

# IMMANUEL MONTHLY

October 1, 2013



## From Pastor's Desk Psalm 124 and the Reformation

By Rev. Jason M. Braaten

“Almighty and gracious Lord, pour out Your Holy Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep us steadfast in Your grace and truth, protect and deliver us in times of temptation, defend us against all enemies, and grant to Your Church Your saving peace . . .” (Collect for Reformation Day)

The month of October brings with it the yearly commemoration of Martin Luther’s 1517 posting of his 95 Theses on the Wittenberg Castle Church door. As has become customary in the recent past, our parish will keep this commemoration on the Sunday prior to October 31. (Perhaps asking parish members to assemble on Friday, October 31, would prove a futile request.) But whether it be on October 26 or 31, the event recognized as the overture to the Protestant Reformation will be remembered.

Besides the retelling of the theses’ posting, Reformation Day commemoration always includes the singing of Luther’s hymn “*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*” (“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”), his

paraphrase of Psalm 46. But a much-forgotten hymn of Luther’s based on Psalm 124 carries the theme of the Reformation: salvation of helpless sinners who have no power or worthiness in them solely accomplished by divine action. Luther’s hymn “*Wer Gott nicht mit uns diese Zeit*” (often translated as “If God Had Not Been on Our Side”) paraphrases the psalm which speaks about divine deliverance given to the Lord God’s people.

King David’s psalm was used by those who were on pilgrimage to Jerusalem’s Temple, especially for the Passover Festival. This Song of Ascents begins as a remembrance of what the Lord God had done for Israel, especially their liberation from Egypt: “If it had not been the LORD who was on our side,” let Israel now say—“If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us alive, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters would have overwhelmed us, the stream would have gone over our soul; then the swollen waters would have gone over our soul.” (Ps. 124:1-5) Those who

remember the Exodus story see it recalled in the words of the psalm.

As the Lord God's faithful people remembered their deliverance—whether from Egypt, Philistia, Assyria, or any of their ancient enemies—the significance of having Him on their side would not be forgotten. The same can be said of Luther and the Reformers. Their work and effort would have been for naught, “if it had not been the LORD who was on [their] side.” As the wrath of Church and Empire rose against them, anger kindled in hatred of hard truth, the German theologians and princes awaited the floods and torrents of Ecclesiastical councils and Imperial armies. But even as they came, the confession of faith remained and the Lord God's people were delivered.

This coincides with the second portion of Psalm 124: “Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as prey to their teeth. Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped.”(Ps. 124:6-7) These words reflect the exultant cries of the Israelites in safety on the opposite side of the Red Sea. The same words could be uttered by Luther and the Reformers, even in spite of earthly losses by many of them and their followers.

As centuries of time have passed, we know that the Lutheran Confession of the Christian faith has remained. Statements of doctrine made in the 16th Century are held by us today. Despite the efforts of Ecclesiastical councils and Imperial armies, those who hold to the Lutheran confession of faith still exist. They were not “swallowed alive” or “overwhelmed.” That would have happened, “if it had not been the LORD who was on our side.” But as we have been divinely aided, “[their] snare is broken, and we have escaped.”

However, this psalm and even Luther's work are not ultimately concerned with earthly existence and success. The deliverance that the Lord God gives is from enemies greater than an Egyptian Pharaoh and his court conjurers or a Spanish emperor and the Roman curia. What the Reformers were concerned with was salvation: deliverance from sin, from death, and from the power of Satan. “If it had not

been the LORD who was on [their] side,” such deliverance is impossible.

Deliverance of this sort requires divine action, something first given at Holy Baptism. For at the font, “[our enemies'] wrath was kindled against us,” as the Lord God brought His people out of slavery into salvation through the waters. Like Pharaoh and the Emperor, Satan's hordes ride out to recapture us, to keep us from reaching the promise of everlasting life. But as the Lord God is on our side—present among us with His free gift of forgiveness given in the aural and visible Word—we remain free. We are still redeemed, kept secure in our covenant relationship with the Lord God.

