

# The Star of Bethlehem



October 2017

Rev. Dana Brones  
Senior Pastor  
blcdana@bellsouth.net  
(904) 249-5418  
Extension 12

Nathan McCarty  
Vicar  
blcvicars@bellsouth.net  
(904) 249-5418  
Extension 13

Jennifer Huber  
Senior Administrative  
Assistant  
jennifer@  
bethlehemlutheranjaxbeach.org  
(904) 249-5418  
Extension 11

Kathleen Olive  
Minister of Music  
blckathleen@bellsouth.net  
(904) 249-5418  
Extension 17

Pat May  
Preschool Director  
(904) 249-1204  
blppat@att.net

Tami Moe  
Administrative Assistant  
tami@  
bethlehemlutheranjaxbeach.org  
(904) 249-5418  
Extension 10

Marvin Beaty  
Sexton  
(904) 249-5418

## THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL BEATS IN THE REFORMATION: THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY

St. Paul writes: "*We hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the Law*" (Romans 3: 28). In the church, what this text teaches is the very heart of why Jesus lived and died and rose. And this precious Gospel truth was shrouded in error for nearly a thousand years.

Five hundred years ago on October 31st (the "Eve of all Hallows" or "Halloween," the eve of All Saints' Day) Martin Luther, a thirty-four-year-old Augustinian friar, preacher, university lecturer, and professor of the Old Testament, took a short walk from his monastery home on one end of the little town of Wittenberg to the Castle Church on the other end of town, and there he posted his "theses" against indulgences. He had no inkling of the firestorm he would start, nor that within weeks he would become the most famous person in the Western world. And he certainly had no inkling that the storm would still be raging some five hundred years later. Today, virtually all Protestants claim Martin Luther as their own, to one extent or another, and the Roman Catholics are still trying to figure out what to do with him and his heirs, even half a millennium later.

During this anniversary year, we've seen Luther in the news more than ever. I've already watched several documentaries on TV, watched a movie, and read numerous articles on-line and in various newspapers. Certainly his unacceptable views regarding the Jews have been paraded before the world. While we cannot excuse those views, it is also true that such views were virtually universal among his contemporaries. Luther's chief frustration was that the Jews of his day had not accepted the Gospel of free forgiveness in Christ, which was also for them. Horrid and indefensible as many of his comments were, Luther's views were not the same as the Nazis' anti-Semitism regarding race or blood, which Luther's theology would condemn to hell.

Now, whenever Luther has been held up as one of the most influential individuals of the past millennium, the emphasis is usually on the story of his impact upon the freedom of conscience, on the individual versus authority, on the decline of the control of the Catholic Church over individual and state, or on the doctrine of the two-kingdoms (that the church should not exercise worldly government, and princes [government] should not rule the church or have anything to do with the salvation of souls). Luther's supreme authority was always God's written Word. This remains true for our church body today.

Luther's Reformation brought about many things of which we can be very proud: universal education; education of young women; real care for the needy; huge advances in university education, art, music, medicine and much more. **Ultimately, however, the Gospel was at the very heart of the Reformation.** With St. Paul, we say: "*We hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.*"

Perhaps a bit of history here would be helpful. Behind the church door where Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses, there was a sanctuary with seventeen side altars. Priests were at those altars day and night, twenty-four seven, saying masses -- that is, communing themselves to achieve merit for the living and the dead. Bequest money had established such practices in perpetuity for deceased

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**Bethlehem Lutheran Church and Preschool**  
1423 8th Avenue North . Jacksonville Beach, Florida 32250  
(904) 249-5418 Church or (904) 249-1204 Preschool  
www.bethlehemlutheranjaxbeach.org



- 1 Brandon Almaguer

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- 4 Elyse Matthews  
Linda Reed

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- 5 Luke Smith

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- 6 Caleb Crafton  
Nola Tostovarsnik

