



Moments with Marty

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Moments with Marty



Moments with Marty – week 1, January 8

This year we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

In our support of this and as we **Live the Vision** for ourselves and for Christ the King Lutheran Church, each week from now through Reformation Sunday in October we will include in the Sunday bulletin “Moments with Marty,” a brief explanation of Martin Luther and his work.

It will touch on who we are as Christians and as Lutherans, why we say and do what we do and how we worship.

Martin Luther was a Roman Catholic priest in Germany 500 years ago. It wasn't his intent to create a new denomination, rather he simply wanted *reform*, changes in the Catholic Church to bring the focus back to our connection with God. At the heart of this, and the foundation for his 95 thesis was *forgiveness*. He felt that forgiveness had become a transaction rather than a proclamation. What he meant was that people were buying their forgiveness and salvation by purchasing indulgences, pieces of paper that said they were forgiven. He felt that the sale of indulgences was a fundraising activity, raising money for the construction of large churches in Rome as the Popes completed with the Emperors for power and control. His belief, and a centerpiece of our Lutheran faith is that we are saved by God's grace, not by our good works or purchasing a certificate.

Luther said we are saved by God's grace, we are undeserving of it but live in the faith that we are saved by Christ's ultimate gift to us, dying on the cross.

Moments with Marty – week 2, January 15

When Lutherans speak of the Reformation we are referring to an event that is specific to actions and writings of Martin Luther. Luther was not the first reformer nor was he the last.

There was a continual struggle between the Popes and the emperors for control of the people. While a few men dared to protest from time to time, the power of the church was so great that it quickly put them down. Among the reformers were John Wyclif in England, John Huss in Bohemia, Savonarola in Italy and Jerome of Prague. Those who protested were either burned at the stake or hanged as heretics. These forerunners of the Reformation did not fail in their efforts since it led others to think more seriously of the church customs which were not in agreement with what the Bible taught. This resulted in more people trying to reform the church and a more general reference to the reformation.

A short time after Luther broke away from the Roman Catholic Church other reformers protested the Pope and his authority, yielding the term “Protestants.” Notable of these were Zwingli in Switzerland and John Calvin in France, both of whom did not entirely agree with Luther and their followers formed a new church group. The beliefs and confessions of these created other Protestant groups that we recognize today as Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and Congregational.

Moments with Marty – week 3, January 22

Who was Martin Luther?

Martin Luther was born in 1483. His father encouraged him to become a lawyer but after nearly being struck by lightning, he decided to become a monk. He entered a monastery in 1505 at age 22 and was ordained as a priest two

years later. A year after being ordained he was assigned to teach at the University of Wittenberg where he spent his entire career. Four years later Luther earned his doctorate of theology degree.

He continued to be an avid student, lecturing and studying the Old Testament writings of the Psalms and Hebrews and Romans in the New Testament. It was his study of these New Testament writings of Paul that caused him to become discouraged with the Catholic Church. After five years Luther began to understand that salvation is a gift of God and is received by faith alone and not by paying for and buying forgiveness. A slogan of the times was. "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs." In his 95 theses written in 1517 he took issue with this practice and took direct aim at this slogan with his thesis #27.

Four years later In 1521 Luther was called before an Imperial Diet (an official assembly) at Worms, in southwest Germany to recant his views. He refused and a result was excommunicated as a heretic, his writings were banned and in effect was sentenced to be executed. He escaped arrest by taking refuge in a sympathizer's castle in Wartburg where he initially translated the New Testament into German for all people to be able to read. He followed this with the Old Testament translation and continued writings of his theology until his death on February 18, 1546 at age 63.

Moments with Marty – week 4, January 29

The most commonly referred to event in the reformation is Martin Luther's nailing of the 95 theses to the door at Wittenberg Castle church, a common means communicating viewpoints and stimulating discussion.

That by itself wasn't the reformation, rather just the beginning. For the sixty plus years following the posting of the 95 theses, there was considerable reformation activity going on in Germany and between the Pope in Rome and the reformers in Germany. (More on this next week.) Since Gutenberg created the printing press about 70 years earlier, the distribution of written works was easier and widespread. In addition to translating the Bible into German, Luther finished both the Small Catechism and Large Catechism in 1529, 12 years after the 95 theses. A definition of catechism is "a collection of questions and answers that are used to teach people about the Christian religion." Luther was a teacher, so that is what he did best.

A colleague of Luther at the University of Wittenberg was Phillip Melancthon. Though 14 years younger than Luther, he was a well-known theologian and a prolific writer. He gets credit for much of the writing that was done to prepare for the variety of assemblies (called diets) where reformers were called to present their ideas to political and religious leaders. A close analogy to this would be the Senate hearings we conduct in the U.S. today

Moments with Marty – week 5, February 5

In the thirteen years after the posting of the 95 theses, those agreeing with Martin Luther grew in numbers. There wasn't a Lutheran church yet, just a number protesting some of the Roman Catholic practices.

In January 1530, Italian Emperor Charles V invited the German rulers who were following the religious convictions of Luther to a Diet at Augsburg in April. The purpose was for these German rulers who supported the reforms of the church to explain their religious convictions and restore religious and political harmony in the Holy Roman Empire.

Philip Melancthon (mentioned last week) was part of a small group who authored the "Augsburg Confession" that was presented to the Roman leaders. Here the term confession means *a formal profession of belief and acceptance of doctrines* and not an admission of guilt as we commonly define it. The Augsburg Confession consisted of 21 Chief Articles of Faith, the principles of Luther, and seven statements they believed to be abuses in the Roman church. It was written by Melancthon "to be an expression of the faith of the universal Church, and thus a basis for reconciliation between the Lutheran Reformers and the Roman Church."

The original 95 theses have now been captured in these 28 articles. Since Luther was banned by the Pope and Emperor, he didn't attend the diet, but was in contact with Melancthon and the group who were in Augsburg. It is said that Luther wrote seventy letters to the group, of which twenty were directly to Melancthon.

Pause for a moment and think about the thirteen year span that has been covered in our “Moments” for the past five weeks. Was Lutheranism moving slowly or rapidly?

Moments with Marty – week 6, February 12

Last week we mentioned the Augsburg Confession and the Diet of Augsburg. It is not possible to provide all the details leading up to and following the Diet of Augsburg and the presentation of the Augsburg Confession in a few paragraphs here. The full version of the Augsburg Confession fills 35-40 pages in the Book of Concord. (More on that next week.) The good news is you can go to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augsburg_Confession for an easy to read 2 ½ page summary in today’s language.

The first 21 articles of the Augsburg Confession are important teachings and beliefs in Lutheranism based on the Bible. Many of these weren’t a great departure from the Catholic Church, leading to the hope that an agreement could be reached and harmony restored. Articles III and IV are about justification by faith alone and not good works, an important point in Luther’s original 95 theses. Article X is about the presence of Christ’s body and blood at the Lord’s Supper and Article XI covers confession and absolution which we will deal with in more detail in upcoming weeks.

The last seven articles deal with abuses that had crept into the church in the past few centuries. Some of these are that people received only the bread at communion, priests must be celibate, confession was mandatory, the practice of fasting and the authority claimed by bishops was out of line.

A few weeks later the Catholic theologians reply condemned 13 of the articles, accepted nine without qualifications, and approved six with qualifications. The discussions will continue for more than 40 years.

