“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen” (Galatians 1:3-5). Yesterday was a special day for those in the Lutheran Church. It is not like celebrating Reformation Day with Martin Luther. That event has one voice unafraid to preach the Gospel. June 25th, 1530 dealt with many more voices surrounding that Gospel. The presentation of the Augsburg Confession before Emperor Charles V was a document presented by lay people, but crafted by pastors. They wrote,

“…We offer and present a confession of our pastors’ and preachers’ teaching and of our own faith, setting forth how and in what manner, on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, these things are preached, taught, communicated, and embraced in our lands, principalities, dominions, cities, and territories” (Tappert 25:8).

Augsburg, Germany was where the first united Lutheran confession of the true catholic faith shined forth in a world of darkness.

Those dark days are upon us today. We can only ride the wave of others for so long. Their bold confession of the Gospel must become what we will boldly confess. Coming together as a dual parish is a good place to have this light shine once again. Trinity has a name after the only true God who graciously gives the Gospel to save a sinful world. Concordia has a name for the unity of love that we as Lutherans share in confessing the Gospel to others in the world. As Sioux Valley and Lake Park communities continue to change. Jesus still keeps giving His Word and Sacrament in our churches as a promise outweighing the pains. What holds us together at all times and in all places is God’s Son, our Savior. In order firmly to believe in Him above everything else Jesus says, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.” As with those during the time of the Augsburg Confession, we today experience disturbance caused by the Gospel. The sword of God’s Word goes out into the world with the peace of Christ proclaimed for all.

**The sword scares our lives because we would rather live without it in peace.**

* Family is first, but not the first commandment.
  + Jeremiah said, “The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms.” (Jesus quoting prophet Micah 7:6)
* Carrying the cross is concern to take as much as to give.
  + Dietrich Bonhoeffer declared, “The only basis of the disciples’ truthfulness is that Jesus, while we follow him, reveals our sinfulness to us on the cross. The cross of God’s truth over us is the only thing that makes us truthful” (Meditations on the Cross 24)
* Finding “my life” is selfish since I will die.
  + St. Paul reminds us, “The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me”(Romans 7:11-12).

**The sword saves our lives because Jesus is good**

**news for sinners to have peace.**

* He denied His family for the love of His Father.
  + St. Matthew wrote, “And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:49-50)
* Our cross is NOT as big as what Christ carries.
  + “Follow me”
* He is selfless and His sacrificial glory remains to save.
  + The future verb “will find” life in Jesus is not only a promise for Judgment Day, but already applies to this life.

**The sword sticks out in our lives because God’s**

**grace brings benefits by His peace being proclaimed.**

* Prophet’s reward is preaching of the truth.
  + Augsburg Confession
* Righteous person’s reward is a right faith that saves.
  + Introit, “I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.” (Psalm 89:1)
* The smallest act of love is BIG before God.
  + Love “because he is a disciple” (baptized)

A dividing line sounds forth by the Savior, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.” The sword of God’s Word goes out into the world with the peace of Christ proclaimed for all. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.