



DISTRICT NEWS

KANSAS

Reformation 500: Luther on Trial

“I recant.”

Imagine having to say those words with respect to your Christian beliefs. And what if the highest authority in the Church was insisting that you disavow your core convictions or risk being imprisoned or even tortured to death?



Rev. Peter K. Lange
District President

Such was the predicament facing Martin Luther in October 1518, 500 years ago, when he was summoned to appear before Cardinal Cajetan, a powerful church authority, in the city of Augsburg, Germany. The charge: Heresy — notorious and public. The standard punishment for condemned heretics: Burning at the stake.

This episode in Luther’s life isn’t nearly as high profile as the posting of the 95 Theses, but it’s nonetheless well worth remembering as part of an ongoing “Reformation 500” celebration. Luther faced serious consequences for his 95 Theses, yet he confidently and resolutely entrusted his situation to the will of God.

Since October 1517, the angry reaction of church authorities to Luther’s 95 Theses had been growing. By early June 1518, charges were drawn up against Luther at the Vatican, accusing him of



Cardinal Cajetan questions Luther.

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suspicion of heresy, disdain for ecclesiastical power and lack of respect for the papal power of the keys.

Then came the summons. On Aug. 7, 1518, Luther was ordered to appear in Rome within 60 days to answer for his 95 Theses. Out of concern for his safety and a fair hearing, Luther attempted to get the proceedings moved from Rome to Germany. With help from his political ruler and protector, Frederick the Wise, the pope finally granted permission for Luther to appear before Cardinal Cajetan in Augsburg rather than Rome.

On Oct. 7, Luther arrived in Augsburg for his three-day hearing, which began on Oct. 12. On the first day of the proceedings, Cajetan laid three demands before Luther. First, Luther had to

return to the heart of the church. Second, he must retract his errors. Third, he must refrain from these errors in the future, and from everything that would disturb the church. Luther had come expecting to debate, but Cajetan made it clear that the purpose of the proceedings was simply to hear him recant.

But Luther wouldn’t recant, asserting that he couldn’t do so without first being refuted by Scripture. He also objected to Cajetan having appealed to a papal decree the day before. For Luther, Scripture should be the supreme authority by which everything else is tested — a powerful reminder for us all!

On the last day of his hearing, Luther once again made it clear that Scripture stands above any canon (church) law or

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Planning a big gathering?



Consider the **DISTRICT RETREAT CENTER**

Since 2009, the Kansas District has operated a Retreat Center in Herington, a place for church workers and laity alike to get away in a peaceful setting. We checked in recently with **Rev. Mark and Kristi Lovett**, the Retreat Center property managers, to find out more about this district resource.

You started managing the Retreat Center in 2017. What prompted you to say yes to the job?

First and perhaps most influential in our decision is that we've used the Retreat Center for several years now for our own family reunion. So our kids, nieces and nephews have grown up going to the "Big Brown House" as they call it, and we don't want to see it go away.

We also wanted to help the Kansas District, and this is a way we can. And we've been pretty successful at it. I think we've seen close to a 45 percent increase in usage from the previous year.

What are the biggest selling points of the Retreat Center?

We're not sure there is a "biggest selling point." But if you forced us to narrow it down, we'd say it's the venue itself. It's like going to a resort where the whole goal is to get you to sit down, take a load off and relax.

There's fishing and swimming, even boating if you have a boat, or kayaking. But there's also sitting around a fire on a big piece of tree-surrounded land and enjoying being away from it all.

Second, it's not expensive, especially for what it is. Similar venues are easily two or three times as expensive. Our extended family of about 30 people comes here every year and everyone has a bed. The kitchen is never crowded. The living room is never crowded. The kids never say "I'm bored."

Who uses the Retreat Center?

Lots of people, for lots of reasons. Families use it — family reunions probably make up half to two-thirds of our bookings. Churches use it for youth retreats, singles retreats, staff retreats. There's an annual men's group that uses it to study and have fellowship together. Individuals use it for quiet getaways.

We think a lot of people don't think about it or use it because they think it's here only for professional reasons. But that's not

▲ The Kansas District Retreat Center has hosted a variety of events in the past year, including the Pastors Wives Retreat in March. "The Kansas District Retreat Center is pleasant," said Rev. Mark Lovett, who manages the property with wife Kristi (who is pictured in the back row, third from left). "It's a home as much as it is a Retreat Center."

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really the case. Churches and auxiliary groups use it and they have services here, but most of its use comes from families who need a less expensive vacation. And that's awesome.

Tell us a little bit about Herington.

Herington is a small town, but there are several restaurants, even award-winning ones. It's got its own museum and historical society. The town has a public pool and a few parks, and one even has a fishing lake itself! There's a skateboard park and one of only four original-style malt makers in Kansas, which is in the local pharmacy.

