

MOUNTAINSIDE RUMBLINGS

Mountainside
Lutheran Church



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The Body Language of Worship ...its beauty and meaning

Like Australians, Kiwi's love their sport, and most of us have either watched sport on TV, gone to a live game, or participated in it ourselves. Whether it's a game of rugby, tennis or test cricket, what I always find particularly fascinating is watching how people at sporting events react.

Some fans might not be doing much at all, just watching in silence. Whereas at other times, those in the crowd can be more animated. At times some of them punch the air above them. At other times you see people stand in unison and applaud or do the Mexican wave. Sometimes there's lots of angry finger pointing at the referee. Even if you could not understand a word that was spoken or, more likely shouted, you would probably get the gist of what was going on, and that is because people use more than simply words to express what they want to say and how they feel. Our body language, often speaks louder than words and more honestly than words. It is a powerful communication tool which we had use of well before we learned how to speak.

Recently I read somewhere that 80% of what we understand is actually read through the body, not words. As Ludwig Wittgenstein once said, "*The human body is the best picture of the human soul*".

In Christian worship, as in our everyday lives, we also use body language. In fact as a worshipping community here at Mountainside together we speak the same body language. We all use similar gestures, posture and body movement to communicate not only what we believe, but also to involve our whole being in worship.

This is what it means to "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind*" (Luke 10:27). We don't just use our lips and tongues to praise God, we also use our arms and legs and fingers and knees and toes—in other words the whole of our bodies. As Renner says in his little booklet, *The Body Language of Worship*, "*Our whole being has been redeemed by Christ, and [so] all its parts join in thanks and praise to God*".

I saw some of the beauty and meaning of body language in a recent visit to *Our Lady Star of the Sea*, a Catholic Church in Howick. My family and I attended there while I was on leave.

The service began with great formality. As Father Terry, the parish priest received the holy Bible from his acolytes, he kissed its pages, bowed and then placed it reverently on the altar. Then, as he prepared to read the Gospel later in the service, he made the sign of the cross three times: first on his forehead, then on his lips and finally on his heart. This body language symbolizes and enacts the prayer that as he reads the good news of the Gospel, Christ would be on his mind, lips and heart. Towards the end of the service, the congregation, having crossed themselves on numerous occasions, joined in with praying the Lord's Prayer. In unison we lifted up our hands as we began to pray. This was Paul's encouragement to Timothy and his congregation. It was his desire that those who worshipped, would "*lift up their holy hands in prayer*" (1 Timothy 2:8).

Of course there are lots of different postures for prayer and all are legitimate uses of body language. Our friends in the Pentecostal tradition tend to stand, with their head held heaven-ward, eyes shut and hands raised. Some Christians kneel when they pray or even prostrate themselves (see Mark 14:35). This is the body language of prayer for Muslims who are effectively saying with this posture: "*Allah is great and we people are small. I respect him*" (Renner).

As Lutherans, we often sit or kneel for our prayers. This is a way of making ourselves "*small*" in the presence of God and in the presence of one another. We also tend to kneel at the altar rail when we receive Holy Communion. Notice our Indian brothers and sisters also take off their shoes and come bare-foot to the altar. These gestures are our way of saying that we are in the presence of "*holy things*" that bring to us the Holy One. It is a show of humility and respect.

During worship there are also those occasions when we greet one another. As your pastor you will hear me say to you, "*The Lord be with you*", and you respond with the words, "*And also with you*". Since I can't shake each of your hands individually, I accompany these words with my arms extended out sideways, and with my palms turned toward you.

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This is a gesture of openness and love. It is a way of saying, as Renner puts it, "I embrace you [all] with the greeting I extend to you". As the one who stands in the "stead of Christ", as his representative, in the greeting I am giving you the blessing of Christ's presence.

