

## **From Our Pastor – OCTOBER 2017**

### **REFORMATION SUNDAY**

*“The word of God is living and active; ...it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” Hebrews 5:12*

While every Sunday worship is special – the most treasured day of my week, I want to set one Sabbath celebration apart. October 29th is the 500th Anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation, for it was on October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany.

One of the central issues of the Reformation was the right –indeed, the responsibility – of all people to be able to read and study the Scriptures in their own language. The Roman Catholic Church had kept the Scriptures in Latin, thus preventing uneducated folks from having access to them, intending thereby to protect the sacred text from the vulgar thoughts and self-serving rituals of common ordinary people. The Church told them what God was saying to them and how they were to interpret it and respond to it.

That fear proved to be unfounded, for what the Protestant Reformation discovered was that when common people read the Scriptures for themselves the Holy Spirit did exactly what Jesus promised it would do. It worked in devotional experience to inspire meaning, unfold mysteries, and guide believers in right conduct.

Furthermore, the followers of Christ in every age were liberated from the curse of what we now call *group think!* ...the pattern of controlled thought that stifles imagination and destroys creativity. We discovered in the last 500 years that there is great variety of expression and diversity of perception in the revelations that come from the text, inevitably addressing the readers personally and passionately about the lives they are living, about the world in which they are struggling, while all the while holding up the authority of God that inspired the sacred text and inspires its readers as well.

We will begin our *Thank God It's Friday! Bible Study* on Friday, November 3rd, and will be studying the scripture reading for the previous Sunday's worship experience. The theme for that first Bible study will therefore be Reformation Sunday. What a perfect time to return to the Word of God with open minds, grateful hearts, and gladdened spirits for the wonderful gift that our Protestant Reformers provided for the ages.

David