

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

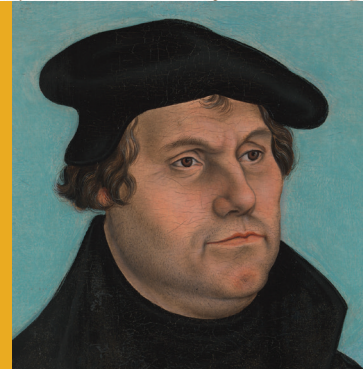
OCTOBER 2017



◦ THE PATH TO THE REFORMATION ◦

LUTHERWEG

1517 ◦ 2017





THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

OCTOBER 2017
VOL. 55 NO. 10

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THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

(USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413)
is published monthly by
the Association of Free
Lutheran Congregations.
AFLC headquarters and
publications office is at
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.,
Plymouth, MN 55441.
Phone (763) 545-5631;
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SUBSCRIPTION CHANGES AND INFORMATION

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.,
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

\$19 a year, Group, U.S.
\$20 a year, Individual, U.S.
\$22 a year, International
Periodicals postage paid
at Minneapolis, MN, and
additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to
The Lutheran Ambassador,
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.,
Plymouth, MN 55441.

GRACE ALONE

BY PASTOR PETER FRANZ

In his book, *Whatever Happened to the Gospel of Grace*, James Montgomery Boice writes, "When the Reformers spoke about 'grace alone' (*sola gratia*), they were saying that sinners have no claim upon God, none at all; that God owes them nothing but punishment for their sins; and that, if he saves them in spite of their sins, which he does in the case of those who are being saved, it is only because it pleases him to do it" (p. 107).

This truth is difficult for sinful human nature to swallow. We want to think that we have something to offer God. There must be something good in us that pleases Him. But the Bible is clear: "There is no one righteous, not even one" (Romans 3:10). So if we are ever going to be saved it must be by the grace of God alone.

What happens when we are saved by grace? First, we are saved from the penalty of sin.

God's Word makes it clear that the penalty for our sin is eternal death. Paul tells us that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 3:23). And this is the case with everyone because "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 6:23a). But the good news is that we can be set free from the penalty of sin by God's amazing grace. "The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23b).

Second, when we are saved by grace we are saved from the power of sin.

There are some people who claim to be saved but their lives show no evidence of it. They still think the same way, they still talk the same way, and they still act the same way as those living in sin. You have to wonder whether or

not these people really understand what grace is because God's grace is powerful. It changes the way we live. Paul says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age" (Titus 2:11-12).

This obviously doesn't mean that we don't sin any more, but when we are saved the power of sin is broken. As an example, a young girl was being examined for church membership when a deacon asked her if Christ had made a difference in her life. She replied that He certainly had.

Then the deacon asked her, "Do you sin anymore?" She replied that she still did.

So the deacon asked, "Well, if you sinned before you were a Christian, and you sin since you became a Christian, how has Christ made a difference in your life?" The girl thought a minute and then answered, "Before I was Christian I ran after sin. Now I run from it."

Last, when we are saved by grace we are saved from the presence of sin.

As long as we live in a fallen world with a sinful nature we will never come to the place where can say we do not sin. But when Jesus comes again we will be set free from the very presence of sin. We will never disobey our Savior again, for "when He appears we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is" (1 John 3:2).

God's grace alone saves us and that is truly amazing.

Franz, who is the vice president of the AFLC, serves Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn.



THIS SUMMER, TWO GROUPS FROM THE AFLC TOURED SITES IN GERMANY ASSOCIATED WITH MARTIN LUTHER AS THE WORLD MARKS 500 YEARS SINCE THE START OF THE REFORMATION.

WE ASKED MEMBERS OF THESE GROUPS TO WRITE ABOUT THE PLACES THEY VISITED, THE PEOPLE IN LUTHER'S LIFE, AND THE IMPACT THEY HAD ON HISTORY.

LEIPZIG

BY PASTOR MICAH HJERMSTAD

The city of Leipzig, Germany, is not necessarily famous for its direct role in the Reformation. It was, and still is, an economic center in Germany, and the city hosted a famous debate between Martin Luther and Johann Eck in 1519. Beyond that, the major events of the Reformation took place elsewhere.

Today, however, Leipzig represents a significant gift that the Reformation gave to the world. That gift was a renewed love and appreciation for music that was beautiful and theologically rich. I visited Leipzig in July, and the first stop on our tour of the city was St. Thomas Church. This church is home to a famous boys' choir, but its claim to fame is that it was home to Johann Sebastian

Bach for 27 years, until he died. As cantor (music director) at St. Thomas, Bach led the boys' choir, taught at the church-affiliated school, and composed hundreds of cantatas and other musical works. Those compositions took the rich theology of the Reformation that was 200 years old at the time and set that theology to beautiful music that helped to impress those truths on the hearts of the people.

On our tour through Germany, we listened to an organ concert in Wittenberg which included several selections from Bach's works. The titles to these songs included "Now Come, Saviour of the Gentiles," "May You Be Praised, O Jesus Christ," and "Christ Lay in Death's Bonds." The first verse of that song declares, "Christ lay in Death's dark prison, it was our sin that bound Him; This day hath He arisen, and sheds new life around Him. Therefore let us joyful be and praise our God right heartily. So sing we Hallelujah!" Those precious words of law and gospel give hope and joy to you and me today.

Our tour group was blessed to have the opportunity to listen to an organ concert at St. Thomas Church. The current organist at the church wrote in the concert program, "The songs

of Martin Luther are among his most important achievements. Luther loved and promoted music, he created wonderful melodies and composed impressive lyrics. His songs were intended for worship, but also for school and daily life. Even today, 500 years later, they are sung by many people with joy ..." Luther believed that music was a wonderful gift from God, and that music could uniquely reinforce the meaning of the words being sung. Bach put that thought to practice in his prominent position, and today the music of both Luther and Bach has endured and is being used by Christians all over the world to teach and reinforce those precious biblical truths that were rediscovered during the Reformation.

Five hundred years after the Reformation, we remain thankful for the gift of music that a city like Leipzig represents. We thank God for leaders like Luther and Bach who were diligent to promote music and its role in teaching the faith "that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3).

Hjermstad serves St. Paul's Free Lutheran, Fargo, N.D.

ERFURT

BY PASTOR KEN MOLAND

W

alking in Luther's steps included a very meaningful time in Erfurt, a preserved medieval

city in the center of present-day Germany. Our AFLC tour group saw the Augustinian monastery where Martin Luther took his monastic vows and where Luther celebrated his first mass as a Catholic priest.

Erfurt was also the home of the university Luther attended as he was preparing to become a lawyer, prior to his entering the monastery. It was on his way back to the university in Erfurt in 1505 that Luther's course in life was dramatically changed as he bargained with God in the midst of a violent thunderstorm. Luther promised that he would become a monk and shortly thereafter entered this Augustinian Monastery, leaving behind his plans for a career in law.

We paused at the door where Luther had knocked, seeking admission to the monastery. We considered his desperate search for peace with God and the disciplines of the monastery which Luther embraced with fervor, hoping to please God with his works. Luther testified later, with his

new discovery of the gospel, that his "monkery" had brought him no peace. Only in the finished work of Christ did Luther find peace with God.

We did try briefly to practice one of the disciplines of the monastery as we committed to five minutes of silence at the beginning of our communion service. It was a time for reflection and self-examination as God prepared our hearts to receive the Lord's Supper.

We were privileged to have a communion service in the monastery, giving us an opportunity to reflect on Luther's insights regarding the sacrament. We chose to use a chalice, a common cup, for communion. Each participant was encouraged to hold the chalice containing the consecrated blood of Christ. We celebrated the priesthood of all believers and the blessing of receiving communion as Jesus had taught at the Last Supper, "Drink of this, all of you."

