

69th Annual Reformation Service at Town and Country Lutheran Church in Sacramento

We had a wonderful Reformation Service at Town and Country Lutheran Church in Sacramento, California on the afternoon of October 26th. Dr. Lawrence Rast, President of Concordia Theological Seminary and Professor of American Christianity and American Lutheranism was our guest speaker. The procession started with the singing of "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." After The Apostles Creed, we sang, "All Praise to Thee, For Thou, O King Divine." Joyce Scolnick and Debbie Weber sang a Duet entitled "David's Song." The Hymn of the Day is a Lutheran favorite, "Thy Strong Word," followed by Dr. Rast's sermon, entitled, "Posting the Message on the World's Door." The sermon text was the Gospel Lesson, John 8:31-36. The Recessional hymn was "Lift High The Cross."

Dr. Rast joined the Department of Historical Theology in the fall of 1996 after serving as pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church, Madison, Tennessee from 1992 to 1996. He received his B.A. from Concordia College, River Forest, Illinois in 1986, and his M.Div. in 1990 and his S.T.M in 1995 from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. In 2003, he earned his Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. Dr. Rast is a member of the Board of Directors for the journal Lutheran Quarterly and of the editorial committee of the Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly. He is a faculty representative on the LCMS's Commission on Theology from 2006 to present, and has been the chairman of that commission since 2010.

The Annual Reformation Service is presented each year by the Sacramento Valley Zone 4 and 19 of the Lutheran Laymen's League of the California/Nevada/Hawaii District of the LCMS. The members of this group are Lutheran Hour Ambassadors in their own congregations. Our Pastoral Advisor is Rev. Alan Flynn, of Messiah Lutheran Church in Citrus Heights, California, and our president of Zones 4 and 19 is Dr. Gilbert McMillan, a retired high school teacher, who lives in Foresthill, about 55 miles north of the state capital of Sacramento.

On the Friday before our Reformation service, there was a police chase that affected both Dr. Rast and Dr. Gilbert McMillan. That morning there was a police shooting in Sacramento killing a police officer in Sacramento and led a police chase up to the Auburn/Foresthill area where a Placer County police officer was killed. Dr. Rast, who was travelling north Highway Interstate 80 towards Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Rocklin, had to pull over while the police chase was going on. Meanwhile, our LLL zone president was a substitute high school teacher in Auburn, and when news of the shooting reached the schools in the Auburn area, Dr. McMillan and his class remained down on the floor for several hours, in fear that a gunman might fire into one of the classrooms. Sacramento County Sheriff's Deputy Danny Oliver, 47, was shot and killed as the deputy approached a car the suspect was in. "The couple, armed with an AR-15 rifle and at least two pistols, then allegedly took off and carjacked two other vehicles, shot a motorist who resisted giving up his car and fled to Auburn, authorities said. There, two Placer County deputies confronted them along a roadway and (the suspect) shot and killed (Placer County) Detective Michael Davis Jr. and wounded (another deputy)."

Our LLL Zone 4 & 19 started this endeavor in 1945 to bring together Lutherans from the five county's we serve; Sacramento, Eldorado, Yolo, Placer and Nevada; bringing them together in celebration for what the Lutheran Reformation means to Confessional Christians of the LCMS. This was our 69th continuous service, being held at Town and Country Lutheran Church in Sacramento, California.

For a number of years, the service was held at Governor's Hall of the California State Fair Grounds until it became too expensive to rent the facilities. We moved to local LCMS church facilities in the late

1950's, and have utilized Town and Country Lutheran Church since 1969. Over these many years we have invited well known pastors of the LCMS to be our preachers. Among them have been District presidents; Seminary presidents – Dr. Jacob A. O. Preus, Dr. Dean O. Wenthe, and teaching staff, synod presidents, Speakers of the Lutheran Hour including Drs. Oswald Hoffman, Wallace Schulz, Dr. Dale Meyer, Rev. Kenneth Klaus, and last year, Dr. Paul Maier. This year we were delighted to have Dr. Lawrence Rast, President of Concordia Theological Seminary. Next year, 2015, our preacher will be the current Lutheran Hour Speaker, Rev. Gregory Seltz. We welcome you to join us at Town and Country Lutheran Church in Sacramento on 25 October, 2015 at 4:00pm

Offerings from our Reformation Services have been given to the Lutheran Hour/Lutheran Laymen's League projects; Synod and District projects; Seminary needs, along with Concordia University Projects sponsored by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. Normally, a good portion of our offerings go to the organizations that our current speaker represents. This year the group gave one half of the offering to our host, Town and Country Lutheran Church, for the many years of service to the Reformation without charge.

At our services we utilize local LCMS pastors for our liturgists, Old and New Testament and the Holy Gospel readers, along with noted organists. As usual, we had a lovely choir whose members came from many of the local congregations, a hand-bell choir, children's choirs and a Duet.

It is our desire that we serve our Lord of the Church and the Lutheran Laymen's League in our Annual Reformation Services. We pray that those in attendance leave each service with their Faith strengthened; ready to face each day knowing that their Lord Jesus is with them always.

It has been our custom for many years for the small group planning the Reformation Service from Zone 4 and 19 of the California-Nevada-Hawaii District Lutheran Laymen's League to take our speakers out to dinner after the service. This was no exception. This is a time for all to relax and enjoy each other's company, and to thank our speaker.

You may listen to Dr. Rast's Reformation sermon at www.cnh-lhm.org. At the same website you can also listen to last year's Reformation sermon by the renowned church historian, Dr. Paul L. Maier.