

October 25, 2009
First Evangelical Lutheran Church
Idaho Falls, Idaho

Reformation Sunday

Jeremiah 31:31-34 Psalm 46 Romans 3:19-28 John 8:31-36

Reformation Assignment from Pastor Larry: List five characteristics of a church that makes it distinctively Lutheran:

1. The understanding that we are justified, or our relationship with God is restored, by grace alone through faith alone. This is at the heart of the Reformation, so I will talk more about this later.
2. A common confession written in the Book of Concord. This book contains writings such as the Augsburg Confession and the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, which discusses our fundamental articles of faith and doctrine, detailing our basic beliefs about God, the Son of God, the Church, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, confession, and repentance among other things. The Book of Concord also includes Luther's Small and Large Catechism, which many people are familiar especially through confirmation.
3. Our belief about what makes a sacrament in the church. It is a common, everyday, earthly element that when joined with God's Word, God pours out some gifts and promises to us.
4. An understanding of the cross where Christ takes on our sin and suffering. Luther understood that Christ on the cross can be terrifying for us because we see there how serious God takes sin. But it is also there where we hear Christ cry out, "My God, my God. Why have you forsaken me?" And so we understand that Christ

on the cross knows well and meets us in a most intimate way in all of the moments in our life where we too may feel such trouble and pain that we feel forsaken. It is also the cross that gives us an important part of our mission in the world. A famous painting of Luther shows him in the pulpit, pointing to the cross. A part of our mission in the world is one beggar telling another where they can find bread, where they can find forgiveness.

5. Importance of baptism for our daily life: Our most basic identity. Return daily to be washed and renewed and raised to the new life in Jesus Christ.