As a reformer, Luther was adamant in his view that all believers should have the privilege of receiving communion in "both kinds," that is, both the bread and the wine. The practice of his day was that the laity received only the bread and the clergy received both kinds. Earlier in our trip, we studied the masterful painting by Lucas Cranach the Elder in the Town Church in Wittenberg where his interpretive painting of the Last Supper includes one of the apostles passing the cup to a lay person beyond the inner circle. Cranach painted the face of Luther on that apostle to convey Luther's conviction regarding communion. In our communion service at Erfurt we were reminded of the privilege that is ours in receiving the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

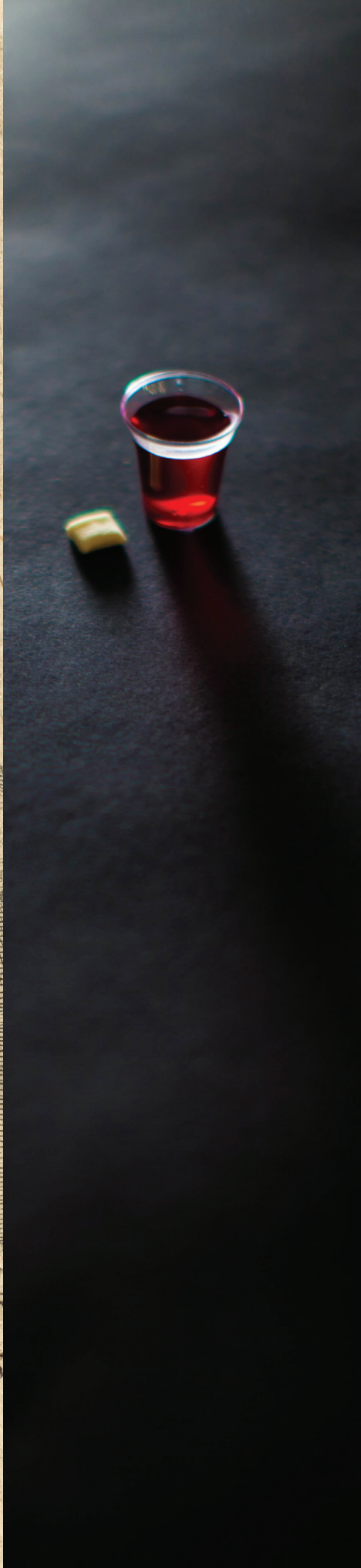
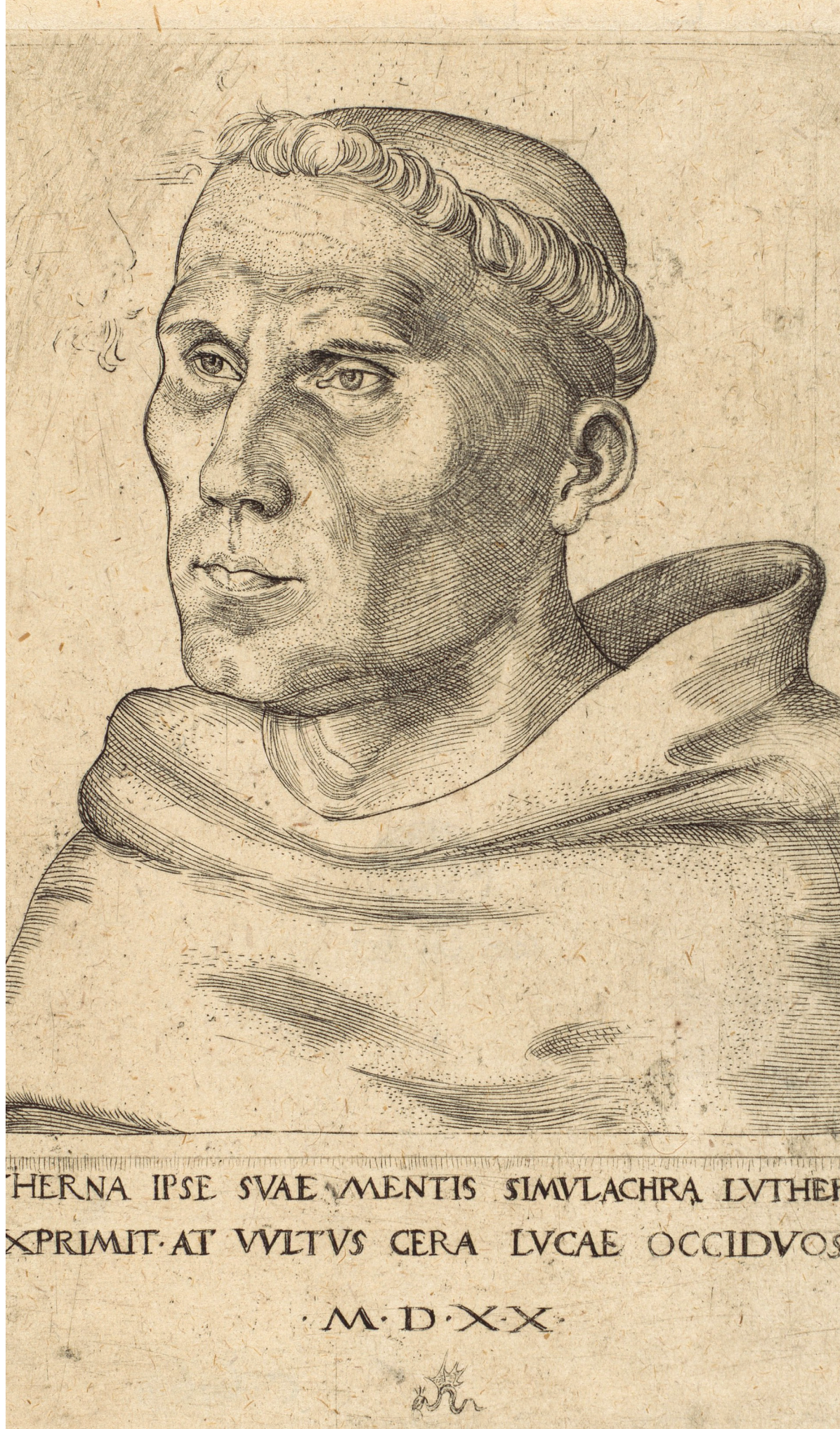
The second insight we celebrated was that communion is not an expression of the law, but

gospel. Communion is not what we do for God, but what God graciously gives to us. Luther's first mass as a Catholic priest was at this Augustinian monastery. At this point in his life, Luther still saw Christ as a righteous judge who needed to be appeased with human offerings. He still feared God's wrath and was anxious regarding his life of service as a priest. As Luther raised the chalice in the act of consecration, he physically trembled so that he spilled the consecrated wine, a horrible sacrilege and a humiliating failure for the young priest.

We had spent time on this chancel in the light of the glorious stained glass windows before which Luther had also stood. The glory of God was conveyed in the magnificent artwork, but because of Luther's rediscovery of the gospel, both the glory and the grace of God shone upon us. We remembered that the blood of Christ does not cry for revenge, but pleads for mercy. The communion service does not demand our performance, but rather offers to us the gracious forgiveness won by Christ on the cross.

As we received communion in this historic monastery in Erfurt we heard once again the gracious words of forgiveness and reconciliation and restoration. We were reminded that our feeble efforts to be worthy in ourselves are futile and that our worthiness is based solely on the merits and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the glory and grace of God shone upon us through those Christ-centered 14th century stained glass windows, we gave thanks to God that He looks upon us in Christ with divine favor.

Moland serves Our Redeemer Lutheran, Kirkwood, Wash. "Martin Luther as an Augustinian Monk" engraving by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1520).





WITTENBERG

BY PASTOR CRAIG JOHNSON

N

ot many tourists would travel from around the world to Wittenberg,

Germany, if it was not for what happened there 500 years ago. Wittenberg is a nice little town that has been well maintained over the years. It didn't suffer extensive damage in wars like many other places in Germany. However, it isn't a major player in the German economy. It does not have any unique natural features nearby like beautiful waterfalls or a majestic mountain. It is one of those places that most people would drive by if it wasn't for the fact that Martin Luther did much of his teaching and preaching there. The door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg is where Luther nailed his *95 Theses* on October 31, 1517—the event that is often looked at as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

Even in 1517 Wittenberg was not considered one of the most important cities of the region. It had a rather obscure university with a professor of theology named Martin Luther. In 1515 a list of biographical sketches of 100 professors from the universities of Leipzig, Wittenberg, and Frankfurt-an-der-Oder was published. It was a way of trying to draw

attention to the schools and let people know who was teaching there. Luther didn't even make that 1515 list of 100 professors people ought to know. In four years, however, he became one of the most famous men and the most published and widely-read author in all of Germany.

The main historic sites in Wittenberg are all within easy walking distance of one another. There is Luther's house, where he lived with his family, the City Church, where he frequently preached, the Castle Church, where he nailed the *95 Theses* and where he is buried. When we visited Wittenberg during our tour in July we walked between the sites a few different times during the two days we were there. It has the feel of a quaint, small town. But it is a place where very big things happened.

It was while teaching in Wittenberg that Luther came to understand, through his study of Scripture, that a person is justified before God by faith in Christ. The Catholic Church was trying to coerce people into buying indulgences. An indulgence could be described as a "get-out-of-purgatory" card. The claim was made that if an indulgence was bought or earned the recipient, or a deceased loved one, could have their years in purgatory lessened, or be released altogether and freed to enter heaven. This is completely contrary to Scripture, which declares the good news that forgiveness of sins is by God's grace and not of works. It is received by faith in what Jesus did at the cross.

