



WITTENBERG WAY

October 2023



#NAILEDIT #HAMMERTIME

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FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Grace Family,

During the Sunday School hour, we have been looking at key doctrinal distinctions that led to the sixteenth-century Reformation between Luther and the Roman Catholic Church. Chief among these is the doctrine of justification by faith alone, which Luther considered to be the very heart of the Gospel and the absolute center of Biblical theology. At the end of this month on Sunday, Oct 29th, we will celebrate Reformation Sunday and extol God's goodness in the recovery of that Gospel, the very center of all we believe, teach, and confess here at Grace Lutheran.

Over the past five hundred years, there have been several ecumenical attempts to find unity on the doctrine of justification between Wittenberg and Rome. One such attempt was called Evangelicals and Catholics together (ECT) in the early 90's. They produced two documents that purported that after all these years, both camps found a common way forward by noting: "We affirm together that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ." At first glance, this reads like a very positive step forward until you recognize that Rome defines terms like grace, justification, and faith far differently from Lutherans. The ECT effort failed in the end, because they could not find common ground in Scripture alone, especially on a key aspect of justifying faith: the imputed righteousness of Christ.

The theologian Michael Horton has likened "imputation" to chocolate chips in the making of chocolate chip cookies. If you set out all the ingredients to make chocolate chip cookies but leave out the singular ingredient of chocolate chips, then you don't have chocolate chip cookies when you pull the tray out of the oven. Likewise, you can have most of the key ingredients of the gospel. You can have the understanding that we are sinners. You can appreciate God as holy and just. You can have an understanding of Christ and His work on the cross. But if you leave out imputation, you don't have the gospel. This is why the Reformers considered this word absolutely essential to a biblically faithful proclamation of the gospel. But what does this word imputation mean?

The word imputation is an accounting term; it means "to apply to one's account." Expenses are debited and income is credited. The old King James word is "reckon." For example, in Genesis 15:6, we are told that

"Abraham believed the Lord, and He *credited* it to him as righteousness."

In theological terms, we speak of a double imputation that takes place in justification. This double imputation is taught in texts such as 2 Corinthians 5:21, where Paul says plainly, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Here we read that our sin is

imputed to Christ. We are the offending party. He is guiltless. He perfectly kept the law. Yet, on the cross, God poured out His judgment on Christ. Why? Because our sin was imputed to Christ. Christ took upon Himself our sin. Our great debit was put on His account. Christ paid the horrific penalty as the cup of God's wrath was poured out upon Him.

There is also a second imputation. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us. He not only takes our debit, but we also get His credit. It is not earned, but given, which is why we call it "grace." Christ paid the penalty we could never satisfy, but He also kept the law perfectly, which we can't do either. Consequently, God credits to us His righteousness. We stand before God clothed in Christ's righteousness as the baptized. We can actually say that we are saved by works—not by our works, but instead by Christ's works on our behalf. This is why the two most beautiful words in the Bible are "for us." Jesus lived and died—and rose again—for us.

A simple example of imputation is found at home when parents are given a drawing created by their children—with objectively terrible renderings of trees, houses, and siblings, all out of proportion with zero perspective or shading—and the mom pronounces it a masterpiece and proudly puts it on the refrigerator for all to see. The child has been imputed with a decision that is not inherently true. This is how God treats us, and we see this in the ministry of Jesus throughout the gospel accounts.

He finds Matthew in his tax collector booth, defrauding his people and living high on the hog, and calls him to be a disciple. He sees Zacchaeus up in that tree, a thief and extortionist, and says, "I'd like to honor you by eating dinner in your home." In conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, He treats her as an equal, someone with worth and value, which is the opposite of how everyone else treated her. Throughout His ministry, Jesus treats sinful people as if they are saints. He treats broken people as if they are success stories. He treats the losers of society as if they are winners. This is what we mean when we talk about imputation. And it has the power to change people's lives. Forgiveness is certainly part of it, but it goes beyond it and fuels the sanctified life in Christ. You can forgive someone and still not really care for them. When Christ imputes His righteousness to us, it's like He is saying, "Not only do I forgive you, but I want to be your heavenly Bridegroom."

