



From the Pastor's Perspective

The 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast." -Ephesians 2:8-9

Five hundred years ago, a world-shaking revolution was about to erupt and change history! The world was on the cusp of a dramatic shift. Europe was Christian, divided into two churches: The Orthodox Church in the East, and the Catholic Church in the West. Each blamed the other for separating away (back in AD 1054). In the West, there were seismic tremors suggesting the coming of a major quake.

The Catholic Church wielded amazing power, and tried to use that power to keep the culture in order and Christian. In an attempt to protect the holiness of God, it mandated that worship must be kept pure and based on tradition, that the Bible must be kept in Latin, and that salvation was found only in the path the Church explained.

But others had been challenging some of the Church's orders. Some began translating the Bible into local languages—illegally—such as John Wyclif in England (AD 1383) the Hussite Bible (AD 1430s), and a Catalan translation (AD 1478). Others chafed at the call to sell and buy indulgences, sold, in no small part, to help fund the building of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. National leaders challenged the centralized power of Rome, vying for their own authority.

But it was the invention of new technology in communication that really brought the changes. Johannes Gutenberg, around AD 1440, invented the movable-type printing press. For the first time in history, copies of writings could be distributed and read faster than they could be seized and destroyed. Centralized powers, such as the papacy in Rome, could no longer suppress the spread of ideas easily.

Meanwhile, a Catholic monk in Germany, Martin Luther, was asked to teach the Old Testament. This forced him to begin actually *reading* the Bible (a rare occurrence in an illiterate world). As he did, he began to notice discrepancies between what the Church officially taught and what the Bible actually said. Over time, he compiled 95 concerns and decided to organize a discussion on them among his peers.

So, on October 31, 1517, Luther posted these 95 Theses on what was in his day the social media platform: the main door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. Someone took them to a press and distributed the list for everyone to read (and hear read). Common people swelled in support for these protests, and called for reform of the Church across Europe. The Protestant Reformation had begun, and the world would never be the same!

Continued on page 2...

Monthly Church Events

For weekly events see the calendar

October 1	World Communion Sunday
October 3	6pm Financial Peace University begins
October 7	9am United Methodist Men
October 12	1pm United Methodist Women 6pm HCI Team Meeting
October 14	5:45pm Adult Fellowship
October 15	6:30 pm Lifeline
October 16	6:30pm Trustees Meeting
October 18	11:30am Romeos and Juliets
October 19	6:30pm W.O.W.
October 20	5pm Unload Community Care Truck
October 21	6am Community Care Set-up 8am Community Care
October 28	9am-3pm Fall Craft Show and Luncheon

The most enduring of these “corrections” still make up the theological foundation of protestant Christianity, in all its nearly countless church forms (including United Methodism). These are summarized in “5 alones” - 1) *Sola fide*: Salvation comes through *faith alone*, 2) *Sola gratia*: Favor from God comes through His *grace alone*, 3) *Sola Christus*: Salvation is accomplished by *Christ alone* (and that there is no other mediator, such as the Church, or priest), 4) *Sola Scriptura*: *Scripture alone* is the one true authority on all things spiritual, and 5) *Soli Deo Gloria*: “*Glory be to God alone*” - God, not we, should be the center of ourselves.

This Halloween marks the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation! On this day, as you hand out treats to trick-or-treaters, also recite to yourself the “5 alones,” committing to hold fast to them, making them the core biblical doctrines of your own faith. Perhaps you could also “post them” using your social media, for others to see and read!

Today there are many similarities to the time of Martin Luther. We again sit at the cusp of a seismic shift. (Some have called it the “every-500-year-revolution!”) Western society is going through another dramatic change, including what churches do and how they operate. Again, this upheaval is driven by the technology of communication, with the invention of digital communication being the “printing press of our time.”

As we navigate through this time of bewildering change, we can learn from Martin Luther. We need to put our trust in God who alone is unchanging. We can be optimistic that although the Church will change, God’s work on earth will continue as the Holy Spirit directs. We continue to hold fast to the core teachings of salvation as contained in the Bible. We believe that the Church is continually being formed and reformed. And, finally, we recommit our own lives to Jesus and hang on to Him for all we’re worth!

May your Halloween this year be filled with images of pumpkins, trick-or-treaters, church doors, Martin Luther, and the “5 alones.” And, may you mark this once-every-500-year-celebration by giving Jesus thanks and praise for your salvation, which comes through Him, *alone!*

Happy Halloween!

Pastor David

P.S. By the way, side note: In 1999 the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation signed a joint statement clarifying that the Protestant teaching, that justification by God comes by faith alone through grace alone, is biblical and affirmed by both the Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches. (The World Methodist Conference also signed this statement in 2004.) Check out the document, particularly paragraph 15, on the Vatican’s website here: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_31101999_cath-luth-joint-declaration_en.html

This effectively ended the Protestant Reformation! After nearly 500 years, Martin Luther’s core protest is resolved. We can claim the unity of Christ’s Church universal, among all churches and people who affirm the biblical teaching that justification by God comes by faith *alone* through grace *alone*. Although we continue in the diversity of churches, we are united in Christ. Diversity is of God, divisiveness is of the Devil! Happy Halloween!