That is what Luther, the man between God and the devil, came to understand: it is the truth that he confessed, even in his hymn based on Psalm 124. The same truth is what we cling to in our day, as our enemies rise up against us. Each time we go in pilgrimage to the Lord God's sanctuary, we remember this deliverance that He has accomplished for us. As we gather to commemorate Reformation Day this month, we also remember that Luther and the Reformers have a special place for the sole reason that they faithfully believed, taught, and confessed that truth about divine deliverance for helpless sinners. We recognize that they have handed down that truth to us.

Such commemoration is appropriate and right, for the focus is not on our efforts or any other human works, not even the acts done by Luther. Rather, the focus of our commemorations, the focus of the Divine Service, the focus of our Christian lives is on “the LORD who was [and is] on our side.” That is the truth which Luther and the Reformers confessed, which the faithful Israelites confessed, which we confess. It is the truth that King David made clear for all divinely-delivered people in the last verse of Psalm 124: “Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.”(Ps. 124:8) The burden of our salvation is not placed on us, but is carried by Him who sustains all creation and bore the sins of the world on His crucified shoulders.

Thanks be to Jesus Christ, our Deliverer who is still on our side, the Word of God who remains forever!

# From the President To the Reader

By Rev. Matthew C. Harrison

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful" (Col. 3:15). Remarkable! Paul says Christians are called to "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." And even more, we are called "in one body," collectively for the peace of Christ to rule us all together. Now, let's be clear: "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, even as He calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth" (Luther's Small Catechism).

The actor is God. He's called and given us faith in Christ. Paul in Colossians is saying, "God has made you who you are. Now be who you are!"

Not too long ago, I dared to assert that I thought it possible for the Synod to be 85 percent united on even the difficult issues, which often divide us. Can this happen? Coming into this summer's LCMS convention, we worked very hard to bring unifying resolutions. When resolutions dealt with challenging issues where different parties were very much at odds, we worked even harder to bring people together and to come to reasonable and faithful compromise. Rather remarkable things happened, often behind the scenes. We were blessed with a very peaceful and productive convention.

It's my conviction that the less time, energy and money we spend on internal disagreement, the more we can focus on our domestic and international opportunities, which are legion! But we can't simply shout "Mission!" as a mere

distraction for the work of living our unity. We need to be confronted with God's inerrant Word, and that Word must have its way with us. I'm convinced that the historic and time-honored biblical positions of the LCMS are unifying. They are Gospel-centered and tested.



The convention was really remarkable in that the vast majority of resolutions passed with overwhelming majorities of 90 percent or more. Many passed unanimously! Very significant and potentially controversial resolutions on issues like visitation and close(d) Communion passed in the high 70s. We are blessed, truly blessed.

As this next triennium unfolds, our task will be to work toward reasonable consensus on issues that have continued to trouble and divide, such as SMP and the licensed deacon programs. We must work toward unifying solutions that are faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, solutions that are wise and that find the path of good order serving the Gospel, recognizing legitimate Christian freedom. By God's grace, we can do it.

Standing in front of 1,500 LCMS delegates was a humbling experience. More than once I was reduced to embarrassment over my lack of parliamentary skill. The vice-presidents felt the same way, I'm sure. But more than anything else, I was profoundly thankful. The work of the floor



committees was just remarkable. Those who felt negatively affected by this or that resolution carried themselves in Christian fashion and made their views known and felt heard. The "Baptized for This Moment" theme galvanized the body as preacher after preacher and Bible study leader after Bible study leader drove home the biblical case for Baptisms extraordinary ramifications for our real lives. Delegates were patient with me and each other. They were gracious. They were in constant good humor. They demonstrated a deep love for the Gospel of free forgiveness in Jesus and for The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. And when it all ended, the room was filled with deep joy and thanksgiving.

The Missouri Synod has her warts, to be sure. But shes the best thing going. I will continue to do my level best to keep you informed about whats going on (mission, numbers, money, giving, program). As we continue into the future Christ has in store for us, I pledge you my prayers for all our

pastors, church workers and congregations. And I plead for yours, that Pauls entreaty be true of all of us: "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful."

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### **The Book of the Month 5 Things You Can Do To Appreciate Science and Love the Bible**

The debate between those who hold to the theorems and models of science and those who hold that the Bible is the Word of God and must be true influences greatly how we think about things. Does your belief in God and His Word mean you need to reject all of science? Is there a faithful way to integrate science and faith?

