

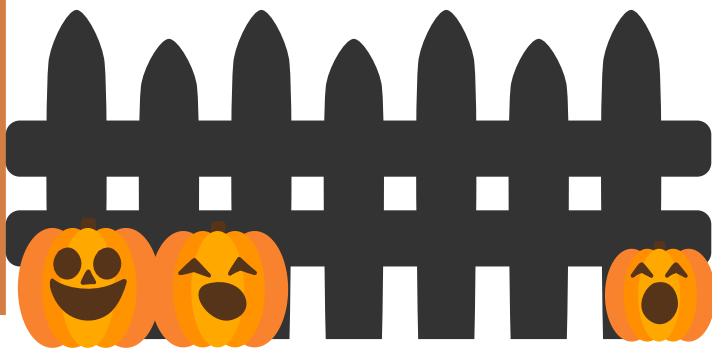
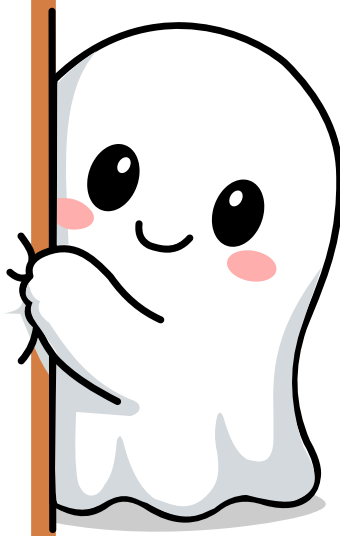
Oct 2026
EDITION 53



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hello





Born Again by Water and the Spirit

Greetings, brothers and sisters loved by God in Christ Jesus at Mount Olive.

Born again? How can a person be born again? This question was asked to Jesus by Nicodemus. Jesus answered that one must be born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of heaven (John 3:5).

Last month, we explored how the Word of God pierces into sinful hearts, creates faith, and gives new life, all by the work of the Holy Spirit. So, you were born again when you were brought to faith and given new life in Christ Jesus (Gal 2:16, 20; 2Cor 5:17; 1Peter 1:3-4).

In addition to new birth from the Spirit through faith, Jesus adds that you must be born again by water. This happens in Baptism. Baptism is a washing of water combined with God's Word of promise. The Word of God attached to Baptism promises salvation (Mark 16:16; 1Peter 3:21). And where there is salvation, there is also the forgiveness of sins, rescue from death and the devil, and the inheritance of everlasting life. A person is saved through faith (Rom 3:23-26; Eph 2:8-9) and Jesus assures you that Baptism also saves!

The same sharp and powerful Word of God which brings you to faith is the same Word at work in the waters of Baptism to drown your sin, crucify your sinful flesh, and raise you to new life in Jesus Christ. Baptism is freely given to you for your benefit, that you might be brought to new life and that you might be certain that you are a child of God, born again and adopted by Him.

God's Word declares that Baptism is a "washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5) and that it is a drowning and dying with Christ and a rising to new life (Rom 6:3-4). You were born again in your Baptism. You were given newness of life and made God's child, an heir of eternal life with Him. Baptism truly saves you because Jesus says so.

The benefits of Baptism don't deny that faith alone saves. This is no contradiction. A person is saved by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9), and Baptism saves you (1Peter 3:21). In Baptism, it is faith which hears the spoken Word of God and receives the benefits of the washing. In Baptism, God washes you clean and saves you by His Word.

Not only is there no contradiction, but there is no choice either. Jesus doesn't give you the option to be saved by faith through the Word or through the waters of Baptism. He commands you to be baptized and to hear and believe His Word (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 1:15). He wants you to receive from Him in both of these truly gracious and salvific ways! God, out of great love for you, pours out His saving grace through His preached Word and through Baptism.

Baptism is God's gift to you. For those of you who are baptized, rejoice in the certain comfort that God has claimed you as His own in the waters of Baptism. Live out your baptismal life daily by confessing your sins and crucifying your sinful flesh, and by rising to newness of life as you hear your Lord's forgiveness. Hold fast to the blessings of your Baptism and confidently await the everlasting life promised and given to you. The Holy Spirit empowers this life in you!



For those of you who are not yet baptized, hear your Lord's call to be baptized. He truly desires to live with you in eternity. This loving desire of His caused Him to give the gift of Baptism and attach to it the forgiveness of sins, salvation, and everlasting life Jesus won on the cross. He wants you to receive this certain comfort of salvation!

Baptism is a gift for eternal salvation and present comfort. May you receive it with joy and confidently live it out daily for strength of faith, comfort, and the hope of everlasting life.