Moments with Marty – week 7, February 19

In 1580, 63 years after the 95 theses, 34 years after Luther’s death and 20 years after Melancthon died, the *Book of Concord* was produced. The writings in *The Book of Concord* are a collection of Lutheran beliefs, many of which separated Lutherans from other reform groups. These writings came because of the close relationship between religion and politics of the time, and the desires of ruling princes, emperors and religious clerics to have a unified people. Over the 50 years following the Augsburg Confession, religious reformers clarified their beliefs into what would eventually become the *Book of Concord*, which we still use. Having already covered the Augsburg Confession, today we will focus on two other parts of the book; “The Smalcald Articles” and “The Power and Primacy of the Pope

The Smalcald Articles: Following the 1530 Diet of Augsburg, (which produced the Augsburg Confession), the Pope and Emperor promised to meet, and in 1537 a general council came together with the purpose of bringing peace between the followers of Martin Luther and those who remained loyal to the Roman Catholic church. Luther, who was in ill health and other theologians wrote the Smalcald Articles to prepare for the meeting. These articles identified points where Lutherans would stand fast and others where further compromise and unification was possible. The Articles weren’t presented at the council, but they were very helpful in bringing clarification to what it was these new “Lutherans” believed.

Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope: As discussions with the Roman Catholic faction was ongoing, the Reformers were receiving pressure from the Princes who had declared for the Lutheran side to make a statement about the power of the Pope. It was this environment that led Philip Melancthon to write the Treatise, intending it to be an appendix to the Augsburg Confession. The main premise of the document is that the Pope isn’t given his position in the church by divine right, nor does he have civil authority by divine right. Furthermore, it proclaims that it isn’t necessary for Christians to believe in the Pope’s divine authority in order to be saved. Melancthon said these authorities are without basis in Scripture or history and the abuses of the papal office should stop.

How do you think the Pope felt about this?

Moments with Marty – week 8, February 26

Following the Smallcald Articles and Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope in 1537, the religious differences in the Holy Roman Empire continued for the next eleven years. Finally in 1548 (30 years after the 95 Theses and two years after Luther's death) Roman Emperor Charles V offered a temporary ruling that allowed the Lutherans to practice their beliefs in the Empire while everyone continued to work for religious unity, the ultimate goal for all.

Seven years later the Roman Emperor called for an imperial Diet in Augsburg in 1555 to end the religious struggle. Seven months later the end result was Emperor Charles V signed the *Peace of Augsburg*. This big step allowed the local princes to choose either Lutheranism or Roman Catholicism as the official confession of their state. Lutheranism now had official status within the Holy Roman Empire. In an interesting twist, he also granted a grace period so families could choose to move and settle in a region where their faith was practiced. The other non-Lutheran Protestants were not protected under the peace, and lived in danger of the charge of heresy.

All was not well in the rest of the world, either. In the 1530's the Church of England was formed, another Protestant group disputing many of the Roman Catholic practices. In 1554 Queen Mary ascended to the throne and set out to reestablish Catholicism in the country. Two English theologians were burned at the stake in 1555 for heresy as they supported the reformation. One of them, Bishop John Hooper surveyed 311 of his clerics and found 186 could not repeat the Ten Commandments and 31 could not locate them or The Lord's Prayer in the Bible. That would make Martin Luther turn over in his grave, and illustrates the need for what became the *Book of Concord* in the Lutheran world.

Moments with Marty – week 9, March 5

The Roman Emperor signed the *Peace of Augsburg* in 1555 following a war that was political and economic in addition to being religious. Lutherans had been following and practicing the beliefs of the Augsburg Confession for 25 years. With the *Peace of Augsburg* the Roman Catholic Church recognized only the Lutherans and those beliefs stated in the Augsburg Confession of 1530.

The years following 1555 weren't really that peaceful in the Lutheran church. Serious controversies existed among theologians and their understanding of the Augsburg Confession. These divisions were threatening the Reformation.

In 1576 and 1577 a group of Lutheran theologians drafted a document titled the *Formula of Concord* which deals with these dissensions and affirms the doctrines. The word "concord" means "agreement" or "harmony" which was the intent of these theologians, to bring all Lutherans together. The group confirmed the existing statements of faith and beliefs and put them in one place.

It was adopted in 1580 by German Lutheran political and religious leaders; 51 ruling nobles, over 8000 princes, political rulers, theologians, and pastors. These statements of faith were written down and in 1580 became the *Book of Concord*, ending the controversy and still used by Lutherans today.

Moments with Marty – week 10, March 12

In the first nine "Moments with Marty" we covered 63 years of reform. Lutherans and many others are very familiar with Martin Luther's posting of the 95 Theses. While they are important, they were just the spark that ignited much theological discussion. Everything in our first nine weeks has been a buildup to 1580 and the *Book of Concord*. We now understand the events, debate, dissent and writing that led to and make up the *Book of Concord* and ultimately what Lutheranism is. It is the expressions of our Christian faith - in one single book that has been used for nearly 500 years.

At the ordination of a pastor he or she promises to perform the duties of the office in accordance with the Lutheran confessions of faith, in other words, following the *Book of Concord*. When people are received into membership in a Lutheran congregation through confirmation they confess the doctrine of the church found in Luther's Small Catechism, which is in the *Book of Concord*.

These confessions (statements of faith) are not necessarily easy to understand but they are important. It isn't a book just for the clergy. Everyone who is a Lutheran should be aware of what the *Book of Concord* is.

"A Lutheran is a person who believes, teaches and confesses the truths of God's word as they are summarized and confessed in the *Book of Concord*." Next week will begin an explanation of what it is and what is in it. As a teacher, Martin Luther would be pleased with the contents and how it gives us direction for our faith, our worship and our lives.

Moments with Marty – week 11, March 19

After ten weeks of the history behind the creation of the statements of faith and the *Book of Concord* we pull back the curtain and show the ten components of the *Book of Concord*.

Apostles' Creed	Augsburg Confession
Nicene Creed	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Athanasian Creed	Smalcald Articles
Luther's Small Catechism	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope
Luther's Large Catechism	Formula of Concord

The creeds were around long before Luther and haven't changed much. Luther created the catechisms in 1529 as a teaching tool and the last five components came from the fifty years of activity previously covered in "Moments."

When the *Book of Concord* is brought up, some may ask "aren't we just supposed to follow the Bible?" Others may compare it to documents such as the book of Mormon as if Lutherans were trying to add new texts to the Bible. In reality the book of Concord seeks to bring unity to what the Bible teaches and to provide clarity on controversial topics. It does this not by adding to the Bible but by pointing to the power of the scripture and its declaration of God's love and forgiveness for all people *and* that Jesus Christ is the center of the teachings of the Christian faith.

Moments with Marty – week 12, March 26

We begin with the first of the three creeds, the Apostles' Creed, which most Lutherans and Christians make a declaration of every Sunday. The creeds are described as *ecumenical* or *universal* because they are accepted by Christians worldwide as the expressions of what God's Word teaches and affirms that God is fully present in Jesus. This means that Jesus Christ is both God and human (not a semi-divine or superhuman creature). As you will see by the dates, they predate the Reformation by hundreds of years.