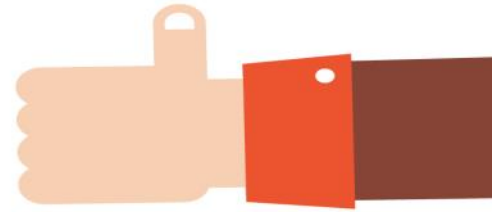
All that we do at Grace Lutheran flows from this grace. Because we have been loved, we love. Because we have been served, we serve.

Your Servant in Christ,

Pr. Thomas



WHAT DOES THE WORD AMEN MEAN?



The word “amen” (pronounced AH-men) is Hebrew for “certainly” or “truly.” Martin Luther said that it really means: “Yes, yes, it shall be so.” You probably recognize this word from hearing it or seeing it used in prayer. Maybe you use it in your prayers every morning when you wake up and every night when you go to sleep.

Why do we use it?

God commands us to pray. When we use the word “amen” at the end of our prayers, we are letting God know that we truly believe that He will hear and answer all of our prayers just as He has promised! What a great way to end a prayer!



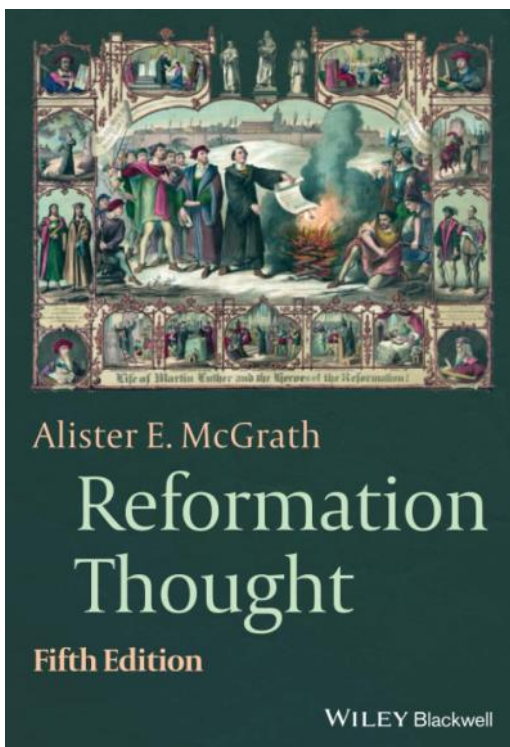
Parents: Point out that Jesus used the word “amen”

a lot in Scripture when He said things like: “Truly, truly I say to you.” Encourage your children to listen for and say “amen” at appropriate points in the service. In what places besides prayer do we hear it amen?

PASTOR RECOMMENDS

Reformation Thought by Alister McGrath

Since we are celebrating the Reformation this month, I want to recommend one of the best books on the background and theology of that momentous event as it offers a clear, engaging, and accessible introduction. Written for readers with little to no knowledge of Christian theology or history, this book surveys the ideas of the prominent thought leaders of the period, as well as its many movements, including Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anabaptism, and the Catholic and English Reformations. The text offers readers a framework to interpret the events of the Reformation in full view of the intellectual landscape and socio-political issues that fueled its development. Based on Alister McGrath’s acclaimed lecture course at Oxford University, the fully updated fifth edition incorporates the latest academic research in historical theology.



A VERY SCARY STORY

On a rainy evening in 1816, a group of friends competed to see who could write the scariest story. Time would ultimately judge Mary Shelley the winner. She created Dr. Victor Frankenstein, the world's first mad scientist, a man obsessed with playing God for the greater good of humanity and his own glory. Hold that thought as we fast-forward to the summer of 2023.

“We can create human embryo-like models”

On June 14, at the annual meeting of the International Society for Stem Cell Research, Professor Magdalena Zernicka-Goetz (University of Cambridge and Cal Tech) made a startling announcement. By reprogramming embryonic stem cells scientists had created synthetic human embryos without the need for natural human eggs or sperm. Zernicka-Goetz described cultivating the embryos to a stage just beyond the equivalent of 14 days' natural embryonic development. While the structures do not have beating hearts or the beginnings of brains, they do include cells that could eventually form the placenta, yolk sac and the embryo itself. The intent, of course, is for the greater good: to provide “a crucial window on the impact of genetic disorders and the biological causes of recurrent miscarriage.”

