



ALC Connections October 2015

LCMS Ascension Lutheran Church 2780 Haslett Rd. East Lansing MI

The Discipleship Chat

Celebrating the Reformation

The celebration of the Reformation seems to be unique to Lutherans. All Protestants owe a debt of gratitude to the Reformers; it would seem that the Lutheran Church remembers the Reformation due to our 'direct' link to Dr Martin Luther (through our name). Although Luther abhorred and resisted any use of his name with the movement – he preferred to be known by the high calling of “Christian” – the Church that followed his teachings and reforms came to be called “Lutheran.”

We usually mark *Reformation Day on October 31*, commemorating the day in 1517 when young Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses, which largely challenged the Roman teaching of purgatory, but also questioned the power claimed by the Roman Pope over man's souls and salvation. There had been reformers before Luther, but the posting of the 95 Theses marks a watershed in Church history.

One of the noteworthy qualities of the Lutheran Church is that the teachings (doctrines) of the Church have been researched and studied in detail. While many Protestant Churches claim to be “non-credal” (no creeds, or statements of faith), our teachings are written down so that anyone may examine in detail exactly what Lutherans believe, and why we believe it. These statements of faith go back to the Reformation days, when the Reformers were eager to discover exactly what the Scripture taught, as opposed to what the Church taught.

In addition to the *Apostles' Creed*, the *Nicene Creed* and the *Athanasian Creed* (often read on Holy Trinity Sunday) are universal statements of faith held by the Lutheran Church. All concentrate especially on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The Lutheran Church also accepts and teaches all the documents contained in **The Book of Concord** of 1580 as completely true and Scriptural. The best known and most widely used of these is Dr Martin Luther's Small Catechism.

Born Nov 10, 1483 in Germany, Luther studied Law. Later, however, he sought to become a monk. In 1507 he was consecrated a Roman Catholic priest and later earned a doctorate in Theology. His break with the Roman Catholic Church in 1521 occurred after he was told

to recant what he believed (and published) to be Scriptural teachings contrary to those of the Roman Church.

Luther's **Small Catechism** and his **Large Catechism**, completed in 1529, were originally intended to be helpful manuals for pastors and family heads in teaching God's Word to children and adults. The Large Catechism is not made up of questions and answers, but presents basic Christian teaching in a form often used in sermons.

Another well-known statement of faith, the **Augsburg Confession**, was written by Philip Melancthon and read before Emperor Charles V at Augsburg, Germany in 1530. Friendly in tone, it was adopted as a testimony against abuses in the church and against the errors of certain reformers regarding such crucial doctrines as original sin and the sacraments.

In 1531, Melancthon wrote the **Apology (Defense) of the Augsburg Confession**. It also became an official statement of faith among Lutherans. In great detail it answers criticisms of the Augsburg Confession. Virtually half of the Apology is devoted to the Biblical doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

The **Smalcald Articles** were written by Luther in 1536. They are a summary of Luther's main disagreements with the Roman Church. Melancthon's **Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope** was also officially adopted at Smalcald. The **Formula of Concord**, completed in 1577, served to resolve doctrinal differences among Lutherans and was approved by over 8,000 theologians, pastors and teachers.

The Book of Concord may be borrowed from Ascension's Library. The Creeds and Small Catechism are also available in our Hymnal. The teachings of the Lutheran Church are available for all to read and study. That is one of our legacies of the Reformation. Of course, first and foremost, the purpose of the Reformation was not just to get us to read the books of doctrine – it was to get us into reading *God's Word* itself – the Scriptures. The Bible alone is God's Word. May God give us all a thirst for His Word!

We celebrate the Reformation on Sun Oct 25.

Excerpts from Luther's Small Catechism, Q & A.

- Pastor Dave



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Bible Study in October – during the month of October, our Sunday morning Bible Study will be studying a Lutheran Hour Ministries study revolving around the life and work of Dr Martin Luther. **A Man Named Martin** lays out the historical and Biblical basis to help us understand why the Reformation was so necessary, and what it accomplished. Please join us – Sunday mornings at 9 am in the classroom, during the Sunday School hour.

If you find that a *large print bulletin* would be helpful for you, please let us know in the office.



Save the Date on your calendar for *Fall Clean up October 17th*.

The Masonry work on the Bell Tower and Sign has been completed!

October Council meeting today after Church this Sunday, in the Classroom.