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- 7 Bernie Brewer  
Timothy Taylor

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- 8 Ruth Morrison

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- 9 Kylah Bryant

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- 12 Katie Gruhn  
Elizabeth Halasz  
Robert Murray  
Jay Reep

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- 13 Michelle Losey  
Dedra Torelli

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- 14 David Grigg  
Anthony Mazzeo III

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- 16 Lorna Boyajian  
June Jamrich

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- 18 Lori Eischen  
Katie Walton

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- 19 Nolan Palmer

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- 20 Romaine Moore

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- 21 Anthony Lapointe

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- 22 Jim Dreyer  
Joann Ekman

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- 23 Robert Borcharding

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- 24 Shea Skorusa  
Lyle Wiechmann

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- 25 Megan Huber  
Emma Williams

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- 26 Wayne Lorenz

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- 27 Mylasia Baskin

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- 28 Trinity Mattox  
Jasper Richards

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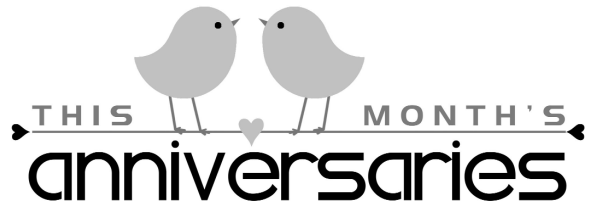
- 29 David Huber

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- 30 Kayla Gruhn  
William Maxwell  
Roy Shimp  
Charlee Troester

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- 31 Matthew Gray



- 2 Bob & Linda Van Ness

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- 17 Gordon & Valerie Gruhn

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- 19 Mark & Lynn McGiveron

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- 20 Loren & Jan Sifferath

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- 21 Keith & Rebecca Bicknase

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- 23 Stephen & Lisa Smith

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- 24 David & Cindy Huber

Like us on Facebook for the latest in news, photos and fun!

### Call Committee

*Volunteers for calling an additional pastor*

- Dana Brones
- Alex Limbaugh
- Bruce Dellinger
- Tammy Barley
- Lee Fischer
- Liz Jaranowski
- Brian Kientz
- Pat May
- Carol Pietrasiuk
- Karen Wilhelm



**SENIOR GAME DAY**  
**October 2**  
**@ 9:30 am**

*Contact MaryAnn Lawrence with any questions.*

### Attendance Record

<u>Date</u>	<u>8 am</u>	<u>9:30 am</u>	<u>11 am</u>	<u>Total</u>
August 7, 2016	87	83	71	241
August 6, 2017	86	79	101	266
August 14, 2016	90	76	69	212
August 13, 2017	73	86	96	255
August 21, 2016	77	83	101	261
August 20, 2017	81	87	104	272
August 28, 2016	69	81	97	237
August 27, 2017	77	71	87	225

### Stewardship

	<b>August 2016</b>	<b>August 2017</b>
<b>Worship</b>	<b>\$40,097.19</b>	<b>\$50,987.42</b>
restricted	1,904.33	1,457.68
<b>YTD Totals</b>	<b><u>\$393,100.20</u></b>	<b><u>\$430,857.11</u></b>
restricted total	\$31,716.71	\$43,640.46

## Screen Operators

## Greeters

## Acolytes

## Altar

					Setup	
Oct. 1	8 am	Pat	Val & Jackie F	Hardys	Tami	Val
	9:30 am	Maggie	Joan R	Ayden Z		Brenda
	11 am	Gina		Brook & Summer P		Diana
Oct. 8	8 am	Sam		Elizabeth J	Jennifer	Tami
	9:30 am	Tami	Joan R	Zach H		Tami
	11 am	Susan S		Elizabeth J		Kathy
Oct. 15	8 am	Val	Larry & Eleanor C	Hardys	Anna	Val
	9:30 am	Romaine	Julie T	Olivia H		Joan
	11 am	Carol		Brook & Summer P		Carol
Oct. 22	8 am	Susan H	David B & Anna A	Elizabeth J	Susan	Susan
	9:30 am	Romaine	Joan R	Jonathan G		Amy
	11 am	Susan S		Elizabeth J		
Oct. 29	8 am	Pat		Hardys	Carol	Val
	9:30 am	Brenda	Joan R	Zach H		Barb
	11 am	Toni		Brook & Summer P		

