



LIFE IN CHRIST

Receiving God's Gifts — Sharing God's Gifts

The Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church, Jackson, MS

+ October 2020 +

About the Cover:

Purgatory

Gustave Dore

1882

The cover art is perhaps an odd one for a Lutheran Church, as it depicts Purgatory as imagined by the famous Italian author Dante. To him, Purgatory was a place of divine suffering, filled with misery, yet misery which ultimately led to heaven, for he believed that suffering made the Christian perfect. It is important to note that in Dore's art, there are angels in Purgatory. Purgatory is not Hell; it is, literally, a stairway to heaven, at least in his mind. So we see repentant sinners climbing a steep stairway, guarded by angels, even as they suffer.

The doctrine of Purgatory, which our Roman Catholic brethren embrace, has absolutely no basis in Scripture. Yet the doctrine that the Christian is made perfect through his suffering is everywhere throughout the Bible. For this reason, the Lutheran Reformers did not entirely reject the concept of Purgatory. Rather, they said that *Purgatory was the sufferings of this life*. In a very real sense, according to the Reformers, this life is Purgatory. It is the stairway of divine suffering, our own *scala sancta* (ask your pastor if you do not know what that means), and indeed, we climb toward God, guarded by angels, and grow closer to Christ by His own grace, enduring the manifold sadnesses of this world: the death of loved ones, the misery of our own lives, the anguish of knowing want and need.

Though the concept of a physical place called Purgatory where people are purified of their sin by suffering before they enter heaven is contrary to the Scriptures, the doctrine that we draw closer to Jesus by the sufferings of our earthly life is deeply Biblical. Therefore, we can look at the art of Gustave Dore as a kind of metaphor for the life we are living right now, and by the grace of our Lord grow closer to Him, knowing that through the pain of this world, we, as Christ, count *even our suffering as joy*, for by it, we grow into His image, the Suffering Servant, the Son of the Almighty. ■

Life in Christ

is the monthly publication of

Christ Lutheran Church, LC-MS

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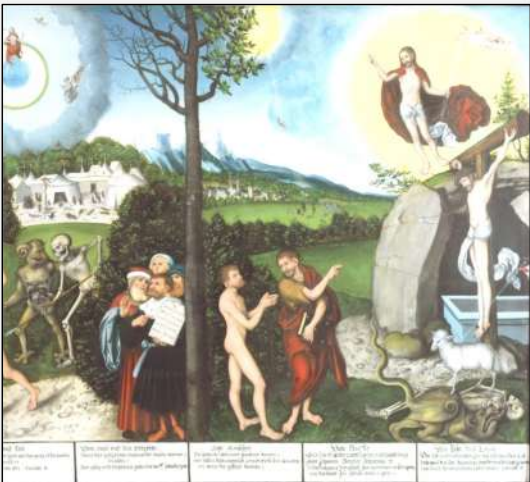
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HERESIES

you shall have with you always

Confessing the Reformation

Pastor Fields



Every October, we celebrate the Feast of the Reformation: the so-called ‘birthday’ of Lutheranism, and the beginning of what became to be known as ‘The Reformation.’

Ask ten different Christians what the Reformation was about, and you will get ten different answers. Ask ten different Lutherans what the Reformation was about, and you will get perhaps eight different answers. The reason for this is simple: though the Reformation began about one

thing—that is, the abuse of the practice of the selling of indulgences in the Holy Roman Empire in the 16th century—it soon seemed to be about everything. There was no Christian doctrine that did not end up being scrutinized, if not openly attacked, by some person claiming the mantle of being a ‘reformer’ by the end of the century.

But at the end of the day, for us Lutherans, the Reformation does boil down to one thing: holding the



practices of the Church at the present time to the eternal standard of the Apostolic Scriptures that have been passed down to us.

Though the Lutherans were by far the least radical when it came to criticizing Church practices of the time, deferring to inherited tradition when there was no biblical reason not to, the Lutheran Reformers still insisted that every doctrine must be affirmed by the Bible, and every practice shown not to contradict the Word of God.

On Reformation day, it is easy to pat ourselves on the back and say, ‘Good job—we did that! We have the Book of Concord and the Historic Liturgy, purified of all abuses. We did that Reformation thing. We got it done.’ Yet the Christ Himself promises that the devil will always attack the Church, both through secular persecutions, but more importantly through false teachers and heretical doctrines of men. And it would be foolish for us to think that, just because we are good LC-MS Lutherans, we have somehow transcended the devil’s reach.

False doctrines are always and ever crawling into the Church, both from within the Church, through new teachers with novel ideas, and from without, when fashionable notions in the modern world get reworked into theological concepts foreign to the faith we have received by tradition.

This is always happening, and it will always happen until the return of our Lord. For this reason, the motto of the Lutheran Reformers was ‘*ecclesia semper reformanda*’, that is, ‘the Church is always reforming.’ The Reformation never ends, for defending the faith against invented and heretical doctrines will never end. So perhaps, during this year’s Feast of the Reformation, we would be most blessed if we not only celebrated the great Reformers provided by God during the Church’s deepest time of need, but also to those saints and faithful pastors and laymen who defended and continue to defend the faith, year after year, against *wolves in sheep’s clothing*, that the flock of Christ’s pasture might be kept whole and undefiled, and be rendered unto Him on the last day, without spot. ■

Council Retreat 2020

Sister Sara

Our freshly-elected council members started this crazy 2020 council year with a bang! On September 19th, they gathered at church for a CLC Council Retreat!

As in all good things, they began the morning with prayer, singing a morning office together before diving into the work ahead.





Pastor Holowach led our new council in pondering the foundation upon which the Lord has built His Church, and how that informs their vocation as council members, individually and collectively.

Pastor Fields then helped them consider how that foundation concretely impacts them as they carry out their respective duties.

The morning was filled with edifying devotion, study, and fellowship. The Lord has truly blessed us with these dedicated servants in His Church, and we shall keep them in our prayers as they enter this new year! ■



Special thanks to Susan Holowach, Nancy Tatum, and Carol Yenish for helping to arrange a COVID-safe lunch for our retreat!