Voters' Assembly after worship on October 11. Join us for the election of officers, financial update, summary of activities, and other Ascension business.

Men's Bible Study every Saturday at 8:00am.

Come and have donuts and coffee with us and feel free to bring a friend. Great fellowship with other Christian men.



PRAYER CHAPEL – The Chapel is open for Prayer on the first Saturday of the month from 10:30 am until noon. It will be open tomorrow, Oct 3.

Men's Venue: October 20th at 6pm at Longhorn Steak House, 5796 W. Saginaw Hwy, Delta Township

Women's Venue: Thursday, October 15, at Clara's Lansing Station, 637 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, at 6 pm.





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WE NEED YOU OCTOBER 10. From 9:00am to 12:30pm Pastor Walther, Michigan District Office, will give his report based on the surveys we completed in July and August. We will discuss where we are and start our discussion of where we believe God is leading us. Be a part of the discussion.

Join us in the Self-Study as often as you can!

Date: Saturday, October 10

Time: 9am-12:30pm in Activities Room

Purpose: Pastor Walther shares his report based on our survey responses and the Church Council report. We begin our discussion of values, mission and vision. We will make assignments to help us develop action plans at the November meetings.

Date: Sunday, October 25

Time: Begin after the worship service for one hour in the Nave.

Purpose: Pastor Walther preaches at the Reformation service and then shares his report based on our survey responses and the Church Council report.

Date: Thursday, November 5

Time: 7-9pm in the Activities Room

Purpose: Receive new information from the October 10 assignments and continue clarifying our values, mission and vision as we begin to set specific goals and objectives for an action plan.

Date: Thursday, November 12

Time: 7-9pm in the Activities Room

Purpose: Continue the November 5 discussion, finalize mission, goals, and objectives and establish tasks and responsibilities in a broad outline of who, what, where, and etc. of our plan moving forward.

Date: Saturday, January 23

Time: 9am-12:30pm in the Activities Room

Purpose: Review new information and progress made since the November meeting, establish specific goals, assignments, accountability measures, and etc. for our 2016 action plan, and identify actions to be taken and evaluation points.



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8 Simple Ways to Mess up Your Estate Plan

Life is scattered with good intentions. So many families think about completing their Will when they have their first child, but when kids leave for college, they still don't have a plan in place. Sound familiar? Here are 8 easy ways that estate plans get messed up.

1. Write a new Will or Revocable Living Trust but don't destroy the old ones. What a mess if older copies are thought to be the most recent documents, new copies aren't found and your current wishes aren't carried out.

2. Rent a safe deposit box to store your estate documents that no one else can access when you are gone. Your personal representative will need to petition the Probate Court to be granted authority to open the box.

3. Create a Will or Trust but don't tell your personal representative/ successor trustee where original documents are located. If your Will/Trust isn't found, your estate will be considered "Intestate" by the state with your assets distributed according to the rules of the Probate Court verses your wishes.

4. Cross out phrases or write notes on your documents creating questions about whether you meant to amend or revoke them. See your attorney to write an amendment or codicil

5. Don't review your documents and update if necessary, on a regular basis. Are your successor trustees or personal representatives still alive and competent? Do you still want charitable gifts given to the ministries listed? Life happens, what's important can change. Make sure your plan reflects your current desires for the gifts you have been given.

6. Trust others to do the "Right thing". Don't clearly indicate how you want your estate distributed. Money does strange things to people. Even in the most congenial families, arguments occur over what's "fair". Clearly express how you want things handled.

7. Don't include a "Charitable Gift" in your plan. Even though your intent was to leave a gift to your favorite ministry, without specific provisions written in your Will or Trust, or a beneficiary designation for the gift, Michigan's "Estates and Protected Individual Code" doesn't include charitable gifts as an option through the probate process.

8. Don't Have Any Estate Plan. Probate Court will search for "Next of Kin" and distribute your estate according to the laws of the state. This could be especially "fun" for blended families and a great source of income for attorneys as members of the family fight over what they feel is theirs.

Bill Burmeister, Church Extension Fund – Michigan District, 800-242-3944 t bill.burmeister@mi-cef.org. This document is provided to assist you in your estate planning process and is not meant to offer financial or legal advice.

Please contact your Attorney or Financial Advisor to obtain appropriate professional advice relevant to your particular circumstances.