

OUR MISSION

Luther Classical College educates Lutherans in the classical, Lutheran tradition and prepares them for godly vocations within family, church, and society, fostering Christian culture through study of the best of our Western heritage.

PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION



On October 4, LCC celebrated the inauguration of Rev. Dr. Timothy Rossow as the new President of Luther Classical College. Please join us in praying for Rev. Dr. Rossow, that his service at LCC may be a blessing to many, to the church, and pleasing to our Lord, Jesus Christ.

SUPPORT LCC

Luther Classical College delivers a classical, Lutheran education and thoroughly Lutheran culture to its students at a cost that is truly affordable, allowing the next generation of Lutherans to thrive in their vocations. This important work is made possible by the generous support we receive from you, our brothers and sisters in Christ. If you are not yet a monthly donor, sign up and become a patron today at lutherclassical.org/donate/patron-give/.

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lutherclassical.org

Have thoughts on this month's *Ad Fontes*? Contact us at support@lutherclassical.org or (307) 216-5294.

LUTHER CLASSICAL COLLEGE
514 S BEECH ST
CASPER, WY 82601



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AD FONTES
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REFORMATION POINTS US BACK

BY REV. DR. CHRISTIAN PREUS

Rev. Dr. Preus serves as Senior Pastor of Mt. Hope Lutheran Church & School in Casper, Wyoming. He also sits on the Board of Regents of Luther Classical College and is currently teaching Greek to pre-seminary students at LCC.

THE REFORMATION WAS NOT A RE-FORMING OF THE CHURCH INTO SOMETHING NEW.

That "re" in Reformation points us back. That's what "re" means in Latin: back. The Reformation formed the church back to what it used to be.

There is an old saying, "the church always needs to be reformed" (*ecclesia semper reformanda*), and liberal, unthinking, or perhaps sinisterly thinking, theologians have suggested that this means we need to keep moving with the times, re-forming the church to suit modern sensibilities. But it's quite the opposite. Exactly the opposite. The fact is that contemporary ideologies and faddish thinking continually seep into the church and try to form it in an unbiblical direction. The task of "always reforming" is the task of always going back to what the church is.

The question is: what is that? What has the church always been? What was it from the beginning?

It's ironic and tragic that people will try to find the answer to this question by looking at anything except the Bible. So we see the trend today of Lutherans (including Lutheran pastors) leaving the Lutheran Church for the Roman Catholic Church or the Eastern Orthodox Church. The reason is always the same. They find something more "ancient" or "traditional" there.

We need to call foul here for two reasons. First, the Roman Catholic Church is not a traditional church. It literally changes its doctrine and practice continually. They used to teach the existence of limbo (where unbaptized babies go, instead of hell or heaven). Now, by decree, it stopped existing. Amazing! The Roman Catholic Church used to say that you could only go to heaven if you were baptized and knowingly confessed Christ. Now they say that a Muslim who is a really good guy will get into heaven, or a Jew, because he sincerely believed his Talmud, or a pagan, because he treats his wife well and is a good father to his children. The Roman Catholic Church changes with the times. That's not traditional, conservative, or ancient.

What about the Eastern Orthodox Church? They still have many of the old liturgical prayers and ceremonies, and unlike the Roman Catholic Church, they don't constantly feature lady lectors and girl communion assistants at their Supper, but they base their teaching not on the Bible, but on tradition that is simply new in comparison with the Bible. The Eastern Orthodox have no doctrine of original sin. The atonement for them is not Christ answering the wrath of God against sin. It is only a victory over death and a healing of human nature. What is left looks old, looks ancient, but looks are deceiving.

Second, it is simply and obviously the truth that the Bible came before any other church traditions. Martin Chemnitz calls the Bible the most ancient tradition. It is. Tradition is what is handed down to us. What could be more ancient, more genuine tradition, than the words of Jesus Himself?

What could be more ancient than the words He gave His Spirit to inspire the apostles to write? If you are looking for the oldest tradition, you have to begin and then end with the Bible.

That is what reformation is about. It's what the Reformation was about. "The church always needs to be reformed" means we need to continually form it back to what Jesus gives us in His Word. If feminism teaches us that women should preach publicly and have authority in the church, and this seeps into the church, then we reform, we go back to St. Paul's words, inspired by the Holy Spirit, that teach men to be men and lead the church in love (1 Tim. 2:12). If wokism teaches that a man can be a woman or a woman a man, and this seeps into the church, then we reform, we go back to the words of Jesus who said, "From the beginning it was not so. God made them male and female" (Matt. 19:8). When sappy pop rock seeps into the church, so that praise bands run the church service, then we reform, we go back to the words of Paul, "Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4:1). If it becomes unpopular to talk about sin and judgement, and that seeps into the church, and pastors shrink away from condemning sin and proclaiming Christ the atonement for them all, then we reform, and return to St. John's words, "If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:1-2).

We Lutherans are Lutherans because we believe in reformation. And that is not a freedom to change with the times. It is a commitment, the heritage of our Baptism, to always go back to God's Word and find there our greatest tradition, our everlasting hope, and our salvation, bought by the blood of our God.