*The Man Who
Spoke to Birds...*

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Pastor Fields



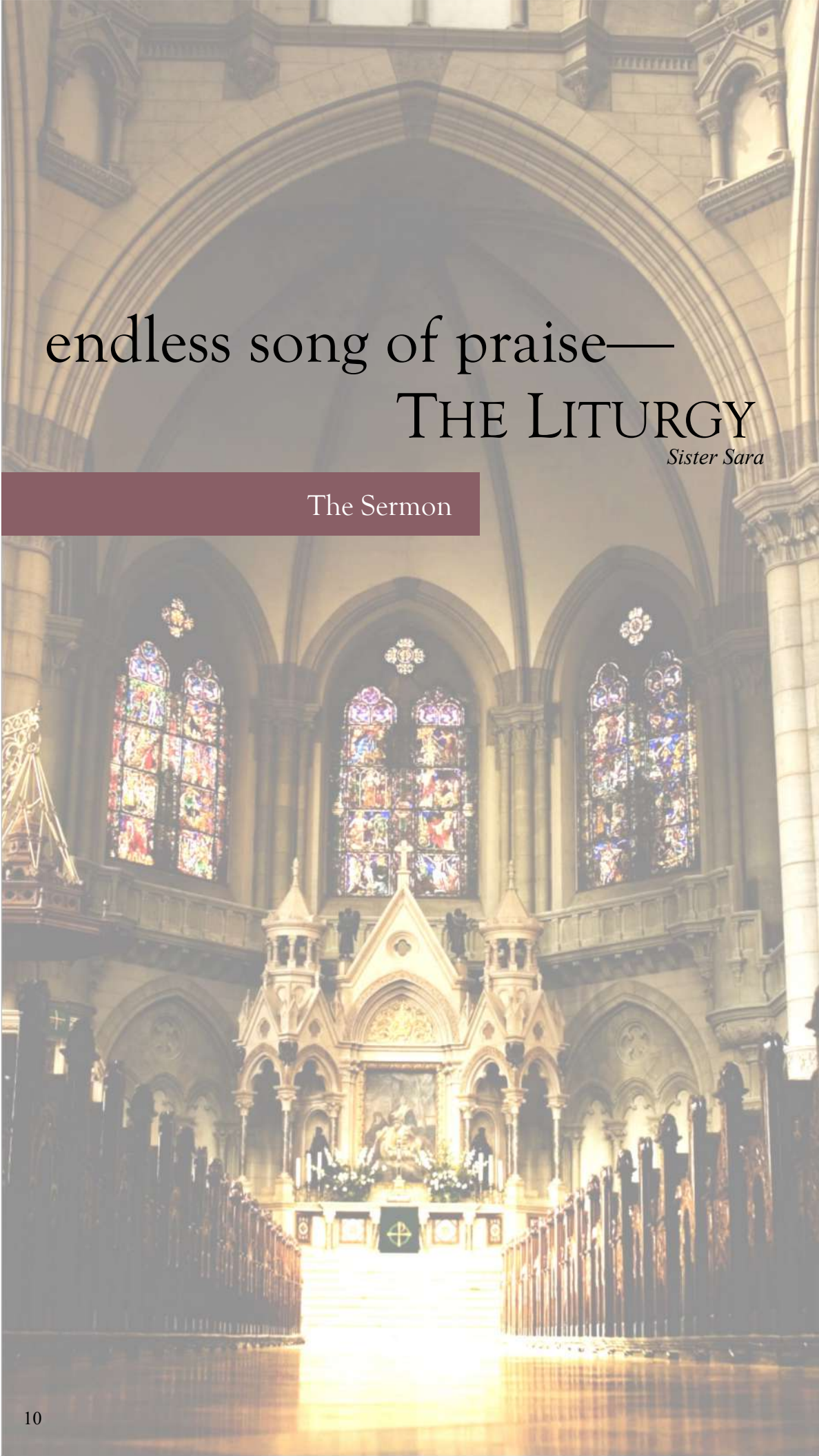
There is perhaps no more controversial saint on any Lutheran Sanctoral Calendar as St. Francis of Assisi. Unlike most saints that we celebrate, he did not die a martyr's death, nor write great tomes of theology to instruct the church, nor fight against a terrible heresy. Rather, he acted like what would think to be a mad man: he rolled around endlessly in the snow. He halted his travels to preach the gospel at length to birds and fish. He, a poor man, gave away even what little he had to the rich. He sang songs to the flowers of the wild. He is even said to have negotiated a peace between the town of Gubbio, Italy, and a man-eating wolf, claiming that the wolf ate men only out of hunger, and that if the town agreed to feed the wolf, the wolf would no longer harm anyone, or anything.

We moderns would immediately call such a person insane. But the faithful of the Church in times past, after his death, called him a saint, and for good reason.

St. Francis, more than any man, loved not Christianity, but Christ; and loved not humanity, but each human he dealt with. He loved not creation, a gift from God, but every created thing. In short, he loved everything that God had created and called good. He did not love abstractions, but the actual thing individually, and in the concrete, whether it be the gift of snow, or this or that bird, or this or that man, whether he be rich or poor. To St. Francis, it did not matter. Whatever was created, was created by God, and was therefore good. Yet, since all creation had fallen in Adam, everything was in need of redemption by Christ, and in need of pity by men. Therefore, he had pity, without end, on everything God had made, regardless of whether it made a whole lot of sense or not.

St. Francis did not believe it mattered whether it made sense to preach to birds and feed wolves and enjoy the snow. After all, it made no sense that the Lord Christ, perfect in holiness and just in every act, would have saved us, a blasphemous people. Christ saved us, not because it made sense, but because he loved His creation. So Francis decided to love Christ's creation too.

So even if birds cannot listen or wolves cannot learn or flowers cannot hear, why not preach to them? We are no less deaf and ignorant, yet Christ came and preached to us. This is the truth that St. Francis of Assisi chose to embody in his own life; and even if it be madness, it is an image of the madness of God, who loves us, even as He loves the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. ■



endless song of praise— THE LITURGY

Sister Sara

The Sermon

In our journey through the liturgy, we have come—*finally*—to the **sermon**. Many people, especially down here in our beloved Bible Belt, think of the sermon as the “main attraction,” the central point that the whole worship service is built around. While the sermon is in fact a prominent part of the liturgy, we as Lutherans have a slightly different take on it from our Baptist brethren. The main difference, of course, is that we believe the climax of the Divine Service is the Sacrament of the Altar—that moment when we are united in the flesh with the Godhead. But that obvious caveat aside, let’s just focus on the **Service of the Word**:

Last month we discussed our “journey to Mount Zion,” and how hearing the Gospel is like finally ascending the mount to see God face to face after wandering so many years in the desert. In the Gospel reading, He comes not as a cloud or a wind or a pillar of fire (as we have seen all through the Old Testament), but reveals Himself as He truly is: Jesus Christ, the loving God who takes on the flesh of His Beloved. The Gospel reading is truly the highest point of the Service of the Word.

What then, of the sermon? If the Gospel is, so to speak, “where it’s at,” why even have the sermon and the Creed to follow? If we are going to be honest, this sounds like an absurd question; because really, who among us has not

furrowed his brow at the many enigmatic parables of Jesus? Although the person of Christ is the revelation of God to Man, He brings with Him many puzzling and... perhaps *un-revealing* sayings. No wonder we need a sermon! Please, Pastor, help us understand what God is trying to say to us here.

The sermon is based historically on a similar part of the synagogue liturgy, from the days of Jesus Himself, wherein the rabbi would expound upon the text that was previously read in the service. We see an example of this in Luke 4, when Jesus reads from the scroll of Isaiah, and instead of teaching about it at length, simply says, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Although Jesus kept His sermon poignantly short, He nonetheless explained what God had spoken through His prophet in the scroll of the Scriptures, just as our pastors do for us today.

Explanations are a good thing. But let us not be fooled into thinking that the sermon is simply an explanation; the sermon isn't just a ten-minute Bible study in the middle of church. To really understand the importance of the sermon, we must go back to the Garden of Eden...

In the beginning, God made all things by the breath of His mouth: He *spoke*, and it was done. We read that God's Word is living and active, creating and sustaining all things; and indeed, St. John calls Jesus Himself the "Word," which is no accident. It is this creative Word that caused all things to be, and it is by this Word which was breathed into the nostrils of mankind that Adam became a living being.

All things are as they should be when God's creation hears His voice. In the Garden, Adam was in perfect union with God, for he was sustained by His Word. Peril befell our first father, though, when he plugged his ears to God's commands and listened to a serpent instead. Without the Word constantly telling us who we are and *Whose* we are, we lose our very essence! When we stop our ears, we cut ourselves off from the life-giving voice of God, and we fall into eternal death. Man, whose very fabric was made of the breath of God, ceases to *be*.