This volume will equip you to:

- Take a Christian worldview out into the world of scientific study
- Know how to live with a Christian worldview in our mental environment
- Understand how a Christian worldview shapes our interpretation of facts
- Know how to interpret scientific facts in light of Scripture
- Have an informed Christian worldview that anticipates being challenged

# Facts and Figures; Dates and Times

## Greeters List

6 Oct	Tim & Teri Pollock (West) Donna Campbell (East)
13 Oct	Harold & Irene Wattjes (West) Jim Dyer (East)
20 Oct	Joan Vukelich (West) Laverl Byers (East)
27 Oct	Ruth Sims (West) Tim & Teri Pollock (East)
3 Nov	Donna Campbell (West) Harold & Irene Wattjes (East)
10 Nov	Jim Dyer (West) Joan Vukelich (East)
17 Nov	Laverl Byers (West) Ruth Sims (East)
24 Nov	Tim & Teri Pollock (West) Donna Campbell (East)

20 Oct	Donna Campbell
27 Oct	Donna Campbell
3 Nov	Joyce Alexander
10 Nov	Becky Kappes
17 Nov	Becky Kappes
24 Nov	Becky Kappes
27 Nov	Tonia Timlin

## Elder On Duty – Communion

6 Oct	Steve Hilgendorf
13 Oct	Steve Hilgendorf
20 Oct	Jack Appleby
27 Oct	Jack Appleby
3 Nov	Geof Danielson
10 Nov	Geof Danielson
17 Nov	Geof Danielson
24 Nov	Geof Danielson
27 Nov	Josh Whitson

## Coffee Committee

Oct	Janet Stumeier
Nov	Erin Pangburn

## Funeral Committee

Oct	Ruth Bretz & Janice Arthur
Nov	Joyce Alexander

## Altar Committee

6 Oct	Janet Stumeier
13 Oct	Janet Stumeier

## Altar Flowers

6 Oct	Ron & Judy Legg
13 Oct	Geof & Sue Danielson
20 Oct	Janice & Wayne Arthur
27 Oct	Joan Rahn
3 Nov	Bryce & Deborah Reifsteck
10 Nov	Ray & Norma Uthe
17 Nov	Roger & Wanda Long
24 Nov	Tim & Sherrie Hoel

ATTENDANCE				OFFERINGS		
Date	Saturday	Sunday	Special	General	Missions	Building
9/1	25	76	0	\$3,626.00	\$2.00	\$5.00
9/8	16	93	0	\$2,074.50	\$25.00	\$40.00
9/15	19	75	0	\$2,652.00	\$0.00	\$25.00
9/22	23	77	0	\$2,010.30	\$0.00	\$200.00
9/29	20	82	0	\$1,974.50	\$0.00	\$0.00
Subtotal	103	403	0	\$12,337.30	\$27.00	\$270.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>506</b>			<b>\$12,337.30</b>	<b>\$27.00</b>	<b>\$270.00</b>

