



FROM THE PASTOR

**God is entirely and personally present in the wilderness, in the garden, in the field.
Martin Luther**

Dear Friends,

It is finally here. This month we will be celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. During this year, there have been constant reminders of this event. There has been much said and written about it. There have been several television programs dealing with it. As I see it one would be hard pressed not to know that it's the 500th anniversary!!!

Upon reflecting on the impact of the reformation, one important thing that comes to mind is that the message of the Gospel was made real and understandable to most of the people whether rich or poor. The predominate church at the time, the Roman Catholic church became so entangled in politics and power, that for the most part the average person had little real knowledge of the faith, and any instructions or reasons to why the church did things a certain way boiled down to the response of a parent answering a child who asks why: "Because we told you so!".

Luther tried to move the church from politics and worldly power, to a gathering of people who worshiped, sang, prayed and served God in the light of God's abundant love in the gift of God's grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They would learn about the gift of God's grace from God's word once Luther translated it into German. They would be able to sing about the gift of God's grace in the hymns Luther and his contemporaries wrote, sometimes using popular tunes from the local tavern.

Finally, Luther corrected the ignorance in the basics of the faith with his Small Catechism. This had such a great impact that later when Europe became embroiled in the wars of religion, and a Catholic leader took over a Lutheran area, the Lutherans would refuse to go back to their old faith holding up their catechisms in defiance.

Now some 500 years later, it may be good to reflect on how the Lutheran Church or any Christian denomination is doing in making sure the faith is real and understandable to people today. For we too can be caught up in being an institution rather than being a vessel for the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ.

May God forgive us when we lose sight of being proclaimers and witnesses of good news of Jesus for all the people. May God also inspire us by the Holy Spirit to have a new fresh vision to proclaim it in word and deed to all people today.

Your brother in Christ,

John

Fairbanks Lutheran Church
1012 Cowles Street
Fairbanks, AK 99701
907-452-3425