But, *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*. Where Satan first tore the breath of God from the clay of man, Jesus unites the two once more in His own flesh. He comes to reunite that which has been rent asunder. He *is* the new Adam, who is once more in perfect harmony with the Father. He has become Man as he was meant to be, hearing the life-giving Word of God.

So, when we are united to Jesus in baptism, the Old Adam is drowned with all his deafness and perversity, and we rise from the water with the ears

of the New Adam, who is Christ. For now we are in Him: His hearing is our hearing, His obedience is our obedience, His union with the Father is our union with the Father. Once more, God speaks to us our very existence, *and we hear His voice*.

This is why it is *so* important to hear the words of Scripture every Sunday. This is why the Gospel is the highest and most necessary moment of the Service of the Word. This is why we come week in and week out to hear the voice of God... because it is *life* to us.

Now, as we struggle on this mortal coil, living each day as "simultaneously justified and sinner," our ears often misinterpret what we hear. Our Lord knows this, and so He has given His Church the immense blessing of men who are called to preach the Word, interpreting the Scriptures for our imperfect hearing. Your pastor is one of these men, called and ordained by God, trained up in the Scriptures. He reads you the Gospel on Sunday morning and then, as with the authority of God Himself, he expounds those Scriptures so we may rightly hear them. What first seemed to us a mysterious saying, the pastor helps us to hear with the ears of Jesus, so that the breath of God might once more fill our ears with His life-giving Word.

So the sermon, we see, is not just any old explanation. The sermon is the means by which God helps us to rightly hear His Word. Every time we hear the sermon, we are Man as he was meant to be, listening to the voice of God.

Earlier, I said that the Gospel reading is Mount Zion... perhaps I misspoke, since we know that the Sacrament of the Altar is the true apex of the Divine Liturgy. If the *Eucharist* is Mount Zion, then the Gospel reading must be Mount Sinai; and in order to ascend Mount Zion, we must first receive the revelation of Mount Sinai.

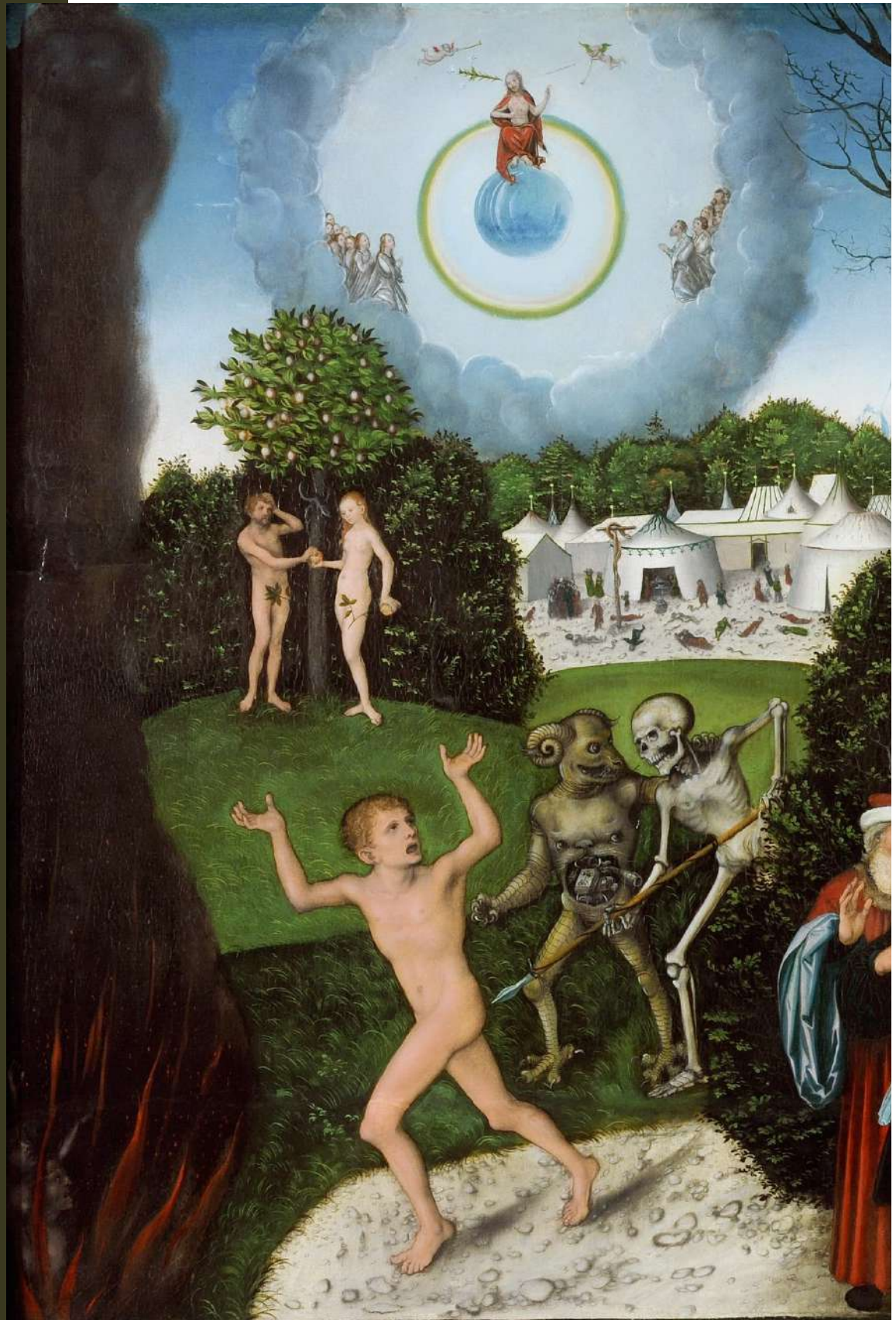
"To him who has ears, let him hear." ■



In and with the Reformation came an ardent zeal for illustrating the rich theology that had been newly rediscovered. This came in all forms of art: poetry and literature, music and song, painting and sculpture. Perhaps the best-known visual artist of the Reformation was Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553). Famously, he depicted doctrine through visual media that allowed the many illiterate Christians of his time to access, learn, and study the tenets of their faith.

A prime example of just such a painting is his *Law and Gospel* (1529). At the center is the Tree of Life, shown naked on its left side, the side of the painting which depicts the Fall of Man (Eve giving the fruit to Adam), his expulsion from the Garden of Eden (at the fore, Death and Satan drive him out), the Giving of the Law (Moses presents the tablets of the Ten Commandments), and the Serpent in the Wilderness (by the tents in the background). To the right, the Tree is budding with Life, for the Gospel is seen here in its fullness: Jesus is crucified, the Blood from His side is brought to the believer by the Holy Spirit, the Evangelist points sinful Man to his Redeemer, the Lamb of God tramples Death and Satan underfoot, and the risen Christ ascends in victory, with the Shepherds (pastors) leading sheep (Christians) across the verdant pasture into the Kingdom of Heaven in the background.

In this way, Cranach catechizes the viewer through his vocation as an artist. May we all thank God for both His Law and Gospel, and for those who teach them to us. ■



Vom Regenbogen vndergericht.
Es wird Gottes zorn offenbart vom himmel vber aller
menschen zoltz leben ond vnrecht. Roman. 1.
vber sein allzumal sunder vnder mangeln des preijs
das sie sich Gottes nuht rühmen mügen Roman. 1.

