



Silent Meditation

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 the 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
REFORMATION SUNDAY

October 27, 2019

Prelude

Kathleen Smith

Welcome and Announcements ✕

Nancy Ellett Allison

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

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

Opening Voluntary

Kathleen Smith

* Call to Worship

John Rapp

One: As we celebrate the Reformation, let us also pray for reconciliation within the body of Christ. For the church that in every age has taught the faith to children, shared the sacraments, and fed the poor,

Many: **O God, we give you thanks.**

One: For the times when the church has let the human urge for power and self-preservation prevail over the will of God,

Many: **O God, we ask forgiveness.**

One: For those who work to create unity among all the churches and seek to find ways to walk together,

Many: **O God, we give you thanks.**

One: For us, when we promote sectarianism above our Oneness as children of God and siblings in Christ,

Many: **O God, we ask forgiveness.**

One: For those in every age who bring reformation and renewal to the church when it has become complacent,

Many: **O God, we give you thanks.**

One: For those instances when we have driven out those who had a different vision of God's will for us,

Many: **O God, we ask forgiveness.**

Cont'd...

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

One: For the diversity of expression in our many churches and denominations and for the spirit of liberation that allows the church to continually renew itself,

Many: **O God, we give you thanks.**

One: For the church, that we may be worthy and willing to work at healing divisions among all worshiping communities throughout the whole world, we pray in the name of the God who is Creator of all.

All: **Amen! May we ever be reformed by the work of God's love!**

* Passing of the Peace

John Rapp

One: Let us now greet one another as a sign of peace, for the peace of Christ is here to stay.

Many: **Thanks be to God!**

* Hymns 439

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

EIN' FESTE BURG

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

Nancy Ellett Allison

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

Prayer of Confession

Fred Robinson

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.

Epistle Lesson

Romans 1:7-17

Debbie Davis

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.**

Special Music

"Great is Thy Faithfulness"

FAITHFULNESS

Felicia Robinson, vocals, Kathleen Smith, piano

* Gospel Lesson

John 8:31-38

Fred Robinson

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
Offertory Invitation		Fred Robinson
Offering Music		Kathleen Smith
* Doxology		OLD HUNDREDTH
φ	Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below, Praise God above all heavenly hosts, Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.	
* Offertory Dedication		Fred Robinson
* Hymn 307	“Glorious Things of You Are Spoken” <i>(stanzas 1 & 2)</i>	AUSTRIAN HYMN
1.	Glorious things of you are spoken, Zion, city of our God; One who’s word cannot be broken formed you for a blessed abode. On the Rock of Ages founded, what can shake your sure repose? With salvation’s walls surrounded, you may smile at all your foes.	
2.	See! the streams of living waters, springing from eternal Love, Well Supply your sons and daughters, and all fear of want remove. Who can faint, while such a river ever will their thirst assuage: Grace which, like our God, the Giver, never fails from age to age?	
* Benediction		Nancy Ellett Allison
* Benediction Response		NEW DIMENSIONS
φ	God of rainbow, fiery pillar, Leading where the eagles soar, We your people, ours the journey, Now and ever, now and ever, now and ever more.	
Postlude		Kathleen Smith

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

PLEASE SIGN OUR ATTENDANCE REGISTER

WELCOME to all who worship today at Holy Covenant! Guests and members, please sign an attendance register and then pass it back to its starting point, taking note of who is worshipping near you and greet them.

ATTENTION SINGERS! ADVENT REHEARSAL TODAY

Bridget Green is excited to be working with you again this Advent Season. Join us today from 12:30-2 and each Sunday into December (with the exception of 11/17).

WILL YOU WALK WITH US ON THE WAY?

We are grateful for all who have generously contributed to the stewardship campaign. The general fund pace is currently at 57% and the Building (capital) fund is currently 68%. If you haven't pledged, please do so soon to help in the budget planning process, but no later than October 27. Place your commitment card in the offering plate or email your pledge to office@holycovenantucc.org.

NEW MEMBER/INQUIRER CLASSES CONTINUE

Please contact JoAnn Jellison, joannjellison@yahoo.com if interested.

TIME OUT YOUTH MEAL, NOVEMBER 14

We are serving a family style dinner at the Time Out Youth Center Thursday evening, November 14th. There is a need for donations (food or funds), and for several volunteers for preparations, serving the meal & interaction with youth for about 1-1.5 hrs. T.O.Y. is a center that supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, & questioning Youth in promoting unconditional acceptance & creating space for self-expression. Your support is greatly appreciated! Contact Bob Saylor, 704-239-7342 or bchs3201@aol.com

SOJOURNERS CLASS - NOT YOUR TYPICAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sojourners continue to discuss *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson. All are welcome to join us at 9:45 in the Conference Room and no preparation is necessary.

ALL CHURCH WORK DAY, NOVEMBER 2, 9 AM

We need to spiff up the church for Advent and the holidays! An all-church workday will include washing windows in the sanctuary and gathering room, carpet cleaning, and outdoor landscape clean up, just to name a few. The coffee will be on. Some kind soul may bring munchies, too. Working together is one of the best kinds of fellowship. Plan to roll up your sleeves with us. #CleaningGodsHouse

REFRESHMENTS FOR FELLOWSHIP - KEEP IT SIMPLE!

You can use the link below to sign up, and you can still sign up on paper if you prefer. <https://tinyurl.com/hcuccsnacks2019>

WE COULDN'T PROVIDE OUR WARM WELCOME WITHOUT THE HELP OF:
Elder for October: Robert Shepherd, rshepvided@att.net or 704-618-1322
Deacons for October: Lisa Sherman, Ed Vickery
Greeters: Kathy Habel, Anne Hayes
Ushers: Shakti Subramanian, Eileen Howe, Mike Sladek,
Mike Taylor, Selma Taylor
Media: Brian Hankins, Lisa Cloninger
Tabulators: Terry Raley-Dennis, Joy Decker
Refreshments: Christine Andersen, Bob Saylor
Recyclers: Phil Kaveler

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Frank & Charlotte Carbone, Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Julie Klever, Helen Lambert, Karen Long, Irene Mikkelson, Bruce & Melissa Noll, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Deb & Yvette Ross, Mamie Stokes

Friends & Family Members

The family of Scott Gleditsch (Barb Schneller)

Ray Adams (Linda Burby), Ann Ebright (Julie Klever), Mary Ruth Edenfield Beatty (Donna Collins), Alma Gordon (Kevin & Joy Decker), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Faye Grumbles (Linda Clark), Will & Addie May Hong (Jim Hong), Marilyn Lafferty (Kim Tyler), Bob Lyon (Melissa Noll), Ron Mann (Robert Shepherd), Carolyn Marshall (Linda Clark), Thibault Ossenbühl (Melissa Noll), Roshani Parikh (Nishi Griffin), Joe Robinson (Bill & Kim Tyler), Jack Ross (Anne Findlay-Chamberlain), Rev. Jeanette Salley (JoAnn Jellison), Ken & Evelyn Sell (Robert Shepherd), Deborah Selma (Kathleen Wagner), Irene Sharpe (Robert Shepherd), Luz Soto (Aida Marcial), Gene Sullivan (Jason Sullivan), John Teague (Donna Collins), Dorothy Underwood (Keith & Cheri Dennis), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Gary West (John Rapp), Wanda Williams (John Rapp)

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

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Mrs. Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant	office@holycovenantucc.org
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