Please contact Kristine Perryman if you are interested in serving as a screen operator and what service you attend, 904-536-0826. If you would like to serve as a greeters, please contact Anna Arno, anna202358@hotmail.com (8 am) Joan Richards, 463.6703 nanajoin55@icloud.com (9:30 am), Jean Shimp, rlshimp@comcast.net (11 am) It is a great way to get to know more members. If you are interested in acolyting, please call Tammy Barley 704-5117 - or email tarnot@bellsouth.net.

*continued from page 1*

nobility and others. Such masses, it was believed, reduced a persons time in purgatory. You see, it was taught that Christ's death paid only for eternal punishments, but not temporal punishments. Temporal punishments had to be (and this is still official Catholic doctrine) paid off by suffering through hundreds of thousands of years in purgatory. The persons purchase of indulgences reduced the time in purgatory.

Now this particular sanctuary was also special in that it housed a collection of "relics" of the saints. Luther's prince had collected hundreds of bits and bones of various saints and holy things. The most important relic, around which Frederick the Wise had build the whole collection, was a thorn, allegedly from the crown of Jesus. But there was also a feather from the wing of the angel Gabriel, fingernails from John the Baptist, and milk from the breast of the Virgin Mary! You name it, it was there! The problem was that it was all fake, even while its veneration brought in huge sums of money for Rome while, at the same time, binding the conscious' of those who wondered if they had seen enough, done enough and paid enough. Besides this, Luther wondered where in the Bible any of this was commanded, or even commended?

None of that was what God intended at all, as St. Paul clearly understood: "Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no one will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:19-21). In other words, no good works of ours, real or invented, meaningful or absurd, could satisfy the demands of the law. And certainly, winning less time in purgatory by venerating bones and bits was not the Gospel!

This is what the Gospel -- what Luther, what the Reformation, whatever else came of it -- was all about. Luther writes:

"Therefore a man can with confidence boast in Christ and say: 'Mine are Christ's living, doing, and speaking, his suffering and dying, mine as much as if I had lived, done, spoken, suffered, and died as he did.' Just as a bridegroom possesses all that is his bride's and she all that is his -- for the two have all things in common because they are one flesh (Gen. 2:24) -- so Christ and the church are one spirit (Eph. 5:29-32) . . . Therefore everything which Christ has is ours, graciously bestowed on us unworthy men out of God's sheer mercy, although we have rather deserved wrath and condemnation, and hell also . . . Through faith in Christ, therefore, Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness and all that he has becomes ours; rather, he himself becomes ours. Therefore the Apostle calls it "the righteousness of God" in Rom. 1:17: For in the gospel "the righteousness of God is revealed . . ."; as it is written, "The righteousness shall live by faith." Finally, in the same epistle, chapter 3, such a faith is called "the righteousness of God" and "We hold that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law." (From a sermon Luther preached on March 28, 1518. See Martin Brecht, Martin Luther: *His Road to Reformation*, 221-237).

That, beloved Bethlehem, is what the Lutheran Reformation was about at its heart and core. It is a message that applies to you and me as intensely today as it did to Luther five hundred years ago. And it is a message needed by our world -- those right in our own families, neighborhoods and workplaces. The heart of the Reformation still lives in our hearts and beats in our church. This is the Gospel that saves (the passive, perfect righteousness of Christ) and this is the Gospel that moves us to serve our neighbor (the "active" righteousness, always imperfect in this life, we carry out in our vocations and to those around us). May this righteousness be yours on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and always.

