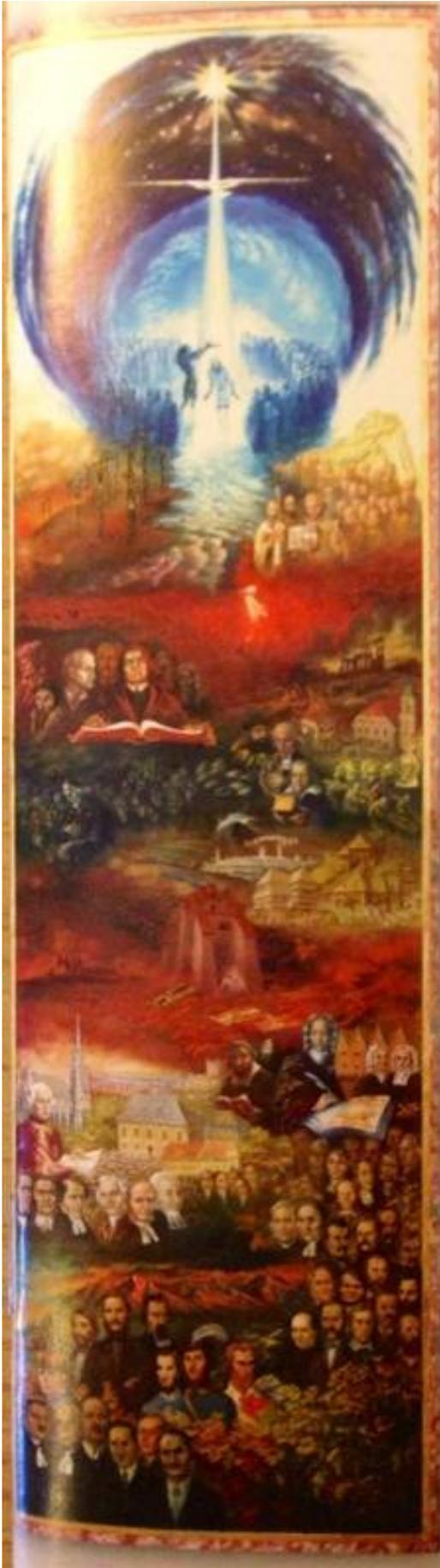


READERS ADDITION

19th Mostly Annual
Reformation Concert & Hog Roast



With Might of Ours

On the preservation of the church

Saint John's Lutheran Church
November 8, 2014 4pm 7pm

Rev. Joseph M. Fisher *Senior Pastor Pilgrim Lutheran Church, West Bend*



I received my Bachelor's Degree from Concordia University in River Forest, IL and my Masters of Divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN in 1994. Since graduation from the Seminary I have served as a parish pastor at Pilgrim Ev. Lutheran Church, being called as Senior Pastor 1997. During this time I have defended the Christian faith in radio debates and public presentations. I have worked with Lutheran's for Life serving as Pastoral advisor for six years. I have been published in the Lutheran Clarion and have presented at Higher Things National Youth Gatherings and Lutheran's for Life at the State conventions. I have served the South Wisconsin District on the Communication Task Force and as Pastoral Delegate to the Synod Convention twice. I worked to get a Communion Wine law passed allowing pastors the right to bring communion into State Prisons and County Jails in Wisconsin. At present I am also serving as a Adjunct Theology Professor at Concordia University Wisconsin.

On a personal note, I have been married to my wife Christine since 1991 and the Lord has blessed us with two daughters Elizabeth born in 1995 and Rebecca born in 1997

Rev. Christopher L. Raffa *Associate Pastor Pilgrim Lutheran Church, West Bend*

Pastor Raffa was ordained at Pilgrim in August 2007 upon graduation from the Master of Divinity program at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. His undergraduate degree was earned at Concordia University Portland, Oregon. Additionally, he yearly attends the seminary's continuing education classes. His is also a proud bibliophile who daily devotes himself to the study of theology.

Pastor Raffa enjoys a day-to-day life that is dedicated to the vocations of a catechumen of God's Word, husband to Julie, father to Rachel and Matthias, and under-shepherd to God's people at Pilgrim. He lives out these vocations he has been given in a state of oratio, meditatio, and tentatio. That is, a life of prayer, meditation, and affliction by which he strives minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour, day-by-day to be faithful to them.

