

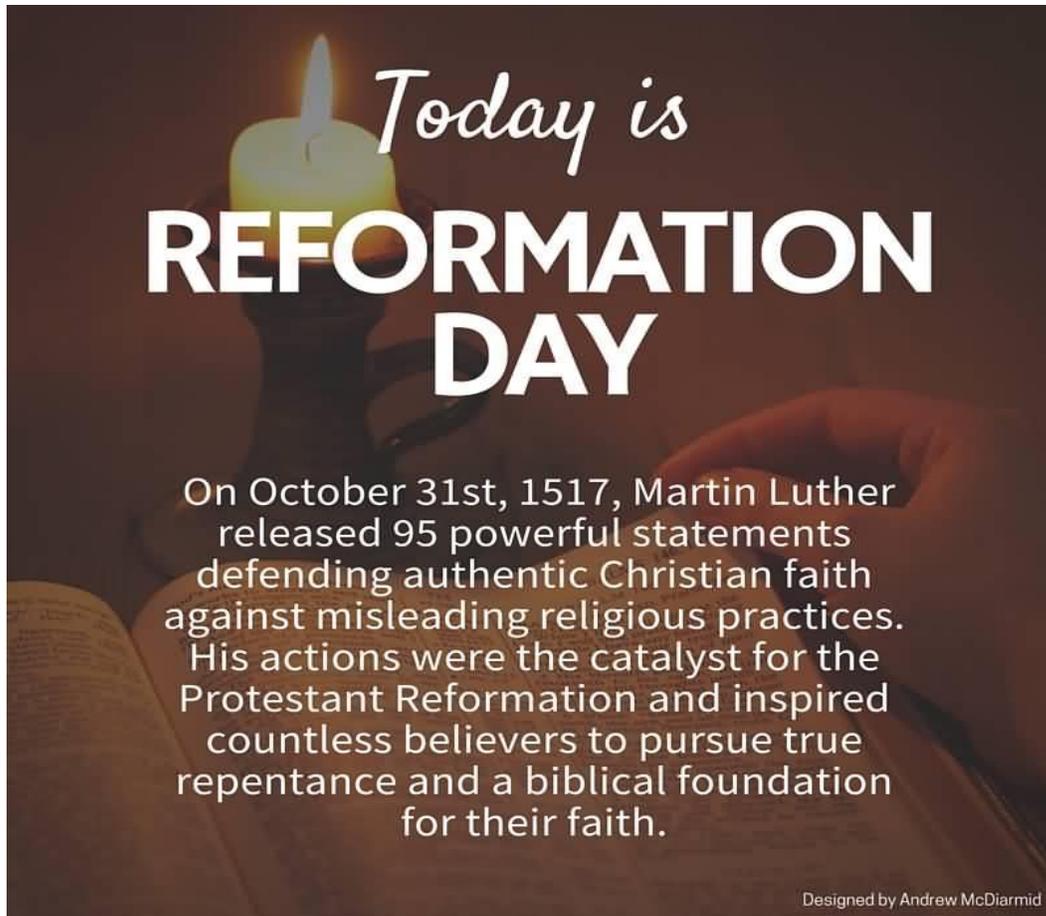
REFORMATION SUNDAY

October 31, 2021

Aldersgate UMC of Butte, Mt

406.782.2425 ... www.aldersgatebutte.org

Pastor Matthias Krier



Scripture Lesson: Mark 12:28-34

28 One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; 30 you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."

³¹The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.' ³²Then the scribe said to him, 'You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that "he is one, and besides him there is no other"; ³³and "to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength", and "to love one's neighbour as oneself",—this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' ³⁴When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' After that no one dared to ask him any question.

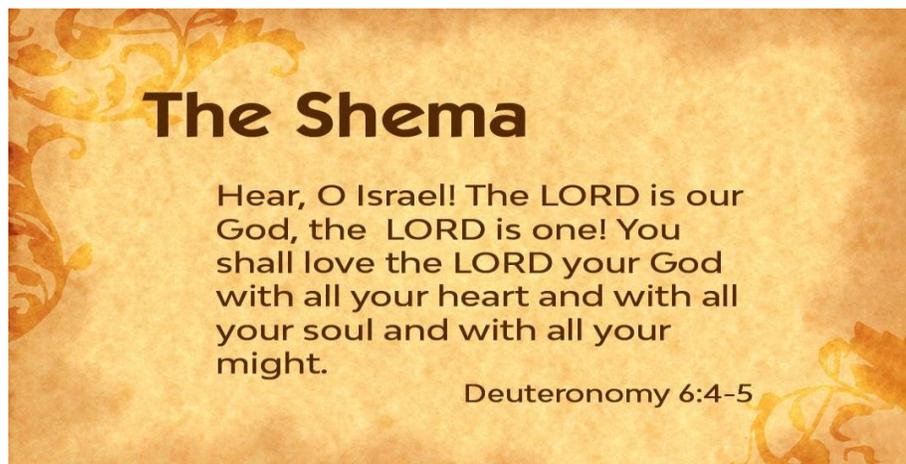
The Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Message

Matthias, the Apostle

"Put a New and Right Spirit Within Me"

(Pastor Matthias was in a 1st century costume to play the role of the 12th apostle, Matthias, from Acts, Chapter 1.)