The **Apostles' Creed** can be found on page 104 of the red hymnal. *It is called the Apostles' Creed not because it was produced by the apostles themselves but because it contains a brief summary of the apostles' teachings.* It was written in the 2nd century AD and used by early Christians in Rome. It is the most commonly used creed today. In Martin Luther's writing of the Small Catechism he introduces his explanation of the three articles with:

*I believe that **God** has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members.*

*I believe that **Jesus Christ**, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord.*

*I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the **Holy Spirit** has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.*

Moments with Marty – week 13, April 2

The oldest statements of faith in the *Book of Concord* (refer to week 11) are the three creeds. We introduced them with the Apostles' Creed written in the 2nd century and continue with the **Nicene Creed**, found on page 105 of the red hymnal.

The Nicene Creed was formulated at assemblies in Nicea in 325 and Constantinople in 381 AD (both were in modern day Turkey). It was meant to bring unity to the church at the time by clearly stating the doctrine of the Trinity, that Jesus Christ is true God, begotten of the Father and equal with the Father and Holy Spirit. It was written as an opposition to a fourth century movement that said *Jesus Christ is separate from God the Father and is subordinate to Him*. It is based on scripture, as is everything in the *Book of Concord*.

The Nicene Creed is often spoken during Advent, Christmas, Easter and festive Sundays. It isn't accepted by Christian denominations that don't believe in the Trinity but still believe in Christ.

The inclusion of the three ancient creeds in The Book of Concord indicates that Lutherans are not a sect but that they embrace and confess the ancient and orthodox (traditional) faith.

Moments with Marty – week 14, April 9

We continue with the contents of the *Book of Concord*, and the third creed, the **Athanasian Creed**.

This is the longest of the three creeds and the least used. The authors of the Athanasian Creed are unknown. The creed is named after Athanasius, a fourth-century champion against the heretics* who denied the deity of Christ. He was also instrumental in drafting the Nicene Creed. The creed originated in southern Gaul (a Roman territory that is present day France) probably about the middle of the sixth century.

This creed consists of two parts; the first is the doctrine of the trinity, and the second dealing with Jesus' human birth, being true God and true Man. Line 34 from the creed: Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ.

Some Lutheran congregations recite the Athanasian Creed on Trinity Sunday (the Sunday after Pentecost) because of its focus on the Triune God.

To read the Athanasian Creed, go to the ELCA.org website, click on Resource tab and type Athanasian Creed.

*A heretic is someone with a belief that contradicts established religious teaching. Through the reformation, there were many who were declared heretics by the established religions of the time. In week three, we found Luther declared a heretic by the Emperor and in week eight, an example of two theologians in England declared heretics and burned at the stake.

Moments with Marty – week 15, April 16

In weeks two and three of our *Moments with Marty* series we introduced Martin Luther and his ideas for getting the Church back to the "theology of the cross." It is appropriate that we visit that theology since it is that cross, the cross we see in all the depictions of Easter that Luther was focused on as he spoke about reforming some religious practices and that ultimately led to who we are as Lutherans today.

Many of the 95 theses, the points of discussion Luther posted on the church door are rooted in Easter.

It is because of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection that we are saved. Luther said *we are saved by grace and grace alone*, not by doing good things to earn salvation or by buying a certificate that frees me.

God's grace is there for us, all we have to do is accept it. It is our faith in God and accepting that grace that saves us. Luther points out that we do good things not to be saved but because that is how we express our joy, sharing the love

that has been given us. In the coming weeks we'll see how Luther explains how the Ten Commandments, Communion, Baptism and Confession all relate to this theology.

Luther was a Priest who was also a great teacher. Since many people were not literate in that day, he created a visual symbol of what his theology is, and he called it his seal. We call it Luther's Rose (on reverse side.) His seal or rose and an explanation of it is on the back of this sheet. With five simple elements Luther has defined who we are. Today is Easter and we are centered on the cross, just as Luther has the cross at the center of his seal.

The meaning of the Luther Rose

These five elements are how Martin Luther illustrates his theology, "the theology of the cross." This theology is not unique to Lutherans and is easy to see the references as you go through his Small Catechism.

At the center is the **black cross**. Jesus died on the cross to save us from sin. We celebrate this not just today, Easter Sunday, but every day of our lives.



The cross is in the center of a **red heart** reminding us that Jesus shed his blood for us. Luther refers to Romans 10:10, "For one who believes from the heart will be saved."

Moving outward is a **white rose** which the cross and heart are centered in. The rose reminds us our faith gives us joy, comfort and peace. The rose is white, the color of the angels.

The rose stands out in a **sky blue field**. This symbolized the heavenly joy to come.

Surrounding this is a **gold ring**, a precious and valuable metal. The ring has no beginning and no end and signifies the endless joy in heaven.

Moments with Marty – week 16, April 23

Martin Luther was not only a professor, priest, writer and teacher but later in life became a family man. Katharina von Bora, or Katie as he referred to her as, was born in 1499 and placed in the care of Benedictine sisters at age 5 for her education. At age 16 she took her vows as a nun.

After several years of religious life, Katharina became interested in Luther's growing reform movement and grew dissatisfied with her life in the monastery.

Living in Wittenberg, Katharina fell in love with a University student who married someone else due to family pressure. Martin Luther saw her heartbreak and ultimately they found romance and were married in the summer of 1525 when he was 41 and she was 25.

Luther said "his marriage would please his father, rile the pope, cause the angels to laugh, and the devils to weep." The Luthers gave birth to six children two of whom died at an early age. Martin quickly learned that marriage means sacrifice, looking out not only for the needs of yourself but also of your wife and family.

After Luther's death in 1546 Katie managed the property until 1552 when she left Wittenberg due to a poor harvest and the plague. She was badly injured as she was thrown from the cart she was in and died a few months later at age 53.

Luther said Katharina taught him about God's love and care and she was a model in helping to define Protestant family life and setting the tone for clergy marriages.

Moments with Marty – week 17, April 30

If one can judge a man by his choice in wives, Martin Luther deserves high marks since Katharina was a most remarkable woman.

Katharina came from a family of higher social rank than the Luther's. Martin came from peasant stock. His father was a miner who got involved in the business side of the mining and became well-to-do.

After marrying, the Luthers lived in the former Augustinian monastery, a generous gift to them. Katharina supported her family by gardening, making wine, raising livestock, and was accomplished at brewing beer, plus she managed the family finances.

Being a former monastery, their home had many small rooms which the Luthers rented to students or visiting clergy. Some were not paying customers either, which put a strain on their financial resources. In effect, Katharina was essentially running a boardinghouse to provide additional income for the family.

In addition to their six children, over the years they also cared for one of Katharina's relatives and six of Luther's sister's children.

Imagine the boisterous dinner table with up to 25; children, inquisitive students and debating clergy.

Moments with Marty – week 18, May 7

Martin Luther was ahead of his time in other ways, particularly his views on the role of women, which he demonstrated in his relationship with his wife Katharina and that we saw some of over the past two weeks.

On one occasion, he put Katie on a search committee to hire a new pastor. In those days it was unheard of for a woman to be part of such a decision. Luther's response was that his wife would show better judgment than he would. It is said that Luther also took Katie's advice on intellectual and political matters.

Luther's business sense was a shortcoming.. Publishers made nice profits from the books he authored while he saw little income from them. After marrying Katie, he let her handle much of the business dealings with publishers.