Martin Luther also experienced this life in terms of the passage of time. Though often we would see the passage of time as routine, even boring, the history of time is simply the history of the sinful creature and the justifying God that seeks after him in His flesh and by His Word. In the intersection of God and man there the story is told, is lived out in all its complexity and all its simplicity. In his Warning to His Beloved Germans of 1531, Luther captured the essence of the pastoral ministry and the reason for why the Reformation of the Church was worth the blood of its martyrs. "It has, praise God, come to this, that men and women, young and old, know the catechism, and how to believe, live, pray, suffer, and die" [Luther's Works 47:52].

It is for this reason that Pastor Raffa works in the church and comes to church. He stands quietly before the puzzles and mysteries of Scripture that he is called to interpret even as he is interpreted by them. Hearing the Word of Promise, he speaks the Word of Promise and is mindful of this Word of Promise in all aspects of the caring and shepherding of the body and souls that have been entrusted into his care. He trembles before this Word as he prays with Martin Luther,

"O Lord God, dear Father in heaven. I am indeed, unworthy of the office and ministry in which I am to make known Thy glory and to nurture and to serve this congregation. But since Thou hast appointed me to be a pastor and teacher, and the people are in need of the teachings and the instructions, O be Thou my helper and let Thy holy angels attend me. Then if Thou art pleased to accomplish anything through me, to Thy glory and not to mine or to the praise of men, grant me, out of Thy pure grace and mercy a right understanding of Thy Word and that I may also diligently perform it. O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, Thou Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, send Thy Holy Spirit that He may work with me, yea, that He may work in me to do through Thy divine strength according to Thy good pleasure. Amen."



Christian Martin: *Prelude Ein festa Burg ist unser Gott (Almighty Fortress is our God)*

Ben Grosskreuz: *Grand Choeru Dialogue by Eugene Gigout and accompany all hymns*

Samuel Grosskruez and Samuel Boehlke on violin: "Thy Strong Word" by Tomas J. Williams arranged by Valerie Floeter

About the cover art

In Slovakia there is a church in Bratislava called *Maly Kostol*, the "small church" there is displayed this painting depicting the Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia. The painting begins at the top with the creation of the world, then goes to the Baptism of Jesus, to the preaching of the apostles, the coming of the Christian church to Slovak lands, to Martin Luther and the Reformation, then to the coming of the Reformation in Slovakia, then it passes through the 17th, 18th, 19th centuries and the communist persecution of the church. It is an incredible testament to the Gospel in Slovakia.

*Picture and text lifted from a post by Rev. Dr. Albert Collver, LCMS Director of Church Relations
www.wmltblog.org*

Organ: *Ein Feste Burg*

Welcome and Introduction – Mr. David Schmutzler

Good evening and welcome to St. John's nineteenth annual Reformation Concert and Hog Roast. We are pleased to have you in attendance.

This year's concert theme is "**With Might of Ours** on the preservation of the Church". Along with the nailing of opinions, I mean the 95 Theses on the church door at Wittenberg, came charges that Martin Luther was destroying the Church. This was a charge that haunted him and received a good deal of contemplation, especially early in the Reformation. Luther was driven by these charges to consider what constituted the Church and whether he or anyone else had it within their power to destroy the Church. His conclusion was that no man has the power to destroy the Church because man does not build or sustain it.

Today faithful followers of Christ are told that they are destroying the Church when they object to teachings that are contrary to God's inspired and inerrant Word. We also hear from many that we have the power to make the Church grow. Tonight Luther speaks to us about the preservation of the Church. How is the church maintained? In observance of the Reformation and for our edification we will hear the words of the great reformer Martin Luther himself, read by the Rev. Joseph Fisher with narration read by the Rev. Christopher L. Raffa.

Music #1 **Glorious Things of You Are Spoken** by John Newton LSB 648

1 Glorious things of you are spoken,
 Zion, city of our God;
 He whose word cannot be broken

Formed you for His own 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 the Lord, the giver,
Never fails from age to age.

3 Round each habitation hov'ring,
See the cloud and fire appear
For a glory and a cov'ring,
Showing that the Lord is near.
Thus deriving from their banner
Light by night and shade by day,
Safe they feed upon the manna
Which God gives them on their way.

4 Savior, since of Zion's city
I through grace a member am,
Let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in Your name.
Fading are the world's vain pleasures,
All their boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasures
None but Zion's children know.