Vom Teuffel vnd Todt
Die Sünde ist des Todes speis aber das gesetz ist der sünden
krafft. 1. Corinth. 15.
Das gesetz richtet zorn abn. Roman. 4.

Vom mose vnd den
Durch das gesetz kömet ertunt
Matthe. 11.
Das gesetz vndt propheeten g

Law & Gospel

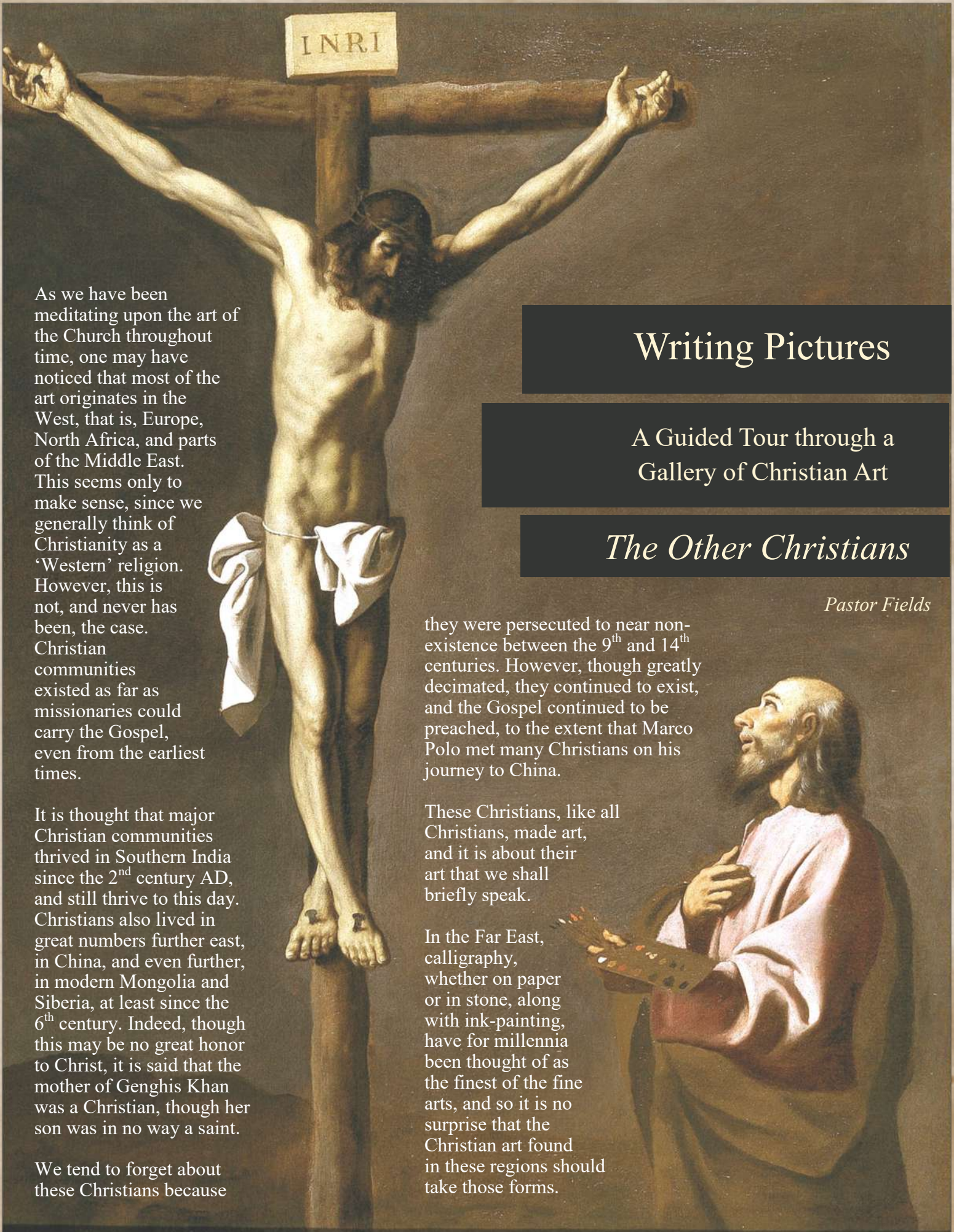


Propheten
aus der sünden koman. 3.
hen bis auff Johanes zeit.

Vom menschen
Der gerecht leben seines glaubens koman. 1.
wir halten das ein mensch gerecht werde den glauben
on werch des gesetzts koman. 3.

Vom Feusfer
Sihe das ist gottes Lamb das der welt sünde tregt
Sant Johanes Baptist Johannis. 2.
In der heiligung des geistes zum gehorsam vnd bespreng
ung des blutes Jesu Christi amen. 1. petri. 1.

Von Tode vnd Lamb
Der Tod ist verlichungen zum sieg Tod wo ist dein spiß
Heller wo ist dein sieg; danck hab Gott der vns den sieg gegeben
hat durch Jesum christum unsern herren. 1. corinth. 15.



INRI

As we have been meditating upon the art of the Church throughout time, one may have noticed that most of the art originates in the West, that is, Europe, North Africa, and parts of the Middle East. This seems only to make sense, since we generally think of Christianity as a ‘Western’ religion. However, this is not, and never has been, the case. Christian communities existed as far as missionaries could carry the Gospel, even from the earliest times.

It is thought that major Christian communities thrived in Southern India since the 2nd century AD, and still thrive to this day. Christians also lived in great numbers further east, in China, and even further, in modern Mongolia and Siberia, at least since the 6th century. Indeed, though this may be no great honor to Christ, it is said that the mother of Genghis Khan was a Christian, though her son was in no way a saint.

We tend to forget about these Christians because

they were persecuted to near non-existence between the 9th and 14th centuries. However, though greatly decimated, they continued to exist, and the Gospel continued to be preached, to the extent that Marco Polo met many Christians on his journey to China.

These Christians, like all Christians, made art, and it is about their art that we shall briefly speak.