Luther boldly spoke against the terrible error of the selling of indulgences and called for an end to the practice. He declared the good news that a person can be justified—made right with God—by faith in Christ. "The righteous will live by faith" (Romans 1:17). When he posted his theses on the door in Wittenberg it was an effort to promote discussion. No one expected it to be the

beginning of a revolution. Wittenberg certainly didn't seem like the spot where a revolution would begin that would change the world.

That is just how God so often works. When I visited Wittenberg in July I thought of I Corinthians 1:26-29: "Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him."

Wittenberg did not seem influential. Luther was a lowly monk. But God chose Luther and Wittenberg to do a special, powerful work. God delights in working in obscure places, using lowly people, choosing ones who may seem foolish, weak, and despised by the world to show His glory and spread His good news.

In the subtitle of the book *Brand Luther*, author Andrew Pettegree gives an apt description of the surprising work God did: "How an unheralded monk turned his small town into a center of publishing, made himself the most famous man in Europe—and started the Protestant Reformation."

The little town of Wittenberg is a powerful reminder of the great things only God can do.

Johnson serves Bethany Lutheran, Astoria, Ore. "Reformation Centenary Broadsheet" (1617), This broadsheet depicts the early Reformation of the Christian Church as a prophetic dream of Friedrich III, often known as Frederick the Wise, the canny Elector of Saxony. Photo of the Castle Church doors in Wittenberg by Johnson.

WORMS

BY RUTH STRAND

I spent a good deal of time with a compelling individual this summer. I read his biography. I pondered his words. I sang his songs. I traveled to places he lived and worked and worshiped. The man was Martin Luther. One of the cities on my pilgrimage was Worms, Germany. Luther spent only ten days in Worms but the high drama that occurred there nearly 500 years ago changed his life and the lives of us all.

By early January of 1521 Luther had been excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church for his writings and teachings which were considered heretical. He had been relentless and forthright in his publications attacking papal authority, the trafficking of indulgences, the practice of invoking saints, the doctrine of

purgatory, and the requirement of good works for salvation.

Elector Frederick “the Wise,” the Duke of Saxony and a staunch Luther defender, urged Holy Roman Emperor Charles V for a last hearing for Luther before condemning him. The emperor needed the support of Frederick and the other princes of the various regions of Germany. He was also well aware of Luther’s popularity among the people and feared a rebellion. Against the strenuous advice from the papal representative, who argued that no hearing was necessary since Luther’s case was already decided, Emperor Charles agreed to give Luther an audience. Thus, Luther was summoned to a deliberative assembly of the Empire: the Diet of Worms, in the spring of 1521.

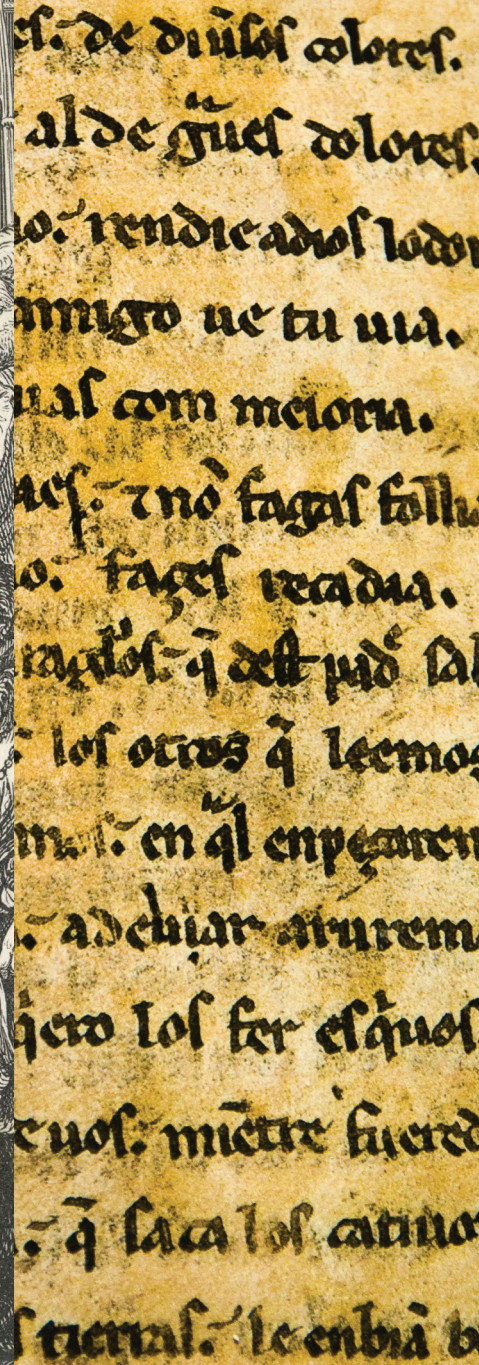
Luther, along with several companions, left his residence in Wittenberg aboard a wagon bound for Worms, a city more than 300 miles to the southwest. The journey would take two weeks, passing through towns where Luther was greeted by supporters as well as the curious. As he was escorted into Erfurt by forty horsemen, masses of people crowded the route to get a glimpse of the famous monk. He called the day “my Palm Sunday.” When he arrived at Worms trumpets



announced him and he was again greeted by cheering crowds.

The following day he was summoned to appear at the bishop’s residence. Emperor Charles, the electors, advisors, and papal representatives—many of Europe’s most important people—occupied the room. Luther, clad in his monk’s robe, was shown a collection of his own writings, asked if they were his, and if he wished to recant what he had written. Luther requested time to consider his answer. He was granted 24 hours.

Late the next day Luther was brought to a candlelit room and before the assembly gave his reply. His words were not the characteristically brash and blunt words we so often read from Luther’s pen; they were measured and careful. He explained that his writings were of various types. One group consisted of writings about the Christian faith. These were considered sound



doctrine that even his opponents could find valuable. The second group were works attacking papal tyranny. To retract those would perpetuate that tyranny. The remaining publications were attacks on various individuals which he admitted were probably too harsh but nonetheless he believed were not theologically erroneous.

Luther was pressed to simply answer the question—yes or no, would he recant? His painstaking and inspiring response was:

“Since then Your Majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen.”

I wonder if Luther knew what a watershed

moment this was. His hopes for change within the Roman Catholic Church were exhausted. He would now, if he survived, be consigned to initiating reforms outside the existing Church hierarchy.

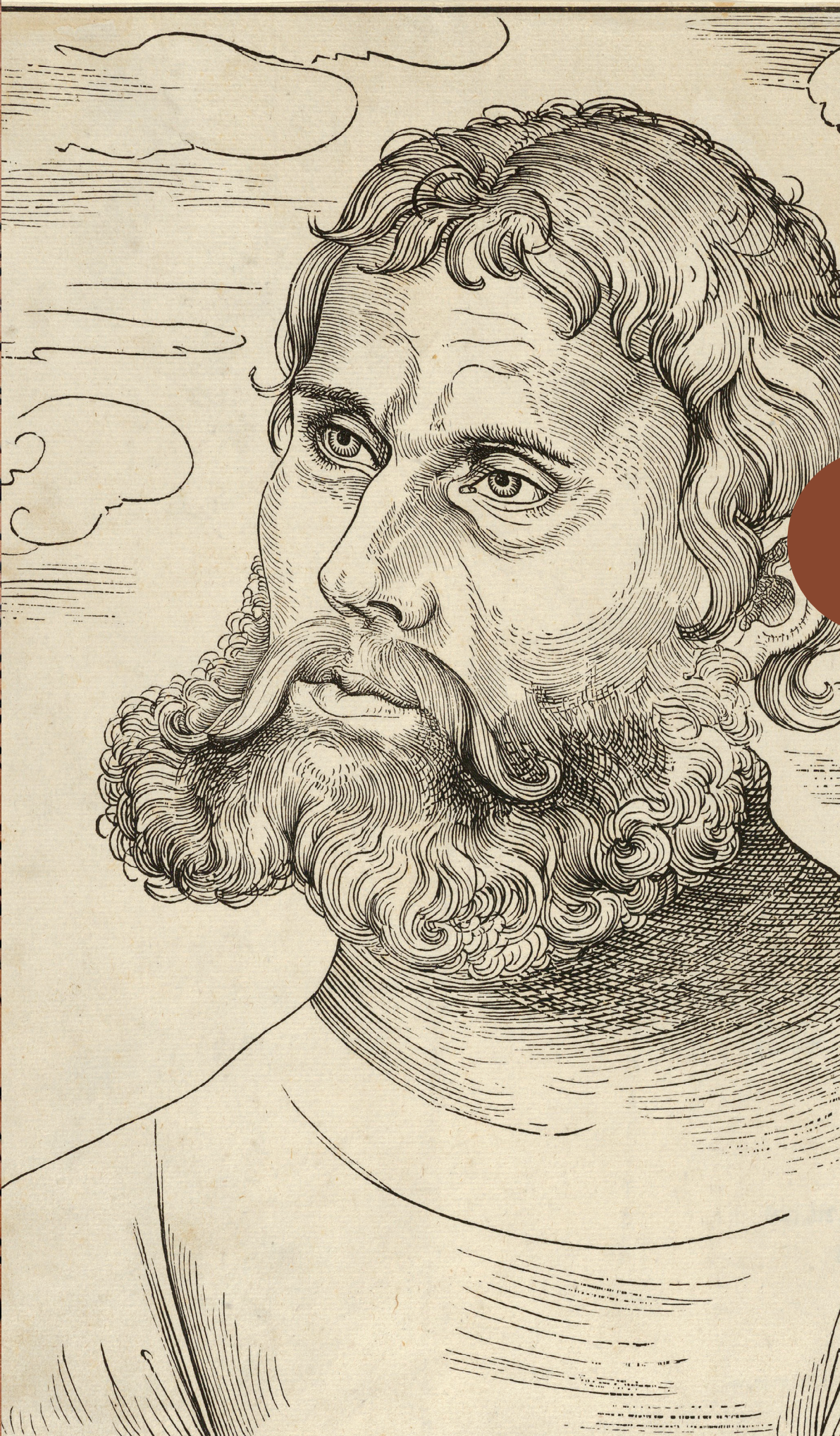
He came to Worms as a monk and professor hoping for a rational debate. He left as a fugitive and an outlaw. Yet, some of his greatest work still lay ahead of him: translating the entire Bible into the German vernacular, making it accessible to so many for the first time; writing catechisms for instructing families the Word of God; composing hymns to teach Christian truths; and guiding and supporting pastors in this Reformation of the Church.

