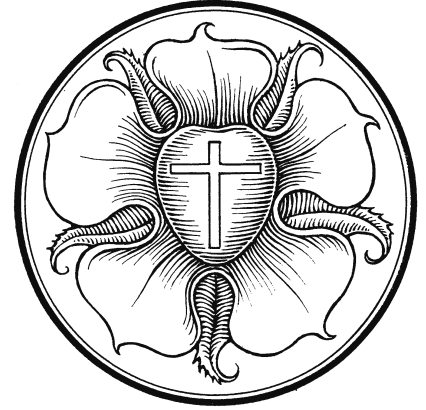


OCTOBER 2022

The final Sunday this October we will commemorate Reformation Day. This day reminds us of our need for the pure preaching of God's Word that we would know and cling to Christ rightly. Like we do with other saints who have gone before us in the faith and made a bold confession of Christ, Reformation naturally brings to our minds the work of Martin Luther and that which he has done for the benefit of the Church.



Luther wrote at least 40 hymns, many within the span of just a few years. His most well known hymn, which finds a home in many Christian denominations, certainly has to be "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" (LSB 656). It is based on Psalm 46 and serves not to express Luther's feelings concerning the psalm but to interpret it and apply God's Word to the church that she would sing of God's promises in Christ in the midst of struggle and be renewed knowing that "for us fights the Valiant One, whom God Himself elected." This was Luther's approach and goal for writing hymns, not for self expression but to serve his fellow believers that they would have a strong confession of Christ. He accomplished this in a couple different ways. Some of his hymns are catechetical, that is, they are instructional and teach. For example, "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word" (LSB 655) is a three stanza hymn with each stanza confessing one Person of the Holy Trinity. "These are the Holy Ten Commands" (LSB 581) is obviously the Ten Commandments with a plea for mercy for where we have failed. In his catechism hymn on Baptism "To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord" (LSB 406), Luther uses the biblical narrative concerning Jesus' Baptism to teach us about ours. There are many more.

In a different style, Luther will put the narrative of Scripture in our minds and on our lips. In his Christmas hymn "From Heaven Above to Earth I come" (LSB 358), which Luther wrote for his children, we are brought through the joyful words of the angels at the news of Jesus' birth and then join the shepherds in their response of joy and gladness. "Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice" (LSB 556) rehearses the biblical teaching of our wretched sinfulness and need for a Savior and then declares the life of Jesus - His birth, death, resurrection, and ascension - as the cause of all our rejoicing for by His work we are set free from our sins. This list, too, could be longer.

Luther wrote - a lot. We know his Small Catechism by heart, his Large Catechism and the Smalcald Articles which are contained in our church body's official confession *The Book of Concord 1580*. Yet beyond these documents and the sermons and more documents and the translation of the Bible into German and the famous 95 Thesis which he posted on October 31, 1517 which began the Reformation, he also wrote music and hymns for the church. These also are our heritage. Not simply because Luther wrote them, but because they are solid confessions of Jesus. Which is what the Reformation was about. Jesus. A right confession of Him as our Savior who came from heaven (LSB 358), kept the commandments in our place (LSB 581) that we would be kept steadfast in His truth (LSB 655) and rejoice with all Christians (LSB 556) that we, by faith, are justified, bought and paid for, and have a trusty fortress, the kingdom of God, who is Christ Himself (LSB 656).

Happy Reformation Day. Cling to the truth of God's Word and sing boldly.
In Christ,
Pastor Suggitt

Our Lord is the Author and giver of life (Acts 3:15) and forms us in our mother's womb (Jeremiah 1:9). Therefore, all life is precious, has worth before God, and according to the Fifth Commandment we are to help and support our neighbor in every physical need (Small Catechism). Proposal 3, which will be on the ballot this November, directly contradicts this. The overturning of Roe v. Wade was a great and wonderful blessing, but the battle is not over. Proposal 3 seeks to enshrine within our state constitution extreme laws that will harm vulnerable children, women, and families. It opens the door for abortion at any time, no parental consent, tax-paid abortions, abortions performed by non-doctors, and even more harmful statutes which seek to erode the family. Educate yourself on this proposal with the handouts provided at church and continue to be a voice for life and an advocate for what is good, right, and true. May God have mercy on us all.

NO
PROPOSAL
3

TOO CONFUSING
TOO EXTREME

Paid for with regulated funds by Citizens to Support MI Women and Children P.O. Box 901, Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0901

Want to listen to good theology concerning current topics, the Bible, and Christ crucified for you? Check out *Issues, Etc.* on your computer or smartphone.