This month, I encourage you to sing and meditate upon the hymn *All Who Believe and Are Baptized* (LSB 601) as part of your personal or family devotions. May the Lord bless you and give you confidence in the certain hope of eternal life.

In Christ,
Pastor Willweber



October 31st: Reformation Day and Halloween

Reformation Day – October 31

Reformation Day commemorates the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther is traditionally remembered for posting his 95 Theses in Wittenberg, Germany, calling for discussion and reform within the church. For Lutherans, the day especially recalls the centrality of God's grace, faith in Christ, and the authority of Scripture. It is an opportunity to give thanks for the Gospel and to remember the ongoing need for faithfulness in the Church.



Halloween – October 31



The word Halloween comes from “All Hallows’ Eve,” meaning the evening before All Saints’ Day (November 1). Historically, Christians observed this evening as part of the church calendar leading into All Saints’ Day, when the Church gives thanks for those who have died in the faith and celebrates God’s promise of eternal life in Christ.

For Christians today, Halloween has both religious and cultural expressions. Costumes, trick-or-treating, and other traditions are largely cultural rather than specifically Lutheran. Churches may use the occasion to emphasize Christ’s victory over sin and death, the hope of resurrection, and the promise of eternal life.



A Lutheran perspective: October 31 can therefore be a meaningful day to remember both the Reformation and the Gospel it proclaimed, while also looking toward All Saints’ Day and the Christian hope of life everlasting in Christ.

Our church celebrates **TRUNK OR TREAT** on Friday, October 23rd, 6:30 to 8:00pm. For more information to participate as a Trick or Treat sponsor, please contact the office at **310.489.1969**



The Night the Lanterns Smiled



Once upon a time, on a crisp autumn evening, the little town of Willow Creek glowed with warm orange light. It was October 31st, and the streets were filled with happy giggles, colorful costumes, and bright pumpkin lanterns.

Little Leo had spent the evening dressed as a friendly lion. He had marched around the block with his family, shared smiles with his neighbors, and collected a small basket of sweet treats. But as the stars began to twinkle in the cool night sky, Leo's paws grew heavy and his lion yawns grew big. It was time for bed.

Leo put on his favorite cozy pajamas and climbed under his warm, soft blankets. Outside his window, a soft breeze rustled the colorful fall leaves. For a moment, the shadowy branches outside looked a little strange in the moonlight. Leo pulled his blanket up to his chin.

His mother sat by his bed, stroked his hair, and smiled. "Do you know what night this is, Leo?" she whispered softly. "It's Halloween," Leo mumbled. "And sometimes the night looks a little spooky." "It can seem that way," his mother said gently. "But Halloween comes right before All Saints' Day—a time when we remember how bright God's light truly is. Long ago, people lit lamps in the dark to remind everyone that God's love shines through every shadow."

She pointed out the window to the porch across the street, where a friendly pumpkin lantern was glowing softly. "Look at the Jack-o'-lanterns," she said. "They aren't there to be scary. They are little lights smiling in the dark, reminding us that light always wins over the night."

Leo looked at the soft amber glow outside his window. The light felt warm, cozy, and safe. His mother held his hand and said a short bedtime prayer:

"God above, so bright and clear,
Keep us safe and hold us near.
Through the dark and through the night,
Fill our hearts with peace and light. Amen."

Leo gave one last big lion yawn. He realized that beneath the dark night sky, God's quiet peace was all around him — warmed by his blankets, guarded by his family, and kept safe in God's loving hands.

He closed his eyes, listened to the peaceful rustle of the autumn leaves, and drifted off into sweet, happy dreams.



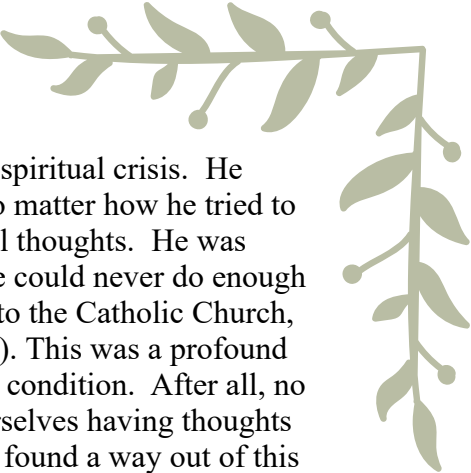
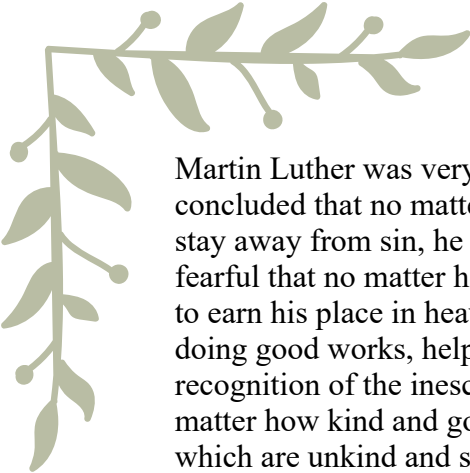
The Cause and the Effect of the Protestant Reformation

