

### **From Pastor Dan**

During 2017, the worldwide Lutheran Church will be recognizing and celebrating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation is a big deal for Lutherans, of course, because one of the primary perpetrators of the whole business was Martin Luther. (And for any young folks who may still be a bit confused, this is not the same guy as Martin Luther King Jr.)

One of the ways some local Lutheran churches will be focusing on the Reformation will be through midweek Lenten worship services. Five churches and their pastors: First English and Pastor Erik Olson, Trinity and Pastor Phil Bogen, St. John in Mosinee and Pastor Marilyn Lange, Good Shepherd and Pastor Kemp Jones, and I will be participating in a Lenten worship round robin series. The theme of these services will be Luther's Small Catechism to include Luther's explanations of the Ten Commandments, the Apostles Creed, Baptism, Holy Communion, and The Lord's Prayer. It is good to revisit these foundations of our faith and Luther's understanding of same. After all, we think discussing Luther's Small Catechism is important enough to teach it to our confirmation students.

So, revisiting the past and remembering the Protestant Reformation can be helpful. For it is important for us to understand that the theology and practices of the Christian church of that time needed evaluation and reform; and it is also important for us to understand Martin Luther's role in the process as well as the theological, social, and political significance of the subsequent changes. But I can't help but wonder if after 500 years, the Christian church may be in need of another reformation. After all, 500 years is a mighty long time for any manner of thinking to persist without substantive change. And it is not as if folks are breaking down the doors to be involved in the current Christian understanding of God and life.

Now I don't have any grand ideas or proposals. I am simply suggesting that this may be a very appropriate year to explore what another Christian reformation might look like. Maybe we ought to take this opportunity to look at what The Ten Commandments, the Apostles Creed, Baptism, Holy Communion, and the Lord's Prayer still mean for faithful Christians and to also come to terms with what their appeal might be to Christian seekers. Again, I don't have any particularly bright ideas. I don't know much other than the realization that any proposed changes would meet with inevitable resistance; big change always does, it did for Luther and it would for us. As a matter of fact, at a monthly

pastor's conference meeting here in Wausau last year, I submitted and lead a discussion on the topic, "Have the Creeds Outlived Their Usefulness?" Well...that whole deal went over like your proverbial lead balloon. The discussion devolved into a heated conversation between me and another pastor who stalwartly proclaimed that the creeds would and should never change. Meanwhile, everyone else pretty much looked on with 'deer in the headlights' expressions on their faces. Change is not easy.

Yet, this year we will celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation and the resultant changes not only to Christianity in particular but to governments and societies as well.

And we will recognize the role of Martin Luther in the whole business. But maybe, just maybe, this year may not only be a good time to remember the past but it may also be a good time to look to the future; to think about what a new Christian Reformation might look like. I have no grand visions of what a new Christian Reformation might bring, but I do have a few thoughts and ideas that I can share with you as the year goes on. But more important than what I think is what you think. So.....what do you think?

Faith, hope, and love be with you all,

Pastor Dan

## **“Council Corner”**

Jan Mueller (An article from the ELCA web site.)

### **Worship - A foundation of faith for everything we do.**

For Lutherans, worship stands at the center of our life of faith. Through God's word, water, bread and prayer we are nurtured in faith and sent out into the world.

Connected with and central to everything we do, worship unites us in celebration, engages us in thoughtful dialogue and helps us grow in faith. It grounds us in our Christian and Lutheran roots, while demonstrating practical relevance for today's world. While some of the approaches to worship may differ from one ELCA congregation to another, we hold certain things in common. Central to our worship life is the presence of God through word and sacrament. The **word** proclaimed and the **sacraments** — both Holy Baptism and Holy Communion — are called **the means of grace**. We believe that Jesus Christ is present in these means through the power of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we describe worship as a “gathering around the means of grace.”

There is also a basic pattern for worship among Lutherans. We *gather*. We encounter God's *word*. We share a *meal* at the Lord's table. And we are *sent* into the world. But we

do not think about worship so much in terms of what we do. Worship is fundamentally about what God is doing and our response to God's action. Worship is an encounter with God, who saves us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Council Members.** Here is a list of Council Members. Please contact them with any concerns or issues you may have. Council meets once a month and welcomes input from the congregation.

President: Randy Knapp – 715-581-5558; rknappeoj@gmail.com

Vice President: Sue Cooley – 715-675-8566; cooley1512@outlook.com

Treasurer: Curt Cooley – 715675-8566; usfcool@gmail.com

Secretary: Sue Rakow – 715-675-7213; suszir@aol.com

Trustees: Laverne Grunenwald – 715-675-6880; mgrunen@yahoo.com

Don Voelker – 715-675-7062; midmainefarms@hotmail.com

Evangelism: Duane Askew – 75-675-4111; daskew@airrun.net

Fellowship: Mike Kluetz – 715-218-1357; mdk@airrun.net

Education: Connie Nowak – 715-675-1577; bcdenowak@gmail.com

Worship: Jan Mueller – 715-675-9558; dmjm5455.wau@gmail.com

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**Mission Statement:** “We are called to serve God; serve each other; serve the community; serve the wider church.”