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Narration: We have a tendency to equate the “Church” exclusively with denominations and local congregations. So, when we hear of a congregation or denomination having problems and even splitting we envision that the Church of God is being split. There is a movement called the “ecumenical movement” which holds that denominations should set aside their disagreements and join in visible unity by agreeing to disagree on points of doctrine. The reality is that while local denominations and congregations may be destroyed, the Church of God is not divided, it is united. We must not mistake human organizations and buildings for the Church of God.

According to Luther, then, you cannot confine the Church. Her boundaries are as intangible as the faith that constitutes her membership. Luther makes this point in his early exposition of Ps. 16:4. (1519-21)

Luther: The Church of Christ is nothing but the spiritual gathering of believers wherever they may be in the world; and whatever is of flesh and blood, that is, whatever is

peculiar to a person, place, time, and to those matters which flesh and blood can put to use, does not belong to the Church of God.

Therefore, we must with all diligence be on our guard, lest we howl with the wolves and Romanize with the Romanists by blaspheming those as heretics who are not in the gathering of the Roman Church or rather the *curia*. Since Christ and the apostles Peter and Paul saw that their bodies and names must, of necessity, have their certain local habitation on earth and this necessity would in the future occasion the superstition and godlessness that men would tie the Church to these places and so draw the Church from being a spiritual gathering into being a temporal one, they have forestalled this misconstruction and sedulously warned us. More. Lest men make Christ Himself their abettor of this godlessness, he took care, in His incomprehensible counsel, to have Jerusalem destroyed and trodden underfoot by the Gentiles. Had this not happened, no one could have kept men from setting up the site of Jerusalem, graced by so great a splendor and name, as the capital of the church (761 *The Church is not tied to any one place. W5, 451- E op ex 15, 357f - SL 4, 968*)

Narration: The Church is a spiritual building, without even the necessity of earthly structure to exist. At its core the Church is the body of those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Music #2 The Church's One Foundation by Samuel J. Stone LSB 644

- 1 The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.
From heav'n He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.
- 2 Elect from ev'ry nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth;
Her charter of salvation:
One Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses
With ev'ry grace endued.
- 3 Though with a scornful wonder
The world sees her oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed,
Yet saints their watch are keeping;
Their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song.

4 Through toil and tribulation
And tumult of her war
She waits the consummation
Of peace forevermore
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.

5 Yet she on earth has union
With God, the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won.
O blessèd heav'nly chorus!
Lord, save us by Your grace
That we, like saints before us,
May see You face to face.

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Narration: In the local church and denomination there is an admixture of those who believe and nonbelievers. Unlike God, we cannot see into the hearts of men. We can only determine the faith of the heart when it is revealed to us by virtue of what is said and done. Unlike God, we can be fooled.

We must remember that in reality it is not the frequenting of a temple at Jerusalem or a cathedral at Rome or some other church that makes man a member of the Church of Christ. A person must enter this spiritual temple by faith alone. So Luther's thoughts dwelt constantly on the true nature of the Church.

Luther: At Jerusalem many wicked fellows, hypocrites, and sinners went in through the gate of the temple; but here, through this gate of the Lord, only the righteous and saints enter to serve the Lord. For no one is or can be in the congregation of the Christians, or can be a member of Christendom unless he truly believes, that is, is righteous and holy, as the article of the Creed testifies: "I believe in...the holy Christian Church." But he who does not truly believe, neither is righteous and holy, does not belong to the Christian Church and cannot enter this gate of the Lord, can also not pray, offer thanks, glorify or serve God. Nor does he know God, even though he spends his physical life among Christians or even have an office among Christian, as pastor, preacher, bishop. This is the article that the "Laudable" Council of Constance condemned, together with this verse and the entire Holy Scripture. For John Huss at that time confessed that there is a holy Christian Church; that if the pope were not pious and holy, he could not be a member, much less the head, of the holy church, even though he held the office in it. For that confession Huss had to burn as a heretic and be

accursed. They rejoin and say: Even if the pope, the bishops, and all of them sinned grievously, they would still not be of the devil or of his synagogue but are of Christ and of God, members and heads of holy Christendom. To be sure, they are members of the church much as spit, snot, pus, sweat, feces, urine, stench, scab, smallpox, ulcers, syphilis, and all contagious disease are members of the body. These things are also in and on the body; yea, as blotches and filth which the body must bear with great danger, pains, and disgust. (762 *None But Believers Are the Church. W 31 I, 164f - E 41, 71f - SL 5, 1234 f*)

Narration: Luther sure used colorful descriptions. But let's not miss the point because of his graphic and earthly descriptions. While the Church is here on earth there will be heretics and unbelievers in her number but, though they are counted as being members of an earthly church that does not mean they can fool God and be counted as part of the true Church.