In His service and yours,  
Pastor Dana Allen Brones

## *A Time for Praise and Thanksgiving*

Coming up on November 4th is the third year in a row that Bethlehem Lutheran Church is participating in the 4th Annual Thanksgiving Community Outreach for Hunger Fight. For a donation of \$1000.00 (given by BLC) and providing 12 team members to fill one table, we will have the privilege to assist this non-profit organization in packing 800,000 meals for those in the Jacksonville community who are hungry and lack food resources. We have elected for the meals that our group packs to stay here at the beach and be given to BEAM for distribution. This is an awesome, and fun opportunity for individuals and couples to give thanks together for all the many blessings we've been given. How appropriate that this be just prior to celebrating the Thanksgiving holiday! It is also a great way for a parent to consider bringing a child (1:1 is best for children under age 10) to teach and relate Jesus' teaching on the Parable of the Talents (Matt 25: 14-30. "For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance" (v. 29).

Please consider volunteering and being one of THE TWELVE. Let us give back during this post-Hurricane Irma time to our community and to those who have suffered much. The event will be held on Saturday, November 4th, from 8:00 am to 10:00 am at the Prime Osborn Convention Center. Parking will be immediately available in the front of the Center, across the street. A sign-up is available in the back of the church. Please do include your phone number and/or email address so that I can get back to you with any changes. Bear in mind that the floor is cement, so you need to be able to stand in place for the two hours. While it is not required, it would be nice for volunteers to wear a Bethlehem T-shirt (if you have one) so others can identify our group. Let the mission of Bethlehem Lutheran Church shine forth as a light "...in the world, holding fast to the word of life" (Philippians 2:15)

-Melissa Estervig



BLC serves the homeless the third Friday of every month at The Mission House. Please sign up in the Narthex. It only takes about two hours and is an amazing mission.

## *Dear Bethlehem*

Thank you so much for sponsoring me to go to Camp Linhaven. I had so much fun and highly recommend it for anyone in middle school. We did many things including study groups, games, free time, and singing around the campfire. My two favorite parts were the campfire and free time because I got to play ping pong. I made lots of new friends and wish I could go back for another year. Sadly, I am too old now, thank you again.

Landon Williams

## *Building a House That Will Last*

Well, we did it. The McCarty family made it through our first hurricane experience. People said to expect an exciting welcome from ya'll, and they weren't wrong! Thankfully, my family and I were spared the more intense destruction that many of our fellow citizens in Florida and Texas have experienced. With only a yard full of shingles and sticks, we truly had much to be thankful for. Certainly, in the wake of such destruction there is much need for prayer, and long-term assistance will be needed for many areas. Please continue to pray for our fellow brothers and sisters, and be open to ways that we can help in the coming weeks and even months as waters recede and building projects begin.

And speaking of building projects... We have all experienced a recent reminder that storms have a way of testing the soundness of a given structure. In Matthew 7, Jesus plays upon this truth with His well-known parable of the wise and foolish builders. In it, He emphasizes that a house built upon the rock of Him and His teaching can withstand the wind and waves, unlike one foolishly built apart from Him, on the sand. I thought of this parable while driving from Florida to the Tennessee/Georgia border. I found myself wondering what I had built my "house" on.

See, we had just gotten settled into the vicarage house. Bags unpacked, pictures hung, fridge stocked, meals planned. We even planted flowers. And as we drove away I found myself asking how I would react if it were all gone when we got back. It was a sobering thought. But also clarifying. I realized that while the pictures hung on the wall were nice, the two people that mattered much more were buckled safely into the car with me. It changed my perspective. That's what Jesus does with His parable. He prompts me to ask, "What am I building my house on?"

Not all foundations are created equal. While the rock of Jesus Christ is solid, the shifting sands of income, prestige, sports, good grades, or extracurricular events are not. When the storms of life come, some things will last. Others will not.

