



Sola Scriptura, Sola Fide, Sola Gratia
By Scripture alone, by faith alone, by grace alone

~ Martin Luther

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted 95 Theses (propositions) on the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church as an invitation to debate the sale of indulgences for forgiveness. That event sparked a reform movement that eventually led to a Lutheran church and from there the Dutch Reformed Church and many “reforming” denominations. While there is much sorrow in the disunity which the Reformation caused, Luther did establish the idea that the Church is always in need of reform in the light of the gospel. Luther's primary principal that Christians are justified by God's grace through faith in Christ has also found universal acceptance among denominations. Today we pray for church unity, for the purity of God's word, and for a church that is always open to reform and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

~ adapted from Thomas L. Weitzel

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN PENTECOST
REFORMATION SUNDAY

October 29, 2017

10:55 AM

Gathering Music

Jared Fischer

Welcome and Announcements ✕

Nancy Ellett Allison

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: **And also with you!**

*(Please pass the friendship pads so that all worshippers
might have the opportunity to sign them)*

Opening Voluntary

Jared Fischer

* Call to Worship

John Rapp

One: On this Reformation Sunday, we give thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit whose light brought new understanding of both the Living Word and the written Scripture.

Many: **We give thanks for the reminder of consistent grace and mercy from God through Jesus Christ.**

One: We are grateful for the inspiration that lead to the printing press, enabling the spread of information and the sharing of the gospel in many languages.

Many: **We thank God for today's technologies that can be used for good for the support of communities and individuals.**

One: Generous God, we thank you for open hearts that were prepared to hear and receive the good news of freedom in Christ.

Many: **We thank you for our continued freedom through Christ to share that same news of salvation to all.**

One: We remember the lives that were lost in the struggle to reform the church on earth- those who were martyred, those who died fighting, those who perished in hiding, and who were killed on all sides.

** All rise in body or spirit ☩ Sing Response ✕ Hymnals located below pews*

Many: We remember also the lives that have been lost throughout history in the name of religion and for those who die today for daring to believe.

One: We thank you for the instruction that comes through our church heritage- the catechisms, the understanding of the saints, the gift of community, and a deeper appreciation of God's gift of Holy Communion and Holy Baptism.

Many: We thank you for the presence of Jesus Christ- in us, with us, and for us- and for the support of the Holy Spirit, ever-reforming us.

One: God of stability and change, we thank you that true reformation is always your work and always being done in us out of your love for your whole creation. We are ever reformed by the work of your love.

Many: We are ever reformed by the work of God's love!

* Passing of the Peace

John Rapp

One: We are renewed by the love of God and the love of our sisters and brothers in Christ. So let us now greet one another as a sign of God's peace, for the peace of Christ is here to stay.

Many: Thanks be to God.

1. A might-y for-tress is our God, a bul-wark nev-er fail-ing,
Our pres-ent help a-mid the flood of mortal ills pre-val-ing.
For still our an-cient foe does seek to work us woe
with craft and pow-er great, and armed with cru-el hate,
on earth without an e-qual.

2. Did we in our own strength con-fide, our striv-ing would be los-ing,
But there is one who takes our side, the One of God's own choos-ing.
You ask who that may be? Christ Je-sus sets us free!
With might-y power to save, vic-to-rious o'er the grave,
Christ will pre-vail tri-um-phant.

3. And though this world with dev-ils filled should threat-en to un-do us,
We will not fear for God has willed the truth to tri-umph through us.
The powers of e-vil grim, we trem-ble not for them;
Their rage we can en-dure, for lo, their doom is sure:
One lit-tle word shall fell them.

4. That word be-yond all earth-ly powers for-ev-er is a-bid-ing;
The Spir-it and the gifts are ours, for Christ is with us sid-ing.
Let goods and kin-dred go, this mor-tal life al-so;
the bod-y they may kill; God's truth shall tri-umph still;
God's reign en-dures for-ev-er.

“Us for Them”

by M. and L. Gungor

When the lines are drawn, when you're in or out,
When it's us or them, and we shame the doubt,
It is all a lie, all we ever really need is love,
There's no need to shed more blood
Look upon the cross / Look upon the cross.

Chorus 1: See the face of Christ; see the mercy in His eyes,
Every valley shall be lifted high.
Now, our enemies are blessed, the heavy laden rest,
For His judgment is love, His judgment is love.

There is no more guilt, there is no more shame,
All our darkest sin, all our deepest pain.
Blessed are the poor, all the lonely, broken, lost, and torn;
See a kingdom comes to us.
A war that's fought with love / Our only war is love.