Music #3 **In Peace and Joy I Now Depart** by Martin Luther, 1482-1546 LSB 938

- 1 In peace and joy I now depart
Since God so wills it.
Serene and confident my heart;
Stillness fills it.
For the Lord has promised me
That death is but a slumber.
- 2 Christ Jesus brought this gift to me,
My faithful Savior,
Whom You have made my eyes to see
By Your favor.
Now I know He is my life,
My friend when I am dying.
- 3 You sent the people of the earth
Their great salvation;
Your invitation summons forth
Ev'ry nation
By Your holy, precious Word,
In ev'ry place resounding.
- 4 Christ is the hope and saving light
Of those in blindness;
He guides and comforts those in night
By His kindness.
For Your people Israel
In Him find joy and glory.

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Narration: An important part of understanding God's preservation of His Church is understanding that membership in the Church is not by our efforts or works, "lest any man should boast" as Paul says. Membership in the Church comes by grace through faith.

Luther: All the members of the body have their office in the body because they are its members. Nor is any one of them a member because of its own exertions or merits, but it became a member of the body by birth, before it acted or could act. It functions, in fact, because it has been made a member; it does not become a member because it has functioned. Hence it derives its existence and all its powers from the body, independent of its own exertions.

The body, however, uses its members according to its needs. The eye did not become an eye because it could see and therefore deserved to be put into the body to become an eye; but first it derived its existence and peculiar function from the body, by which it is enabled to see. This is why it cannot boast to the slightest degree that by its ability to see, as a function peculiar to itself, it deserved to be placed into the body and to become an eye. On the contrary, it derives this honor and privilege wholly and entirely from its birth, apart from its own effort.

Thus, too, no Christian may boast that by his own efforts he became a member of Christ, together with other Christians in the common faith. Nor can a man do any work that will make him a Christian. Man performs good works because he has already become a Christian by the new birth through faith, entirely apart from any merits of his own. Therefore it is a settled fact that good works do not make Christians, but Christians produce good works. Just so the fruit does not make the tree, but the tree produces the fruit. And seeing does not make the eye, but the eye produces vision. In a word, the cause must always exist before the effect. The effect does not produce the cause, but the cause produces the effect. Now if good works do not make a man a Christian, they also do not earn the grace of God, or blot out our sins, or merit heaven; for no one but a Christian can possess these blessings. And even he does not enjoy them because of any works he has performed but simply because he is a member of Christ. Such membership comes about through faith in the Word of God. *(765 Men Do Not Become Members by Works. W17 II, 33f - E 8, 15f - SL 12, 328 f)*

Narration: Important to our understanding of God's preservation of the Church is that the Church is not limited to any organization or structure here on earth, because the true Church is invisible; made up of only true believers. This side of heaven there will be unbelievers mixed in among believers, but membership in the Church is a gift of grace from God not a result of our work or effort.

- 1 Built on the Rock the Church shall stand
Even when steeples are falling.
Crumbled have spires in ev'ry land;
Bells still are chiming and calling,
Calling the young and old to rest,
But above all the souls distressed,
Longing for rest everlasting.
- 2 Surely in temples made with hands
God, the Most High, is not dwelling;
High above earth His temple stands,
All earthly temples excelling.
Yet He who dwells in heav'n above
Chooses to live with us in love,
Making our bodies His temple.
- 3 We are God's house of living stones,
Built for His own habitation.
He through baptismal grace us owns
Heirs of His wondrous salvation.
Were we but two His name to tell,
Yet He would deign with us to dwell
With all His grace and His favor.
- 4 Here stands the font before our eyes,
Telling how God has received us.
The altar recalls Christ's sacrifice
And what His Supper here gives us.
Here sound the Scriptures that proclaim
Christ yesterday, today, the same,
And evermore, our Redeemer.
- 5 Grant, then, O God, Your will be done,
That, when the church bells are ringing,
Many in saving faith may come
Where Christ His message is bringing:
"I know My own; My own know Me.
You, not the world, My face shall see.
My peace I leave with you. Amen."