A final rebellious act was that he made Katie his sole heir in his will. At the time the practice was to make the children heirs and they were expected to take care of their surviving mother. Luther wanted Katie to be economically secure and independent after his death.

On marriage, Luther said, "Why not? This is a holy calling just like the priesthood or the ministry. It is sanctioned by God. It is a gift of God."

Another of his quotes, "A Christian is supposed to love his neighbor and since his wife is his nearest neighbor, she should be his deepest love."

Moments with Marty – week 19, May 14

In weeks five through ten the term “confessions” was mentioned numerous times. In that context a confession was a *formal profession of belief and acceptance of doctrines* and not an admission of guilt. The confessions in the *Book of Concord* are lengthy and in depth papers that define who we are as Lutherans. We now look at the term confession in its more common context, *the admission of our sins*.

When Martin Luther posted the 95 Theses, one practice that annoyed him was the activity of buying indulgences. This practice was in a sense replacing the true meaning of confession where one expressed a sincere admission of sin. Instead, the people were buying their salvation by purchasing indulgences which became fund raisers for the Pope’s projects.

Luther found that many of the people in Wittenberg weren’t coming to him for confession any longer. They were going to nearby towns to buy indulgences, an easier approach to forgiveness than trying to think of and admit where one had sinned in the past week. Luther was sticking to his guns by hearing private confession and giving absolution to his parishioners. He emphasized absolution and its basis in the gospel, like Matthew 6:14, “If you forgive men their trespasses, our heavenly Father will also forgive you.”

Because confession is very important to us as Christians, we will explore Luther’s perspective and what it means to us in our daily lives. In Book 5 of Luther’s Small Catechism he says, “Confession embraces two parts. One is that we **admit or confess our sins**; the other, that we **receive absolution, or forgiveness**, from the pastor as from God Himself...our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.” *continued next week....*

Moments with Marty – week 20, May 21

Luther’s thoughts on confession

“Thus you see that confession must not be despised, but that it is a comforting thing.”

--From a sermon on March 16, 1522.

Confession is a privilege; a splendid, precious, gift we cannot do without. In it we receive absolution or forgiveness without having to do any special works or actions. Our faith in God and His mercy are all we need to receive this forgiveness.

Luther and the other reformers said it is impossible to recall and confess every sin. Even before the reformers put the emphasis on faith and not works or payment there were references to confession, which are still a part of our worship.

In the Apostles’ Creed we state, “I believe in one holy Christian church....and the forgiveness of sins.”

We also make a confession in the Lord’s Prayer, “forgive us our sins as we forgive the sins of others.”

By making a statement of confession and receiving the forgiveness at the start of the worship service, we state that we are humans who are held captive by sin. As children of God we are freed from sin by the grace of Jesus Christ. We then receive forgiveness and worship with joy, sharing in Christ's presence with us.

Luther didn't see confession as a sacrament. He recognized the Eucharist and Baptism as the only two sacraments, those with an outward sign, something tangible such as bread and wine or water. A full explanation of this would take pages, but not calling it a sacrament doesn’t diminish its importance and value to Lutherans.

Moments with Marty – week 21, May 28

(Part 3 on confession).

Confession is not “groveling in our sin,” but heightens our awareness of and gratefulness for what Jesus accomplished at the cross. We need this regular confession of sin and the assurance of forgiveness as a weekly reminder of our dependence on God’s grace.

There are two types of confession practiced in the church today, private and corporate (public or group confession.)

Most are familiar with private confession which was the practice in Luther's early days and continues to be widely used in the Roman Catholic Church. While less commonly practiced, the ELCA also has a Rite for Individual Confession.

Corporate confession isn't new. Thousands of years ago that's how the children of Israel began their worship. They declared their sins in public confession and received an absolution, accepting the Lord's grace and forgiveness. When God's people confess together in a group, it brings us together as members of one body. We are also confessing and asking forgiveness of each other, the same today as thousands of years ago.

Another way to look at the importance of confession is to look at a husband and wife who never speak the words, "I'm sorry, I love you," and confess their failures and shortcomings to one another... and hear the response, "Honey, I forgive you." If that confession is absent, that marriage won't last. This is also true for a parent/child relationship.

Our relationship with Jesus Christ is no different. An example of our faith is in our confession "...we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed..." (page 95 in the red hymnal) or similar words in the *Brief Order for Public Confession* at the beginning of a worship service. In confessing our sin, we open ourselves so that we may receive the Absolute promise of God's lifegiving love and grace and our relationship is renewed with His own "I love you, I forgive you."

Moments with Marty – week 22, June 4

In addition to his other skills, Martin Luther was also a well-trained musician. "Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise," Luther declared. He wanted the people to participate in worship and incorporating music in the liturgy and hymns sung by everyone was a way of achieving this goal. Not all of the reformers of the time felt the same way.

Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) was a reformer in Zurich and was also a trained musician. He influenced Zurich's magistrates to ban all playing of organs. Though Zwingli later permitted some vocal music, he rejected instrumental music. John Calvin (1509-1564) considered music a gift of God but considered instrumental music "senseless and absurd." Under his reform only singing of the Psalms was permitted.

Music in worship remains one of Luther's most enduring legacies. Lutheran hymnals contain twenty or more of the 36 of his surviving hymns, and even non-Lutheran hymnals include many. One of his most memorable, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" (hymns 503 to 505 in the red hymnal) is based on Psalm 46. Take a few minutes sometime and compare this hymn to Psalm 46. During 1523 and 1524 Luther produced more than twenty hymns and in 1524 alone, he wrote six of his seven hymns based on Psalms.

J. S. Bach (1685-1750) is one of the greatest musicians and composers that ever lived and had a strong faith in Christ. He was a very traditional Lutheran, and it was clear Luther had a great impact on him. After his death, Bach's music was neglected. Until eighty years later another devout believer, Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) re-introduced Bach's music to the world with a performance in Berlin in 1829.

Moments with Marty – week 23, June 11

Last week, we began to hear about Luther and Worship, starting with the role of music. Luther loved music, and considered it an important part of worship because it was a way for all people to participate in the service. The music Luther wrote and used in the German mass was not for entertainment, but in order to train, teach, and preach about faith, a role that music continues to play in our worship today.

Beyond music, Luther sought to reform some of the worship practices of his day, as he was most concerned that the worship service had deteriorated through the centuries. In regard to preaching, Luther's experience was that only the law (*what a believer must do*) was being proclaimed, and that most sermons had become an advertisement for whatever the Roman Church was doing, such as selling indulgences to build cathedrals. Furthermore, Holy Communion had become a sacrifice towards God that the priest did on behalf of the people. The people didn't participate, but only

watched and increasingly weren't even present at all as more masses became private. How would you feel if this is what took place in worship? (*And add to it that the service was in Latin.*)

Luther and other Reformers, helped to reclaim worship so that it would be a "gospel-based sacramental practice." If you reread this phrase slowly, you will see just what takes place when the People of God worship. The prayers, hymns, Bible readings, (upon which the sermon is based) all proclaim the Gospel of God's saving grace, and in doing so train and teach us about our faith. These events culminate in the sacrament of Holy Communion, where we taste and see God's grace given to us in Jesus Christ, broken and shed for us.

Put simply; God's grace comes to us in word and sacrament...that is what worship is.