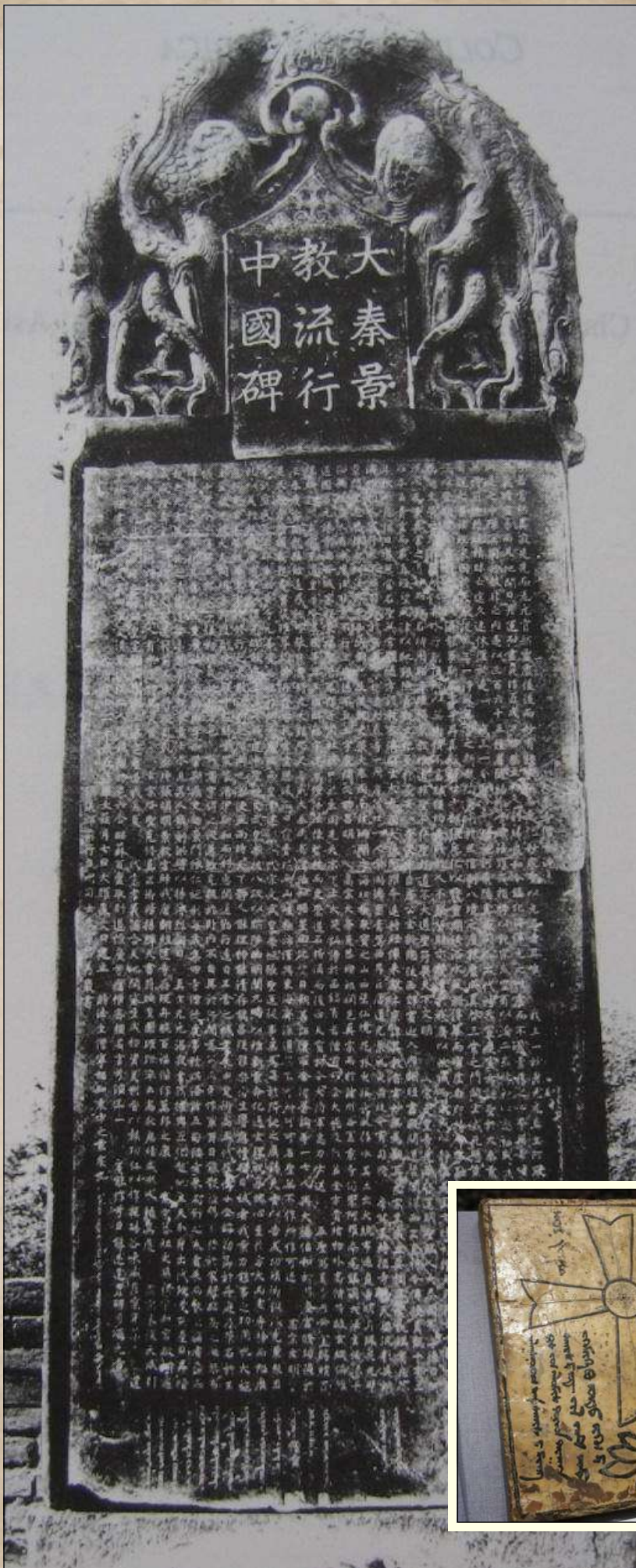
In the Far East, calligraphy, whether on paper or in stone, along with ink-painting, have for millennia been thought of as the finest of the fine arts, and so it is no surprise that the Christian art found in these regions should take those forms.

Writing Pictures

A Guided Tour through a Gallery of Christian Art

The Other Christians

Pastor Fields

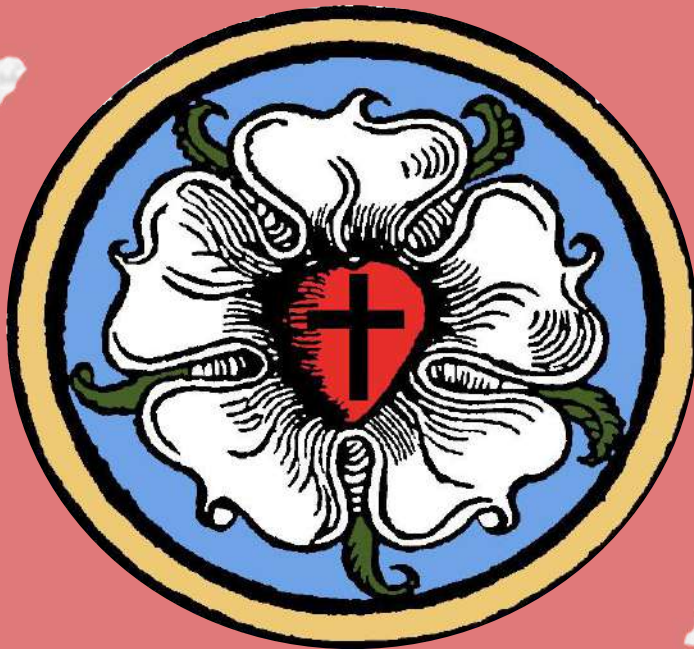


Some ink paintings from the medieval Chinese Church still survive, but most has been lost. Some paintings upon the walls of what once were likely churches can still be seen, including what seems to be a painting of a priest welcoming his congregation as they process forward on Palm Sunday.

What have proven to be more durable are the numerous Christian 'stele' or engraved stone monuments which have been found throughout China. Buried during the great persecution of Christians during the Tang Dynasty (c. 800-900 AD), they began to be rediscovered in the 1600's. Most consist of a large, beautifully carved, text on the main body of the stele, which speaks both of the Christian community in that place as well as their faith, and a 'cap', consisting sometimes of a cross, sometimes of two cherubim on either side of an altar, or some other religious image. The text was often both in Syriac (which was the liturgical language of the Chinese Church, much as Latin was the liturgical language of the Western Church) as well as in Classical Chinese, and sometimes even Mongolian.



We will never know how much of the Christian art of the Far East has been lost to the sands of time and the sword of persecution, but what remains, remains as a testament that the Gospel truly was for those *far off, even unto the ends of the earth.* ■



**Rejoice in the Lord always!
Again I say rejoice!**

**Only let us hold true
to what we have attained.**

--Philippians 3:16

Taken out of the context of the rest of Philippians, you may be wondering to what this verse is referring, and what does it have to do with God's work in Spain? Great questions!

Paul exhorts his listeners, the members of the church in Philippi, to hold on to the truth of the gospel of Christ that they have already believed in. To be unified in their belief of the doctrine that he has taught them, namely that our justification and our righteousness come from faith, not from our works.

In the photo below, three adults profess their faith in this pure Gospel, and join you and me as brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ, and specifically of the Lutheran Church in Spain. You see two pastors and three adults, all holding true to what they have attained: unity in their belief of the true Gospel.



Three new adult members from Galicia,
in northern Spain!

***God's Word is tenacious—it accomplishes that
which He purposes!***

Guillermo, one of the new members, used to live in Seville and attended worship with Pastor Lehman. Due to CV-19, he lost his job and moved home to northern Spain, but continued to worship with the Seville congregation via face book. He had started new

Lutherans return to

Spain

member classes with Pastor Lehman, but then finished them via zoom. He joined the other 2 adults (pictured) for weekly catechism classes led jointly by Pastor Warner, Pastor Machado and Pastor Lobo. That's quite a few pastors getting involved in just one person's membership journey!

*What a blessing to know that all the Pastors currently serving the Spanish Lutheran Church enjoy the **unity of doctrine** that Paul speaks of. They work together, serve in worship together, study the Biblical texts together, and encourage each other in Christ.*

"Again I say rejoice!"

We don't yet have a congregation in Galicia, so Pastor Lehman and his family, as well as Pastor Machado, traveled north to provide the Divine Service to the members and new members who live in this area. One member hosted the service on his patio and several others traveled as well, to this central location.



Fran, Silvia, and Guillermo with Pastors Machado and Lehman. Welcome to God's Family!



When traveling to provide worship, the pastors bring what they can to set up an altar and create an appropriate worship space within the confines of the location. Christ joins us as two or more gather in His name. His Supper always delivers what He promises: the forgiveness of sins.

And where was Pastor Warner in all this? The Warner's traveled to Madrid to provide the Divine Service for the Emmanuel Congregation there. All our pastors "share the pulpit" with each other, which is possible because they share **unity in doctrine**. They share the responsibility for preaching to all the members, in their homes or rented spaces around the country, in our designated worship spaces in Madrid, Seville, Cartagena, and Valencia.