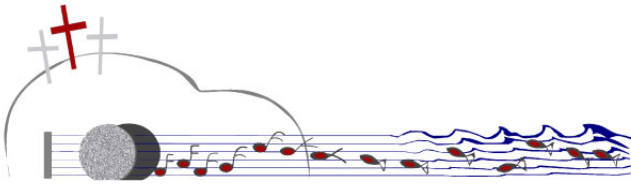
So, husbands, lead your family with the Word of God. Make sure they are in church every Sunday to receive His gifts. Any other foundation will disappoint when the thunder rumbles. Wives, honor your family with service that points to Christ and His forgiveness. Nothing else will last when the lightning strikes. Even those of you without a spouse - spend this wonderful season of life doing your research on this ultimate building material, this Jesus guy. Meet together regularly with others for Bible study and prayer. We are all building a house. Let's make sure it can withstand the storm. Let's make sure the foundation is solid.

As a father, and really just as a human being, I know that it is all too easy sometimes to give up on the task of "building the house" entirely. Sometimes I just sort of "let it happen." But this simply isn't an option for a Christian. Building takes intentionality.

In Christ, we have been given a foundation that can withstand any disaster, disease, or despair. Friends, we aren't going to find a better foundation than the one we've been given. Let's get building.

Vicar Nathan

Please keep our country in prayer.



We may be in Maryland or Montana or, in this case, Iowa - near Iowa City and the University of Iowa, where they truly love their Hawkeyes - but we always seem to have one eye on Florida, especially that bit on the Northeast coast there. So when we heard Pastor Dana's phone call to prayer, time stood still for a bit, as it certainly must have done for you all.

We are glad to know that you are still there! Our hearts and prayers go out to all who have suffered loss, both near the beach, across town and indeed, across the region. May the Lord be with you, as is His custom.

We are on the road full-time again, after a respite in Minnesota to work in the local congregations, and see grandkids and kids. It is good to be on our tenth year of serving this mobile ministry. Some have fiscal years. Our year begins in September. The Lord continues to lead and guide our path. We have been invited to churches where we have not been and we enjoy getting to know ever more people. Later this week we head south to Chesterfield, Missouri, for a concert and an outdoor service. Please keep us in prayer as we make our way to Texas and west to California. It is our prayer that the Lord would continue to be your Light as we all follow Him.

The Horns

## *Celebrating the 500th Reformation Anniversary*

*2017 is the 500th Anniversary  
of the Protestant Reformation*

*Discover the history and impact of  
Martin Luther's historic movement..*

Saturday, October 28, 2017

9 am - 12 Noon

University of North Florida

Fine Arts Center - The Robinson Theatre

1 UNF Drive, Bldg 14A, Jacksonville

Join us for an educational presentation celebrating the Anniversary of the Reformation with a series of presentations by noted Reformation expert speaker, Rev. Dr. Paul Robinson.

Visit the website [www.bethlehmlutheranjaxbeach.org](http://www.bethlehmlutheranjaxbeach.org) for more information or call (904) 249-5418.

General admission is free and seats are limited.

*Please register for event tickets at:*

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/celebration-of-the-500th-reformation-anniversary-tickets-36844696479>

## **Middle School Youth Gathering**

November 3-5, 2017

Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center  
Leesburg, FL

Speaker is Shelli Haynes and Bread of Stone  
is returning this year.

Please check with Vicar for more information  
if you are interested in attending.