What are some of the improvements to the Retreat Center over the last year?

We've purchased new, better-built beds. We've replaced old, worn-out things like towels and such. We replaced the old sofas in the Great Room. We've fixed the broken fixtures and made some other minor repairs.

But perhaps the biggest improvement we've made are intangibles. We've seriously streamlined the booking process. Guests can check which days are available right on the district website and even send us a request for days from the website. The user agreement is now handled via email rather than snail mail. And we have guest feedback forms that are optional.

In the last year, we've gotten a lot of compliments about how much cleaner and more put together the Retreat Center looks and feels. So I guess we've made some good improvements.

What would you like to see happen with the Retreat Center?

Really, we'd like to see the Retreat Center become what it already is in name: the Kansas District Retreat Center. It's a great place that, sort of surprisingly, is not all that well known to our Kansas District congregations and members. We'll keep working on getting it out there for people to know about and use.

It's a really great thing our district has, and we'd hate to see it either go to waste or go away altogether. In fact, it's so great that we've started to get calls from other districts about it. No joke.

Welcome new educators!



◀ **Rhonda Beethe** was installed as teacher at Good Shepherd Lutheran School, Marysville, on Aug. 13.

Kelsey Adcock ▶ was commissioned and installed as teacher at Hope, Shawnee, on Aug. 19.



From left, Kansas District Education Executive James Bradshaw is pictured with **Shannon Manley** and **Allison Miller**, who were installed by Bradshaw as teachers at Bethany Lutheran Church and School, Overland Park, on Aug. 12.

Topeka Lutheran School teachers **Joshua and Erin Grass** were installed on Aug. 12



David Rindt (right) was installed as principal of Christ Lutheran School, Overland Park, on Aug. 19. He is pictured with Rev. Jeffrey Kunze, Christ pastor.

Future teachers receive scholarships

On Aug. 12 (from left), **Mikayla Lowe, Monica Lennington** and **Jayne Lowe**, members of Trinity, Atchison, were each awarded a \$2,500 scholarship from Trinity's Lutheran Memorial Scholarship Fund. The three women are attending Concordia University, Nebraska, where they're studying to be teachers.



MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

pronouncement of the pope, and he argued strenuously for the necessity of the certainty of faith in receiving the sacrament and in justification. Cajetan was not persuaded. At the end of the day, he dismissed Luther with the words, "Go, and do not come back to me, unless you want to recant."

Luther didn't come back. Shortly after the hearing, he left Augsburg secretly and in haste to avoid being arrested. On Oct. 31 — one year to the day after posting the 95 Theses — Luther arrived safely back in Wittenberg, determined to continue confessing the centrality of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone and the preeminent place of Scripture, above all human authorities, in matters of faith and life.

To us today this may seem "old hat," but to Luther and his contemporaries this was a radical and world-changing return to the faith once delivered.

May we also be granted the grace and courage to keep God's Word and its Gospel center first in our lives and to confess the same, no matter the cost.

Source note: I'm indebted to Martin Brecht's excellent biography of Luther for many of the details of this account.

Circuit Reformation Festival 2018

October 28
Grace Lutheran Church
3310 E Pawnee, Wichita, KS 67218

4 p.m. Divine Service
5:30 p.m. Banquet with lecture by Rev. Dr. William Weinrich
7:30 p.m. Closing prayer

Banquet tickets are \$15; children 10 and under eat free. RSVP to Grace by Oct. 23 at 316-685-6781 or graceoffice@glc.scsoxmail.com.



79th Annual Kansas District LLL Convention

Mark your calendars! The Kansas District LLL Convention is scheduled for Nov. 3 at Messiah Lutheran Church, Hayes. The convention will begin at 12:30 p.m., with registration opening at 10:30 a.m. A banquet will be held at 6 p.m.

Featured speakers for the event include:

- ▶ **Polly Gregali**, LHM Ministry Resource manager
- ▶ **Bervin Mirtsching**, LHM Ministry Advancement officer
- ▶ **Jason Broge**, associate director, LHM Design and Development

Messiah is located at 2000 Main St.

Fees are \$15 for the convention and \$15 for the banquet. **Registration should be submitted by Oct. 13.**

For more information and a registration form, go to lhm-ks.org and click "District Convention" on the left side of the page.



Send your photos and announcements to:

- ▶ kbruss@kslcms.org
- ▶ Lutheran Witness Editor
LCMS Kansas District
1000 SW 10th Ave.
Topeka, KS 66604

The deadline for the **December** issue is **Oct. 15**.

Photos should be in high-resolution with a minimum 300 dpi.

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