HCI (Healthy Church Initiative) Update:

There are five core parts to the HCI outline. 1) Pausing regular activities of our church, 2) Sunday worship, 3) Wednesday meal and fellowship, 4) Small group nurturing, and 5) Dream a different future.



We have already moved into implementation on a number of these. We have paused Kid’s Church and Awana. Sunday worship has been changed in time and format, making it more inter-generational. Wednesday evenings are M&M (Meal and More) with the whole church family sharing a meal together and then engaging in a “more” activity that builds relationships. Small group changes are being scheduled to launch in January.

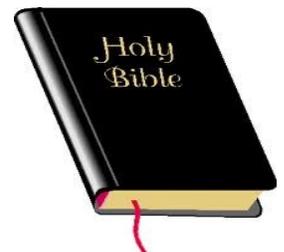
Dreaming has started, and will continue throughout the new year. We have also begun putting into place a new church administrative structure. The HCI Design team has met twice, and is scheduled to meet once more in October. From then on, two teams will take over the leadership of the church and HCI process. One is the Church Management Ministry Team (CMMT) which will take over the responsibilities of the various resource teams and manage the ongoing administrative needs of the church. The other is the Action Ministry Team (AMT) which will be responsible for the directing the vision of the church and making decisions around change. This team, for example, will work on the pausing of church ministries and programming for our Jubilee year. These teams will have preliminary meetings in October, and then be voted on at the Church Conference meeting Nov. 12.

Please keep praying for wisdom, discernment, and unity as our church continues to follow the way that we believe Jesus is leading us!

Pastor David

Worship's Word

“Mary...sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:39-42



Sitting seems so antithetical to us as Christians. Our calling is to “Go!” We are here to make disciples! We are supposed to be co-laborers with God in building his Kingdom. We are supposed to be people of movement, of energy and excitement! But before long, action devolves into distraction. Our mandate from God becomes busywork. We do not see the fruits of our labors. It is easy to be busy like Martha. She was not thrilled to be doing household chores. She did them because they had to be done. Her heart was set on duty and not truly on service. She reveals the state of her heart when she speaks up in resentment about Mary’s choice to sit with Jesus. She demands a little help in the midst of her “ministry.”

Jesus is kind. He does not denigrate Martha, but he does defend Mary. He sees that Martha is upset and worried. She has become preoccupied with her own agenda. The things she wanted to see accomplished have overtaken any other considerations. Here, the presence of Jesus Christ, Martha is fussing with the silverware.

Jesus gently breaks it to Martha that Mary will not be reprimanded. She has made the better choice. Here, in the presence of Jesus Christ, Mary has let duty fade. She is sitting and listening; absorbing every word that Jesus speaks.

This must be our starting point. We cannot make a heavenly impact in this world if we are too busy to sit with the Master. We will not know what to do or where to go if we do not stop for instructions. Disciples can only be made by other disciples. Forest Hills exists as a place where people are invited to come and sit with Jesus to listen to his voice.

Every week in church we sing a hymn of some sort. Some are fast and grand, some are slow and simple. But nearly all of them are wordy. We sing these off’ familiar words but there is little chance to ruminate upon them. The words fly by and the depth of their meaning is easily lost. This month we are going to dredge up an old hymn and we are going to repeat it for a while. We need to think through the words, to savor them, to connect with them:

“Sitting at the feet of Jesus, Oh, what words I hear him say
Happy place so near and precious, may it find me there each day;
Give me Lord the mind of Jesus, keep me holy as He is
May I prove I’ve been with Jesus, who is all my righteousness.”

According to Jesus, by sitting and listening, Mary has chosen the ONE THING that is needed. There are plenty of good things and maybe even a few great things, but what do we list as necessities? For Jesus, the list is short. We need him. We need fellowship with him. We need to live on his very words. As we move forward into this coming season, let us prove we have been with Jesus by being his disciples who sit at his feet.

For the King,



KID'S CORNER

For many kids, the standard experience of church involves them walking with their parents to the front doors, being greeted, and then dropped off in the kid's wing or at their classroom. There they sit in seats, engage in an activity and hear a bible lesson from their teacher. Maybe they sing a few songs and get a small snack. All that they do is very age appropriate and well suited to their stage of development.

This example has all the makings of a well-run children's ministry. But what sounds good at the moment does not take into account the big picture. If this standard experience is church for a kid year after year, what happens when they outgrow the program? Suddenly they are a teenager finding themselves sitting in the strange and alien territory of an adult worship service. They have been given very little context of what is happening. In most cases, even their own parents have had very little interaction with them at church. What once was designed to serve them, is now designed to serve God. How is this paradigm shift to be handled? All the years of Sunday school and children's programming have provided information but not necessarily formation. Can the church expect such a transition to go smoothly?

Kid's are near and dear to the heart of God. It is no coincidence that Jesus refers to him as Father. God's care for children becomes one of the main motivations of his church. At Forest Hills, we are trying to step up the ways in which reflect the heart of God by adjusting the ways we care for kids.