There are many other examples of body language that we use in worship, and each faith community has its own forms of body language, dependent upon such things as tradition, beliefs and their particular cultural context. One example of difference within Christendom is the practice of signing one's self. We Lutherans rarely make the sign of the cross. It's a strong part of Catholic tradition and practice, but it is not so widely used in our tradition. Unfortunately, we tend to see it as something only our Catholic friends do. The unspoken assumption is that if we make the sign of the cross we're "behaving like Catholics". (As if that were such a bad thing!). It's interesting that Luther actually encourages us to make the sign of the cross. In his introduction to the Morning and Evening prayers, he instructs us with these words: "In the [morning and evening], when you rise, make the sign of the cross and say, "In the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen". (Luther's Small Catechism)

If you think about it, the way we're able to use our bodies, is a gracious and wonderful gift from God. Though we *don't have to* use specific or particular body language, (non-verbal communication fits in with what we call "adiaphoron"- that which is neither commanded nor forbidden by God), that we're able to express ourselves this way is part of God's design and will, not only for praise to him, but also for the benefit of others. Those around us, don't just get to hear the Gospel, they get to see it in our "words, deeds, and in our actions". And so it's also important that the ways we "speak", (verbally and non-verbally), give the same clear and consistent message; the good news of the Gospel, that Jesus suffered and died for the forgiveness of our sins, and that he rose again on the third day, so that we might live forever with him.

This is what we believe, and what we believe we always express both with words and with our bodies.

Pastor Joe



Leon Lin

(son of Jason Chui & Cloris Lin) was welcomed into God's Kingdom and our Mountainside Church family through the miracle of Holy Baptism on Sunday 14th May.



SPECIAL PARISH MEETING

Sunday 11th June

A Special Parish meeting will be held after worship on Sunday, 11th June to formally adopt the 2016 Budget, the proposed 2017 Budget, and changes to the Constitution By-Laws, as discussed at the Parish AGM in February.



CONGRATULATIONS to Jason Chui & Cloris Lin on the birth of their son, Leon Lin, on 23rd March 2017.

CONGRATULATIONS also to Hayden and Rhiannon Morris on the birth of their daughter, Lowrie Carter Morris on 22nd May 2017.

Mountainside Women
will be hosting a

SOUP & DESSERT LUNCH

following the Sunday Worship Service
on
2nd July & 6th August

Please stay and enjoy
a scrumptious bowl of
soup and a delicious
dessert.

Only \$5 per person.



Mission: From One *End* To The Other *End*

This has been a long journey for us – from one end of the earth to the other! From Geneva, Switzerland to Auckland, New Zealand! From the northern hemisphere to the southern hemisphere! This has been our missionary journey as we follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

We are originally from Singapore and I (William) am a pastor of the Lutheran Church in Singapore (LCS). I have been serving the LCS for the last 30 years, including my secondment to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) from 2011-2016. Currently, I am seconded to LCA/LCNZ as a guest pastor for four years.

For most part of my ministry I have been a pastor with additional responsibilities/opportunities in teaching and mission/evangelism. For eight years, I taught at local seminaries in biblical Greek, the Gospels, Pauline epistles, systematic theology and intercultural mission. For another eight years, I was heading Cambodia Mission, which was an initiative of Mekong Mission Forum (an LWF initiated platform for all Lutheran churches and mission agencies, who are working in the Mekong region, to cooperate and collaborate). Over these eight years, with the help of God and many others He brought along the way, I managed to set up a church and a social centre in the province, a student hostel in the city and an NGO (Lutheran World Mission) before I left for my new post in LWF.

On top of this, God blessed us with the burden and passion in reaching out to the elderly, mainly parents of LCS members to begin with. With the help of many members with the same burden and passion, Laura and I planted two congregations for the elderly in the LCS.

Even in Europe where people are generally hostile to the gospel and Christians, God never left us alone. We found ourselves leading a group of young international humanitarian workers (from America, Spain, Mexico, Germany, France, Italy, India, Indonesia, Korea, Guam, and South Africa) roaming the red light district of Geneva, in season and out of season, (summer and winter time) reaching out to the sex workers. Outreach has always been the core of our work and calling.

As the sun sets on us, we have been praying for the way forward after my five-year contract with LWF expired. There were several options and there were many things that had our attention.

Not long later, I received an email from Bishop John Henderson enquiring if I was keen in “planting” an Asian church in Auckland. The opportunity for outreach was rather attractive to us. After much prayer and waiting on the Lord, we were persuaded that this is where God wants us to go.

Last October, David and Fui Mee stopped by in Singapore, on their way home to Sabah, to meet up with me. They briefed me on the church, particularly, its past journeys and where it is today. The rest was history.