Sadly, the Bishop's palace in Worms no longer exists. Tucked behind the massive St. Peter's Dom Cathedral is Heylshof Park where the palace once stood. I was so glad to see interpretive signs and a bronze plaque commemorating the significant

events of 496 years ago. A pair of over-sized whimsical bronze shoes can be stepped into for the clichéd “here-I-stand” photo op. As I stood in this historic place I reflected on what Luther bravely faced in Worms. The courageous stand he took by adhering to God's Word filled me with gratitude to God for the faithfulness of a monk called Martin Luther. May God grant us each the same.

Strand, a 1980 AFLBS graduate, lives in Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada.

אלהים וסודותם מן
אשר לא ידעתם
שמה לרשתה ולחנה את הבד
ואת הקללה על הר עינב הלא
אחריהם מבוא השמש בארץ
ברבים מול הגלגל אצל אלונים מן
האלהים נתן לכם וירשתם את
שמותם לעשות את כל החקיקות
והמשפטים אשר תשמוצו להם
אשר נתן יהוה אלהי אבותיך לך
כל המקומות אשר עבדו שם הגו
ותם אתם את אלהים על ההרים
ואילו אלהים תגד עון
מזמורם יהוה לא
בם מכל שבטיכם לשום
דבר וזאת שמד
יבחיכם ואח
ידכם ונדרים
וצאנכם ואי
ותם בכל
יהוה אלהיך
פד דיום איש
עתה אל



EISENACH

BY PASTOR NATHAN OLSON

A heavy fog set in below the castle fortress. From the Wartburg tower high upon the cliff face, one could just barely make out the outline of the town below ... This was the isolationist view for Martin Luther, who disguised himself as Junker Jörg (Knight George) during his 10-month stay in the city of Eisenach. Although the hustle and bustle of town life was visible from his barricade, he was now far removed from fellowship and regular interaction, “barred from using any library and from participating in any discussion.”¹

While this was a sad, lonely reality, Luther had no choice. It was too dangerous to venture out, as Emperor Charles V had declared him an outlaw in the Edict of Worms (May 25, 1521). If seen, Luther was to be apprehended and punished as a notorious heretic, which would mean certain death.

This, of course, was of no surprise for Luther’s friends. When Luther had met before the Diet of Worms just a month earlier (April 16-18, 1521), he had refused to recant his writings in the face of the Emperor. Therefore, for his own safety, Elector Frederick the Wise via Georg Spalatin had

him “kidnapped” and sheltered in the Wartburg Castle until further notice.

From Wartburg, Luther stayed busy. During the bulk of his time there, he managed to tackle such issues as the misuse of the mass and the celibacy of the priesthood, deliver a threatening ultimatum to Albrecht of Mainz regarding a proposed new sale of indulgences, and restore order brought by radical reformers in a secret mission back to Wittenberg. During this same time, he also persisted with sermon writing on the epistles and gospels for the church years, which later became known as the “Wartburg Postil.”

However, after staying at Wartburg for seven months, Luther felt compelled to do so much more. Therefore, on December 18, 1521, in his letter to Johann Lang, he first announced his intention to translate the New Testament into German.² Within 11 weeks, he had translated the entire New Testament from the Greek and Latin editions into the common German tongue. This work, later edited by Philip Melancthon and other theologians, was printed in September 1522. Its 3,000 copies sold out immediately, and a second revision was made and printed in December.³

This was no small feat. Not only did Luther churn out this project in less than three months, but it served to kindle the fire of the Reformation. For years, the common people were clueless as to what God thought of them or their sin. Not only had the German peasants been partaking in church services in a foreign language, but they had no opportunity to hear the Word of God in a language they could understand. Consequently, God’s mercy and grace for them was “hidden,” aloof just like Luther up in his Wartburg Castle tower.

However, with a translation of the Bible into the language of the people, commoners were

able to hear and read the revelation of God for themselves—that they couldn’t buy the grace of God through indulgences or merit the grace of God through their good works, but that God had chosen to bestow His grace to them freely through Jesus Christ.

This same revelation of *sola gratia*, “grace alone,” is what we continue to celebrate now 500 years after the Reformation began. It has always been and still remains to be the central reality of the Christian life—there is nothing you or I can do to make God love us any more than He already does in Christ Jesus. Instead of working for the grace of God or earning the grace of God, God gives it to us freely through His Son. He makes an objective promise through His Word that our sins are forgiven. He declares us to be righteous for Christ’s sake. He calls us children of God. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Olson serves Living Word Free Lutheran, Eagan, Minn. “Luther as Junker Jörg” woodcut by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1522).

1. Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works, Vol. 48: Letters I*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1999), 212.
2. *Luther’s Works, Vol. 34: Career of the Reformer IV*, 283.
3. This Wartburg endeavor consequently resulted in a focused effort over the next decade to compile parts of the Old Testament that were translated as well, leading to a complete common-German Bible in 1534.

AUGSBURG

BY SUSAN BAKER

On the Martin Luther 500th Anniversary Tour led by Pastors Ken Moland and Craig Johnson, Augsburg was the last city in which our group stayed. A picture of our group was taken there before a large set of statues of the heroes and events of the Reformation. Since Augsburg had an important role in the Protestant Reformation, it is a fitting location for the statues.

The first time Luther had involvement with Augsburg was in October 1518, when he was ordered to meet with Cardinal Cajetan. This was a journey of about 300 miles from Wittenberg. Although Luther expected to discuss the church issues he had raised, Rome had decided that Luther was to be treated as a heretic. The only options open to him were to obey and submit to the Church. After some days of discussion with the Cardinal, Luther realized his life could be in danger if he stayed there. So, leaving a letter for the Cardinal, he left at night, returning to Wittenberg. Following that, the Cardinal asked Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, to deliver Luther to Rome, but he refused to do so. Instead, he wrote an appeal of Rome's decision that Luther was to be considered a heretic. The elector wanted Luther to have a

fair trial.

The second Augsburg event with which Luther had involvement was at the Diet held in Augsburg in 1530. Written mainly by fellow reformer Philipp Melanchthon, the Augsburg Confession was presented on June 25, 1530, to Emperor Charles V, being read in German, which lasted about two hours. There was also a Latin version of the Confession given to the Emperor. Since Luther was considered an outlaw and his life was in danger, Luther could not attend the Diet. He stayed at Coburg Castle and was in frequent communication with Melanchthon via courier. A few months before the meeting, Luther, Melanchthon, and others met at Torgau and collaborated on the Torgau Articles, a summary of the Lutheran faith. This document was developed into an "apology" by Melanchthon.

