



On **June 25th** each year, the Church gives thanks to God for the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession before Emperor Charles V in 1530. Thirteen years before (Oct. 31, 1517) Luther had posted the Ninety-five Theses on the Castle Church door in Wittenberg. Martin Luther was unable to present before the emperor since he was considered an outlaw. The work of presenting before the emperor would be done by others.

Much of what the Lutherans intended to present before the emperor was already prepared. When they arrived at Augsburg to explain their teachings as drawn from the Scripture, Philipp Melanchthon and the Lutherans were shocked by the false accusations about them and their teachings. Now Philipp Melanchthon was put under great pressure to draft The Augsburg Confession. It is interesting to note, even before the Internet, technology and the rapid rate news travels today, false accusations would spread quickly and be digested as truth without a fair hearing. Philipp Melanchthon served His Lord and Church well with his drafting of The Augsburg Confession.

The true beliefs and teachings of the confessors is evident in these words from Article XXI, paragraph 1. "This then is nearly a complete summary of our teaching. As can be seen, there is nothing that varies from the Scriptures or from the Church universal... Since this is the case, those who insist that our teachers are to be regarded as heretics are judging harshly."

The Augsburg Confession for us within Lutheranism is the foundational statement of our theology, that is, the truth we believe, teach and confess from God's Word. The Confession itself is drawn from the Word the final authority on all matters of life. The center of our faith in Scripture is Christ and the teaching of justification of sinners by grace alone. The work of Jesus on His cross justifies us before God through faith, for the sake of Christ, the Savior. God declares us righteous for Christ's sake, our sins are given to Christ and His righteousness is credited to us. This is the great exchange, our sin given to Christ and His righteousness given to us; the mercy and love of God given through Jesus our Savior. **"For our sake God made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him (Christ) we might become the righteousness of God" 2 Corinthians 5:21.** It is Jesus **"who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification" Romans 4:25.**

The Augsburg Confession was presented as a Scriptural, peaceful confession of faith before the emperor. Originally, it was intended as speaking for the Saxons only, but as many German leaders read it, they also believed it was confessing the truth of God's Word, therefore, they signed their names to it making it their Confession of faith also.

On June 25, 1530, many brave Lutheran laymen confessed the faith they believed from Scripture stating this was what they believed and taught by the grace of God from His Word. Through the Word alone, they boldly confessed Christ before rulers as found in **Psalm 119:46, "I will also speak of your testimonies before kings and shall not be put to shame."**

We can rely on these words today in a world that rejects every truth of God's Word. Just as the Lutheran confessors, who gathered at Augsburg to state what they believed, taught and confessed, found that much radical false information had been spread about their teachings, so it is today, that the sinful, unbelieving world makes false claims about Christianity, Christians and Scripture. As with the time of Luther and all throughout human history, our calling as faithful Christians is to boldly, firmly, and with Christian love, (looking at all others as people for whom Christ died) make our confession of faith from the Word alone to a world that needs to hear about Jesus and what He has done by His death and resurrection. To that end, we are called to "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest God's Word..." and to grow in our faith and knowledge in learning God's Word and the teachings that give us Christ.

While we are not gathered for Sunday morning Bible class during the summer, I encourage you to study God's Word, reading the Scriptures daily, and learn more about our church history from The Book of Concord containing The Augsburg Confession and the other confessions and teachings of the Reformation drawn from God's Word. We fear and love God by "taking time to reflect on His Word" as we learn in the explanation to the Third Commandment in the Catechism. **Psalm 119:105** teaches, **"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."** And Paul says, in **Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."**

God's blessings to you all as you study God's Word.

In Christ, Pastor Ahrendt