I arrived in Auckland on 1 April and Laura came two weeks’ later. Everything happened quickly and simultaneously—juggling settling in and kick-starting the ministry.

From our preparation to arrival in Auckland we have heard over and over again the name *Mountainside Lutheran Church*. It was something distant but something important for our work at Botany. It was to be our supporting pillar.

By no time, this distant entity took shape and form in friendly people that welcomed us, cared for us, availed their services to us, just to make sure we know that we are an important part of the LCNZ and Mountainside community. We talked like old friends with the new friends we made. Besides, Pastor Joe and Kathy have been most helpful, understanding and welcoming in making our (ours and Botany congregation) transition to Mountainside an easy and smooth one.

We pray that we will not be on the receiving end only. We hope to give as well. New Zealand is presented with an unprecedented opportunity for proclaiming the gospel. We pray that our work at Botany would bring encouragement and motivation, passion and excitement to the Mountainside congregation and even other LCNZ congregations in the proclamation of the gospel locally and overseas.

We (and Botany congregation) look forward to future cooperation and collaboration in mission/evangelistic projects and church planting endeavours—partners in the gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

Habakkuk 2:14



William & Laura Chang, May 2017

'Lutherland' with Bishop Mark, 29th April

The congregation and visitors who gathered at Mountainside were taken down the annals of history when Bishop Mark recalled with nostalgia his trip to Lutherland! As we listened in pin-drop silence Mark led us with a photo display, his voice resonating the corridors of Wittenberg where Luther had trod—his room, his dining hall and the various chambers in the monastery in Germany. We were even invited into Luther's family dining room and to linger around the dining table where many an evening was spent in deep theological discussion.

Then Bishop Mark stopped talking. He took to the organ and let his hands and feet do the talking with his usual flair and aplomb. As musical notes and chords from Luther's great compositions bounced off the Mountainside Lutheran Church's walls spurring the congregation to sing with gusto many a reformation hymn. The context in which some of the hymns were written was



explained, which gave us a greater insight as some of the magnificent organs installed in the Cathedrals of Germany were still fresh in our memory from the numerous slides presented.

Just when we were beginning to get saturated with the past, we were jolted back to the very present—to the Commemoration ceremony that ushered in Reformation 500 celebrations in 2017—the first in the world, with the Dawn Service on New Years morning on the Chatham Islands. We were treated to an interview 'Mountainside Live in the Chathams' in Campbell-live style with Keith Phyn asking the questions and Bishop Mark explaining the significance of the event. On the lighter side we learned that the staple diet in the Chathams consists of delicacies for the connoisseurs of sea food—blue cod and crayfish!

Dan Pilli, Reformation 500 Team



Dear members and friends,
Our friend and scholar, Dr Norman Franke, whom you may remember from the presentation he did in our church in March, has informed me of the following conference which is part of the Reformation 500 Commemorations.

The Waikato Reformation Conference will be held in Hamilton, New Zealand, at the Meteor Theatre and St Peter's Cathedral from 29 – 31 October 2017.

For further information see this website: <https://reformation500nz.wordpress.com/>

Pastor Joe

Reformation Insights ...a rediscovery of the Gospel

Earlier this year, Pastor Joe was invited by Bishop Patrick Dunn, of St Patrick's Catholic Cathedral in Auckland to share some insights into the Reformation. The article below is part two of a paper he delivered to the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Bishop's Pastoral Advisory Body.

The second insight I want to share with you has to do with the Gospel. The Reformation saw a rediscovery of the Gospel. Let me give you a brief survey of Luther's life in order to introduce this second insight.

Luther was extraordinarily successful as an Augustinian monk. He plunged into prayer, fasting, and ascetic practices—going without sleep, enduring bone-chilling cold without a blanket, and flagellating himself. As he later commented, *"If anyone could have earned heaven by the life of a monk, it was I."* Though he sought by these means to love God fully, he found no consolation. He was increasingly terrified of the wrath of God: *"When it is touched by this passing inundation of the eternal, the soul feels and drinks nothing but eternal punishment."*

During his early years, whenever Luther read what would become the famous "Reformation text"—Romans 1:17—his eyes were drawn not to the word faith, but to the word righteous. Who, after all, could *"live by faith"* but those who were already righteous? The text was clear on the matter: *"the righteous shall live by faith."* Luther remarked, *"I hated that word, 'the righteousness of God,' by which I had been taught according to the custom and use of all teachers ... [that] God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner."* The young Luther could not live by faith because he was not righteous—and he knew it.