Scientists involved in the project reassured the audience that there is no near-term prospect of using the synthetic embryos clinically, and that it would be illegal to implant them into a human womb. They added it isn't clear yet if the embryos could mature beyond the earliest stages of development anyway. Robin Lovell-Badge, a Francis Crick Institute geneticist, has voiced concern that if the models are like natural embryos they should be treated the same. “Currently in legislation they're not. People are worried about this,” Lovell-Badge said. Indeed.

Revolutionizing Human Reproduction

In July, NPR's *Health News* ran a story about Conception, a Berkeley biotech startup that is “trying to revolutionize the way humans reproduce.” They are one of a handful of companies worldwide engaged in similar research. All of them are hoping to commercialize the process. Conception has already raised \$40 million from interested investors.

The goal is to create viable human eggs and sperm using pluripotent stem cells derived from a single cell of human skin or blood. The process -- *in vitro gametogenesis* (IVG) -- could enable infertile women to have their own genetically-related babies at any age. In fact, the company claims to be close to having proof-of-concept human eggs capable of developing into genetically-related human babies for anyone who wants one. Matt Krisiloff, a Conception co-founder, said that includes himself and his same-sex partner.

What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

For ethicists and anyone who's read *Brave New World*, this opens the door to dystopian nightmares ranging from designer babies to disposable slaves. For believers, it's Genesis 3 all over again.

Krisiloff admitted the potential for mayhem exists and somebody will need to prevent nefarious excess, but gee whiz the greater good makes it worth the risk:

“Can it go down pathways where, you know, people try to do weird things, like designer aspects or much more out-there things? Yeah, I mean, I think that's a fair thing to worry about and there's all sorts of gray areas that society really needs to figure out. But opening this door for so many more people—including, you know, me and Pablo—is a really cool thing. It could lead to so many more people being able to have, you know, families and children to be able to have lives. I just think that's a really beautiful thing.”

A starry-eyed Gen Z biotech scientist with venture capital funding in a self-absorbed, post-modern world. Mary Shelley never imagined anything quite so scary.

IT'S IN THE WAY THAT YOU USE IT

Consider the humble baseball bat. It is a simple tool designed for a complex task. The batter needs a tool that can consistently deliver force to a small ball which may be thrown at over 100 miles per hour, but which might also come slanting across the plate as a slow curve. For a game like this, the founders of baseball had to redesign the old cricket bat, which is more of a flat paddle. The tool had to fit the job.



But even a specially designed tool can be used for a different purpose. It turns out that some years ago in England, the home of cricket, baseball bats suddenly started selling like hotcakes. What were folks across the pond doing with all those baseball bats? Using them as clubs in riots!

A tool can be used, and it can be misused. It's all in the way that you use it.

The same is true with the things of God. The Second Commandment states that we should "not misuse the name of the Lord." In the Small Catechism, Luther goes on to tell us exactly what this misuse is, as well as the proper use:

"We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks." (SC I)

The Lord has given us His name: He has placed it upon us in Holy Baptism and He has invited us to pray to Him as our Father. In this sense, the Lord's name is something for us to use. We should not misuse it ... and we should not fail to use it. The Pharisees of old were so afraid of misusing the name of God that they decided to simply never say the name of God (YHWH, Jehovah) at all! This non-use is just as bad as misuse. The Lord gives His gifts for our use.

A Christian steward is one who is called to use all of God's gifts for His purposes. This includes things like the Name of God, the Sacraments, and the Word, and it also includes things like our family and friends, our talents and skills, our money and resources. Everything that God has given to you, He has given to you so that you may be blessed to use it for His kingdom.

It's all in the way that you use it!

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship

SEPTEMBER GIVING

| | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Sept. Actual Offerings | \$ 20,116 |
| Sept. Budget | <u>\$ 19,760</u> |
| Overage | \$ 356 |
| YTD Actual | \$165,189 |
| YTD Budget | <u>\$192,660</u> |
| Shortfall | \$ 27,471 |

HOW TO GIVE

- Your offering envelopes or those in the pews
- Online from your bank website
- Scan the QR code here
- Text the amount to 84321
- The Giving Page at grace.sandiego.com
- Time and Talents



GROWING IN GRACE AND GOD'S LOVE TOGETHER



Top left: This Fall Sunday School semester kicked-off with a standing room only start as the Wittenberg v. Rome has proven to be a hot topic.

Top right: Daniel Paylor was raised and catechized in this church, and now is faithfully passing this knowledge on to our children as he teaches Luther's Small Catechism.