Coming up: Why worship. How we worship. The ceremonies in worship.

Moments with Marty – week 24, June 18

Why Worship?

Worship is not a song the choir sings, the amount placed in the offering basket or participating in church on Sunday. These are *acts* or *expressions of worship*, but they do not define what true worship really is.

The *Augsburg Confession* (weeks five and six in this series) says worship is for the people to learn the Scriptures to experience faith and find comfort through the preaching and the sacraments. Then the *Apology to the Augsburg Confession* defines the goal of worship: to bring people to give thanks in prayer and strengthen our relationship with God. This relational experience, between God and God's people, was what Martin Luther was trying to restore in worship.

So, why should Christians attend worship? Why is it so heavily encouraged in scripture; like in [Hebrews 10:24-25](#) which tell people to meet together because the benefits of meeting outweigh any threat of possible persecution at the time. It is encouraged, not commanded, because the Christian life is not a solitary life. All of the biblical metaphors for a church are communal, images such as a body, a flock or a holy nation, with each of us engaged as a unique individual.

One reason for worship attendance is that group worship promotes spiritual fellowship and encouragement as mentioned in the Hebrews passage. Worshiping with others provides benefits that are unavailable to us individually. We hear the public preaching of the Word of God and participate in a communal meal, the Holy Communion. Worship by television isolates and doesn't provide the Lord's Supper. Think about a Skype session with family, which unlike television is a two way encounter; but you can't share and feel the emotion and love that comes from being there and receiving a hug.

As was stated last week, worship is individuals in the community receiving God's grace in the reading and preaching of the word and receiving the sacrament of Holy Communion, resulting in loving community with God and with each other. That's why we worship.

Moments with Marty – week 25, June 25

Worship Rituals – the Liturgy

Our lives are filled with rituals. We wake up, work out, have our morning coffee and brush our teeth before going to work. We blow out birthday candles and stand during the seventh inning stretch at a baseball game.

The church is rooted in tradition and our worship life is filled with rituals. The most common ritual is what we call the liturgy; defined as "a variety of ideas, phrases, or observances, a fixed set of ceremonies, words, etc, that are used during a public worship." It is a pattern for hearing God's Word and responding with thanksgiving and praise. Its familiarity gives comfort to members as they worship. Martin Luther and the reformers kept the rituals, ceremonies and traditions of the Mass. The changes that took place 500 years ago were to actively include the worshippers, having them participate in these rituals.

The structure of our liturgy in the worship consists of: **Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending**. Each of these segments is made up of a number of different actions or traditions. These four segments are highlighted in today's bulletin. The Liturgy of the Word is important to us because it prepares us for the Holy Communion. Receiving Holy Communion is pinnacle of our worship and of our Christian life, and it is not merely a snack, like milk and cookies, but a Divine Feast. Hearing God's Word prepares our hearts, minds, and communities to receive this Feast.

Think for a moment on all that you see, hear, smell, touch, and taste within the liturgy; how do you experience worship? Where and how are you actively participating? How do you think Luther and the reformers would react to what they see in our worship today?

Moments with Marty – week 26, July 2

How we worship – rituals and practices

In the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship (the ELW, commonly called the “Red Book” or hymnal) pages 91 - 93 you will find a detailed description of the structure of the liturgy that was introduced last week. Rather than replicate it in this series, take some time to read this before or after worship one Sunday, it is also available on the CTK website under the tab “Who we are” and then “Moments with Marty.”

Throughout the worship service you will observe the presiding minister making the Sign of the Cross. Over time the practice of the *worshippers* crossing themselves has come to be considered a Roman Catholic ritual, something far from true.

Martin Luther suggested making the sign of the cross as a regular practice, in doing so it draws the whole self into the act of worship. Place the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand together as a reminder of the Trinity, touch your head at “the Father” and touch the middle of your chest, over your heart, at “the Son” and touch your right shoulder, then left shoulder at the “Holy Spirit.” In this description you see the spiritual symbolism in these motions and the reminder of our baptism when we were marked with the Sign of the Cross. So, it is a Christian practice, not just Roman Catholic. Is it time for a reformation back to the practice?

This action, like many others such as our verbal responses through the worship - our “dialogue” with the pastor, are not just going through motions but are symbolic of something greater.

Moments with Marty – week 27, July 9

How we worship – rituals, practices and symbolism

The earliest Christians did not gather for worship in the wonderful facilities we have today. Being a Christian at that time was frequently viewed as a crime so Christians usually had to worship in secret, generally gathering in private homes to avoid persecution. In 313 A.D. Roman Emperor Constantine declared Christianity a legal religion enabling Christians to build permanent structures to worship in.

Church buildings are meeting places between God and God's people and worship is the time when we come into God's presence with purpose. Through their architecture, beauty, and symbolism, church buildings surround us with reminders of God's awesome presence. Church buildings generally have three divisions of worship space: gathering space, nave, and chancel.

The nave is where the assembly gathers and participates in worship. Nave is derived from the Latin word *navis* which means ship. The nave reminds us of the church in the ocean of time and the water reference is a good reminder of our baptism.

The chancel is a raised area in front of the nave. Most worship leadership is conducted from the chancel since it is the place of the altar and pulpit. This chancel is defined by lighting, the presence of candles, fabric and seasonal banners or decorations. The furnishings and decorations should demonstrate beauty in their simplicity, worthy of the God whom we worship.

Altars with Altar – week 28, July 16

*Continued from last week....*The altar is prominent in the chancel. It is the table where the Lord's Supper is set out and that Jesus Christ invites us to for this celebration.

Like many things, changes have taken place in the positioning of the altar. In Martin Luther's day, most churches were built oriented to the east and the altar was against the east wall of the church. This was because the east was where the sun rose and symbolized the dawn of the resurrection and the promise of the second coming. Facing the altar was as if the priest was holding up the sacrifice of Christ to God. With the Reformation and restoring Holy Communion to the people, the altar was moved away from the wall so the pastor presided while facing the people and we are all gathered around the table.

The chancel has other elements that provide a visual focus during the worship service. Candlesticks and freestanding torches are a way to reflect the importance of the word of God. The lighted candles symbolize the light of Christ that comes to us in the word. Candles are among the oldest ornaments of worship since fire has long been a sign of God's presence and from a practical perspective they provided light for reading for hundreds of years before electricity. The candles are also a reminder that Christ is the light of the world as stated in John 8:12. Flowers and plants may adorn the chancel, representing the beauty of creation, the joy of life and the frailty of our existence. Due to the simplicity of Lent, flowers are generally omitted during this season.

The procession to the chancel and altar with the cross and torches symbolizes the coming of Christ to overcome the darkness of the world. The procession is particularly appropriate for festival days such as Easter and Christmas.

Altars with Altar – week 29, July 23

Often you have heard the Pastor ask during the children's sermon what the "color of the day" is. Last week we mentioned the chancel as being the visual focus of the worship. While we notice the colors of the stole worn by the pastor and the paraments (scarves) on the altar and lectern in the chancel. What do they mean? Each color reflects a season in the church year and carries a distinct message and mood for that season. The paraments accent the chancel, draw our attention and are a visual reminder of what we are celebrating in our worship that day or season. We are engaged by color and are reminded of the rainbow, God's promise given to Noah and his descendants.