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Narration: One of the great battles of the Reformation, which continues to this day, is the battle over the authority of the Church. At the heart of this battle is whether the church on earth has the authority to declare new doctrine, or whether the declarations of church hierarchy are to be considered the Lord's voice. Luther understands that the Church's preservation is secure because it is created by God's Word and not by the accumulative invention or will of man.

Luther: The church has no power to make new divine promises of grace, as some prate, saying that whatever is established by the church has more authority than what is establish by God, since the Holy Spirit rules the church. But the church is born of the Word of promise through faith, and is nurtured and preserved by this same Word. This means that

the promises of God; for the Word of God is incomparably superior to the church. In this Word the church, as a creation, has nothing to establish, ordain, or make, but is only to be established, ordained, and made. For who begets his own parent? Who first makes his own maker? The church is indeed able to do this: it can distinguish the Word of God from the words of men. Thus Augustine confesses that he believed the Gospel, moved by the authority of the church, which proclaimed that this is the Gospel. Not that the church is therefore above the Gospel; for in that case it should also be above the God in whom we believe, because the church proclaims that He is God. But as Augustine elsewhere says: The truth so lays hold of the soul that through the truth it is able to judge of all things with the greatest certainty. But the truth itself cannot judge but is obliged to say with unerring certainty that it is indeed the truth. For instance, our reason declares with unerring certainty that three and seven are ten, and yet it is unable to give a reason why this is true, though it cannot deny that it is true. It is taken captive by the truth; it does not judge the truth but is judged by the truth. (787 *The Word Makes the Church, Not the Church the Word. WG, 560f - E op var arg 5, 102-SL 19, 108 f*)

Narration: The preservation of the Church is safe from the changing winds of mankind's corrupt imagination. Because the Gospel originates from God and is given by God, it is as unchangeable and reliable as God Himself. Sad to say however, there are those in the church who challenge both the unchangeable nature of God as well as the reliability of His Word.

Music 5 **"In Adam We Have All Been One"** *text by Martin H. Franzmann LSB 569*

- 1 In Adam we have all been one,
One huge rebellious man;
We all have fled that evening voice
That sought us as we ran.
- 2 We fled Thee, and in losing Thee
We lost our brother too;
Each singly sought and claimed his own;
Each man his brother slew.
- 3 But Thy strong love, it sought us still
And sent Thine only Son
That we might hear His Shepherd's voice
And, hearing Him, be one.
- 4 O Thou who, when we loved Thee not,
Didst love and save us all,
Thou great Good Shepherd of mankind,
O hear us when we call.
- 5 Send us Thy Spirit, teach us truth;

Thou Son, O set us free
From fancied wisdom, self-sought ways,
To make us one in Thee.

6 Then shall our song united rise
To Thine eternal throne,
Where with the Father evermore
And Spirit Thou art one.

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Narration: The church on earth is made up of those who are weak in faith and often stray. Her king, Jesus Christ, preserves His Church in love. And how often through the centuries the church has been in need of such a King! Lauterbach tells us that on December 12, 1538, Luther spoke at some length at the dinner table about heresies into which people fall once they depart from the Word and about the fact that since the days of Judas the church has suffered from those who were a disgrace to it. So it is, was, and so it will be.

Luther: Farewell to those who want an entirely pure and purified church. This is plainly wanting no church at all. (*799 No Church of Perfect Saints in This World. W-T No 4190*)

Narration: Even though the church will continued to be plagued from with in we should not allow ourselves to become disheartened. God will ever, and has always, sustained His church. Luther holds that the genealogies of the Old Testament have been introduced to call our attention to this consoling fact. So he remarks in his lectures as he comes to a genealogy. (*Gen 11:10ff*)

Luther: Let us, then, prepare ourselves to be patient and learn to bear the furious attacks and the blows of Satan, who is trying to tear the church of Christ to pieces and to establish his own church. We are not any better than the fathers. At the cost of much sweat and labor they, too, scarcely succeeded in their effort to preserve the Word and to snatch a few souls from the jaws of Satan. (*825 Lack of Progress No Cause for Despair. W42, 425- E op ex 3, 58-SL1, 711*)

Narration: Try as he might Satan has not been able to destroy the Church from without or from within. We have Christ's promise that the gates of hell will not prevail over the Church. This promise gives us great comfort especially given what we may see with our eyes and experience in the churches.