If you have been in worship lately, you will have noticed that we have been working to provide services that touch on many different levels. No longer are we planning with adults only in mind. In fact, we have found that as we seek to make our services meaningful to kids, they have become even more accessible to adults as well. Object lessons and demonstrations have long been fodder for children's sermons, but in reality, these methods of teaching have applicability to all of us. In fact, we do not have to dig too deep into Scripture to see that this is one of the main ways that Jesus taught.

We do not want to replace worship as we know it with some sort of overly annoying, dumbed down, kiddie experience. But rather, our goal is to invite and incorporate kids into the life of our church. We want to avoid making the leap from kid's lessons to "real" church. We do not want to create an environment where kids are so adored that God himself becomes marginalized. Instead of having two churches split within the same building (adult and kids) we are looking to provide a place where kids and adults are both seen and accepted as the true church. We come together as a family because that is what we are: children seeking to glorify their heavenly Father.

For the King,

-Andrew



A Note from Pastor David:

Children Are Important at FHUMC!

With the pausing of Kids Church and Awana, some might wonder how our church is shaping and making disciples for Jesus of our youngest generation.

Kids continue to be a primary focus of our church's ministry. We commit to nurturing their spiritual growth and faith development. Our focus, however, cannot be exclusively instruction and information. Instead, it must be the biblical calling of making disciples. We want to do a better job of making disciples among the next generations!

To this end, we realize that the local church is not usually the main shaper of faith among our kids. It happens primarily in the home. Therefore, part of our ministry shift is to equip parents and homes to

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Events and Info

Adult Fellowship

October 14th at 5:45 pm. Watch for the sign-up sheet in the lobby.

Romeo's and Juliet's

October 18th at 11:30 a.m. More details to come; watch for updates on locations.

Financial Peace University

The first class for Financial Peace University will start on October 3rd, and go through November 28th, meeting Tuesday nights at 6pm at the church. If you are interested in joining, or learning more about this class, please contact Paulette Johnson.

Fall Craft Show and Luncheon

October 28th 9am-3pm. Join us for a homemade luncheon with baked goodies, homemade soups and pies, and shop for unique gift ideas for the holidays from the handcrafted items on sale!

Community Care

Saturday October 21st 8 am - 11 am
Truck unloading Friday, September 15th at 5pm

Lifeline Sunday October 15th 6:30 pm

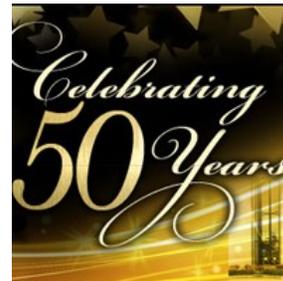
Sometimes God can feel distant and it seems like we are alone. If you are weary and disconnected, come and seek God's presence. Lifeline is a simple gathering of prayer and praise. Come and be filled!

help make Jesus-disciples of our kids. We will do this by increasing the connection our kids can have with older Christians.

Discipleship is shaped through modeling, support, encouragement, faith-sharing, and instruction. We have not hosted Awana on Wednesdays and Kid's Church on Sundays this school year. Instead, we are [Worship-focus] crafting Sunday mornings to be meaningful inter-age worship. We are [Fellowship-focus] planning Wednesdays to build relationships and connections among different ages. And, we are [Nurture-focus] designing small groups to be contexts in which all ages are nurtured. The Sunday worship and Wednesday fellowship experiences have already started with the beginning of the school year. We plan to launch the small group experiences for all ages in January.

Making disciples of our youngest generation cannot be relegated to a couple of programs our church runs. It is the responsibility of every person of our church! We want all of our main church activities (worship, fellowship and nurture) to be kid-inclusive. The changes we are making show better that kids are important at FHUMC!

50th Anniversary Celebration!



On December 10th we will celebrate our church's 50th anniversary! This is the JUBILEE year! An anniversary team is planning special activities to commemorate this milestone.

In preparation for our celebration, all of October and November, we are asking for donations of dry food goods. Our goal is 50 each of 50 different food items! That's 2,500 food items! We believe we can reach this radical goal! On Dec. 4th, we will present all the food to Community Helping Hands amid great fanfare and press. Be watching, and check out the website, for more details!

On Dec. 10, we are planning a continental breakfast, a special worship service, a "1967 Potluck" for lunch, a program, and dessert for after lunch. To help fund this celebration, we are asking each member to contribute \$1.00 for each of the years that the member has been a part of FHUMC. Of course, all can contribute as called - more or less as circumstances dictate. Please consider this idea! If you are willing, simply make your contribution payable to FHUMC, designate it "50th Anniversary" and put it in the offering plate any Sunday.

Let's make December 10, 2017 a great JUBILEE day!

Annual Fall Craft Show!



Our annual craft show is coming up on October 28th, from 9am to 3pm! We are excited to be providing a luncheon (to include homemade soups, yummy baked goods, hot sandwiches, great Christmas ideas, and fun, original handmade crafts)! For more information, please see Amanda Lucas. See you there!