Blue. The church year starts with Advent, a time of anticipation and waiting. The color blue for Advent is the color of the sky, communicating the message of hope and the coming savior.

White is the color of purity and holiness, respect and reverence and is the color for Christmas and its twelve days, through Epiphany (Jan. 6). It is also the color theme for the "fifty days of Easter." White carries the message of joy and rejoicing in Christ's triumph from the grave on Resurrection day.

Green, the color seen most often during the church year. The color green is symbolic of a new life, growth, and our need to grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ. It is the season when worshipers are constantly reminded of growing in God's grace. Being saved by grace and not good works was a key point in Luther's desire to reform the church. Some churches maintain several sets of green paraments, changing the shades to illustrate that faith is living and growing.

Gold is the optional color for Easter Sunday. It is also the suggested color for the last Sunday in the church year, Christ the King Sunday. Gold represents value and worth. We celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and adorn his altar with the color of splendor.

Purple, is a repentant color rather than a festive one. During Lent we use the rich color purple to represent somberness and solemnity, penitence, and prayer. It is a vivid reminder of the contempt and scorn Jesus endured and the sacrifice he made for our salvation..

Purple was a very cherished and expensive color in Jesus' time. The dye used to make the color was painstakingly acquired by massaging the neck of a Mediterranean shell fish that secreted a special fluid. It was therefore afforded only by the rich and worn most exclusively by the royalty

Red is the color of fire and power, so on Pentecost Sunday we remember the power and fire of "the Lord and Giver of Life" and of the Holy Spirit.

Red is also the color of Reformation Sunday, especially this year as we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. It is also the color of festive occasions such as dedications and for ordination and installation of a pastor. As the color of the day gets your attention every Sunday, think about its symbolism and message.

Moments with Marty – week 30, July 30

Practices and symbolism in worship

In a recent reading from Matthew and in the sermon you heard a symbolic reference to a yoke. A pastor's stole represents a yoke used to carry burdens. This symbol of the responsibility and authority of the pastoral office and of obedience to Christ is placed on a pastor when he/she is ordained

The stole is draped over the alb, a white ankle-length garment worn by worship leaders and is one of the oldest symbols. The Alb is a symbol of baptism and just as being baptized was to "put on Christ," worship leaders wear it on behalf of the whole assembly, putting on Christ.

Baptismal fonts were originally covered and locked in medieval times because people stole the consecrated water thinking it had magical powers. A baptismal font filled with water and placed in the assembly worship space symbolizes the centrality of this sacrament for our faith.

Crucifix and Cross. A crucifix is a cross with a body on it. At the time of the reformation, some non-Lutheran churches interpreted the first Commandment to prohibit any form of "graven images" and they rejected crucifixes. While the empty cross is seen as a reminder of the resurrection (Jesus is no longer on the cross) a crucifix reminds us that we are saved by Jesus as he took on a human body and physically died for us on the cross.

A symbolic act, bowing, demonstrates reverence and respect for God. We bow our heads in prayer and may bow towards the cross as it is carried in to worship representing Christ's presence among us.

Moments with Marty – week 31, August 6

Over the past weeks occasional quotes from Martin Luther have been inserted to complement the story. From the hundreds of published quotes, here is a small selection that illustrates the wisdom, faith and sense of humor Martin Luther had.

We need to hear the Gospel every day, because we forget it every day.

A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing, and suffers nothing, is worth nothing.

Christianity can be summed up in the two terms faith and love...receiving from above [faith] and giving out below [love].

Show me where a man spends his time & money, and I'll show you his god.

Whoever drinks beer, he is quick to sleep; whoever sleeps long, does not sin; whoever does not sin, enters Heaven! Thus, let us drink beer!

I have so much to do today; I'll need to spend another hour on my knees.

I have no use for cranks who despise music, because it is a gift of God. Music drives away the Devil and makes people joyful; they forget thereby all wrath, unchastity, arrogance, and the like. Next after theology, I give to music the highest place and the greatest honor.

People go through three conversions: The conversion of their head, their heart, and their pocketbook. Unfortunately, not all at the same time.

Moments with Marty – week 32, August 13

The July 2017 ELCA magazine, *Living Lutheran*, contains an article by Rod Boriack, "50 things you may not know about the Reformation." Below is a handful of selections from that article. Some of these illustrate the

Reformation's broader impact on religion in general. For the full article, go to LivingLutheran.org and click on the Reformation tab.

The Reformation created a demand for all kinds of religious writings. Readership was so great that the number of books printed in German increased from about 150 in 1518 to nearly 1000 six years later.

By the time Luther died, 30 editions of the small catechism had been published. By the end of the 16th century, there were an additional 125 editions in circulation and approximately 100,000 copies in print.

Prior to the Reformation, congregational singing – and even talking – during church services wasn't standard practice in Germany.

An emphasis on the involvement of lay people during worship revolutionized the way space inside the parish church was used during the Reformation. Many of the physical barriers between priest and congregation were removed. Consequently the interiors of local churches took on the appearance that many still have today.

Education was also set on a course of reforming thanks in part to Luther's advocacy and ideas that a proper, well organized and broad education for all children – not just those of the wealthy elite – would benefit the state as well as the church.

The area of Germany where Luther's story unfolded is now referred to as “Luther country.” This region of Reformation sites and history was part of East Germany for 40 years until the Berlin wall fell in 1989.

While the Reformation gave birth to Protestantism, today only two of the 10 countries with the largest Protestant populations are European.

Moments with Marty – week 33, August 27

What is a catechism?

A catechism is a book of instruction, usually in the form of questions and answers. As early as 400 AD, Christians used a collection of texts as a basic summary for teaching the Christian faith and life. The texts, often referred to as a catechism, included the Ten Commandments, Creed, Lord's Prayer, and often certain biblical passages on Baptism, Confession, and the Lord's Supper.

Fast forward 1100 years; as Martin Luther ventured away from Wittenberg he realized the poor level of Christian instruction especially in the villages. Luther said, *“Good God, what wretchedness I beheld! The common people have no knowledge whatever of Christian teaching, and unfortunately many pastors are quite incompetent.”*

His solution was the Small Catechism, written in 1529, and is probably the most influential of all his works, shaping generations of Lutherans across several continents. It is widely used today in Lutheran churches as part of youth education and Confirmation.

It can be found on pages 1160-1167 of the red hymnal or <http://bookofconcord.org/smallcatechismpdf.php> is an excellent resource that is easy to navigate.

...continued next week.

Moments with Marty – week 34, September 3

What is a catechism-continued

Many pastors wrote catechisms with many complicated questions and answers. Luther's small catechism sticks to one simple question: “What is this?” or “What does this mean?” He was not interested in deeper hidden meanings, rather used this simple question because he found it effective in teaching the faith. All this was in contrast to his reputation for being verbose. Throughout his explanations the theme of justification by faith comes through loud and clear.

Luther's Small Catechism sums up Christian doctrine by dividing it into six chief parts: the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Confession, and the Sacrament of the Altar. He included these texts along with brief explanations; the answers to the question "What does this mean?" This phrase and "This is most certainly true" are two of the most recognizable phrases in Lutheranism. Those who grew up Lutheran have these phrases etched in their brains.