Music #6 **Rise! To Arms! With Prayer Employ You** By: Wilhelm E. Arends LSB 668

- 1 Rise! To arms! With prayer employ you,
O Christians, lest the foe destroy you;
For Satan has designed your fall.
Wield God's Word, the weapon glorious;
Against all foes be thus victorious,
For God protects you from them all.
Fear not the hordes of hell,
Here is Emmanuel.
Hail the Savior!
The strong foes yield
To Christ, our shield,
And we, the victors, hold the field.

- 2 Cast afar this world's vain pleasure
And boldly strive for heav'nly treasure.
Be steadfast in the Savior's might.
Trust the Lord, who stands beside you,
For Jesus from all harm will hide you.
By faith you conquer in the fight.
Take courage, weary soul!
Look forward to the goal!
Joy awaits you.
The race well run,
Your long war won,
Your crown shines splendid as the sun.

- 3 Wisely fight, for time is fleeting;
The hours of grace are fast retreating;
Short, short is this our earthly way.
When the Lord the dead will waken
And sinners all by fear are shaken,
The saints with joy will greet that day.
Praise God, our triumph's sure.
We need not long endure
Scorn and trial.
Our Savior King
His own will bring
To that great glory which we sing.

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Narration: The comfort in the promise of the preservation of the Church is from of old. For the covenant God of Moses is the God of the Christian too, and, as Moses says, from generation to generation He has been the God of His people., (*Ps. 90:1, 1533-34*)

Luther: There has always been a church, there has always been a people of God, from the first human being, Adam, till the last. To be sure, at times the church was so very weak and scattered that one could see it nowhere. Thus it was in the times of Elijah, when the impious king Ahab had forbidden the true worship of God and had cruelly killed a large number of prophets so that Elijah complained that he alone remained of the servants of the true God. The church was at that time so hidden that no one saw it but the eyes of God, who said that He had preserved seven thousand who had not bowed their knees unto Baal (*I Kings 19:18*). Just so the church was and remained in the papacy, but it was truly so hidden that,

judging by mere appearances, nobody could see it anywhere. This truth is to be well and carefully note. (827 *The Church Weathered the Dark Ages of the Old Testament. W 40 III, 505-E op ex 18, 279 - SL5, 746 f*)

Narration: Given the fact that the church is so often afflicted with evil intents and sinful action of those who claim membership in her, we must trust that God will continue to be true to His promise of preservation. After all is not the very nature of faith being sure and certain of things unseen? Even though Luther often noted the corruption in the church despite his bitter denunciation of papal heresy and superstition, he always held that throughout the weary centuries of corruption there were Christians in the Church of Rome. He says so, for instance, in his letter on translating and on the intercession of the saints. (1530).

Luther: Do you not think that God was able to preserve His own under the papacy even though the priests and monks have been the devil's teachers in Christendom and have gone to hell? Very many children and young people have died in Christ. For Christ, even under the Antichrist, has with might preserved Baptism, the bare text of the Gospel in the pulpit, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed, so as to preserve very many of His Christians and thus His Church. (828 *The Church Also Weathered the Dark Ages of the New Testament. W 30 II, 645 - E 65, 121f - SL 19, 984*)

Organ Prelude *kommt her zu mir*

Music #7 **O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe** by Jacob Fabricius LSB 666

- 1 O little flock, fear not the foe
Who madly seeks your overthrow;
Dread not his rage and pow'r.
And though your courage sometimes faints,
His seeming triumph o'er God's saints
Lasts but a little hour.
- 2 Be of good cheer; your cause belongs
To Him who can avenge your wrongs;
Leave it to Him, our Lord.
Though hidden yet from mortal eyes,
His Gideon shall for you arise,
Uphold you and His Word.

Organ

- 3 As true as God's own Word is true,
Not earth nor hell's satanic crew
Against us shall prevail.
Their might? A joke, a mere facade!
God is with us and we with God—
Our vict'ry cannot fail.

4 Amen, Lord Jesus, grant our prayer;
Great Captain, now Thine arm make bare,
Fight for us once again!
So shall Thy saints and martyrs raise
A mighty chorus to Thy praise
Forevermore. Amen.

