the main theme of our celebrations surrounding the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. It will also be the theme of the 2017 Assembly of The Lutheran World Federation in Windhoek, Namibia. All our celebrations, worship, study and engagement over the next three years will focus on how the gracious love of God, through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, opens up opportunities for us as faithful Christians to reach out as healers and reconcilers to a world torn apart by strife and inequality.

We want to engage you in dialogue. We are asking – liberated by God's grace, from what? For what? Your response will reflect the reality of life where you live, but we believe we are called to be responsible citizens in God's world and good steward's of God's creation. We are freed by the grace of God to engage in this Christian ministry.

I am so proud this year to be part of 74 million Lutherans in 98 countries as we strive to put our faith into action within and beyond the communion, and seek God's Word and Spirit to guide us.

See you in church, *Pastor Mark*

Bible Studies Continuing

Texts from God: Every Monday at noon at Java Moose. Join Pastor Mark for a text message that is 'for you' and enjoy a cup of your favorite coffee at the same time.

Homestead Bible Hour: The weekly worship texts read, explained, and considered. Join with BLC members who live at Homestead in this weekly soul

Circle Leaders Bible Study: September 28, and October 26, on the last Thursday of each month, we prepare for the Gather Magazine Bible study at 1:00 p.m.

A note from Stewardship

“Excel in the Grace of Giving”

On Sundays November 5, 12, 26, our stewardship theme will be “Excel in the Grace of Giving.” I hope you will make every effort to be present on all three Sundays. During the second Sunday, we will introduce a giving challenge titled “Give Plus One.”

We hope and pray that the messages offered will help us in our journeys as faithful and generous stewards. By the power of the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament, we are molded and transformed into stewards who follow God’s ways and become more Christ-like in our giving. As Christians, we are motivated to give by the gift of God’s grace through his son. With hearts filled with God’s love and grace, we can give faithfully.

Giving is our faith response to God’s gifts. God wants us to give willingly and cheerfully out of hearts filled with love and gratitude for our present and eternal lives. We also give out of obedience because God’s Word directs us to give. The Apostle Paul said, *“But just as you excel in everything ... in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us ... see that you also excel in this grace of giving”* (2 Corinthians 8:7). Just as Paul urged the people in Corinth to give, we are urged to *“excel in this grace of giving.”*

Please bring your commitment forms to church on Commitment Sunday, December 3, or return it to the church office at your convenience.

May God bless and keep us in His peace and joy as we give to Him!

Your Stewardship Committee

God’s Work Our Hands Sunday

This year we had seven our members out on the national ELCA service project campaign. Kelly Holtzman of Care Partners, Senior Chore Program helped coordinate two projects for us. One team, pictured on the bulletin board had two cords of firewood to move stack for a home owner to use this winter. They did a great job and came back with smiles (just check the photo!). The other team went to help repair cement stairs at another home.

One outcome of this year’s coordination with Kelly and the Senior Chore program will be a fruitful relationship for future service projects. Often we wonder, “How can we help?” I am so grateful to Kelly for our opportunities. We will be looking forward to practicing our faith in deeds of kindness.

**Chet’s Pie Social –
October 1st after
church.**

Chet has prepared apple pies for the congregation as a fund raiser for Hurricane Relief. Sunday October 1 come and be generous and enjoy.



Mission of the Month

Mission of the Month for October will be dedicated to Global Health Ministries. Global Health Ministries has a unique mission of recycling and reusing hospital and medical supplies for medical facilities in developing countries. In our own country because of strict health standards and economic efficiency many items that could be sterilized and reused as discarded. Global Health Ministries has for

over 30 years collected these supplies, and shipped them overseas, saving countless lives and aiding the medical personnel in impoverished areas. Your gift will help Global Health Ministries collect, store and ship these vital supplies. You will also be part of an international effort to recycle and reuse valuable medical equipment. Please use the special envelopes in the pews for the mission of the month. If writing a check, please note in the memo line **Global Health Ministries.**



Equipping Households of Faith

A Presentation and Discussion Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

This will be the first of the special learning events in this program year. This program will include a short DVD presentation by leaders in the field of sharing faith across the generations. We will also use material Pastor Mark has prepared for family faith sharing. But very vital to this program will be your

experience and contribution. Together we make a difference. While it will definitely have a focus on families raising children it is a basics course on the practice of sharing faith. Therefore it is open to all and hopefully beneficial to all practicing Christians. Pastor Mark will be leading this program on October 4, 11, 25, and Nov. 1.

Winter is coming – the church will need snow removal: We are hoping that a member of our church has a plow and is willing to clear the alley and the parking area on the west side of the property. Call the office and let us know.