Luther intended the small catechism for the household, a simple way in which the parents can explain the Christian faith. Over time additional sections included morning and evening prayers and prayers for mealtimes. He also wrote the Large Catechism, intended clergy and more educated readers. The Large Catechism is not in the same questioning format. Both are included in the *Book of Concord*.

Moments with Marty – week 35, September 10

Most of us probably aren't motivated to read *the Book of Concord* or even Luther's Large Catechism. We *should* take some time to read the six parts of Luther's Small Catechism or go back for a refresher if it has been a while since we were taught it during our confirmation class. These six parts are the focus of our Christian doctrine, what we believe and how we live.

Luther's responses to "**What does this mean?**" aren't trying to disclose some hidden theological meaning, but are meant to simplify things for us. It may help if, as you read the catechism, look at the responses as "**in other words this is saying _____ to me.**"

We will spend the next six weeks briefly covering the intent of each of the six parts of the Small Catechism. It is intended to set the stage and prepare you to read that part and what Luther is teaching in the explanation. The Small Catechism is found on pages 1160-1167 of the red hymnal, just seven pages, but admittedly it is small type.

Ten Commandments

As we get started, don't feel guilty if you can't recite the Ten Commandments, much less in order. Most people can't! We believe that the Ten Commandments summarize how God wants us to love Him and love our neighbor. Luther does not present the Ten Commandments as ethics. Rather, "in other words" they're telling us what we *should* do and they show us what we are *not doing but should be* doing.

Luther said the First Commandment is really the only Commandment there is. It is one that permeates all others. The first three Commandments spell out our actions toward God in service to God and set the tone for Christian life: *trust in God alone*. The other seven commandments are our obligation toward our neighbors – our fellow humans.

Moments with Marty – week 36, September 17

Why is Luther's Small Catechism in the order it is? By putting it in this order, there is a flow that helps us understand what we believe and you can see how each part supports the next.

- The Commandments express God's expectations, and knowing the "rules" leads us to.....
- The creed, which proclaims God's promise and what it is like to live under those commandments.
- The Lord's Prayer is our communication with God where we acknowledge the law (commandments) and gospel (God's promise) and build our relationship with our Heavenly Father.
- We are given the sacraments (Baptism and Lord's Supper) as tangible expressions of God's **grace** and are something we can continually go back to when we have moments of weakness .

Last week introduced the first part of the Small Catechism, the Ten Commandments. We continue with the **Creed**.

A person was with a group of friends when the conversation turned to religion. Yes, politics and religion are dangerous topics. As they discussed the topic, it was clear that most of the group wasn't really sure what they believed in. They spoke in vague generalities, and some weren't able to articulate what they believed at all.

This person had been quietly listening until somebody said: "You're been quiet, what do you believe?" The person opened their mouth not thinking or knowing what to say. Then the words came out; "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord." After reciting the entire Apostles Creed from beginning to end she looked up and her friends were silent and wide-eyed.

The Apostle's Creed summarizes who God is and what He has done out of love for us. It states how God cares for the world and promises a new life without sin. That's it ... in a couple sentences.

As you read Luther's explanations to the three articles, think about that and your answer to yourself "in other words this is saying____to me". What would you say when someone asks you "What do you believe in?"

Traditionally the creed was divided into twelve articles, for each of the Apostles. When Luther wrote the catechism, he went back to an even older tradition and presented the creed in three articles, for the Trinity.

Moments with Marty – week 37, September 24

Luther's Small Catechism - The Lord's Prayer

The third part of Luther's Small Catechism is the prayer Jesus taught us, the Lord's Prayer. Depending on the version, it is approximately 55-70 words, powerful and to the point.

Christians connect with Christ through prayer, especially the Lord's Prayer where we put our trust in Christ and receive God's care and blessings.

The Lord's Prayer has seven petitions (requests.) Seven signifies perfection. The first three petitions **focus on God** and His will and we send praise and glory to him. In week 24 we defined worship as an act of praising God, the Lord's Prayer is one way we praise God during worship.

1st - Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name

2nd - Your kingdom come

3rd – Your will be done on earth as in heaven

The other four petitions **focus on us** and our human needs and concerns.

4th – Give us today our daily bread

5th – and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us

6th – save us from the time of trial

7th – and deliver us from evil

Some Christians, particularly Protestants, end the prayer with a doxology, coming from the King James Version, Matthew 6 at the end of verse 9, "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

If you want to really get a discussion going, turn to Luke 11:2-4 where there are only petitions 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7 as we know them.

Whether we pray aloud or silently in our hearts, prayer is a personal and communal form of communication where we can speak directly with our Father in Heaven and be nurtured in our relationship with God and with our neighbor.

Moments with Marty – week 38, October 1

Luther's Small Catechism - Sacraments

As it sounds, the term “sacrament” comes from the word “sacred.” Sacraments are a mysterious symbolic rite with deep religious significance.

The two sacraments practiced by Lutherans, Holy Baptism and The Lord's Supper, are visible signs of God's divine grace. They were instituted by Christ, as indicated in the gospel, and have material elements; water in baptism and bread and wine in the supper.

The Roman Catholic Church has seven sacraments:

Sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion

Sacraments of healing: Penance and Confession, Anointing of the Sick (Extreme Unction)

Sacraments of service: Marriage and Holy Orders (ordination,)

A part of Roman Catholic teaching is that the sacraments are necessary for salvation, though not every sacrament is necessary for every individual.

God makes salvation certain in the sacrament of Baptism and, "since Christ died for the salvation of all, if one sincerely seeks God and strives to do his will, they can also be saved without Baptism (*Baptism of desire*). We entrust children who die without Baptism to the mercy of God.

Lutherans, on the other hand in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession define sacraments as "rites that have the command of God, and to which is added a promise of grace." Lutherans do not consider the other four rites as sacraments because they don't meet this definition. They are still retained as rites rather than sacraments and you may find them used in the Lutheran church.

Moments with Marty – week 39, October 8

Luther's Small Catechism - Sacrament of Baptism

In Luther's Small Catechism, his explanation of the Sacrament of Baptism is a bit different than the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer and Apostles Creed where he asks "What does this mean?"

For baptism he still asks questions, four of them, and provides answers in a more conversational tone. In week 35 we said to approach Luther's explanations to his question, "What does this mean?" by asking "what is this saying to me." With the two sacraments, he answers the question "What is it?" and "How can this be?"

We practice infant baptism, because a newborn baby has the same sinful nature that a grown person hence they need salvation. The Holy Spirit through baptism washes away this sin, creates a new life and saves. Furthermore, the baptism comes to us by grace, and bestows its benefits even upon those who cannot understand its gifts.

When the minister pours water over or immerses the person in the water it signifies death. When he/she raises the person up it signifies a new life. A way to think of this is drowning the "Old Adam" and raising to life, the "New Adam", who has been raised in Christ's eternal life. In our baptism, God creates a covenant with me, calling me by name, and declaring me God's child. I begin my life in the Church through baptism and am sustained by the Lord's Supper.

If Luther were young person today looking for the perfect tattoo to express his personal motto it would likely be "I am baptized."

Moments with Marty – week 40, October 15

Luther's Small Catechism - The Sacrament of the Altar

Whether you refer to it as the Eucharist, Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper or the Blessed Sacrament, the Sacrament of the Altar, is the central act of worship in most Christian churches.