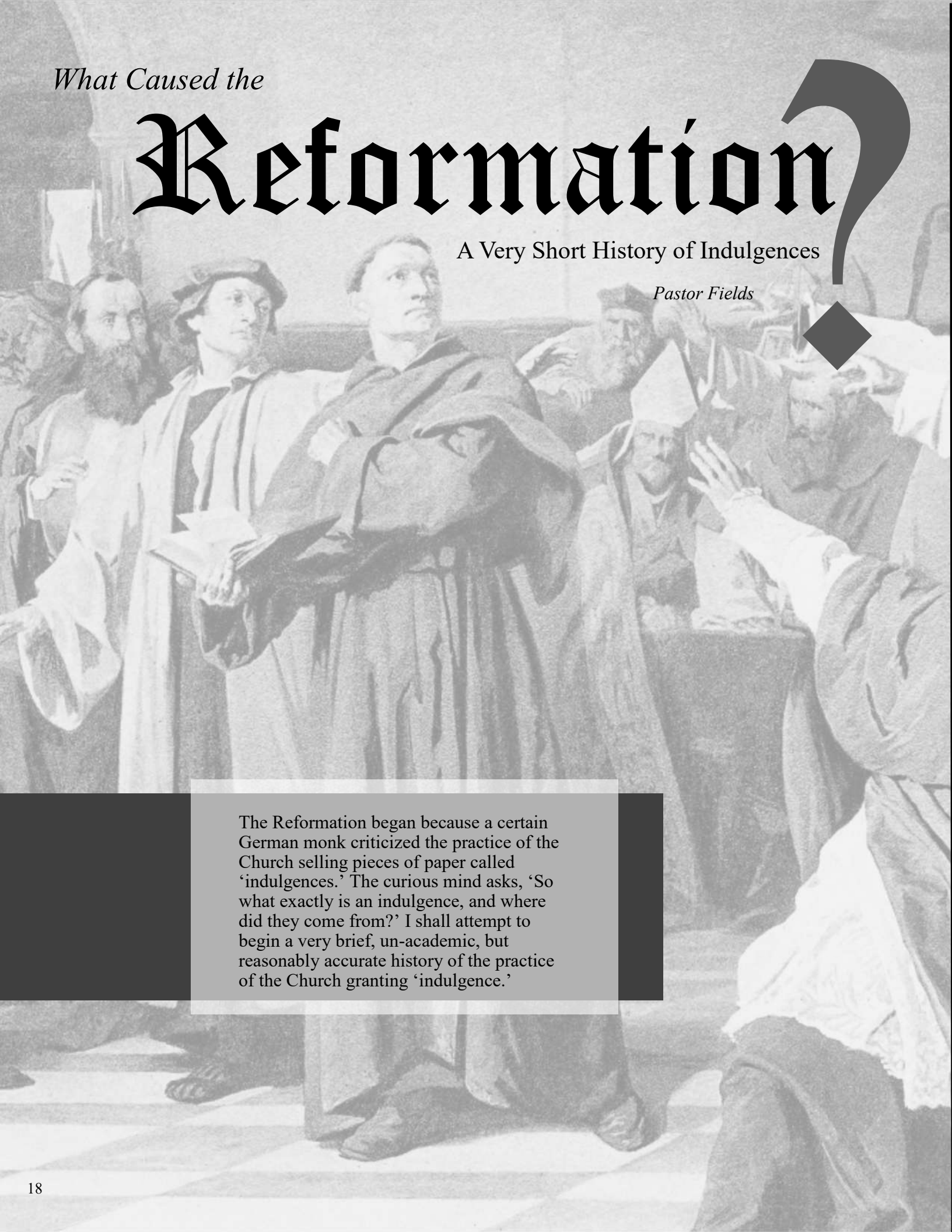
We rejoice because of your unity in this doctrine and your partnership in the mission—Thank you! ■

What Caused the

Reformation?

A Very Short History of Indulgences

Pastor Fields



The Reformation began because a certain German monk criticized the practice of the Church selling pieces of paper called 'indulgences.' The curious mind asks, 'So what exactly is an indulgence, and where did they come from?' I shall attempt to begin a very brief, un-academic, but reasonably accurate history of the practice of the Church granting 'indulgence.'

Part I: The Birth of Penance

Back in the good old days, when the Roman Empire made it a pastime to regularly gather up Christians and feed them to lions and whatnot, some Christians, who could not stand the thought of martyrdom, renounced their faith before the authorities, and not only that, but told the authorities where to find other Christians, betraying them to be killed.

A question arose: if these former Christians, after the fact, repent and want to return to the Church, can and should the Church forgive them? Some groups, known collectively as 'The Rigorists' said no. Once you betray the Church, there is no coming back. Others said yes, most notably a certain St. Cyprian of Carthage, because the Church is in the business of forgiving sinners, even people whose sin is apostasy.

St. Cyprian and his companions ultimately won the debate against the Rigorists, and decided to allow apostates to return to the Church. But then a practical question arises: how do you reincorporate someone into the local congregation when that person may have betrayed people to their death? How can that congregation ever trust that person again? To answer this question, the Church devised the practice of giving penances.

Giving penances meant having the penitent apostate do some very unpleasant task, such as fast from all food but bread and water for several years, to prove to the congregation (not to God!) that he was serious about his desire to return to the Church. It is important to note that it is *not* God that demands the penance, for God forgives freely; it is the *congregation* that needs it, so that they can once again trust their lost brother.

The penitent would take an oath, promising to fulfill whatever penance was given to him, and the congregation would promise to accept him back upon its completion.



St. Cyprian of Carthage

Part II: The Birth of Purgatory

Over time, during the early Middle Ages, penances were given for sins that were not apostasy, but were nonetheless scandalous to the congregation, things such as adultery or theft.

But now, another question arises! What if the penitent dies before he finishes his penance? One might think that the penance just goes away, since the penitent is not there to do it. But the theologians of the Middle Ages, convinced that God would want all people to be truthful and keep their word (*'Let your yes be yes'*) started to say that God would allow penitent Christians to complete their penance after death, but before entering heaven, not because God demanded it, but because God would allow a Christian the opportunity to fulfill his oath of penance. This place, where people would be allowed to finish their penance became known, by the 11th century, as 'Purgatory.'

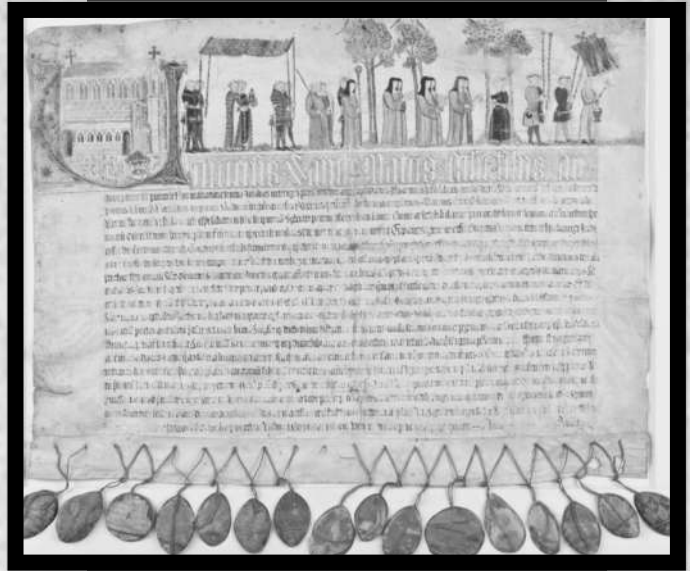
Part III: Corruption

As time went on, the doctrine of Purgatory became more and more fanciful, with penances being 'finished off' through centuries of burning divine fire and physical torments.