Wednesday Worship

Wednesday Services kicked off in fine style with a sharing of the peace that took five minutes (so many people to share the peace with). We look forward to even greater numbers. There will be a meal before every worship service.

Wednesday Sermon Series: Reformation 500 – the Small Catechism Continuing in October Pastor Mark is offering a sermon series on the Small Catechism of Martin Luther. October 4 Apostle’s Creed;

October 11 The Lord’s Prayer; October 25 The Holy Sacraments; November 1 Christian Households.

We have Small Catechisms for you to use in the worship hour. You may also purchase a special edition of the Small catechism for \$5.00 and carry it with you. This series complete with group recitation of the Catechism is intended to be a refresher for everyone as we move to the 500th celebration of the Reformation; the series is also a primer for all parents of our confirmation students as they

prepare to be the best “apostle, bishop and priest” for their child.



Confirmation Sunday/Reformation Sunday October 29 ~ Don't Miss it!

We have an exceptional morning planned for October 29. First of all, at worship we will be confirming three of our great students, Tanner DeBoer, Louise Ramberg, and Izabella Sparks. Next we will be blessed by having our Bishop Thomas Aitken presiding at our worship service and adding a special anointing for our confirmands. Third we have heard that Martin Luther and Katherine Von Bora themselves will be here greeting all members and announcing the 95 Theses!

And last but certainly not least, after the worship we have a Germanic Feast for all prepared by Chef Jason Gesch. How does pork tenderloin, with caramelized onion and apple, wild boar sausage, sauerkraut, boiled red potatoes and soft pretzels sound. Hungry yet? Don't miss this celebration!

Retreats in October

Men's Faith Retreat October 13 & 14 at Wilderness Canoe Base. The program will feature the Friday night movie *The Shack* with campfire discussion on the beach. Saturday there will be all the usual activities including Bible Study, Deep discussion, Canoeing, Wood craft, Sauna. The cost is \$75.00 for overnight and four meals.

Women's Retreat October 27 & 28 at Wilderness Canoe Base. Susan Bragstad, Cara Sporn invite all women to enjoy this retreat filled with good conversation, craft, music and discussing the influence of Catherine Von Bora (Martin Luther's wife) on the Reformation. \$75.00 covers overnight and four meals. Attendance only on Saturday is also possible. Call the church to register. Deadline Friday October 13.

Holy Moly/Connect to start October 4

This year we will be offering classes to children in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade. Registration forms can be dropped off at the church office.



Youth Programs

The 2017-18 BLC Youth Programs are off to a great start!

Sunday School program kicked off on September 10th with our

“Whirl”. Over 40 children attended Sunday School that day and we are looking forward to a great year. Laurie Spry, Brooke Youngdahl, Carrie Jansen and Janet Ditmanson are teaching our Sunday School program. We are currently looking for substitute teachers that are willing to help when our regular teachers are unable. If you are able to be a sub for Sunday School, please contact Cara Sporn at carasporn@gmail.com

Confirmation classes started on September 20th. Classes are held on Wednesdays at 7:00. Our curriculum, “Here We Stand”, is a three year program where 6th grade studies the Old Testament, 7th grade studies the New Testament and 8th grade studies the Lutheran Small Catechism. Mike Chmelik is teaching the 6th and 7th grade class and Pastor Mark is teaching the 8th grade class.

Senior High Classes also started on September 20th. Our Senior High group is starting the year by watching the movie, “Woodlawn”. Following the movie, they will move into a four week series with guest teacher, John Bragstad. In the series, “Digging Deeper”, John will discuss, friendship, empathy, courage and problem solving. Senior High meets on Wednesdays at 7:00.

Holy Moly and Connect, our faith program for 3-5th grades, will start on October 4th. Enclosed is an informational letter and an enrollment form. Forms can be returned to the church office. Theresa Oberg, Jes Rodne and Jeanne Monson will be teaching the Holy Moly and Connect programs.

Wednesday Schedule

3:15 - 5:00 Holy Moly and Connect Classes (Starts October 4th)

5:00 All Congregation Dinner

6:00 Worship

7:00 Confirmation and Senior High Classes

Thank you to all our teachers for their time and dedication to the BLC faith programs!

We are going to Houston! The 2018 National Youth Gathering is this summer, June 27th - July 1st. Students currently in grades 8-12 are eligible to go on this amazing adventure.

Every three years, 30,000 high school youth and their adult leaders from across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gather for a week of faith formation known as the ELCA Youth Gathering. Through days spent in interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, young people grow in faith and are challenged and inspired to live their faith in their daily lives.

If your child is interested in attending the National Youth Gathering, please contact Cara Sporn.

You can also find more information on the National Gathering website at <https://www.elca.org/YouthGathering/about/overview>

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