In the fourth part of Luther's Small Catechism, the Sacrament of the altar, with five questions he explains why we come to the altar. Luther's approach is that it is more important to *use* the sacrament and reap its benefits in our personal lives than to explain the mystery and a formula of it. We don't have the space here to explain *transubstantiation* and the Lutheran position. For an interesting study, Google it, or check out the *Book of Concord*.

Luther's answer to the third question, how does it do what it does? "It is not the eating and drinking that do these things, but these words: "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." These words are, along with the bodily eating and drinking, the main thing in the Sacrament. Anyone who believes these words has what they say: that is, the forgiveness of sins."

With those words, the bread and wine are consecrated or blessed and we consume them in remembrance of Jesus's life and how it was given for us on the cross. The act of participating in this ceremony or celebration is the act of communion, coming together with our brothers and sisters, to dine together in a meal of graceful love, which binds us together in Christ's unending life.

An interesting bit of trivia more relevant to us in New England, the largest Portuguese feast in the world is held in New Bedford, Massachusetts in honor of **the Blessed Sacrament** attracting over 100,000 visitors each year. -*Wikipedia*

The sixth part of the Small Catechism is on confession, which was covered in weeks 19-21 in May.

Moments with Marty – week 41, October 22

Lutheran Principle - The Three Solas

Politicians, businesses and leaders have a motto or catchphrase, a watchword that conveys the essence of their beliefs. Lutheran Theology has its watchword in the three "solas" that we experience in many different ways in our worship* and that lead us in our daily lives.

This theology, justification by faith, is based on and starts with **scripture alone** (*sola scriptura*) where we learn a sinner is justified or pardoned by **grace alone** (*sola gratia*) through **faith alone** (*sola fide*) and not through saints, indulgences or good works which were in Luther's 95 Theses, and where "Moments with Marty" started forty one weeks ago.

Sola scriptura means that Scripture alone is the authority for our faith and practices. Scripture takes precedence over church traditions and teaches the truth necessary for our salvation and spiritual life.

In Martin Luther's time, literacy was low, and therefore, the authority to interpret, preach, and teach from scripture lay solely in the hands of the Catholic hierarchy, with the Pope as the final authority. (A position affirmed in the 1870 declaration of papal infallibility.) With the invention of the printing press, the Bible became the first book to be published in 1452. This put the Word of God in the hands of everyone and they could search for their own answers. It was seen as risky but Luther believed that "the commoner could interpret the Bible better than many of the church "scholars" in Rome."

In our CtK constitution, and in the constitution of all ELCA congregations, it is stated that the congregation accepts the Bible as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life. While there are differences in ways the Bible is read and interpreted among denominations, it is of central importance to all who call themselves Christian.

Sola Gratia translates as grace alone or only grace. God's grace is demonstrated in Christ Jesus as he offered His life in exchange for our sinful lives. God continues to show His grace to us through His Word and Sacraments.

Sola gratia or salvation by grace is what inspired John Newton to write the wonderful hymn "Amazing Grace" in 1779. Newton was an atheist and slave trader who found his faith during a storm at sea. He became an Anglican priest who wrote over 280 hymns. Listen to or read the words, particularly the second verse. (Page 779 in the red hymnal.)

Sola Fide or "faith alone", declares that good works are not a means to or requirement for salvation. Faith is belief without proof, believing the unbelievable. Through faith we are justified or granted a judicial pardon for our sins.

John 3:16 is the best explanation of sola fide. *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

The New Testament contains almost two hundred statements that refer to faith or belief as being sufficient for salvation, a good example of *sola scriptura*.

*For example, in worship we state our confession and are forgiven our sins-*sola gratia* and as we recite the creed we are declaring our faith-*sola fide*.

As you see, while there are three solas, they are intertwined and together provide our Lutheran watchword. And with this knowledge you can call yourself a theologian!

Moments with Marty – week 42, October 29 –Reformation Sunday

Today we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant reformation. In our weekly "Moments with Marty" over the past 10 months a number of questions have been answered, possibly some questions have come up and fun interesting points have been made. You have acquired a deeper understanding of what took place beginning 500 years ago in Germany and how it affects our worship today, specifically our Lutheran teaching, practices and rituals. We are saved by the gift of God's grace, not good works.

Places like Google and Southwest Airlines take great care in immersing their people into their corporate culture. These 42 weeks have been about our Lutheran culture. Being a Lutheran is something we don't need to apologize for, it is who we are and what we believe. Whether it is formal or informal, worship is a central part of our Christian life and culture and will always be based on the Bible and the traditions.

Today, Lutheranism is one of the largest denominations of Protestantism. Lutheranism is the third most common Protestant denomination. (more information on the other side.)

Whether this is the first time you have seen a "Moments with Marty," have missed a few weeks over time or have read them every week, the entire series is on the Christ the King website to read or download. To help direct you to a week or a topic, they are indexed so you can click on the topic and it will take you to it. Go to <https://www.christtheking-holliston.org/> and select "About Us" where you will find "Moments with Marty." There are links to other resources that have been mentioned in the series, such as Luther's Small Catechism, the creeds, the actual 95 Theses and the Augsburg Confession.

Sometimes we may be on "autopilot" as we recite the creed, pray the Lord's Prayer or receive the Lord's Supper. Set aside time in our 501st year to take time to read, study and expand on Luther's question, "What does this mean?" or "What does this mean to me?" Reflect on how I live each day, my relationship with others, my relationship with God and how I worship. You might start with six weeks to read the six parts of the Small Catechism (weeks 34 to 40 in this series) or do a web search on a topic or point mentioned in the past months of this series.

Live your vision....to know and to grow.

And some bonus information.....

Little did Martin Luther, Jan Hus, Philip Melanchthon and the other reformers know how things would look 500 years later.

Today there are 800 to 900 million Protestants worldwide. They make up nearly 40% of all Christians worldwide and are approximately 10% of the world’s population.

Of that number, over 74 million belong to Lutheran denominations.

Top 10 Nations with the Highest Percentage of Lutherans in the population		Top 10 states in the U.S. with the highest Percentage of Lutherans in the population		
<u>Country</u>	<u>Percent Lutheran</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Percent Lutheran</u>	<u>Percent *ELCA Lutheran</u>
Iceland	94	North Dakota	35.5	28.1
Norway	90	Minnesota	33.9	18.8
Denmark	90	South Dakota	30.3	16.5
Sweden	90	Wisconsin	26.2	9.4
Finland	86	Nebraska	16.3	8.2
Greenland	80	Iowa	15.4	9.5
Namibia	50	Montana	12.2	6.2
Germany	30	Pennsylvania	8.6	5.7
Estonia	26	Michigan	8.3	1.8
USA	6	Washington	7.8	2.7

Ten percent of the Massachusetts population is Protestant and less than one percent is Lutheran.

The *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is what we at Christ the King are a part of. It has 3.6 million baptized members in 9320 congregations. It is the seventh largest religious body in the U.S. and the largest Lutheran denomination in the U.S.

On a final note, **did you know?** Martin Luther King Sr., the father of the civil rights leader assassinated in April 1968, was born Michael King in 1899 (died in 1984.) A widely respected Baptist minister, in 1934 he made a trip to Germany. During this trip he became so inspired by the life of Martin Luther the protestant reformer, that on his return he changed his name from Michael to Martin Luther King.