## **Just be quiet and pray.....**



Well, we all made it through Irma, some more gracefully than others. We all have aftermaths with which to deal, some more trying than others. We all are concerned with what seem to be more and more upcoming storms, some more serious than others. I had plenty of time to reflect upon how dependent we have become upon electricity. How did folks ever survive with just candles and oil lamps? I thought I had my rough and ready girl-scout skills in tact.... But: wrong. I was certainly grateful that I have an acoustic piano (does not require current, just determination). Several days after the storm I was getting my hair cut and discussions ensued about all the various storm stories. My good friend Alice told me hers which I found particularly profound in its' simplicity. She was staying in a house with various family and friends who had agreed that it was probably the safest place to be. Everyone was experiencing their own levels of stress and trying to cope with whatever was going to happen. There was one man whose anxiety got the best of him and he began complaining about the storm, the weather forecasters, the news people in general, the city, state and federal officials and on and on. Needless to say this did nothing to help the coping skills of the gathered folks. As his negativity escalated and everyone became more tense, my friend finally could take no more and firmly announced, "Just be quiet and pray!!!" Silence filled the room and she took the opportunity to continue her words of wisdom. "Your faith is too small; you need to grow it!" She took out her Bible, as she did to me in the shop in the middle of my haircut and said "read the book of John and learn of all the miracles." I found this to be wisdom; a phrase to be used on many occasions. I will try to remember when things seem to be getting much too noisy and confusing and just generally out of hand: "Just be quiet and pray!" I left the shop with much more than a great haircut. The hair will continue to grow and be cut, but the thought will remain with me forever. Thank you, Alice.

Blessings to you all,  
Kathleen, Minister of Music



**REFORMATION  
2017 It's Still All About  
Jesus**

# October 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> 8, 9:30 & 11 am Worship 9:30 Bible Study	<b>2</b> 9:30 am Senior Cards 6:45 pm Gideon's Meeting	<b>3</b> 6 pm Bells	<b>4</b> 9:30 Chapel 11 am Staff Mtg 5 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Confirmation 6:30 Adult Info Class 7 pm Bible Study	<b>5</b> 9:15 Prayer Meeting 9:30 Bible Study 6:30 Choir 6:45 pm AA Mtg	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 8:45 am AA Mtg 9 am Grounded in Faith 10 am Music Practice
<b>8</b> 8, 9:30 & 11 am Worship 9:30 Bible Study Pastor Appreciation Sunday	<b>9</b> 7 pm Over the Ditch Small Group	<b>10</b> 6 pm Bells 7 pm Elders Meeting	<b>11</b> 9:30 Chapel 11 am Staff Mtg 5 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Confirmation 6:30 Adult Info Class 7 pm Bible Study	<b>12</b> 9:15 Prayer Meeting 9:30 Bible Study 6:30 Choir 6:45 pm AA Mtg	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 8:45 am AA Mtg 10 am Music Practice
<b>15</b> 8, 9:30 & 11 am Worship 9:30 Bible Study	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 6 pm Bells	<b>18</b> 9:30 Chapel 11 am Staff Mtg 5 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Confirmation 6:30 Adult Info Class 7 pm Bible Study	<b>19</b> 9 am Circuit Meeting 6:30 Choir 6:45 pm AA Mtg	<b>20</b> 6 pm Mission House	<b>21</b> 8:45 am AA Mtg 10 am Music Practice
<b>22</b> 8, 9:30 & 11 am Worship 9:30 Bible Study	<b>23</b> 7 pm Over the Ditch Small Group	<b>24</b> 6 pm Bells 7 pm Exec. Council	<b>25</b> 9:30 Chapel 11 am Staff Mtg 5 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Confirmation 6:30 Adult Info Class 7 pm Bible Study	<b>26</b> 9:15 Prayer Meeting 9:30 Bible Study 6:30 Choir 6:45 pm AA Mtg	<b>27</b> 6 pm Trunk or Treat 	<b>28</b> 8:45 am AA Mtg 9 am Reformation at UNF 10 am Music Practice
<b>29</b> 8, 9:30 & 11 am Worship 9:30 Bible Study <b>Reformation Observed</b> 5 pm Reformation Worship Service followed by Dinner	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Reformation Halloween 6 pm Bells	 <p><b>REFORMATION</b> 2017 <i>It's Still All About</i> <b>Jesus</b></p>			