October 2013 Church Calendar

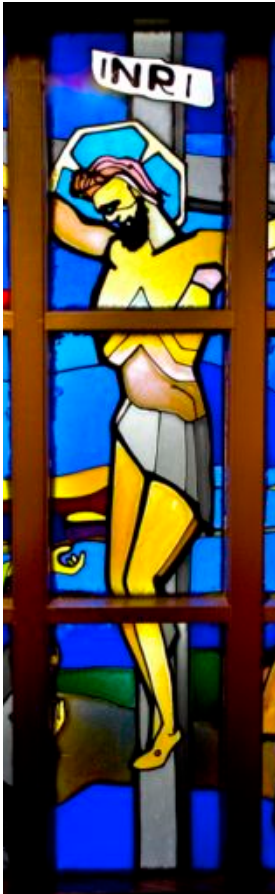
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>6</b></p> <p>8:00 Ministry Missions/WWMS                      9:00 AM Divine Service/Communion                      10:30 AM Sunday School &amp; Bible Study                      Steffy Rubin                      Rowald W. Legg                      Collection: Restoration Day</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins                      8:00 AM Staff Meeting                      8:00 PM Elders Meeting</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins                      8:00 AM Staff Meeting                      11:30 AM Circuit Pastors' Meeting</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins                      8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>Christophers &amp; Myranda                      Carnevalis                      Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion                      Johannes V. Verbeke</p>
<p><b>13</b></p> <p>8:00 AM Divine Service/Communion                      10:30 AM Sunday School &amp; Bible Study                      11:15 AM Church Council                      Deborah Erdreich                      Pastor at Oaklump CO                      Children's Seminar Day</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>8:00 PM Missions &amp; Evangelism Meeting                      Eric Penghorn</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>Josh &amp; Aimee V. Nelson</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins                      8:00 AM Staff Meeting                      Geoff &amp; Sue Dunsdon</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>Alexis Frie                      Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion                      Erin Parhammer</p>
<p><b>20</b></p> <p>8:00 AM Divine Service/Communion                      10:30 AM Sunday School &amp; Bible Study                      Collection: Restoration Day</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins                      8:00 AM Staff Meeting                      8:00 PM Board of Education Meeting                      7:30 PM Visitors                      Jeffrey Leidge                      Karen Rantz</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins                      8:00 AM Staff Meeting                      Mary Ellen Burnett</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins                      11:30 AM T.A.M.A. Meeting</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins                      8:00 AM Staff Meeting                      Daniel &amp; Shelia Stevens</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>Cathy Rubin                      Hannah Roth                      Alice Johnson                      Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion</p>
<p><b>27</b></p> <p>8:00 AM Divine Service/Communion                      11:30 AM Catechism                      10:30 AM Sunday School &amp; Bible Study                      7:30 PM Youth Group                      Event: Pioneer</p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins                      8:00 AM Staff Meeting                      Stacy Frick</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins                      8:00 AM Staff Meeting                      Chloe Alexander                      Marcus Deem</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins                      Elizabeth Brown</p>	<p><b>31</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins                      8:00 AM Staff Meeting                      1:30 PM Ladies AM                      Abby Martin                      Darla Gardner                      Ruth Bevil</p>		

November 2013 Church Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>3</b></p> <p>9:00 AM Divine Service/Communion 10:30 AM Sunday School &amp; Bible Study Dawn Everswell Collection: Restoration Day</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 8:00 PM Elders Meeting Joy Stanger</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Jenni Borelin Kenneth &amp; Holly Wikoff</p>	<p><b>1</b></p> <p>11:00 AM &amp; 1:00 PM Wastep Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion Elizabeth Cronsh Megan Osborne</p>
<p><b>10</b></p> <p>9:00 AM Divine Service/Communion 10:30 AM Sunday School &amp; Bible Study Susan Ludwig Children's Service Day</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 8:00 PM Missions &amp; Evangelism Meeting</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 10:00 AM Church Pastor's Conference 10:30 AM Church Pastors' Meeting Doreen Stevens Johnna Wender Samantha South</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins Kary Mosen</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>Sue Rother William Fritsch Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion Devon Florer Leonard Beveridge Mary Appleby Norma Uble</p>
<p><b>17</b></p> <p>9:00 AM Divine Service/Communion 10:30 AM Sunday School &amp; Bible Study Adrian Stevens Cary Rubin Celia Slaughter Lenny Rubin Lucia Oyr Robert Kravis Collection: Restoration Day</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 8:00 PM Board of Education Meeting James Slaughter Marta Slaughter</p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting David Snyder</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Chad Dy Egor &amp; Wanda Long Kristin Steier</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>Levi Eskels Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion Heather Apperson</p>
<p><b>24</b></p> <p>9:00 AM Divine Service/Communion 10:30 AM Sunday School &amp; Bible Study 7:00 PM Youth Group Johnna Wender</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Mike Eggles</p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM L.W.B.L.</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 10:30 AM T.A.M.A. Meeting Carrie Dixon Sandra Jones</p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 1:30 PM Ladies Aid</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>Jurian Rubin Laci Woodford Ruth Fendrich Timothy Stummer William &amp; Peggy Through Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion Carl Rabin Mackenzie Bowden</p>

# In This Issue . . .

From the Pastor . . . . .1  
Facts & Figures . . . . . 5  
Calendars . . . . . 6



Immanuel's stained glass window in the Narthex.

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