by Chief Elder Bill Dahlgren

So, if we go back to the year 1500, the Roman Catholic Church was very powerful (politically and spiritually) in Western Europe (and in fact ruled over significant territory in Italy called the Papal States). But there were other political forces at work too. There was the Holy Roman Empire (largely made up of German speaking regions ruled by princes, dukes and electors), the Italian city-states, England, as well as the increasingly unified nation states of France and Spain. The power of the rulers of these areas had increased in the previous century and many were anxious to take the opportunity offered by the Reformation to weaken the power of the papacy and increase their own power in relation to the Church in Rome and other rulers.

Keep in mind too, that for some time the Church has been seen as an institution plagued by internal power struggles (at one point in the late 1300s and 1400s, church was ruled by three Popes simultaneously). Popes and Cardinals often lived more like kings than spiritual leaders. Popes claimed temporal (political) as well as spiritual power. They commanded armies, made political alliances and enemies, and, sometimes, even waged war. Simony, (the selling of Church offices) and nepotism (favoritism based on family relationships) were rampant. Clearly, if the Pope was concentrating on these worldly issues, there wasn't as much time left for caring for the souls of the faithful. The corruption of the Church was well known, and several attempts had been made to reform the Church (notably by John Wyclif and Jan Hus), but none of these efforts successfully challenged Church practice until Martin Luther's actions in the early 1500s.

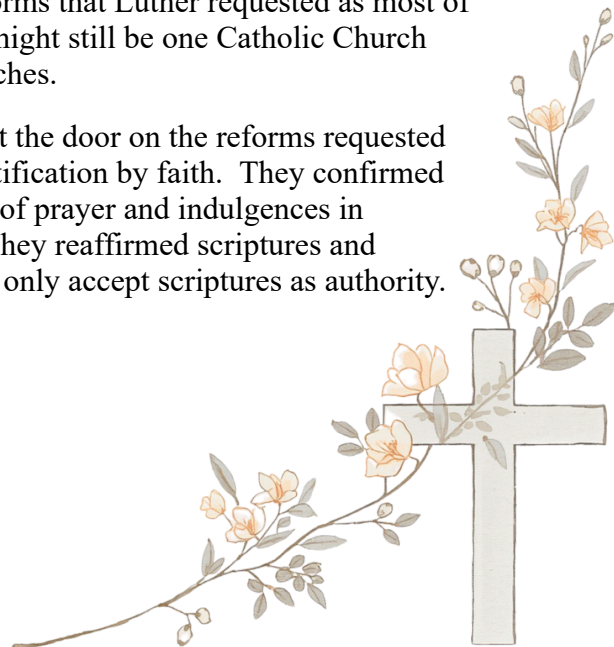
The greed and scandalous lives of the clergy had created a split between them and the peasants. Furthermore, the clergy did not respond to the population's needs because they did not speak the local language, or live in their own diocese. The papacy lost prestige. The recent invention of the printing press helped spread awareness of the Church's abuses, and coordinate a response. In 1515, the pope started a new indulgence campaign to raise money for the rebuilding of St. Peter's Basilica, a church in Rome. This was the last straw for Martin Luther, a Catholic monk from Germany. On October 31, 1517, he nailed 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg chapel on protest. Luther, who appeared as an enemy of the pope, was ex-communicated. Luther never planned to separate from the Catholic Church or to create a new religion, he wanted to reform the Catholic Church.