Chorus 2: Prepare the way of the Lord, wielding mercy like a sword,
Every mountaintop will be made low.
Know, He holds the earth like dust,
And His judgment comes to us,
And His judgment is love, His judgment is love.

We will not fight their wars, we will not fall in line,
Cause if it's us or them, it's us for them.
We reject the either or, they can't define us anymore,
Cause if it's us or them, it's us for them. (*Instrumental to Chorus 2*)

Children's Message & Offering

Nancy Ellett Allison

(Following the Children's Message, preschoolers go to extended care and those in kindergarten through fifth grade to Children's Church.)

Epistle Lesson

Romans 1:7-17

Jim Hong

To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Creator and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world. For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers, asking that by God's will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you. For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the Gentiles. I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish – hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, 'The one who is righteous will live by faith.'

One: May we hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Many: Thanks be to God. Open our ears, our hearts, our minds.

Journey to Generosity

Kristin Andes

Prayer of Confession

Jean Berg

One: Let us put aside our good works and remember that we do sin and fall short of the glory of God.

(Pause for personal reflection.)

One: Loving God, help us along our journey towards peace. Forgive us for the times when we do not do the hard work required to honor our covenants with one another.

Many: Allow your touch to be stronger than the resistance that we might give to it. Open our eyes to the cloud of witnesses who have come before us and worked towards a shared vision of shalom.

One: When we want to be a church ever-reforming, yet cling to comfortable ways:

Many: Christ, have mercy on us!

One: When we want to honor your “still speaking voice”, but are fearful of insights which challenge old assumptions:

Many: Lord, have mercy on us!

One: When we want to live into Jesus’ dream of oneness, but fail to listen to voices of difference:

Many: Christ, have mercy on us!

One: God of our refuge and strength,

Many: have mercy on us, write on our hearts. Amen

Words of Assurance *(adapted from the Heidelberg Confession)*

One: Take heart, we trust in the one who has guided the church for two millennia. Through Christ, God forgives us our failings, and continues to call us into a community of mutual love and forgiveness.

ALL: We take heart in our only comfort in life and in death: That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, through whom we pray:

Our God, in whom is heaven, blessed be your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Gift of Music

“What A Wonderful World”

Weiss & Theile

Arr. Marge Bailey

Kristin Andes, Terry Dennis, Judah Jones, Karen Long

* Gospel Lesson

John 8:31-38

Jean Berg

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.' They answered him, 'We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, "You will be made free"?"

Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because there is no place in you for my word. I declare what I have seen in God's presence; as for you, you should do what you have heard from God.'

One: May we hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Many: **Thanks be to God. Open our ears, our hearts, our minds.**

Sermon

"Always Reforming"

Nancy Ellett Allison

Offering Invitation

Jean Berg

Offering Music

Concerto for Horn
Jared Fischer, piano; Bill Tyler, horn

S. R. Mercado

* Doxology

OLD HUNDRETH

☩ **Praise God who gives all blessings birth;
Praise God all creatures on the earth;
Praise God, who makes, sustains, sets free;
One holy God in persons three. Amen.**

* Offertory Dedication

Jean Berg

* Hymn 457

“Jesus, I Live to You”

LAKE ENON

1. Je-sus, I live to you, the love-li-est and best;
My life will be your life in me, in your blessed love I rest.
2. Je-sus, I die to you, whenever death shall come;
Un-ceas-ing-ly, you'll live in me in my e-ter-nal home.
3. Wheth-er to live or die, I know not which is best;
To live will be your bliss in me, to die is end-less rest.
4. Liv-ing or dy-ing, Lord, I ask to be your own;
My life will be your life in me, and heaven on earth be known.

* Benediction

Nancy Ellett Allison

* Benediction Response 581

WORLD PEACE PRAYER

- φ Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth,
From despair to hope, from fear to trust,
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace;
Let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our world,
Let peace fill our universe.

Postlude

Jared Fischer

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

WELCOME TO HOLY COVENANT

We welcome all who worship with us at Holy Covenant. Guests and members, we invite you to sign our friendship pads so that we may have a record of your worshipping with us and be in touch with you during the week. Members, please indicate any changes in your contact information. We invite our visitors and members to linger following worship and join us in light refreshments and conversation.

JOURNEY TO GENEROSITY

Thank you for your generosity to Holy Covenant!