The Augsburg Confession is the primary confession of faith of the Lutheran Church and one of the most important documents of the Lutheran Reformation. Melanchthon wrote the Confession to answer Johann Eck's attack on Luther and to prove that Lutherans supported the tenets of the historic Christian faith. Of the 28 articles in the Confession, only seven were negative in response to abuses in the Church. The other articles were a positive statement of Lutheran faith based on Scripture.

There were seven princes and representatives of two cities who signed the Augsburg Confession. They were unified against the traditional Catholic faith. The Emperor was angry when the signers refused to abandon their faith, and he threatened them if they did not recant by April 1531. In order to protect themselves, the princes and cities joined together in the Schmalkaldic League to defend themselves against the Emperor's forces. By 1535, the League admitted any city or state to ally with them if it agreed with the Augsburg Confession and Apology. Augsburg joined the League in 1537.

The third occasion in which Augsburg was

mentioned in an event in the Reformation was after Luther's death. In the Schmalkaldic War of 1546–1547, fought between the German Lutheran princes and the Emperor Charles V, the Protestants were decisively defeated at Muhlberg in 1547 and had heavy losses. The Emperor forced the Augsburg Interim (1548) on the Lutheran provinces, planning to incorporate the Lutherans back into the Roman Catholic Church. The Interim was condemned by Lutherans in northern Germany. A group of Lutherans left Wittenberg (where Melanchthon was) and moved to Magdeberg where they continued to resist.

The last Augsburg event in the Reformation after Luther's death was the Peace of Augsburg in 1555. With the Augsburg Interim in place, another revolt against the Emperor arose in 1552 under the leadership of Maurice of Saxony with help from King Henry II of France. The Emperor was outnumbered and fled. As a result, he cancelled the Augsburg Interim. Three years later, the Peace of Augsburg was formulated and officially ended religious battles between the two groups. It legally divided lands within the Holy Roman Empire into Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism based on the faith of the ruler of that area. No other denominations were allowed. People who lived in an area and didn't share the prince's faith were allowed to move to a different area. If a Catholic leader turned Protestant, he had to give up his position.

The anniversary tour increased our knowledge of Martin Luther and our church's history in the Reformation. Augsburg had a vital part in the Protestant Reformation.

Baker is a member of Plymouth Apostolic Lutheran, Plymouth, Minn., where her husband, Joel, serves as pastor. "Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony" oil painting by Lucas Cranach the Elder and Workshop (1533). "Catechism and Confession of the Lutherans in Augsburg," Bernard Picart (1732).



Erlicher der Drie/
für und herzog
Sachsen.



MINISTRE dans l'Eglise de S^{te} ANNE à
la juridiction Episcopale.



Le CATECHISME des ENFANS dans
des MINORITES, à AUGSBOURG.



Erlicher bin ich billich gerand
Schönen freid ich er weit im land.
Durch gross vernunft gedult und glicke
Wibltz manchen Hoffen thut.
Das land ich zieler mit gebew
Und Griffte ein hohe Schul auff's new.
Zu Wittenberg im Sachsen land
Im der welt die ward bekand
Denn aus der sel. Iohn Gottes wort
Und thet gross ding an manchem ort.
Das Bepflich Reich störgt es nitder
Und bracht rechten glauben wider.
Zum Kaiser ward erkorn ich
Des mein aber beschweret sich.
Dafür ich ... Carl erwelet
Von dem nit, nie, wann geist noch gelt.

TORGAV

BY PASTOR STEVE AND TRACY SNIPSTEAD

M

artin Luther, Nicolaus von Amsdorf, Philip Melancthon, Katharina von Bora: the

Reformation road trip turned these names from a history book into real people.

The city of Torgau is best remembered today as the place where the American and Soviet forces met at the conclusion of World War II. But it is also rich in Reformation history, especially related to the life of Katherina von Bora, one of the historical characters our road trip transformed from story into a real people.

The life of Katharina von Bora, who would become Luther's wife, became more than a story when we looked at the wedding ring she wore and a wedding present—a large silver decanter—she used and cherished.

Women of that time aren't mentioned much in history

books. But we know more about Katie than perhaps any other woman of the 16th century because of the hundreds of letters Luther wrote her. Katie wrote too, but far fewer survive. The intense fascination that surrounded her famous husband made everything he wrote something people collected and saved. This makes the story of their lives together a bit one sided, but we still see a picture of a loving spouse, a devoted mother, a business woman, and a vital contributor to the Reformation in her own right.

Katharina von Bora was born to a noble family in 1499. Her mother died when Katie was 5 years old, and within a year her father remarried. Girls fortunate to get an education started school around the age of 6. That usually meant joining a convent, and little Katie was brought to one some 30 miles distant. Later she was sent to a second convent, where she took her vows as a nun. She was welcomed here by her aunt, and this would be her home for many years.

Life in the cloister taught her hard work, discipline, and administrative skills not available to women elsewhere. Katie was well educated in the classics and theology. We don't know when news of the Reformation reached the cloister, but when it did many recognized the truth and the power of the gospel. Katie and her sisters looked for a way out, but leaving the convent was a serious crime. They wrote to Luther for help.



The story of Katie and 11 other nuns smuggled out in empty pickled herring barrels probably has some truth, though they were more likely sitting alongside the barrels not in them. Torgau is part of this chapter in her life, too, as it was the city to which she and the nuns fled. In April 1523, the refugee nuns arrived in Wittenberg. Three returned home, but the other nine had to find homes, and that meant husbands.

Katie was at first taken in by the Lucas Cranach household. There she met a young man and fell in love. He wanted to marry her, but when he returned home to seek permission from his parents, he was not allowed to return. Marrying a runaway nun was scandalous. The other former nuns found husbands, but what to do with Katie? Luther sent his friend Nicolaus von Amsdorf to Katie with an offer to marry an elderly pastor. Katie rejected that plan and proposed another. She would marry Luther, or—if he would not consent—then Amsdorf.

Luther thought her arrogant. But for a variety of reasons—none of them having to do with romantic love (that is his story)—he agreed and



on June 13, 1525, they were married. His friends hoped for the best. Philip Melancthon wrote that he hoped marriage would help tone down the “low buffoonery” of which they often had to correct Luther.

They grew to love each other. Luther called Katie “my rib, my sweet heart, my true love.” Luther wrote, “I am a happy husband and may God continue to send me happiness, from that most gracious woman, my best of wives.” Together they had six children and their house became the first Protestant model of a Christian home.

Katie brought order. Luther was ridiculously generous. At their wedding Luther tried to give away all of their presents. Katie went and retrieved them. She saved his life. Her hard work gave him a home, loving children, and a safe haven away from the worries and cares that pressed in. Under her direction the Luther household became mildly prosperous. Katie took in boarders and with the extra income bought additional land to feed their growing household. She was in charge of the finances.

Luther sometimes complained about her. Making a play on her name, he sometimes called her his “chain,” “the boss of Zulsdorf,” after the name of the farm they owned, and the “morning star of Wittenberg” for her habit of rising at 4 a.m. to take care of her various responsibilities. But he realized and deferred to her capabilities.

Luther respected her intelligence and learning. He asked her advice in theological matters. She was an active participant in the discussions with the many guests who ate at their table. Because of her influence, Luther began to support giving women control and voice in their homes and society. Against law and custom he made Katie the guardian of his estate. Knowing this was against the law of the time, he appealed to John Fredrick, Elector of Saxony, to validate his will, saying, “No one can manage the affairs of Katie better than Katie”

In 1546 at the age of 63, spent and worn out from work and care, Luther died. Katie was heartbroken. Soon after the Schmalkaldic War made her a refugee again. It would be two years before she could return to their war-ravaged

home. The Luther family survived by generosity of John Fredrick. Katie remained in Wittenberg until 1552, when she left for the City of Torgau to escape the Black Plague and famine. On the way, the cart she was riding in overturned and she was thrown in the ditch. Badly injured she survived bedridden for three months before she passed at the age of 53. Among her last words were, “I will stick to Christ as a burr to cloth.”

The Snipsteads live in Kalispell, Mont., where Pastor Steve serves Stillwater Lutheran.. “Schloss Hartenfels” in Torgau by Lucas Cranach the Younger and “Katharina von Bora” by Lucas Cranach the Elder.



M

artin Luther wrote both the words and music for "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,"

considered the "Battle Hymn of the Lutheran Reformation." Lutherans usually observe the custom of standing while singing this hymn.

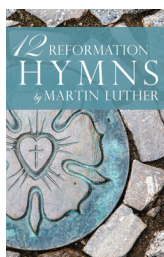
There are two versions of this hymn of Luther's. The original version, written by Luther, is very rhythmic. The repeated notes at the beginning bring to mind the hammer blows of nailing the 95 *Theses* to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church. The melody is rugged in its presentation.