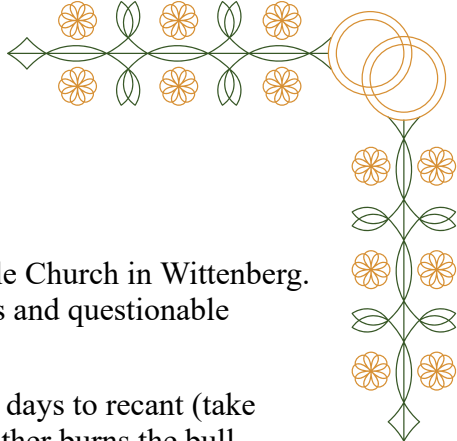
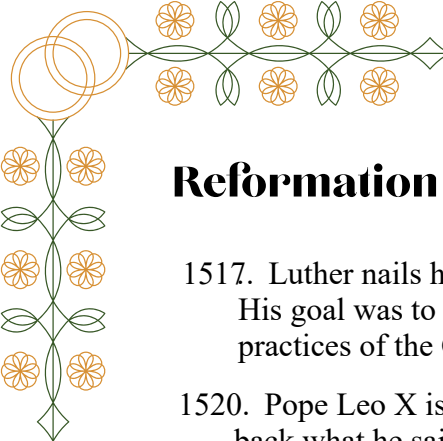


Martin Luther was very devout and had experienced a spiritual crisis. He concluded that no matter how “good” he tried to be, no matter how he tried to stay away from sin, he still found himself having sinful thoughts. He was fearful that no matter how many good works he did, he could never do enough to earn his place in heaven (remember that, according to the Catholic Church, doing good works, helped one gain entrance to heaven). This was a profound recognition of the inescapable sinfulness of the human condition. After all, no matter how kind and good we try to be, we all find ourselves having thoughts which are unkind and sometimes much worse. Luther found a way out of this problem when he read St. Paul, who wrote “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17). Luther understood this to mean that those who go to heaven (the just) will get there by faith alone - not by doing good works. In other words, God’s grace is something freely given to human beings, not something we can earn. For the Catholic Church on the other hand, human beings, through good works and faith in Christ, could go to heaven.

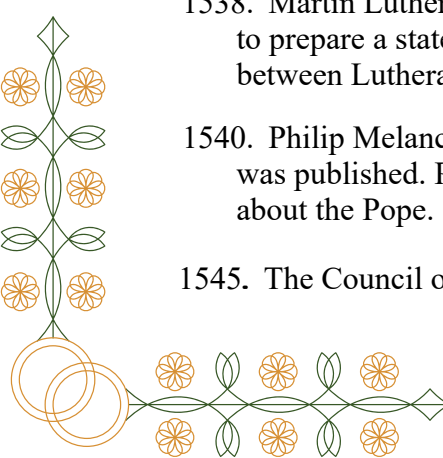
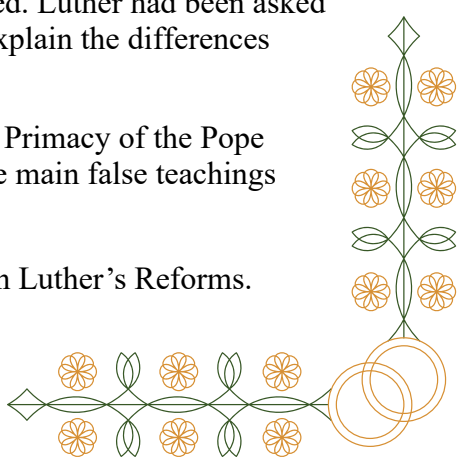
From 1517 to 1545 the Roman Catholic Church could have stopped the Reformation by accepting the reforms requested by Martin Luther. Luther never intended to break away from the Catholic Church. He only wanted to stimulate academic debate and draw attention to the practices of the church. In 2017 we celebrated the 500th year of the Reformation. Cardinal Dolan (the most influential US Cardinal) made a video for our celebration saying that Pope Leo X should have accepted the reforms that Luther requested as most of these reforms have now been made. We might still be one Catholic Church today instead of the many Protestant churches.

The Council of Trent met in 1545 and shut the door on the reforms requested by Martin Luther. The Council denied justification by faith. They confirmed the existence of Purgatory and usefulness of prayer and indulgences in shortening a person’s stay in Purgatory. They reaffirmed scriptures and Church traditions for authority. Lutherans only accept scriptures as authority.