**Serve God** through worship, prayer, and the dedication of our lives to His kingdom.

**Serve Each Other** by mutual care and support to encourage everyone to fulfill their God-given potential. **Serve the Community** by making known the good news about Jesus and the love of God by word and deed. **Serve the Wider Church** through prayer and practical support to help spread the good news about Jesus throughout the world.

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*Worship Schedule*

9:00 a.m. Sunday Mornings

*Please join us as we worship our Lord!*

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**Homebound Parishioners.** The following parishioners are no longer able to consistently attend worship services. I visit them to remind them that they are loved by God and loved by their community of faith, St. John. Sometimes it is helpful to hear those reminders from someone in addition to me.

Ann Kieckhafer  
1347 Crystal Avenue  
Room 236-1  
Naperville, IL 60563

Ellen Kruit  
3312 Terrace Court #19  
Wausau, WI 54401

**News from South Africa.** Sello Ratshikana sends his greetings from Rietpan Lutheran Church. Rain has fallen several times in Rietpan in December. Grass is starting to grow. Perhaps there is hope for their gardens. In fact, it rained on Christmas Eve. This rain ended a three-year drought. It is summer in Rietpan and has been very hot. (I wish we could send them some of our cold.) The rain has brought cooler weather. Rietpan Lutheran Church lights a candle and prays for St. John each month. They had a wonderful Christmas celebration. Sello and Francinah are grateful for your wonderful hospitality last summer.

You can e-mail Sello [msratshikana@gmail.com](mailto:msratshikana@gmail.com).

### St John Lutheran

#### Long Range Planning Committee

#### Building Refurbishing Project March 2015-January 2017

#### Final Status Report 1/23/17

#### Projects Completed in 2015:

- A. Parish Hall-Total Cost-\$5,337.05
  - a. (6) Doors, Hardware, Trim;
  - b. Oak Baseboard;
  - c. Painting;
- B. Sanctuary/Narthex-Total Cost-\$7,843.40
  - a. Stonework;

- b. Back Light Cross;
- c. Painting;
  - i. Sanctuary,
  - ii. Divider Wall;
  - iii. Alter Guild/Acolyte Rooms;
  - iv. Narthex Walls and Ceiling;
  - v. Entrance Walls and Ceilings;

C. Loan Origination Fees-\$419.50

Total Costs in 2015-\$13,599.95

Projects Completed in 2016:

- A. Back Lighting Stained Glass Rear of Sanctuary;
- B. (2) Doors, Hardware, Trim (1 door necessary to replace office door damaged in break-in attempt);
- C. Loan Fees

Total Costs in 2016-\$1,704.55

Projects Completed in 2017:

- A. Railing;
- B. Loan:

Total Costs 2017-\$950.00

Total Project Cost -\$16,254.50

Project Estimate - \$22,000.00

Total Under Budget-(\$5,745.50)

Several comments by way of explanation;

1. Through the course of the original project, we made decisions to add several smaller projects. These included oak baseboard in the Parrish Hall and additional painting (Alter Guild/Acolyte Rooms, Narthex Ceiling and Entrance Way Walls/Ceiling). We included the oak baseboard because once the old rubber base was removed for painting, we realized how much better the oak would look as it matched the new doors. We did the additional painting because the paint bids came in well under original estimates and we were able

to include painting that we originally wanted to do but did not include because we felt it would be too costly.

2. The overall project came in well under the original estimates, we are all thankful for that. There are several primary reasons for this. First, as noted previously, the trustees and several volunteers pitched in and painted the parish hall. Secondly, overall paint bids came in below our original estimates. Third, we were unsure what the cost would be to back light the cross and stained glass at the rear of the Sanctuary (or if it could even be done). As a result, we used conservative estimates for the lighting in our proposal. As it turned out, we were able to successfully back light both the cross and the stained glass well below original estimates, partially because one of the trustees obtained the material at cost.

As usual, thanking one person for their help in successfully completing the Refurbishing Project risks forgetting to thank someone else who contributed equally so we won't do that. However, I do want to thank all of the members of the congregation for helping to make the vision of this project come to fruition.

**Reminder!** If you are in the hospital and would like Pastor Dan to visit, **PLEASE CALL** and let him know. Because of privacy issues, the hospital will not notify him or the church that you are there.

**Food Pantry.** The food items collected for the food pantry in February will be donated to The Neighbor's Place. Your donations are appreciated. If you are able to help out with delivering these items to the local organizations, please contact the church office.

**Council Meeting Minutes.** Copies of the minutes from the most recently held Council meeting are by the mailboxes. Please feel free to pick up a copy. If more are needed, please contact the church office.

**Announcements.** If you would like to have an announcement included in our weekly bulletin or newsletter, please submit the information in writing and put it in either Pastor Dan's mailbox or the administrative assistant's mailbox located in the narthex. If it is more convenient for you, you can submit your announcements via e-mail to [stjohnwausau@msn.com](mailto:stjohnwausau@msn.com). The deadline for submitting announcements for the Sunday bulletin is the Thursday before by 9:00 a.m. The deadline for the newsletter is indicated on the monthly calendar.