The second version, unknown by Luther, is the so-called "smoothed-out" version. This version came into being some 200 years after Luther and is the version used in most hymn books today. Sometimes Christians are surprised that it is not the original version. You are encouraged to learn the original version. It is well worth the effort.

~Pastor Gordon Waterman
Crown of Life Lutheran
Tomball, Texas

A mighty fortress is our God

1. A mighty Fortress is our God,
A trusty Shield and Weapon;
He helps us free from ev'ry need
That hath us now o'ertaken.
The old bitter Foe
Now means deadly woe:
Deep guile and great might
Are his dread arms in fight;
On earth is not his equal.
2. With might of ours can naught be done,
Soon were our loss effected;
But for us fights the Valiant One,
Whom God Himself elected.
Ask ye, Who is this?—
Jesus Christ it is,
Of Sabaoth, Lord,
And there's none other God,
He holds the field forever.
3. Tho' devils all the world should fill,
All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill,
They cannot overpow'r us.
This world's prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none,
He's judged; the deed is done;
One little word can fell him.
4. The Word they still shall let remain,
Nor any thank have for it;
He's by our side upon the plain
With His good gifts and Spirit.
And take they our life,
Goods, fame, child, and wife,
Let these all be gone,
They yet have nothing won:
The Kingdom ours remaineth.



These hymns are featured in a new booklet from Ambassador Publications, *12 Reformation Hymns by Martin Luther*. Featuring a hymn of Luther for each month of the year, the booklet is available for \$2/each. For more information, visit ambassadorpublications.org.

SENT NORTH

BY HEATHER HANSEN

This summer I worked with Paul and Carissa Eikom and Alisha Kneeland

in Alaska for seven weeks teaching vacation Bible school (VBS) in remote villages. Each week, we traveled to a different village, living with them for the week. We always looked for opportunities to hang out with the kids and explore the village.

This summer we had the chance to go into two new villages. Each one took us by surprise. In the first new village, we were surprised by the kids. During the week we had 65 different kids with an average of 40-45 a day. It wasn't just the amount of kids that took us by surprise. We were surprised to learn of the hardships that they faced in their lives. While we played basketball, hiked a mountain, or hosted a finger nail painting party we heard their stories. Stories like having a drunk friend's dad trying to stab them. Stories of abusive teachers. Stories of how a

mother and sister almost died in the river. Despite all of their life experiences, these kids were loving and kind toward us. In fact, they showed up early and stayed late each day, turning the program into an eight-hour VBS some days.

The other new village gave us a different surprise. Instead of staying in the village, we flew there every day and stayed in Naknek each night. What was surprising most about that village was the amount of fear that surrounded those who live there. Coming in as strangers, we sensed that there were a few things that weren't quite right. We soon found out that someone had been murdered there three days before our arrival, which resulted in the fear we sensed there. To be able to go into the village with the theme, "Mighty Fortress: In Jesus the Victory is Won," was an incredible way to minister to the kids there. We showed them the love of Christ during this difficult time—it was God's perfect timing.

Since this was my second summer on an Alaska VBS team, it was great to see how much the kids remembered when we went back to villages I had been in last year. The first thing out of their mouth was, "Remember when we went swimming?" or "Remember when my brother

threw a fish at you?" or "Remember when we went to the playground?" I found out that the moments that stayed with them were when we took the extra time to be with them, and the extra walk. Some of them remembered the songs and lessons, too.

It's amazing to see the work that God is doing in the remote Alaska villages near Naknek. This summer we told 205 kids about the good news, doubling the outreach from last year and quadrupling since the first team was sent up in 2013. We also had two teams this year: our group taught VBS in seven villages and another two-person team taught VBS in two villages, totaling nine villages this last summer.

In addition to our weekly VBS programs, we were blessed to attend Hilltop Christian Fellowship in Naknek, which has a bilingual service in the summer due to all the Spanish speaking cannery workers in town. To get to see it and be a part of it is a wonderful blessing from God.

Hansen, a 2014 graduate of AFLBS, is a member of Bethany Free Lutheran, Abercrombie, N.D.

Seminary revises degree, now called M.Div. Certificate

Members of the AFLC Schools Board of Trustees announce that in addition to offering a Master of Divinity degree (M.Div.), the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary (AFLTS) will also offer a Certificate of Master of Divinity Studies (M.Div. Certificate). This certificate replaces the Graduate of Theology degree for students admitted without having first earned a bachelor's degree. If admitted to the seminary, a student not possessing a bachelor's degree will pursue the same course of study as the regular M.Div. degree students. Upon completion of these studies, the student will instead receive a M.Div. Certificate. These students would have the opportunity to be recommended for ordination after an internship in an AFLC congregation. Also, should they complete a bachelor's degree in the future, they would become eligible to upgrade their degree to the M.Div.

Several factors will be taken into account for admitting students to the M.Div. Certificate program. According to the policy adopted by board members on July 17, such students must be at least 40 years old, have completed at least 60 semester hours of undergraduate studies with at least a 2.0 grade average, and demonstrate spiritual maturity and involvement in congregational life and ministry.

Companion trip offered for spring European choir tour

The AFLBS Concert Choir will travel to eastern and central Europe during spring break 2018. The tour, planned for March 23-April 12, will include stops in Slovakia, Poland, Czech Republic, and Germany. Friends of the AFLC Schools are invited to join the choir for the final week of their European Reformation tour. The trip will include guided educational tours of Reformation sites and an additional weekend tour of Berlin. The tour costs \$2,750 a person, including airfare and flexibility to arrive early or stay late. The tour begins April 5 in Prague and continues into Germany, with returning flights from Berlin April 12 (or later). Spots are limited; for more information or to reserve a spot, call Sherry Mork at 763-544-2004.



Bible school, seminary students begin new year

After a two-day orientation over Labor Day, students of the Bible school and Seminary started classes on the Plymouth, Minn., campus on Sept. 6. Twenty-four students are enrolled in on-campus classes at the Free Lutheran Seminary, while 106 students make up the junior and senior classes of the Bible school.



Banquet planned for friends of AFLC Schools

The second annual Friends of the Schools Banquet is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Nov. 9 in Heritage Hall on the AFLC Schools campus. The program includes student testimonies, a ministry update from President Wade Mobley, president of the AFLC Schools, and a message by Dr. James Molstre, AFLTS dean. Cost is \$25/person and registration closes Oct. 31. For more information, visit aflbs.org/banquet.

A Reformation Hymn Festival will be held in conjunction with the banquet, at 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 10, in the AFLC Schools' chapel. The hymn festival will commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. This event will include congregational singing and a choral presentation featuring a chamber orchestra and festival choir, including AFLBS students, alumni, and friends. For information, visit aflbs.org/hymnfest.

**WMF**WOMEN'S
MISSIONARY
FEDERATION**A**

lot of people wonder what being on a summer team is like—living out of a suitcase,

staying in strangers' homes, traveling for 10 weeks, dealing with energetic kids. Why would anyone want to do that? Because seeing new parts of the country, making new friends, and especially seeing the kids' faces light up with joy after learning about all that Jesus has done for them makes just about anything worth it. There's so many good reasons to be on a summer team. But what is it like?

To start, you need to pack. Imagine picking out the outfits you're going to wear for the next 10 weeks and throwing them into a suitcase. You wear the same thing every week. It's a different way to live, but it's a small price to pay for the great reward of telling others about Jesus.

Some might think it would not be fun being in other people's homes for so long. It is kind of strange at first, but by the end of the week it really feels like home and you never want to leave. It is such a blessing being able to stay with people. Their hospitality is so encouraging after a day of vacation Bible school. They always say, "Our

SUMMER MINISTRY

BY HEIDI MUNDFROM

house is your home," and they truly mean it. Staying in host homes is one of the best things about summer teams. It's great to know that while we feel encouraged by them, they feel encouraged by us, as well.

Living on the road must mean a lot of fast food right? Most churches we go to have a sign-up for people to feed the team either for lunch, or supper, or both. Having people invite you over for a nice home-cooked meal is always fun. It's a way for our team to connect with even more members of the congregation. Often it's usually an older couple from the church who don't come to VBS but still want to help with the ministry, so they offer to feed the team one meal.

What is the best part of being on a summer team? Telling others, especially little kids, about Jesus, their Lord and Savior. We witness to the congregation through our actions. We witness to the youth through our attitudes. But we witness most of all to the little kids by what we tell them. Even after a long week of VBS, singing songs, playing games, teaching lessons, it's all worth it. The last day is the day that we talk about Jesus' trial, death,

and resurrection. It's the best day because we tell the kids the most important story ever told. It's so rewarding to see their faces light up when we tell them how loved they are by Jesus and that God is always there with them. Kids love to hear the gospel message.