Around the same time, the Crusades began, and many crusaders (as well as ordinary soldiers) feared that, if they were killed in battle, and had not completed their penances, they would have to go through the agony of purgatory, which they wished to avoid. The Church, which gave the penance to begin with, gave to them an option: if they gave a lot of money and property to the Church or to the poor, that would be considered their penance, and the rest of their penance would be 'indulged', that is, forgotten. After all, if the Church can give a penance, it can also take it away if it feels it right.

By the 15th century, it became common for not only soldiers going to war, but also regular laymen, to prefer to 'complete their penance' through the payment of money and land, especially if they were sick, and death was near.

Now, it is easy to see where the idea of people 'buying indulgences' or even 'buying forgiveness' comes in. The precedent had been set that people could escape purgatory through parting with their wealth and comfort while they were still alive.



In the time of Luther, the Roman Church was particularly strapped for cash, and needed to raise money. Some sly monks, among them a certain John Tetzel, came up with an idea: instead of granting indulgences only to the very wealthy who could afford to give up large amounts of land and therefore truly show their penitence, why not grant indulgences to regular people, even peasants, at a steep discount! Perhaps a single florin (a coin worth around 500 dollars today; a dear price for a peasant, but still affordable)! It may be less money per person, but the market is much larger!

So, many such monks went about Europe, selling to simple laymen pieces of paper promising that if they gave a florin to the Church, their penances would be remitted, which most uneducated laity took to mean all their sins were forgiven, or worse, that only if they gave a florin *would* their sins be forgiven.

It was about this practice that Luther, on October 31st, 1517, proposed to debate. ■

— GOD IN THE — WASTELAND


Our Regional Vice President, Rev. Christopher Esget, preaches about the madness of this world, and the madness of the God who entered into it, that He might save us.

The Washington Redskins announced recently that they're changing their name. For this season, they'll be known as the Washington Football Team, which is actually more creative than their style of play.

The name change comes amid the destruction of statues across the land. Stoking the fires of racial and religious division, Shaun King called for the destruction of statues and stained glass images of Jesus and His mother. These Christian symbols are "tools of oppression" and "racist propaganda."

The fervor behind such iconoclasm is rooted in a new fundamentalism. Nathanael Blake calls it "symbolic purges of the inherited wickedness of the past." Language of "inherited wickedness" immediately gets my intention; instead of using the term "original sin," the Lutheran Confessions preferred the term "inherited sin" (*erbsünde* in German).

But original sin is making a comeback in the language of the culture wars. Jim Wallis recently wrote a book called *America's Original Sin*, with the subtitle



Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America. There are plenty of places to study and debate the meaning of America and her founding principles. The pulpit is not the appropriate vehicle for that. But Wallis is making a specifically theological statement – that racism and white privilege are America’s “original sin.” His mistake is not in being too radical. He’s not radical enough.

The problem is not in America’s founding. The problem—the original sin—is far deeper, and far more perverse and corrupt than we imagine. Symbolic purges won’t cleanse our sins. Smashing statues cannot liberate us from our origins. Changing the name of the local football team is a marketing strategy. It may propitiate the mob for a time, but there is no redemption there.

Our inherited wickedness goes back deeper than 1776, 1619, or 1492. It stretches back beyond the tyranny of popes and emperors, beyond the enslavement of the Jews in Egypt, beyond even the wickedness that precipitated the great flood of the ancient world.

We inherited the wickedness of our first parents. Their crime was not in eating fruit. Their original sin was in turning away from the Creator’s Word and purpose. Our first father rejected who God made him to be. The Antifa anarchists trying to burn down our cities have nothing on him. Adam is the original anarchist.

But even if we could go all the way back and find a statue of Adam, pull it down and smash it to bits, we still would not purge ourselves of the original sin. The inherited wickedness is not so easily removed. It is in us.

“We didn’t start the fire,” Billy Joel sang, but he’s wrong. Adam was the entire human race. We sinned in him. The contagion of his rebellion flows through our veins. It’s why you lust, why you are greedy; it’s the source of your narcissism, your anger, your love of gossip.

We can pull down all the statues, burn all the cities, and we still won’t have eradicated the problem. The problem is in us. Our Lutheran Confessions put it this way:

Knowledge of original sin is a necessity. For we cannot know the magnitude of Christ’s grace unless we first recognize our malady. The entire righteousness of the human creature is sheer hypocrisy before God unless we admit that by nature the heart is lacking love, fear, and trust in God. [AP II.33, K/W]

The entire righteousness of the human creature—i.e., everything that you think is good about yourself—is sheer hypocrisy. You accuse others of lawlessness, but the lawlessness is in you every time you disregard God’s Law.



In today's Epistle reading, God's Word describes our natural condition **"as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness."** All the things that have enslaved you – the anxiety, the lust, the seething resentment – what did it profit you? It leaves you with nothing. All the devil's promises are empty. All the world's allurements are traps. We humans have not just fallen into bad behavior; we've fallen into meaninglessness.

The rich splendor of the garden has become a desolate place with no food. In today's gospel that desolate, barren land is not only the location of the 4,000 Gentiles who came to Jesus. It's symbolic of our world-situation. Fears of nuclear annihilation or ecological catastrophe are a projection of what our world already is: A wasteland. We've wasted our world, we've wasted the life God gave us.

The line "teenage wasteland" in The Who's *Baba O'Riley* was inspired by Woodstock; Pete Townshend describes "the absolute desolation of teenagers at Woodstock, where audience members were strung out on acid and 20 people [suffered] brain damage." It's a teenage wasteland; they're

all wasted. Fifty years later, we've lost our motivation to even send our kids to school. But these are mere symptoms.

T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* is more comprehensive: "That corpse you planted last year in your garden, Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?" No. Our corpses do not bloom. The dead stay dead. "I will show you fear in a handful of dust."

We are in the wasteland. Exhausted. Dying. Jesus says, **"If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way."** We're doomed.

But here is what changes everything. Into our wasteland comes Jesus. Which is to say, into the world we've ruined comes God – the God who takes on our flesh. He goes into the desert. He confronts the devil. He grows hungry. He is betrayed. He stumbles. This God bleeds. This God dies.

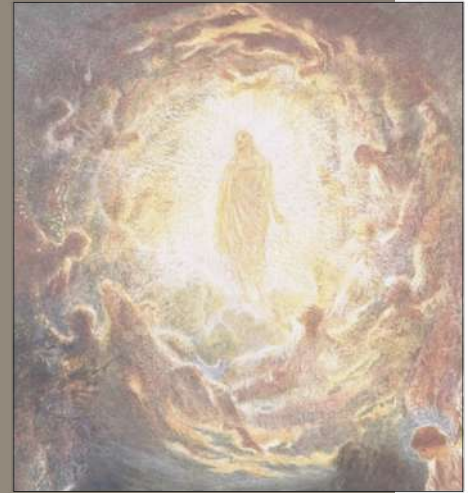
It's all driven by the words of Jesus in today's Gospel: **"I have compassion on the multitude."** What does this mean? He has compassion on you. He knows the wickedness in you. He knows the

wickedness you inherited. He knows your hypocrisy. He knows who you are, what you've done. And this is His verdict: **"I have compassion."**

That's your God. In Him is the atonement a mad, anxious world needs. He feeds the crowd with an anticipation of the Eucharist: "He took the ... loaves and gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to His disciples." All that's left is the fulfillment: "This is My body, given for you."