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Narration: Luther did not save his condemnation for the papacy alone. He points out that the storms which, in the course of centuries, blew over the Church were many and varied. They have their origin in man and are most dangerous in times of peace. In a letter of September 8, 1541, to his disheartened friend Link in Nurnberg, Luther speaks about these foes of the church.

Luther: The first trial of the church (from the beginning of the world) always comes from the tyrants, who shed our blood. When the tyrants are almost at an end, the far more harmful trail brought on by heretics follows, reinforcing the violence of the tyrants. After the heretics have been somewhat suppressed there follows the most harmful trial of all in the time of peace, namely, license and worldly mindedness of living, life without the Law, without the Word, since we are satiated and surfeited with the Word, which is no longer necessary "because the enemies are defeated." So the worst enemies of a man are those of his own household. These three trials tempt to sin against the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. (*829 The Successive Foes of the Church. W-Br9, 510 f-SL 21b, 2645*)

Narration: Without the Word, the church is without its weapon. In times of conflict the weapon is obviously needed. In times of apparent peace, the enemies of the church pray on the churches which have laid aside their weapon. God preserve us from this.

Music # 8 **Isaiah Mighty Seer, In Days of Old** by Martin Luther, 1483-1546 LSB 960

1 Isaiah, mighty seer in days of old,
The Lord of all in spirit did behold
High on a lofty throne, in splendor bright,
With robes that filled the temple courts with light.
Above the throne were flaming seraphim;
Six wings had they, these messengers of Him.
With two they veiled their faces as was right,
With two they humbly hid their feet from sight,
And with the other two aloft they soared;
One to the other called and praised the Lord:
"Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!
Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!
Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!
His glory fills the heavens and the earth!"
The beams and lintels trembled at the cry,
And clouds of smoke enwrapped the throne on high.

Narration: In the church of our day there is great confidence placed in our ability to grow the church. If the right style of music is used, if we are non-threatening and affirming, and if we avoid taking unpopular stands we can really help God out. In a sermon on 1 Peter 5:5-11 Luther emphasizes the utter dependence of the Church on her Lord. To be sure, we should work zealously and purposefully; but after all, it is only God who can prosper His cause.

Luther: No man or creature is able by any thoughts, wisdom, or abilities of his own to advance and maintain the church. In this matter, therefore, neither power nor might nor protection, with which we may console ourselves and on which we may rely, is to be sought from the world. On the contrary, this task rests entirely and completely in the hands of God alone. He must maintain the church through His divine power, as in fact He has done constantly and marvelously from the beginning in the midst of great weakness, divisions caused by sects and heretics, and persecutions brought on by tyrants. The control of the church is entirely His own, although He commits the office and ministry to men whom He would require and employ to dispense His Word and Sacrament. Therefore every Christian, especially he who is in this office of ministering to others, should make it his sole purpose faithfully to serve God in the sphere into which He has called and placed him and to carry out whatever he has been commanded to do. But the care as to where and how the church may continue and be maintained against the devil and the world is to be referred entirely to the Lord. He has assumed the entire responsibility for this task and has thereby divested us of all care so that we may be certain that the church will stand and endure. For if the cause of the church were to depend on the counsel, power, and will of man, the devil would soon subvert and overthrow it with his power. (*832 "With Might of Ours Can Naught Be Done" W 22,32 - E 9,68 - SL 12, 690*)

Organ, Violin Duet

Music #9 **Thy Strong Word** by Martin Franzmann LSB 578

- 1 Thy strong word did cleave the darkness;
At Thy speaking it was done.
For created light we thank Thee,
While Thine ordered seasons run.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise to Thee who light dost send!
Alleluia, alleluia!
Alleluia without end!

- 2 Lo, on those who dwelt in darkness,
 Dark as night and deep as death,
 Broke the light of Thy salvation,
 Breathed Thine own life-breathing breath.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Praise to Thee who light dost send!
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Alleluia without end!
- 3 Thy strong Word bespeaks us righteous;
 Bright with Thine own holiness,
 Glorious now, we press toward glory,
 And our lives our hopes confess.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Praise to Thee who light dost send!
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Alleluia without end!
- 4 From the cross Thy wisdom shining
 Breaketh forth in conqu'ring might;
 From the cross forever beameth
 All Thy bright redeeming light.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Praise to Thee who light dost send!
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Alleluia without end!
- 5 Give us lips to sing Thy glory,
 Tongues Thy mercy to proclaim,
 Throats that shout the hope that fills us,
 Mouths to speak Thy holy name.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 May the light which Thou dost send
 Fill our songs with alleluias,
 Alleluias without end!
- 6 God the Father, light-creator,
 To Thee laud and honor be.
 To Thee, Light of Light begotten,
 Praise be sung eternally.
 Holy Spirit, light-revealer,
 Glory, glory be to Thee.
 Mortals, angels, now and ever
 Praise the holy Trinity!