This was a time of great *Anfechtung*, (spiritual crisis), for Luther. He believed that he had to be ready at any moment to meet God's judgement. In order to be ready he turned to the Saints to intercede with the one whom he himself did not dare address. *"At the same time"*, as the Lutheran scholar, Brecht says, *"seeking through his own pious effort and action to escape the impending disaster"*. Luther's concept of Christ that he had learned through his days in the monastery, to quote Brecht again, *"[was] exclusively that of a judge to whom one had to render an account and to whom good works had to be displayed in order for him to forgive. Thus Christ was not seen as one who comforts, blesses and frees, but as a tyrant"*.

By 1507, Luther began teaching at the University of Wittenberg. He was ordered to take his doctorate in the Bible and by 1512 he had become a Professor of Theology. During subsequent lectures on the Psalms (in 1513 and 1514) and a study of the Book of Romans, he began to see a way through his dilemma.

"At last meditating day and night, by the mercy of God, I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that through which the righteous live by a gift of God, namely by faith... Here I felt as if I were entirely born again and had entered paradise itself through the gates that had been flung open."

On the heels of this new understanding came others. To Luther the church was no longer the institution defined by apostolic succession; instead it was the community of those who had been given faith.

Salvation came not by the sacraments as such but

by faith. The idea that human beings had a spark of goodness (enough to seek out God) was not a foundation of theology but was taught only by "fools." Humility was no longer a virtue that earned grace but a necessary response to the gift of grace. Faith no longer consisted of assenting to the church's teachings but of trusting the promises of God and the merits of Christ. Luther, in short, had rediscovered the Gospel.

Early in his career (in 1520) Luther wrote a short book called *The Freedom of the Christian*. In this book he shares this rediscovery of the Gospel and explains the joy that comes through trusting in Jesus as our Saviour.

"Although I am an unworthy and condemned person, my God has given me in Christ all the riches of righteousness and salvation, without any merit on my part, out of pure, free mercy, so that from now on I need nothing except faith which believes it is true".

As Fraser Pearce, a pastor of the Lutheran Church of Australia says, *"Luther could write these words joyfully, because he knew that God gives us the gift of faith through his gracious Word, winning our trust in Jesus, and freeing us from self-centred living. Because we have Jesus as our Saviour we no longer need focus inwardly and become anxious about what we lack... Instead we are free to look to Jesus, to trust that, in him, God gives us all that we need. And we are free to respond with gratitude"*.

For Lutherans this Gospel is the *sine qua non*, the essential foundation of the Church. Lutherans regard the Gospel—and in particular the doctrine of justification—as the article on which the church stands or falls. Indeed this opinion goes back to Luther himself, who wrote that *"if this article [on justification] stands, the church stands; if this article falls, the Church falls"* (WA 40.3; 352.3; cf Eph 2:19-21; 1 Cor 3:11; Gal 5:4). Therefore no discussion of the Church is complete without a discussion of the Gospel.

But what exactly do we mean by the Gospel? Some would say that the Gospel is simply the proclamation of the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. However, if we focus only on the person of Christ and not the work of Christ for our salvation, this definition opens the door to multiple understandings of how the work of Christ relates to our salvation.

Likewise if we say that *"human beings are justified not through works of the law but by grace through faith,"* terms such as grace and faith need to be defined otherwise we are left open to multiple interpretations. Does grace simply refer to God's favour, or to a power he infuses into us to transform us? Does faith save because it is the instrument whereby we grasp hold of the promises of God, or because it is a theological virtue which in combination with the other theological virtues of hope and love in some way merits God's reward?

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At this juncture, I would like to make some comments about the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, signed by both parties on the 31st October 1999 in Augsburg, Germany.

In the opening paragraphs of this document, its authors note: *"The present Joint Declaration has this intention: namely, to show that on the basis of their dialogue the subscribing Lutheran churches and the Roman Catholic Church are now able to articulate a common understanding of our justification by God's grace through faith in Christ. It does not cover all that either church teaches about justification; it does not encompass a consensus on basic truths of the doctrine of justification and shows that the remaining differences in its explication are no longer the occasion for doctrinal condemnations"*.