And He sends them home. To do what? To be faithful sons and daughters, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers. That's sanctification - to live the life of God's holiness right there in your home, in your stations. **"Now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life."**

You are sanctified. You are the object of Christ's compassion. You have a new name, better than any football team's: **Christian.** ■



ON THE FRONT: Squeakad Update

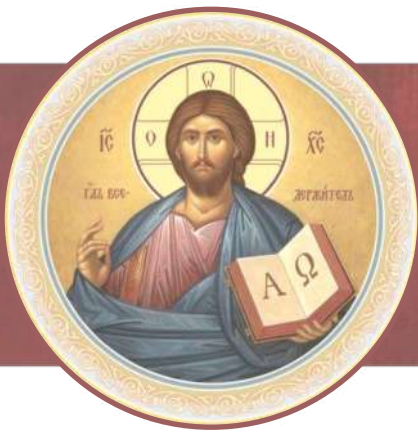
As it concerns the past month, there is little news on the Squirrel front. Things have been quiet. Too quiet. This caused our Fearless Leader and those in charge of the war effort great concern, and an effort has been made to discover the cause of this recent lack of Squeakad attacks upon our property.

After much subterfuge and intensive signal intelligence operations, Christ Lutheran has discovered that the Squirrel Dynasty has lost where they had hidden their own stone idol to their rodent despot. In response to this, they have concentrated their resources on the development of a new idol with which to worship their so-called Emperor and mock the poor laity of this humble congregation.

We ask that all members of Christ Lutheran be on the lookout for this newly minted blasphemy, should it appear on our property in the near future. See something, say something.

In service of our Fearless Leader.

Pastor Fields
-Supreme Allied Commander



THIS MONTH

At Christ Lutheran



THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS
+ November 1 +

Christmas Recital

— Christ Lutheran Church —



Mark Your Calendars
for the
Christ Lutheran Christmas Recital

Saturday
+ **January 3** +
2:00 p.m.

If you are interested in participating in the
recital, contact Sister Sara!



Christ Lutheran Church
On Facebook!

Find...
Divine Services
Bulletins
Church Updates
Blog Posts
Devotions
And More!



— Sunday Morning —

Bible Study

coming [back] november 2020



Join us as we embark on a journey through Revelation, beginning

**Thursday
October 8
9:30 a.m.**

Revelation

LifeLight



Sunday School Returns!
November 2020



Saints' Days in October

- 4 St. Francis of Assisi, Confessor
- 7 St. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Pastor
- 9 St. Abraham, Patriarch
- 11 St. Philip the Deacon
- 17 St. Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop & Martyr
- 18 St. Luke, Evangelist
- 23 St. James of Jerusalem, Brother of Jesus & Martyr
- 24 St. Raphael, Archangel
- 25 St. Dorcas, Lydia, & Phoebe, Faithful Women
- 26 Sts. Philipp Nicolai, Johann Heermann, & Paul Gerhardt, Hymnwriters
- 28 Sts. Simon & Jude, Apostles
- 31 Feast of the Reformation



**FRIDAY
DIVINE SERVICE**

6:30 p.m.

20 people

Contact Sister Sara
so we can plan for
your attendance!

See you soon!



Artwork in This Issue:

Cover: *Purgatory*, Gustave Dore, 1882.

Page 8-9: *St. Francis Preaching to the Animals*, Jan Siberechts, 1666.

Page 11: *Mount Sinai*, Edward Lear, 1812-88.

Page 12-13: *Law and Gospel*, Lucas Cranach the Elder, 1529.

Page 14: *St. Luke Painting the Crucifixion*, Francisco de Zurbaran, c. 1650.

Page 21: *Forty Days in the Wilderness, Tempted by Satan*, William Brassey Hole, 1846-1917.

Page 23: *Jesus Breaking Bread and Giving His Disciples the Cup*, William Brassey Hole, 1846-1917.

Page 24: *Jesus Ascending into Heaven*, William Brassey Hole, 1846-1917.

JOIN US FOR BIBLE STUDY

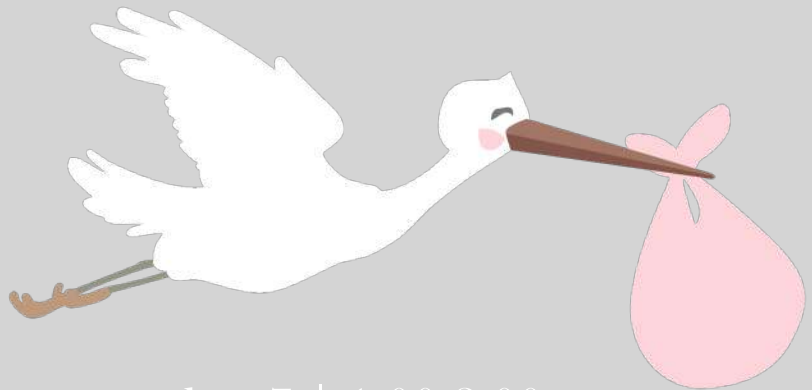
bible & breaky | fridays @ 6:30 a.m.



THE FEAST OF THE REFORMATION

Observed
+ October 25 +

christa's diaper drop drive



november 7 | 1:00-3:00 pm
@clc parking lot

NO OFFERING PLATE? NO PROBLEM!

Send your tithe to
4423 I-55 N
Jackson, MS 39206

Visit
ChristLutheranJacksonMS.org
and click the "Give" button at
the top of the page

October 2020

PRAYER FAMILIES and BIRTHDAYS

Mark Ochs
2—William Held
2—Jerry Mutter

Serving this month:
Elder—Gary Atchley
Ushers—Bruce Bodkin, Allen
Goodlett, Jonathan Ketter

For more from Christ Lutheran Church,
visit the Christ Lutheran Facebook page
or go to
ChristLutheranJacksonMS.org/
LifeAtChrist!

6:30 p.m.
Divine
Service

Bob & Gloria Pedersen
8—Francis Dillon

PENTECOST XVIII
10:30 a.m. Divine Service
St. Francis

6
11:00 a.m.
Wassum Funeral
6:15 p.m. Elders'
Mtg.

7
*St. Henry
Melchior
Muhlenberg*

8
9:30 a.m.
Lifelight

9
St. Abraham
6:30 a.m.
Bible Study
6:30 p.m.
Divine
Service

Ramsey Family

11—Nathan Burkhalter
14—Emma Goodlett
14—Daryl Smith
15—Chuck Haynes
16—Krista Hansford

11
PENTECOST XIX
10:30 a.m. Divine Service
St. Phillip

12

13
6:15 p.m.
Council Mtg.

14

15
9:30 a.m.
Lifelight

16
6:30 a.m.
Bible Study
6:30 p.m.
Divine
Service

17

*St. Ignatius
of Antioch*

Laura Rawson

18
PENTECOST XX
10:30 a.m. Divine Service
St. Luke

19

20

21

22
9:30 a.m.
Lifelight

23
St. James
6:30 a.m.
Bible Study
6:30 p.m.
Divine
Service

24

St. Raphael

Leslie Ridlehoover
27—James Hansford

25

**FEAST OF THE
REFORMATION
(OBSERVED)**
10:30 a.m. Divine Service
Ss. Dorcas, Lydia, & Phoebe

26

*Ss. Philipp
Nicolaï,
Johann
Heermann,
Paul
Gerhardt*

27

28

*Ss. Simon &
Jude*

29
9:30 a.m.
Lifelight

30

6:30 a.m.
Bible Study
6:30 p.m.
Divine
Service

31


*Feast of the
Reformation*