

October 2023

Lutheranism, as you most likely well know, has its roots ethnically from Germany (less than one hundred years ago the services at St. Paul, Linkville were still in German). The faith in Christ we confess didn't start in Germany, it is the faith of the apostles handed to them by Jesus Himself, but a clear articulation and confession of the faith came back to the forefront when Martin Luther, a German, boldly spoke before people of high estate the truth of the Scriptures. Luther's bold confession brought the purity of Gospel out from under a veil that had been placed over it by terrible teachings and practices that had crept into the church.



In October, we remember and give thanks for our forefathers of the faith who labored hard under the threat of great punishment from men of high estate to speak the truth of God's Word. Luther and his colleagues put themselves in harm's way and risked everything so that a clear understanding of what the Bible says would be heard by all. We commemorate God's work through them on October 31 and call it Reformation Day. On October 31, 1517, Luther posted 95 statements (called the 95 Theses) on the castle church door in Wittenberg in order to debate teachings in the church that had went astray and needed correction. This served as a catalyst for a pursuit of a right and faithful confession of the Scriptures around which the church could gather and be edified to the glory of God.

This took risk. This took a reliance on a faithful confession of God's truth even in the face of powerful people. To keep him safe, Luther's colleagues staged his kidnapping in order to hide him for a time. But he certainly wouldn't remain hidden. No one lights a lamp and hides it under a bushel basket. Neither should we. We are not simply inheritors of a German tradition but inheritors of the truth of God's Word and His Kingdom. A kingdom that has no end which the gates of hell cannot prevail against.

That means the risk is worth it. Let's risk being unabashedly dedicated to our Lord's truth as put forth in the Bible. There is life in His truth. It speaks of Him. This will run you up against people in powerful places. Not necessarily those who could take your life like Luther faced, but those of the world who might then say mean things about you and try to ruin your reputation. So what? If God is for us who can be against us? St. Paul says. It's worth the risk to have the Words of eternal life proclaimed. It's worth the risk to have people come to the knowledge of truth. It's worth the risk to defend our families and our church and our community from the veil of terrible teachings and practices that lead men astray. The church is not a hiding place but a place where our Lord Jesus gives His gifts of life and salvation to renew us and equip us for living boldly in this world by His truth until He returns and ushers in the life of the world to come. He has won the victory, the kingdom ours remaineth we sing in that beloved hymn. Lord, grant us Your Spirit to risk embracing that fact wholeheartedly so that we would be bold to give a defense for the hope that is in us.

Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen. - Martin Luther in 1521 in front of powerful people.

In Christ,
Pastor Suggitt

REFORMATION HISTORY

A Matter of Confession: *The Book of Concord*

Like most church bodies, Lutherans have a statement of what they believe, teach, and confess according to the teachings of the Bible. Ours are found in what is called *The Book of Concord* - 1580. Each congregation and every pastor of our congregations in The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod must consent to abide by the confession of the faith found within *The Book of Concord* because it is faithful to what the Bible teaches.

Here are the titles of the writings contained in *The Book of Concord*, the date they were written, and the authors:

Apostles' Creed	Second Century	Unknown Author
Nicene Creed	325, 381	Council of Nicaea and Council of Constantinople
Small Catechism	1529	Martin Luther
Large Catechism	1529	Martin Luther
Augsburg Confession	June 25, 1530	Philip Melanchthon
Apology of the Augsburg Confession	May, 1531	Philip Melanchthon
Smalcald Articles	1536	Martin Luther
Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope	1537	Philip Melanchthon
Formula of Concord	1577	Jacob Andreae, Martin Chemnitz Nicolas Selnecker

The Book of Concord is readily available for you to purchase, read, and study. Some of you may have a copy already in your home. Tell Pastor Suggitt if you have one or are interested in purchasing one.



EXPLANATION OF LUTHER'S SEAL

The black cross in the center reminds us that Jesus died to take the punishment for our sins. The red heart reminds us of the love God has for us in sending Jesus to be our Savior. The red of the heart is the color of the blood of Christ, shed for us and for our salvation. The white rose helps us remember the work of the Holy Spirit, who makes us pure and holy in God's sight by bringing us to faith in Jesus and by helping us to live our lives for him. The sky blue background pictures the joy of the new life God gives to all who believe and trust in him. Finally, the golden ring outlining the seal reminds us of our eternal inheritance—a home in heaven where we will enjoy complete joy and happiness in our Savior's presence.