

NOVEMBER 2023



## St. John Journey

[www.stjohnabingdon.org](http://www.stjohnabingdon.org)

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### Council President's Corner

Every year since I can remember, the last Sunday of October is set aside as Reformation Sunday. I grew up with this tradition, but have to admit that as a young person (at least into my early to mid-teens), I just knew that the paraments finally changed from green to red that Sunday. If you didn't grow up with this practice, you may wonder why congregations keep this tradition, and where it comes from.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Roman Catholic Church (church) distributed what were known as indulgences to anyone making a financial contribution to help a loved one out of purgatory. In a nutshell, the church claimed that even those bound for heaven had to be cleansed of their earthly sins, and this cleansing took place in a place called purgatory. The certificates or "indulgences" offered by the church essentially were necessary to lessen the cleansing time for those who had died. Additionally, one could buy these certificates in advance of one's own death. Basically, the church laid a guilt trip on relatives of loved ones who passed away. As you can imagine, the church raked in money and used this money for things like rebuilding St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Whereas the practice was wide-spread, there were some people who thought the practice essentially amounted to people paying the church to be forgiven.

One of these people was Martin Luther. Although he was a Roman Catholic priest, he objected to the practice of selling indulgences and argued that we are not forgiven by anything we do (including purchasing indulgences), but rather because of God's grace and mercy. On October 31, 1517 Luther posted his 95 theses. These theses provided reasons why he objected to the practice of selling indulgences, and ultimately was the catalyst for the Reformation.

I'm grateful for Richard Brumleve for writing the manuscript for our Reformation Sunday skit. October 31, 1517 was a long time ago, but we need to remember why—why does Reformation Sunday matter? I found some interesting information on a church website that I'll paraphrase.

First, Reformation Sunday gives us a chance to not only tell our story, but an opportunity to remember how some of the early reformers risked everything so that we can gather and worship the way we do. We all have a history, a story of how we got to this point in life. I told my story on Reformation Sunday as part of a stewardship temple talk. Reformation Sunday can also be a day when we remember and re-tell stories about our families and our own faith formation.

Second, Reformation Sunday reminds us of the most important things in church—most notably the habits of our faith that point to what we believe. On this particular day, we are reminded of the things that were so important to Martin Luther, that he risked his life telling anyone who would listen that God's grace is a free gift, and not a commodity we can buy.

Finally, Reformation Sunday challenges us to do better. We are called to be grace-filled, because God is gracious and loving to us. God gave us Jesus Christ—the ultimate gift of grace. His grace is a free gift. Our very being is a gift from God. We need to be givers too. Reformation Sunday is a reminder that the grace and mercy given to us in Christ Jesus is the bedrock of our faith.

So, this community we commonly call church, has a common denominator—Martin Luther's courage to post his 95 theses 506 years ago this October 31<sup>st</sup>. As Lutherans, it is important for us to remember, but equally important for us to live what Luther believed and taught. As he stated in number 62 of the 95 theses, "the true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God."

Happy Reformation Day!

Peace and Blessings,  
Bill



## Prayer Chain

Joanna Wolfe  
Kathy Smith  
Bob Murphy  
Richard Brumleve  
Joel Rosen  
Dallas Church  
Jim Suhrbier

Bridgette Smith  
Peg Curphey  
Erik Flynn  
Taulbee Cherry

Prayers of Christian Sympathy for the family and friends of Marty Dunn, who passed away on Nov. 21st.

We pray for all on the front lines: doctors, nurses, medical personnel.

We pray for the homebound: Vickianne Dotten, Ann Godsey, Barbara Wright, Nancy King, Betsy Bohham.

If you have names to add (or ones to be taken off) the prayer chain, please email Joan at the church office.

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**Thursday Nov. 2nd 11:30-1:30 Lunchtime Gathering with Heather Bland, CEO of My Refuge House. Sandwiches and hors d'oeuvres served.**

**Sunday Nov. 5th---Consecration Sunday. Please bring your pledge to church if you have not already sent it to the Financial Secretary.**

**Time Changes Sunday Nov. 5th--set your clocks BACK one hour Saturday night or Sunday morning.**

**Sunday Nov. 12th--Baptism of Adeline Posey.**

**Tapestry Meeting Nov. 14th 7PM on Zoom**  
Meeting ID: [895 6259 4566](#)  
Passcode: 326300

**Harvest Sunday--Nov. 19th--bring canned goods to leave at the altar--they will be taken to Faith in Action Food Pantry**

### November Birthdays

Nov. 2--Madison Wellenhoffer  
Nov. 7--Helen Findley  
Nov. 8--Michelle Morris  
Nov. 14--Henry Davis

**If we missed your November birthday, please let the church office know.**

### Volunteers for November

Sunday November 5  
Lay Asst.: Linda Garnett , Lector: Charlie Garnett  
Ushers: , Altar Guild:

Sunday November 12  
Lay Asst :Joan Shaver, Lector :Amanda Meacham  
Ushers: Katie Gifford , Altar Guild:

**Thursday Nov. 23rd--Thanksgiving Day.**  
**Please be aware that the church office will be closed Thursday and Friday, Nov. 23-24.**

**FOOD PANTRY--Nov. 27-Dec. 1**

**St. John serves at the Food Pantry the week of Nov. 27-Dec.1. Volunteers needed on Monday 9AM-1PM, Tuesday 406PM, and Friday 9AM-1PM.**



Sunday November 19  
Lay Asst.: Ed Davis, Lector: Dave Morris  
Ushers: , Altar Guild:

Sunday November 26  
Lay Asst.: Ken Croghan, Lector: Doris Vaught  
Ushers: Sue Croghan, Don Williams , Altar Guild:

Sign-up sheets for Usher and Altar Guild are on the bulletin board. There is also one for after church snacks.

Please find someone to trade with if you cannot serve your assigned Sunday.