Those who know the JDDJ well should realise that it only achieves consensus in a broad sense, and it doesn't settle the questions raised above. It achieves verbal agreement, but does so by using expressions that can be interpreted broadly enough to cover both a Lutheran and an Augustinian view of justification. Many Lutherans today may be willing to live with this kind of ambiguity when it comes to the central article of the Christian faith. Others would see this as a departure from the historic stance of the Lutheran Church, which has been striving for doctrinal precision in this article of the faith above all others, lest the Gospel be turned into a new law and the foundation of the Church undermined. Many Lutherans of this latter kind would consider a more precise definition of the doctrine of justification to be an essential step on the road to Christian unity.

All this said, the JDDJ marks an advance in ecumenical relations, since both sides refrain from the recriminations of the past and from caricaturing the other side. Lutherans no longer see Catholics as being essentially pelagian in relation to the doctrine of justification. They are more Augustinian. And Catholics no longer view Lutherans as antinomians. There may be some degree of truth in this latter caricature for some Lutherans, but certainly one cannot accuse Luther of being antinomian. Luther would simply say that sanctification comes or flows from justification. We receive the gift of faith through the Holy Spirit working through the means of the Gospel. At the same time the work of renewal begins in our lives. What is critical for Luther is the Gospel. He once said of the law, *"The Law can change the hand, but not the heart"*. You need the Gospel. To put it another way, we would say that our good works, our love for one another is simply the fruit of the Gospel, the fruit of the forgiveness we have received in and through Christ's suffering and death, *"once for all"* for the forgiveness of sins (1 Pet 3:18).

The story of the sinful woman who anoints Jesus' feet and the illustration of the two debtors in the Gospel according to Saint Luke makes this essential point. *Jesus is basically saying that whoever is forgiven much, loves much. "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little"* (7:46-47).

In other words the Gospel alone produces true sanctification; the motivation to be able to serve God

and one's neighbour out of love, not with a mercenary spirit that demands some reward but out of the love of Christ that dwells within. The sinful woman's anointing of Jesus' feet was simply her *"response of gratitude"* for the forgiveness she had received.

Clearly in terms of the doctrine of justification there remains an ongoing need for further dialogue. There needs to be further work done on more precisely defining the language we use. As Catholics and Lutherans, we may use the same words, the same theological *"speak"*, but we mean different things. And so the journey on the road to Christian unity continues. Yet it is one that we continue with good will towards each other. The Reverend Professor Denis Edwards, from the Australian Catholic University's School of Theology and Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry remarks, *"What a joy it is that we can come together on what was the central cause of division between our churches, and that we no longer condemn each other's views on the central truth of our faith, our salvation in Christ!"*

As I said at the beginning of this paper, these insights are not particularly *"my"* insights. And I would add to that they are not particularly new. I hope and pray, however, that what I have shared with you today has been of interest to you; that it has stimulated you, and perhaps even been helpful. Thank you again for the opportunity to share with you my thoughts. It is always a source of great blessing to be together as brothers in Christ, to listen to and to learn from one another.

As we commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, it is important for us to remember that, as one of my Catholic friends reminded me of, *"what unites us as Christians is infinitely greater than what divides us"*. And this is because *"what unites us is Christ himself, but what divides us is only our own fallible human interpretations"*.

I leave you now with some words of encouragement. First, from the authors of that most recent fruit of dialogue, *From Conflict to Communion*. *"What happened in the past cannot be changed, but what is remembered of the past and how it is remembered can, with the passage of time, indeed change"*.

And from Pope Francis, who delivered a homily at the ecumenical prayer service for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, at the Lund cathedral in Sweden, on the 31st of October, 2016.

"Here in Lund, at this prayer service, we wish to manifest our shared desire to remain in with Christ, so that we may have life. We ask him, "Lord, help us by your grace to be more closely united to you, and thus together, to bear a more effective witness of faith, hope and love". This is also a moment to thank God for the efforts of our many brothers and sisters from different ecclesiastical communities who refused to be resigned to division., but instead kept alive the hope of reconciliation among all who believe in the one Lord. As Catholics and Lutherans, we have undertaken a common journey of reconciliation.