Shalom! My name is Matthias. There are at least two common pronunciations of my name. *Mattias*. Or *Matthias*. So you might be thinking: *potato patato, and you would be right!*

As most of you already know, I was the replacement as an apostle after Judas died. And speaking of Judas, that is a story that many do not understand and that story is for another time. But let me just say that Judas, in my opinion, got a bad rap! You may think you know the story of Judas Iscariot, but you do not.

Two of us were candidates for taking the place of Judas. The other was Joseph who was called Barsabas. We were candidates because we were there from the beginning and experienced first hand the resurrection which is a requirement if one is to be an apostle. If I may, I would like to make a confession. When they drew lots to see who would become the 12th apostle, I was scared, and secretly wished that the lot would fall on Barsabas. Can you blame me?

It is one thing to be a disciple, simply a follower of the Way, but then to be appointed and anointed as an apostle meant I was going to have to move way out of my comfort zone. I felt safe and comfortable as a disciple simply learning the teachings of Yeshua and striving to live them out. As a disciple, I was more or less just a student.

However, as an apostle, I was now called to be a leader, not just a follower, and I wasn't sure I was ready for this. In some ways, I thought being a follower of Yeshua was difficult and challenging enough, but now, this was going to be something way more demanding of me to be anointed as an apostle which means *“one who is being sent off” to share the Good News of the Kingdom!*

We were to spread the Good News of the kingdom, the Good News of Adonai and Adonai's unconditional love. The Good News that the kingdom of Yahweh was and is in our midst. It is in the here and now. This is eternity. Yeshua said, *“The kingdom of God is within you and all around you.”* When Yeshua was teaching this to us, I remembered the words of the psalmist: (Psalm 139:)

⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

Speaking of Sheol which is the underground, Hell if you will. My people lived in hell under Roman oppression. If you have never lived under this kind of oppression, then you do not know the hell we lived in where my people were not only oppressed and tortured, but hung on crosses to rot.

This is why we awaited for the Messiah that would free our people once and for all. We waited for a Messiah that the prophets foretold.

So you can only imagine our disappointment, grief and even anger when Yeshua was not this kind of Messiah. We did not understand the nature of what being the Messiah meant according to Yeshua. Judas tried forcing Yeshua's hand in being the Messiah we longed for and we know how that ended up.

Instead, Yeshua brought to us the best of the Law and went beyond our sacred texts. For example, I see on the front of your worship bulletin the Shema translated into English. The Shema by the way is our confession of faith from the Torah. This is the first part of our confession of faith that we recite morning and evening:

“Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

This was and is a sacred text for us and while I was surprised at some of the teachings of Yeshua, I was not surprised that Yeshua would lift up this sacred teaching from the Torah. Then Yeshua paused and added this:

“And you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Seriously, I have a hard time loving members of my extended family much less my neighbor. And when he told the parable of the Good Samaritan on who is our neighbor I thought our beloved Rabbi was a heretic. A

Samaritan, a half breed, someone who is unclean, was the one who stopped to help this poor victim alongside the road. A Samaritan! Really!

But that was Yeshua always turning our world upside down and so we struggled with his teachings as you might imagine. I struggled immensely when I was chosen to become an apostle and I thought how can I possibly do this and then two things happened.

For years, I would pray from the psalms and for whatever reason, the words seemed empty until I experienced an epiphany with this verse from the Psalms: *“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.”* I would say it again and again, *“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.”*

This verse which became my prayer was followed up with an event that would change everything. While this event seemed to be filled with chaos and confusion, it was actually a moment of clarity of what was to come. And do you have any idea what this moment would be which would be as moving and inspiring and as empowering as experiencing the resurrection of Christ?

PENTECOST! I hesitate to even try to put to words how the Holy Spirit came to us. For some it came like a gentle breeze and for others it was like the rush of a mighty wind. Somehow this talk of the kingdom of God made sense now. Yeshua’s kingdom was not an earthly kingdom and he wasn’t to reign over the earth like a king. This experience was unlike any other where we began praying and speaking in other languages as the Spirit gave us utterance.

It was then I realized that I could move from being a disciple to becoming an apostle, not just a follower, but a leader. It was then that I realized the vision of Yeshua: *(in Aramaic)*

*Teytey malkuthakh
Nehwey tzevyanach aykanna d’bwashmaya aph b’arha*

Which is:

*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.*

Amen.