

## *Vicars Note*

Greetings in Christ,

July 2007, on the 24th of this month it will be one full year since I and my family were blessed to become a part of this fellowship of Christians. I would like to ruminate (reflect) on history, one of my favorite topics. I thought I would reflect on history from a unique perspective as we will all be part of an historical event to take place in our county next month. A Lutheran Ordination.

As with any Historical account, in order to gain a full appreciation for the significance of the event it is always best to start from the beginning. We will forgo a review of Moses divinely inspired creation account and fast forward about 5483 years (give or take a few years) to bring us to the year 1483 AD.

On 10 November 1483 Martin Luther was born in Eisleben Germany. After being frightened by lightning in 1505 he vowed to become a monk and was ordained as a priest 500 years ago in 1507. Luther's ordination was probably in the spring during the month of May, the date is uncertain, however it is known that He was ordained in 1507, and when you are celebrating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of something being a few months off is a very minor thing. Ten years later On 31<sup>st</sup> October 1517 He posted the famous 95 Thesis that started what is commonly known as the Reformation. Luther was not trying to protest (protestant) against the church he was trying to correct man made customs that had developed over the previous 1000 years that contradicted scripture.

Let's Fast forward again to 3 November 1817 and on the very edge of what is now Sevier County, very close to what many of us know as the location of "Forbidden Cave" There was a German settlement at Bird's cross roads. Henry Jacob Eli and Jacob Bird acting as officers for the church purchased an acre of land for \$2:50 near Jacob Derrick's grist mill, and on that land was a meeting house called Saint James Lutheran Church. Very few if any Lutheran pastors made it to the East Tennessee frontier so most of the German descendants start appearing on local Methodist church roles by the late 1840's. ( I have since learned that there is a St James Lutheran Church only 30 miles away from there in Green county established in 1811)

It would be over 100 years before another Lutheran church would establish itself in Sevier County. In the late 1950's the group of Lutherans that formed Our Savior Lutheran Church started to meet and worship together.

As the Lutheran church has had little presence in Sevier County and as the three Lutheran churches here in existence today have all had previously ordained pastors sent to their congregations. It is quiet probable that the ordination we plan to celebrate next month will be the first Lutheran ordination in Sevier County's history. And all this on the 500th anniversary year of Martin Luther's ordination!

There are over 240 Christian Churches in Sevier County however; I feel we are currently in a great location in both time and geography to be a light for the gospel in our community. We need not see those 240 other churches as competition because the harvest is great, and the workers are few. One Half to three quarters of the people who call Sevier County home do not go to any church. If we stand firm proclaiming a sound confessional understanding of God's revealed truth contained in His Holy Word, we can be sure that His word will not return empty, as it says in Isaiah Chapter 55: verse 11

***so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.***

So as we approach this historic event for our county and our congregation let's not forget that we are surrounded by approximately 50,000 to 75,000 lost souls who are not "yet" washed clean in the blood of the lamb and He calls us to show them their need that the Holy Spirit can work faith in their hearts.

In Christ  
Vicar Portier