Now, in the context of the commemoration of the Reformation of 1517, we have a new opportunity to accept a common path. ...We have the opportunity to mend a critical moment of our history by moving beyond the controversies and disagreements that have often prevented us from understanding one another....

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We too must look with love and honesty at our past, recognising error and seeking forgiveness, for God alone is judge. As Lutherans and Catholics, we pray together in this Cathedral, conscious that without God we can do nothing. We ask his help, so that we can be living members, abiding in him, ever in need of his grace, so that together we may bring his word to the world, which so greatly needs his tender love and mercy”.

May this prayer of Pope Francis and of those who were gathered in the Lund cathedral on that day continue to be our prayer. And as we enter more fully into this season of Lent, a season of repentance, of reformation, of turning away from our sinful past and turning towards Christ, may we always acknowledge whose church this is, and to whom we all belong. Sola Deo Gloria- To God be the glory!

Pastor Joe, Lent, 2017



Reformation 500 Apple Tree

The apple tree which was planted and blessed in October last year has borne some fruit!! We did not expect that!
To all those who continue to care for the tree - watering, mulching, checking for pests, and fertilising, we say A Big Thank You!

Reformation 500 Posters

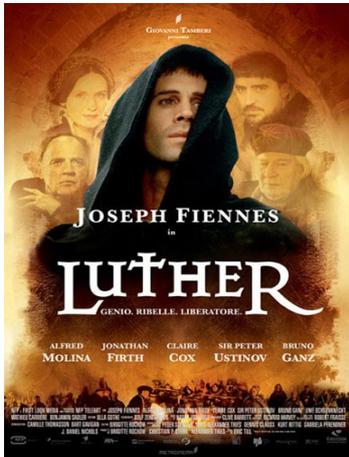
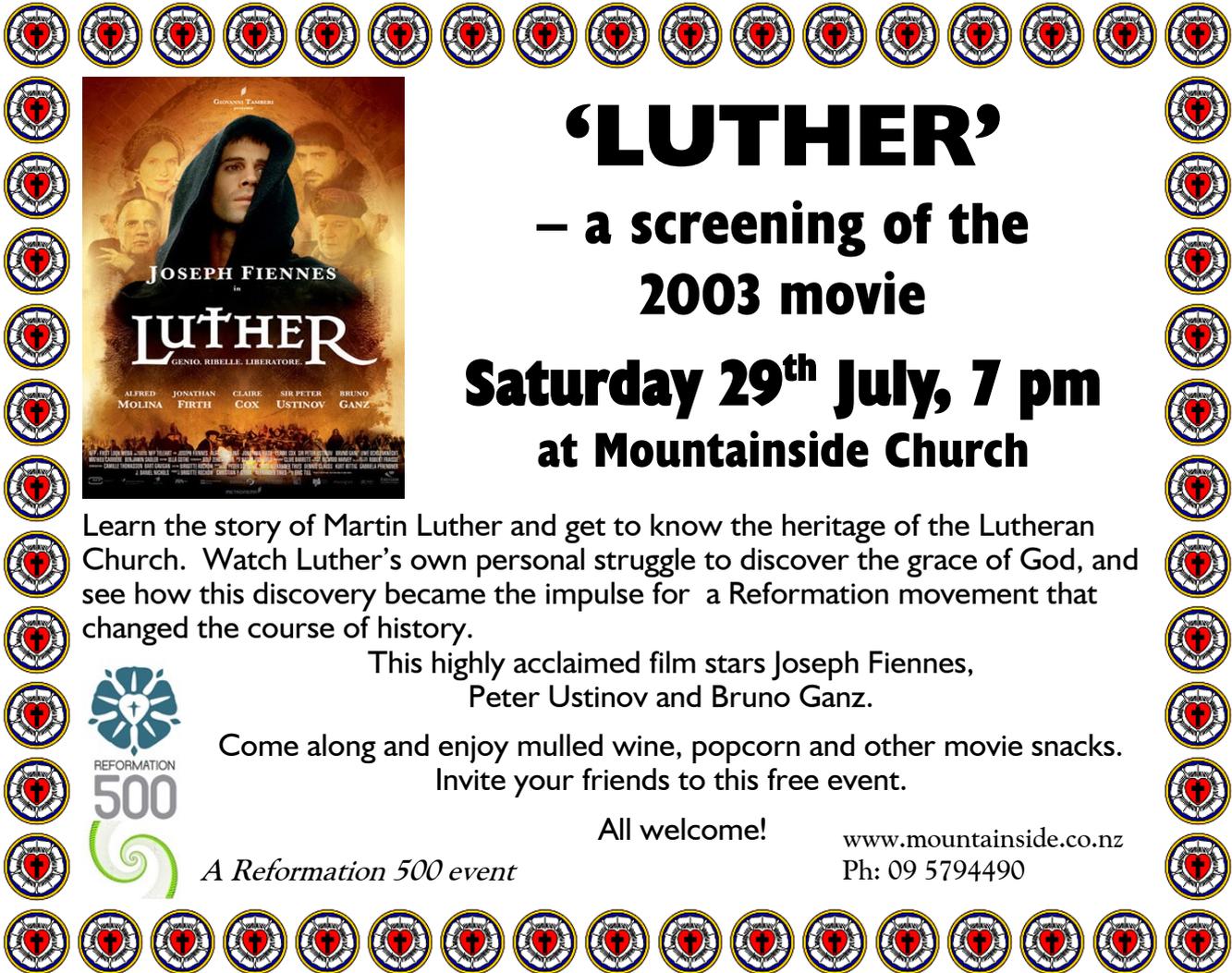
Check out the changing display of Reformation posters during 2017 in the foyer at Mountainside. The posters bring the history of the Reformation to life.