As you share your time and talents through church and your service elsewhere, you strengthen the fabric of community. As you support Holy Covenant financially, you build our collective capacity to make a difference in the world. If you have already pledged, thank you for your generosity. If you have not and are able to do so, please prayerfully consider pledging today and put it in the offering. **Final budget decisions will be made next week. We are presently at 81% of goal for our General (Operating) Fund and 98% of goal for our Building Fund.**

ANNUAL MEETING, NOVEMBER 19

Our 2017 Annual Meeting is our opportunity to discuss and share the work of the church with the entire congregation. In order to conduct the business of the church we need a quorum - and that means we need our members present! If you have any questions about the annual meeting, please contact Consistory President **Jeff Hughes**, jeffhugh@msn.com. **POTLUCK FOLLOWING ANNUAL MEETING** Bring your favorite recipe from our Cookbook! Cookbooks will be available to purchase Nov. 19; proceeds to benefit Guatemala Missions.

HCUCC ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR, DECEMBER 2 & 3

Calling all Artists/Crafters/Bakers! Plan to be a part of the HCUCC Christmas Bazaar! Saturday, December 2 -- An evening of wine and cheese preview/sale party AND Sunday, December 3 -- Sale will continue before and after worship. 20% of sales are donated to the church to benefit Missions Trips. Please contact Kim Tyler, yhr762@yahoo.com or Kay Smith, HappyArtByKay@gmail.com if you would like to participate in this fun event!

12x12 SERVE. STAND UP. SHARE.

Take action with Missions & Justice! We need to be heard; we need to act! M&J wants to know how the people of Holy Covenant are responding to the many issues facing our people and our society today. Write your mission, drop it in the basket in the Gathering Room and M&J will track them as the year goes along.

- November 13-17, HCUCC members join UMC in an Upper Room Ministry, bible reading and prayer time. Contact **Phil Kaveler**, pwkaveler@yahoo.com if you would like to be a part of this outreach.
- Support the HCUCC Benevolence fund that assist members in times of need. Notate your offering "Sunshine Fund"
- Contact your local Senators and Representatives about Tax Reform. <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>

SAVE THE DATE! ROOM IN THE INN

December 10, January 14, February 11, March 11

There are many ways in which to participate in this ministry that directly assists our neighbors. Look for the signup sheets in the gathering room.

SOJOURNERS CLASS~NOT YOUR TYPICAL SUNDAY SCHOOL GATHERING

Join us in a lively discussion of *Biblical Literalism: A Gentile Heresy*. On the last Sunday of each month we will continue to view the video series, *How Jesus Became God*, during our regular Sunday School time, 9:45-10:45. All are welcome and no preparation is necessary.

WEDNESDAY YOGA

Please join David Smith and friends, Wednesdays at 7:30 pm for yoga, fun and fellowship. No experience necessary. Facebook: **HCUCC Yoga4all**

UCC's Disaster Ministries:

http://www.ucc.org/donate_to_disaster_relief.

WE COULDN'T PROVIDE OUR WARM WELCOME WITHOUT THE HELP OF:

Elder for October: Faye Humphrey, fghumphrey@aol.com or 704-618-2750
Elder for November: Jeff Edwards Knight, Jeff763@aol.com or 704-651-4838

Deacons for October: Martha Bomely, Sally Duffy

Recyclers: Phil Kaveler

Greeters: Donna Collins, Lisa Sherman

Ushers: Barry Holcomb, Suzanne Lamorey, Tom Magraw

Media: Brian Hankins, Debbie Davis, Lisa Cloninger

Tabulators: Debbie Davis, Terry Raley Dennis

Refreshments: Joy Decker, Kevin Decker

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Gail Bushman, Frank & Charlotte Carbone, David Cable, Donna Collins, Ginny & Bob Fisher, Phil Kaveler, Helen Lambert, Irene Mikkelson, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Yami Senturias, Ed & Beth Sharp, Anita Taylor, Caroline Utz

Friends & Family Members

Ray Adams (Linda Burby), Bill Funderburk, Kathy Gibson (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Peace Hale (Ben Hale), Alice Huskins (Jared Fischer), Ashley Jones (Annette Shoop), Beth Poyer Meyer, Aldo Sanchez (Alice Phelan), Jessie & Craig Sharp (Terry Raley-Dennis), Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Becky Neese Smith (Diane Neese), Luz Soto & family (Aida Marcial), Doris Storie (Garrett Barlow), Cindy Wagner (Donna Collins), Wayne & Libby Walters (Barry Holcomb), Gary & Wanda Gilbert West (John Rapp), Elizabeth Wilson (Donna Collins), Wayne & Libby Walters (Barry Holcomb), Gary & Wanda Gilbert West (John Rapp)

Holy Covenant United Church of Christ

Rev. Nancy Ellett Allison, Ph.D., Pastor

Ms. Cheri Dennis, Ministry Intern

Mr. Jared Fischer, Director of Music

Mrs. Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant

3501 West W.T. Harris Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28269-8510

www.holycovenantucc.org office@holycovenantucc.org 704-599-9810