Summer teams is such a rewarding experience. There's nothing you can compare it to. Ten weeks away from home, constantly traveling, can get sort of exhausting. We miss our family and friends, our homes, and our beds. We try to find any and every moment where we can relax and recharge. Meeting so many people can get a little exhausting. But it's worth it. And we know that so many people are praying for us. God is constantly with us giving us strength and lifting us up. He makes us His disciples to carry His message wherever He calls us. That's what summer team ministry is like.

Mundfrom, Crystal, Minn., is a senior at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School.

Amiot installed at Thief River Falls

Pastor Alex Amiot was installed July 9 at Our Saviour's Free Lutheran Church and Reiner Free Lutheran Church, Thief River Falls, Minn., with Pastor Terry Olson, former assistant to the president, officiating.



Johnson installed at Kenyon parish

Pastor Gideon Johnson was installed July 9 at Hauge Lutheran, Kenyon, Minn., and Emmanuel Lutheran, rural Wanamingo, Minn., with Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president, officiating.



Installation planned for new WMPL director

Lindquist, outgoing director, to be honored at thanksgiving service

Transition is a time of looking back at the past and looking forward to the future. The World Mission Prayer League is in that position now. The Prayer League is a Lutheran mission sending organization based in the Twin Cities, closely associated with the AFLC since its founding in 1962. WMPL is currently sending 100 missionaries to 20 different countries, fueled by the prayers of 6,000 individuals. Some of those missionaries are graduates of the AFLC Seminary or members of AFLC congregations.

Chuck Lindquist has been serving as the general director for the Prayer League for the last 20 years and is now ready to retire. As he looks back over that time, he reflects: "For more than a century, in one form or another, we have sent missionaries. And from the very beginning we have found God faithful! I have no doubt whatsoever that our faithful God is as dependable today as ever before. We may fittingly thank him for our past. We may properly trust him for all that's to come."

As members of the Prayer League look forward, much prayer and thanks have been given for the new general director, Paul Gossman. Along with his wife Pris, the Gossmans are veteran



Paul and Pris Gossman. Paul is the general director of WMPL.

Prayer League missionaries who have served in the Philippines, Peru, and in bilingual congregations in the United States. He will step into the role of general director at the Prayer League Office in Minneapolis starting in mid November.

In celebration of God's faithfulness throughout Chuck Lindquist's service as director, a gathering of thanksgiving will be held at 2:30 p.m. Nov. 26 at Calvary Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minn.

With joy and anticipation for what God will do in the future, a service of installation for Paul Gossman will be held at 2:30 p.m. Dec. 3 at Trinity Lutheran of Minnehaha Falls, Minneapolis.

Friends and prayer partners are welcome to attend both events. For more information about either event, contact the Prayer League by email at wmpl@wmpl.org or call 612-871-6843.

AUGUST MEMORIALS

AFLBS

Robert Lofthus
Ruth Claus
John Loiland
John Hauser Sr.

AFLTS

Pastor Lloyd Weiland
Jane Barkema
Ron Watt
Morris Moan
Janice Schmitke
Clarice Astrup

Builders Fellowship

Carol Dietsche

Development

Carol Dietsche

Evangelism

Janice Schmitke

General Fund

Ron Watt

Home Missions

Carol Dietsche (27)
Sam Lodahl

Vision

Helen Hanson

WMF

Carol Dietsche (4)

World Missions

Carol Dietsche

... in honor of

AFLBS

Chad Friestad

Home Missions

Phyllis Miller

WMF

Gladys Schauand

St. Petrie members give school supplies to community

Members of St. Petrie Lutheran's Loving Hearts and Helping Hands group, Leland, Ill., gave away basic school supplies to those in need on Aug. 13. The project donated 32 bags of supplies for kids in kindergarten through fifth grade. The congregation worked with another local church on the project, Bethany Lutheran, through a food pantry called Five Loaves Two Fish.





T

he word *reforma* in Portuguese means “remodeling.” This was the theme of winter youth

camp in Brazil, where youths were challenged to let God do the work of remodeling in their lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. Altair, a Brazilian pastor in Campo Mourão, encouraged 18 teenagers from the small Cohapar church and surrounding neighborhood to participate in the camp.

Altair, a fix-it man by trade, knows a lot about remodeling. He has done countless remodeling jobs around the Bible school and seminary and Bible camp in Campo Mourão. He is a man gripped by grace, a man who has allowed God to transform him into His image day by day.

We still remember the day when a defeated, hopeless alcoholic appeared at our house. He had been through a Christian treatment program, but had gone back to drinking and thought there was no more hope for him. My husband, Paul, was happy to share God’s grace with Altair, insisting that God, in His faithfulness and mercy, is always ready to receive repentant sinners. Then the *reforma* began in Altair’s life. He

REMODELING WORK

BECKY ABEL

asked Jesus to forgive him, change him, and remodel him. Over the course of several years Altair worked during the days as a brick layer and studied every night to finish grade school, high school, and seminary. He became the president of the Free Lutheran Church in Bateias.

After Altair finished seminary God blessed him with a wife. Odete also had been gripped by grace, an unwed mother with two young sons who had tired of her worldly life and decided to seek God. She and her two little boys were baptized and active in the Campo Largo church. By God’s grace this couple was united in marriage. They moved to Campo Mourão, where Altair became a teacher at the Bible school and pastor of the Cohapar church. Odete is one of the house mothers at the Miriam Home. Their union has been blessed by a third son, Daniel. Two souls gripped by grace have been used by God to minister grace in many other lives.

As we celebrate the Reformation this month,



may we pause to reflect on the difference God’s grace has made in our lives. Do you need a *reforma* in your life? Sometimes the work of remodeling can be messy, costly, and time-consuming, but the finished product is worth all the effort. If God’s grace can grip the soul of an alcoholic and transform him into a minister of His gospel, if

God’s grace can grip the soul of an unwed mother and transform her into a lovely Christian woman who cares for children at risk, if God’s grace can grip the soul of a troubled monk and transform him into the forerunner of a denomination that has persevered for 500 years, then His grace is sufficient to remodel any one of us who comes to Him in repentance and faith.

Let the work begin.

Abel and her husband, Paul, serve as AFLC missionaries in Campo Mourão, Brazil.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Pastor Jesse Kneeland has accepted a call to serve Living Hope, Rogers, Minn., beginning ministry there in September, after leaving Hope Lutheran, Northome, Minn., and Bethesda Lutheran, Mizpa, Minn.

Aaron Arneson, a 2017 AFLBS graduate, has accepted a call to serve as youth ministry director at St. Paul's Lutheran, Fargo, N.D.

Pastor Jerome Nikunen retired as senior pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Cloquet, MN, and is available for interim ministry.

Ethan Kucera, a 2016 AFLBS alum, has accepted a call to serve as youth and family director at First Lutheran, Ellendale, Minn.

Ashley Wolterstorff and **Aaron Ocker** will serve 12-month apprenticeships through AFLC Youth Ministries. Wolterstorff, from Osakis, Minn., is a 2017 AFLBS graduate. She will serve at Calvary Free Lutheran, Arlington, S.D. Ocker, a 2014 AFLBS graduate, will serve his internship at his home congregation, Del Lutheran, Frost, Minn.

Three new parish builders have started working in AFLC Home Missions congregations. **Erik Nelson** and **Damien Johnson** are serving at New Hope Lutheran, Jamestown, N.D. **Regan Johnson** is serving at Faith Lutheran, Metropolis, Ill. All three are 2017 graduates of AFLBS.

The Free Lutheran Seminary has announced internships for two students completing their final classroom semester this fall. **Ryan Patenaude** will serve at St. Paul's Lutheran, Fargo, N.D., under the leadership of Pastor Micah Hjermstad. **Chris Kumpula** will serve at Abiding Savior Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D., under the leadership of Pastor Kirk Flaa. Their year-long internships will begin in January.

Donations totalling more than \$344,000 have been received toward the purchase of the Charles property, adjacent to the AFLC campus in Plymouth, Minn. A final payment of \$316,000 is due at the end of December.

The AFLC has set up a fund to help those affected by the recent **hurricanes**. Donations can be made online for local AFLC congregations. A work trip to help those affected by Hurricane Harvey is also being planned, with possible dates in October, November and December. If interested, visit aflc.org/hurricane_harvey.



Carol Dietsche

Carol Dietsche, 89, of Osceola, Wis., died July 23 after a long illness. She was a member of the WMF national board for many years, and along with her husband, Robert, served as the first directors of the Association Retreat Center.