There are 7 Themes—each theme has 4 posters. One poster from each theme will be enlarged, but the others are displayed also. If the text is a bit small there is a QR code on each poster—instant smartphone accessibility!

The posters have been produced by the German government and are also available online.

Delving Deeper...the website contains loads more information and graphics, for example **20 objects up close in 3D to discover** and print.

<http://here-i-stand.com/en/>



‘LUTHER’

– a screening of the
2003 movie

Saturday 29th July, 7 pm
at Mountainside Church

Learn the story of Martin Luther and get to know the heritage of the Lutheran Church. Watch Luther’s own personal struggle to discover the grace of God, and see how this discovery became the impulse for a Reformation movement that changed the course of history.

This highly acclaimed film stars Joseph Fiennes,
Peter Ustinov and Bruno Ganz.

Come along and enjoy mulled wine, popcorn and other movie snacks.
Invite your friends to this free event.



A Reformation 500 event

All welcome!

www.mountainside.co.nz
Ph: 09 5794490

Introduction

A lot of what we know about God comes to us through religious language (Scripture, hymns, sermons), it is largely theopoetics (the poetical writing of God). Modern religious poetry is a special sub-genre of theopoetics. It cannot claim to be authoritative; it is usually an individual's view on religious matters, necessarily limited by the temporal and spatial horizon of the poet. It is hardly more than an invitation to contemplate or celebrate; but it also provides an opportunity to discuss alternative viewpoints and experiences with others. Thus, modern religious poetry is in the tradition of the Reformation. It focuses on the individual's relationship with and understanding of divine matters while encouraging the formation of communities of various believers (and honest doubters), calling us into a dialogue of searching and sharing. Work in progress, the poetry published here is part of a wider body of portrait poems of theologians and artists who have influenced or challenged my (religious) world view; the errors are mine.

Norman P. Franke

For Martin Luther

Who makes God just?
The graceful, the crucified Son of Man.

A dead friend, struck by lightning
near Stotternheim; a longing for faith.

A chorale track of history;
thus you stood before the Imperial Diet, proud
in humility: we should obey God more
than bishops, the Emperor,
professorial tenure.

For freedom we are set free.

The transubstantiation
of beer and sauerkraut protracts
the winter night. Theological thinking
about the *servo arbitrio*, the Babylonian
Bondage of the Church; immortality.
Somewhere in a neighbour's house
a groaning woman gives birth.

Thomas Mann would have been
most unwilling to be your dinner guest,
unlike a beggar, a hungry student.

Your deliberations, rage, your profound
failures against the peasants,
the Jews and Erasmus.