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Narration: Luther was convinced, the Devil was especially active in his days. The Reformer was sure that it was Satan, the father of lies, who was raising up all the heretics, fanatics, and antinomians. Against such a swarm of false teachers, God alone could and would be a sure Defense. So Luther confesses when writing against the antinomians in 1539.

Luther: God help us as He has helped our ancestors and will also help our descendants to the praise and honor of His divine name throughout eternity! For we are, after all, not the sort of people who could sustain the church. Nor were our forefathers; nor

will our descendants be such. But the Lord had done it, is doing it now, and will do it. He says: I am with you until the end of the world (*Matt. 28:20*), as is written Heb. 13:8: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever,” and Rev. 1:4: “He was, He is, He will be.” Yes, that is His name; and it is the name of no other Man; nor should it be. **(833 “But for Us Fights the Valiant One” W50, 476-E32, 12 – St 20, 1621)**

Narration: Luther had a profound conviction that the Church of Christ would remain in spite of all persecutions and perversions. We would do well to be of a similar mind and heart.

Luther: God is still wise and mighty enough to know very well how to sustain His church without the help of the world and the devil. Therefore the challenge: As you please, devil; come on with all your henchmen; Christ will not only continue to exist in spite of you but will finally also crush your head. Of this we are confident. To Him be praise and honor throughout eternity, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the one true God and creator of all things. Amen. **(835 “God Is Our Refuge and Strength”. W21, 203–E 7, 22)**

Narration: Given all the intrigue and corruption Luther saw through the years, his advice on maintaining the church is clear-cut. He once remarked that the simplest way to have a Church as God wants it to be, is to follow the Word.

Luther: Let him who wants a true church cling to the Word by which everything is upheld. **(842 The True Church Clings to the Word. W-T 6, No. 6525)**

Music #10 **Almighty God, Your Word is Cast** by John Cawood LSB 577

- 1 Almighty God, Your Word is cast
Like seed into the ground;
Now let the dew of heav'n descend
And righteous fruits abound.
- 2 Let not the sly satanic foe
This holy seed remove,
But give it root in ev'ry heart
To bring forth fruits of love.
- 3 Let not the world's deceitful cares
The rising plant destroy,
But let it yield a hundredfold
The fruits of peace and joy.
- 4 So when the precious seed is sown,
Life-giving grace bestow

That all whose souls the truth receive
Its saving pow'r may know.

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Narration: Only a church that holds to and proclaims the Word undefiled has the right to demand the allegiance of men. Luther says disloyalty to the covenant and the testimony of God removes His favor from men.

Luther: Only that church which follows the voice and the Word of the Lord has divine authority. (*843 The Church Loyal to the Word Has Divine Authority. W 40 III, 431 E op ex 20, 266 - SL 4, 2113*)

Music #11 **A Mighty Fortress Is Our God** by Dr. Martin Luther 1483-1546 LSB 656

- 1 A mighty fortress is our God,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He helps us free from ev'ry need
That hath us now o'ertaken.
The old evil foe
Now means deadly woe;
Deep guile and great might
Are his dread arms in fight;
On earth is not his equal.
- 2 With might of ours can naught be done,
Soon were our loss effected;
But for us fights the valiant One,
Whom God Himself elected.
Ask ye, Who is this?
Jesus Christ it is,
Of Sabaoth Lord,
And there's none other God;
He holds the field forever.
- 3 Though devils all the world should fill,
All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill;
They shall not overpow'r us.
This world's prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none.
He's judged; the deed is done;
One little word can fell him.
- 4 The Word they still shall let remain
Nor any thanks have for it;
He's by our side upon the plain
With His good gifts and Spirit.
And take they our life,
Goods, fame, child, and wife,
Though these all be gone,
Our vict'ry has been won;
The Kingdom ours remaineth.

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