Middle left: Several parents rotate in service to our nursery age children teaching basic Bible Stories, singing hymns, and doing crafts together.

Bottom: Between services our choir rehearses to beautify our liturgy through song.





Selah Jules Fohey was born on Sept. 20th. Daniel and Eileen are a Navy family worshipping with us. Selah was only a few week old and she attended her fist service at Grace last week.



Pastor Brian, Mark Jordan, and Sheldon Lee represented Grace Lutheran at the annual CAPS Charity tournament this year at Maderas Golf Club.

GRACE LUTHERAN

Oktoberfest

**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 21, 2023
2-5 PM**

**JOIN THE FUN AND GOOD FOOD
AT OUR ANNUAL CELEBRATION**

**TRADITIONAL GERMAN FARE
WITH LIVE MUSIC AND GAMES**

*PLEASE RSVP AT THE
WELCOME DESK*

**GERMAN COSTUMES AND TRADITIONAL
GARB IS ENCOURAGED!!!**



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Dale Sorenson
dalesorenson2@gmail.com

Church Secretary
Gretchen Jordan
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Sunday Divine Service
8:00 am & 10:30 am
Sunday School
9:30 to 10:15 am
Nursery available

JOHN HANSEN
Council President

RICHARD SEGARRA
Treasurer

SHANNON CARREIRO
Secretary

HEATH RUSSERT
Trustee

KELLEY SCHMIDT
Fellowship/Activities

JOHN BARBER
PHILIP HAWTHORNE
Members-at-Large

CARL LEHMAN
Education

TED NILSEN
Head Elder

JEREMY FULLAM
STEVE HOLLMAN
JASON HUNTLEY
DARYL NEWTON
Elders

PRAYERS

PRAYERS FOR STRENGTH AND HEALING

Dave, Bill, Phil, Edward, Mike, John, Hannah, Rita, and Grace

PRAYERS FOR THOSE EXPECTING A CHILD

Jeremy & Jessica Belgau, Carl & Elsie Lehman

PRAYERS FOR OUR MISSIONARIES

Rev. Tyler McMiller, Joshua Salas, Lorenzo Murrone, Luiz Lange,
Michael & Nance Morizio (Lutheran Church planters & seminarians in Italy),
Rev. Dr. John Bombaro, and Rev. Dr. Tardelli Voss

PRAYERS FOR OUR MILITARY MEMBERS

Rev. Mario Ancira, John Campisi, Tajy George, Nathan Farish,
Philip Hawthorne, Matthew Morgan, Jeff and Jordan Gruetzmacher

PRAYERS FOR THOSE UNABLE TO ATTEND

Joyce Rochester

BIRTHDAYS

OCTOBER

9- Victoria Fullam
13- Rebecca Kiperts
14- Cindy Behling-Hansen
17- Wesley Newton
17- Mike Thompson

20- Zaro Razak
28- Jeremy Fullam

If we missed your birthday, please
contact the church office at:
gjordan@gracesandiego.com

1517 Here We Still Stand

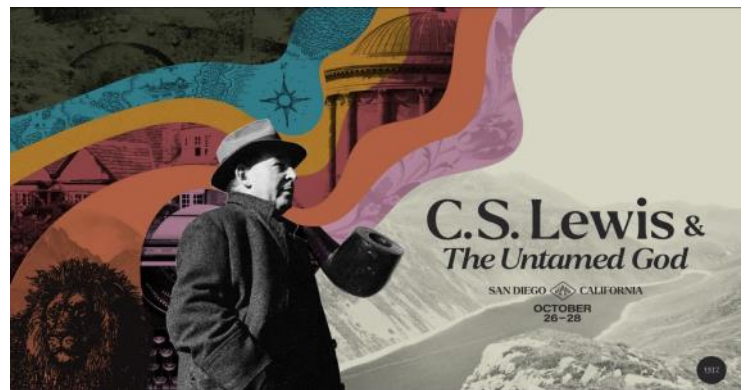
HOW TO STREAM

While tickets sold out quickly, you can still sign-up for the
livestream conference at:

<https://learn.1517.org/cs-lewis-livestream>

Immerse yourself in the captivating world of C.S. Lewis as we delve
into his timeless literary legacy and profound insights into human
nature, theology, and imagination.

Thurs.- Sat.
October 26-28
Coverage Begins at
6 pm



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