(How often have we lost heart
in pathos, cowardice - even before the friend,
and, incidentally, found it again
staring at a courtyard in Flossenbürg)

Jesus and the prophets,
love that is strong as death,
the morale of the mustard seed,
they all spoke through your vernacular;
in tongues of shepherds and handmaidens.

Your translator's chair: a spinal bone
of the Leviathan. Into the depths
of the night you worked. Exhausted
to the point of delirium and acedia.
Then, in the midst of your terror,
the old enemy appeared.

Your ink bottle missed him by half an inch.

Cathedrals and cloisters were laid
in ruins; the Middle Ages, the unity
of the church; you wept
about a dying child.

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Three times a week
you became one body
with a runaway nun.
In the distance of the Wittenberg flood planes
you heard the resplendent song
of a nightingale. Herr Käthe
found your admiration; Sophia
you did not recognize at the well.

Staupitz, Melanchthon, Bugenhagen:
It seems, you had some faithful friends;
which is more than one can say
about most revolutionaries and preachers.

In the end, history was not yours;
neither sugared by 19th century anecdotes
nor transfigured into power politics.
Because and in spite of the edifying writings
of junkers, vicars, and missionaries
(too rattling, too saccharine).
Sometimes a divine message
prevailed between the lines:
the dreaming of Zion, the lame walking
in Jüterbog, the scent of the anointing oil,
women rushing to an empty grave.

(I would have liked to see you compose some Shekhinah songs)

We are beggars. This is true.



Mountainside Church Picnic, 7th May

BirthDay greetings

'Happy Birthday' and Best Wishes to the following people celebrating birthdays in June:

Sumita Golconda (5th) Molly Neal (9th)
Maurice Heidrich (10th) Jennifer Jala (12th)
Joe Kummerow (19th)
Annette Nielsen-Geese (20th)
Karen Rasmussen (22nd) Manita Beatty (25th)
Tanya Sutton (25th)
Tevita & Saimone Ongoongo (30th)

Wedding Anniversary Congratulations to:
Peter & Sumita Golconda 23 years on the 8th
Bernard & Sandra Naish 4 years on the 15th

'Happy Birthday' and Best Wishes to the following people celebrating birthdays in July:

Sandra Naish (1st) Joshua Armstrong (3rd)
Jeff McClintock (5th) Jenny Lindstrom (6th)
Amberlee Jones (11th) Kathryn Skadiang (12th)
Michael Meharg (15th) Margaret Ross (20th)
Nina Girard de Soucanton (23rd)
Zachary Hewett (25th) Bjorn Geese (27th)
Mari Doss (27th) Beryl Morris (28th)
Ofa Ongoongo (29th) Jorgen Holgersen (30th)
Ellie Skudder (30th)



Faith is like WiFi

It's invisible,
but it has the power
to connect you
to what you need.

PRAYER POINTS

In your prayers this month, please pray for the following:



We pray ...

- ✚ With thanks for the sacrifice of your Son, Jesus Christ at Easter, and for granting us forgiveness for all our sins.
- ✚ For Rev Dr William Chang and his wife Laura as they settle in to their new life in Auckland and spread the good news of God's saving grace with the Botany congregation.
- ✚ With thanks for the safe arrival of Hayden & Rhiannon's daughter, Lowrie. Bless them as they adjust to life as a family.
- ✚ For the LCNZ Synod to be held in Wellington, 3rd–5th June. Be with the delegates and all who participate over the weekend.
- ✚ For Bishop John Henderson as he recovers from the heart attack he suffered in Namibia. May God grant him a full & speedy recovery, and give strength & comfort to his wife Valmai, family & friends as they support him during his recovery.
- ✚ For the families of all those killed and injured in the recent terror bombing at a music concert in Manchester, England. Comfort them in their grief as they come to terms with the dreadful loss of so many young lives.
- ✚ For all who are sick or suffering at this time—may God give them strength and his healing comfort.

Deadline for articles for the August/September 2017 issue of *'Mountainside Rumbings'* is **TUESDAY 25th JULY 2017.**

Don't forget that you have 3 options for receiving this newsletter—a printed copy available in the foyer of Mountainside Lutheran Church, we can post you a copy if you let us know your address, or we can email a copy in PDF format which you can enjoy in full colour!! Just contact Kathy and she will organise it for you. And please remember to let us know if your contact details change so we can alter our records accordingly.

Thanks very much.

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