Reformation Events

1517. Luther nails his 95 thesis to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. His goal was to start discussions about indulgences and questionable practices of the Catholic Church.
1520. Pope Leo X issued a papal bull giving Luther 60 days to recant (take back what he said) against the Catholic Church. Luther burns the bull.
1521. Luther was kicked out of the Catholic Church by Pope Leo X.
1526. Diet of Speyer. German princes were given the right to choose whether their territories would be Roman Catholic or Protestant.
1529. Luther publishes his large and small catechism.
1530. The Augsburg Confession was prepared by Philip Melanchthon to explain the Lutheran belief to the emperor Charles V. Charles V did not like what was in the Augsburg Confession and prepared his own statement, the Pontifical Confutation to explain what he thought was wrong with the Augsburg Confession. Philip Melanchthon takes 6 month to prepare Apology (defense) of the Augsburg Confession. Melanchthon works through each of the points of the Emperor's Confutation and explained the error in the Confutation and the truth in the Augsburg Confession.
1531. The Augsburg Confession and the Apology of the Augsburg Confession are published.
1538. Martin Luther's Smalcald Articles were published. Luther had been asked to prepare a statement of faith that would clearly explain the differences between Lutheran and Roman Catholic beliefs.
1540. Philip Melanchthon's Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope was published. Philip Melanchthon points out three main false teachings about the Pope.
1545. The Council of Trent meets and shuts the door on Luther's Reforms.
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Come Grow with Us at The Grove!

This year at The Grove, we're diving into **God's Living Water**, an exciting journey through the Bible—from Creation to the Early Church. Along the way, children will discover how God's people experienced His amazing grace and how His love has flowed throughout the whole story of Scripture.



Learn About the Love of Jesus in Small groups

At the center of everything is **Jesus, our Living Water**. His overflowing, soul-quenching grace surrounds us, refreshes us, and gives us new life.

Just as water is essential for living things to grow, God's love and grace help our faith grow strong. That is what The Grove is all about: providing a place where children can grow in faith, grow in their understanding of God's Word, and grow in their love for Jesus and one another.



Written by **Julie Kurtz**

This year's GROVE: God's Living Water – Covered in Jesus' Grace is for kids in pre-kindergarten through 6th grade. There are also opportunities for older kids (6th grade and up) to volunteer to be small group leaders and help with games and other aspects of the program. They can earn volunteer hours for school credit while they experience Jesus's Grace and spend time with friends.



The Grove starts Friday, September 18, 2026 and goes through March 12, 2027. You can start any time and friends are always welcome. For a registration form or more information contact Julie Kurtz (310-489-1969) jckurtz@gmail.com.

Join us on Friday nights as we learn, worship, play, and experience the life-giving grace of Jesus together!

PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES



Support Mount Olive Lutheran Preschool by purchasing a beautiful handmade air plant,  lovingly crafted by David Welch!  Your purchase directly benefits the preschool and helps support its wonderful students. 



PRESCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Written by Preschool Director David Welch

Our new school year opened with over 55 families, compared to 43 last September. We had an excellent year, with over 75 families enrolled by the end of July. We are excited for a new beginning, and we are praying for our new pastor.

Our families are fantastic, and word of mouth has produced around 95% of our business growth. We closed one of our classrooms and turned it into an art studio and prayer center.



Hazel enjoys finding a caterpillar at school.



Sophia enjoys helping in the school garden.



Our monthly Christian curriculum consists of the following stories: God Made the World and the Plants, God Made Animals and People, God Calls Abraham, and Abraham is Blessed.



Our Discovery Point says that God gives us nighttime to enjoy and rest because God has shown us how much he loves us in Jesus. We can also be sure of His love and care for us through the night.

photos & written by David Welch





CALENDAR



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
					Grove 6:30pm	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bible Class 9am Worship 10am	ESL Class 9:30am	Confirmation 5pm	Preschool Chapel 9:15am Bible Study 7pm		Grove 6:30pm	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Bible Class 9am Worship 10am	ESL Class 9:30am		Preschool Chapel 9:15am Bible Study 7pm		Grove 6:30pm	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Bible Class 9am Worship 10am	ESL Class 9:30am	Confirmation 5pm	Family Chapel 9:15am Bible Study 7pm		Trunk OR Treat 6:30pm	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Bible Class 9am Worship 10am	ESL Class 9:30am		Preschool Chapel 9:15am Bible Study 7pm			

Holidays and Observances: Columbus Day (12), Halloween (31)

Homemade
CRAFTS MADE EASY



Editor's Message

Greetings, Mount Olive!

Blessings to you, MOLC congregation! Thank you for taking the time to read the 53rd Edition of the Mount Olive Press.

I hope you enjoyed reading this newsletter. For anyone who would like to contribute to next month's newsletter, don't hesitate to send an email to office@mtoliverpv.com

Additionally, if you are new to the congregation, or have not had the chance to introduce yourself, don't be shy! We would love to hear from you.

Thank you for all of those who contributed to this newsletter: Chief Elder Bill Dahlgren, Preschool Director David Welch, President Ulrike Ziegner Hokanson, Youth Director Julie Kurtz, and Pastor Cory Willweber.

It is always nice to get a newsletter and learn something new each time.

God Bless!



Lauralee Lapid





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SCAN ME



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