Born April 7, 1928, she was the daughter of Alfred and Christine Bendiksen. She was raised on a farm in Dovre Township near New Auburn, Wis. She graduated from Chetek High School in 1946. She worked as a waitress, assistant to Dr. Adams in Chetek, Wis., and receptionist at Northern Granite in Barron, Wis.

She married Robert Dietsche on Nov. 24, 1950, and they made their home in Sand Creek, Wis. She worked alongside her husband in the operation of Bob's Radio & TV and National Air Photos serving as their bookkeeper. Both Bob and Carol accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior together as a couple in 1960. They attended Faith Free Lutheran Church of Running Valley, rural Colfax, Wis., where she served as the local WMF president and as Sunday school superintendent. Her WMF National Board service included roles as second vice president and as president. She was active with her husband in the Gideons International at the Menomonie West 300 Camp. In 1979, they began to serve as the directors of the Association Retreat Center near Osceola, Wis. In their early years at the ARC, she ordered food, planned menus and served as their bookkeeper. Carol was a devoted wife and mother who lived a life of service to her family, friends and her church. She loved her Lord and Savior and eagerly shared the good news of the gospel.

Surviving are her husband, Robert Dietsche; one son, Cary (Rosalie) Dietsche; two daughters, Laurie (Paul) Nash; and Christie (Dennis) Jacobsen; 10 grandchildren, 15 great grandchildren, numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

The service was held July 27 at Amery Free Lutheran, Amery, Wis. Interment was in Zion Cemetery in Sand Creek, Wis. The family requests donations be made in her name to the Association Retreat Center, Amery Free Lutheran Church, or AFLC Home Missions.

Schools host campus revival conference

The AFLC Schools hosted a campus Revival Conference Sept. 24-27, under the theme, "Live It: Discovering Free and Living Christianity." Pastor Jim Johnson, who serves Good Shepherd Lutheran,

Camarillo, Calif., and is the former dean of the Bible school, was the featured speaker. Services (vimeo.com/aflbs) were held each evening, as well as chapel services each day.

AFLC BENEVOLENCES January 1-August 31, 2017

FUND	REC'D IN AUGUST	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$29,403	\$278,195	\$240,075
Evangelism	12,468	94,459	86,473
Youth Ministries	9,557	73,037	70,153
Parish Education	43,773	130,013	100,657
Seminary	22,300	169,021	161,232
Bible School	39,163	377,718	348,443
Home Missions	46,590	371,675	309,719
World Missions	55,144	297,765	344,510
Personal Support	51,207	405,540	396,001
TOTALS	\$309,605	\$2,197,424	\$2,057,264

For additional financial information for each department, go to www.aflc.org/giving

HALLE: CITY OF FIVE TOWERS

The names of the cities mentioned elsewhere in this issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* are familiar to those of us who know something of the story of the 16th century Reformation, but Halle is usually not included. This south Saxon city seems to be remembered primarily as a center of the post-Reformation spiritual life movement known as Lutheran pietism.

Yet there is a significant relationship between Martin Luther and Halle, as both of the tour groups learned.

Halle, an ancient city surrounded by coal, clay, and salt mines, was known for its wealth and its independent spirit.

The rulers of Saxony found it very difficult to exercise their authority there, and they built a large fortress in 1484 for the purpose of bringing the people under their control.

It was 500 years ago that Martin Luther posted his 95 *Theses* in Wittenberg, moved by the sale of an indulgence (forgiveness of the temporal penalties of sins) that was actually a fund-raising scheme for the benefit of the pope and a young German church leader, Albrecht von Brandenburg, Archbishop of Mainz. The connection to Halle is the fact that this city was where Albrecht was headquartered, and it was also where he displayed his enormous collection of more than 8,000 relics—offering the faithful a possibility of almost 40 million fewer days in purgatory.

One of the main sights in Halle today is the Market Church, also known as the Church of our Dear Ladies since it was built on the sites of two older churches named for St. Mary and St. Gertrude, encompassing the spires of both. (The two towers of each older church, plus the red tower of the city hall, are the landmarks that give Halle its name, City of the Five Towers.) Albrecht commissioned the new

church building to be constructed as a bulwark against the Reformation, but it quickly became a Lutheran church after he left the city in 1541—taking his relics with him, by the way.

The pastor of the Halle church was Justus Jonas, one of Luther's closest friends. A graduate of both Erfurt and Wittenberg universities, Jonas served for several years as professor at Wittenberg and preached regularly at the castle church there. Luther described him as an eloquent preacher, but complained that he cleared his throat too often. His services to the Reformation movement included translating writings of Luther and Melancthon from Latin to German, as well as helping to organize church life in several areas that were newly reformed. He became pastor in Halle in 1541 with Luther's blessing and the vote of the people, holding the first Lutheran service in the Market Church on Good Friday.

Halle also has a unique connection to the death of Martin Luther. The reformer was requested in 1546 to mediate a dispute between two noblemen, and he reluctantly traveled to Eisleben, the city of his birth. Justus Jonas joined him on the journey when he passed through Halle, and he was present to minister to his friend in the hour of his death and to record an account of his passing. There he would preach at Luther's first funeral service, choosing I Thessalonians 4:13-18 as his text.

Luther's body was transported home to Wittenberg for burial, but on the way it was laid out in the Halle church for several days. A death mask as well as an impression of his hands were made, and still are in display in the church today. This certainly sounds strange to our ears today, but one must remember that the enemies of the Reformation believed that Luther would



repent of his teachings in the hour of his death and would be in great agony as he was cast into hell. It was important, therefore, that witnesses could testify that he died peacefully, firm in his convictions, and that a death mask and impressions of his hands would serve as evidence.

Halle is remembered, too, for its connections to church music. It was the hometown of Georg Friedrich Handel, composer of "The Messiah." There is a monument to him in front of the Market Church where he was baptized, with the original font still on display, and where he served as organist. The church organist was the only music teacher that Handel ever had. A second music connection is also organ-related. A new organ in the church was inspected and approved by Johan Sebastian Bach, and his son Wilhelm Friedemann Bach became the organist after Handel.

Sadly, the Market Church and the red tower were severely damaged by Allied bombardment in 1945. Restoration work was slow during the East German communist years, yet today one can enjoy the Halle old city reconstructed to look as close as possible to its 16th century appearance.



Pastor Robert Lee

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association retreat center

ON MISSION AT THE ARC

BY KIRK RAUTIO

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ool, brisk air brushed across my face as the frost crunched beneath my feet. These were the first steps I would take on our new mission field.

My heart was anxious with anticipation for the people I would meet. My mind raced with the needs that could be met and the opportunities for Jesus to be encountered on this mission field. As I raised my eyes I saw a shadow cresting across the field. A cross so big, so grand, so breathtaking. Perhaps you have seen it, too?

Each day my family and I wake up and work at the Association Retreat Center near Osceola, Wis. Our new home is much like that of a mission field. While we are not in a far off country or a forsaken land, we provide a place where Jesus can be met, and through those meetings, doors are opened, hearts are mended, and fires are ignited.

AFLC missions, both home and abroad, is intent on making disciples for the Lord Jesus Christ. When you hear about missions, what places do you think of? Your home, the grocery store, the city streets,

the jungle, or the desert? Or is missions ministering to those who are ministering to others? Or is missions leading someone to Christ? In truth, missions is all of the above.

The mission of the Association Retreat Center is to provide a place for people to “come away and rest awhile” (Mark 6:31). In this verse Jesus encouraged His disciples to come away and rest because so many people were coming and going in their lives, each with needs. The key point in this verse is that He called them to come away and rest with Him. Through a relationship with Christ in which we meet regularly with Him, we are enabled to make disciples for Jesus, seek His face, build congregations, support congregations, and deepen our walk in His Word. Here is where our organization meets the mission field, where we are open to God’s will and calling.

Because we live in a country that is becoming more fixated on tolerance and acceptance of other’s thoughts and feelings, it is getting more difficult to stay true to one’s own convictions without being labeled ignorant or narrow minded. This makes it

even more difficult for a biblical Christian to stay visibly and vocally true to the core fundamentals of Christianity. This is the mission of the ARC, to spread the good news of the gospel by staying visibly and vocally true to the core fundamentals of biblical Christianity.

The ARC is intent on making disciples for the Lord Jesus Christ. The staff here sees thousands of people coming through our doors each year. While they may not all come back Sunday after Sunday, we are allowed a God-appointed moment in their lives to be open to their needs, whether that is through our facilities, speaking with them directly, serving them, or offering them the quiet time they need to be with Jesus. As you reflect on the mission of making disciples, is Jesus calling you to come away and rest with Him?

Rautio is the executive director of the Association Retreat Center, located near Osceola, Wis.