

Minor Festivals: Presentation of the Augsburg Confession, June 25

June 25th—U.A.C.—Cornerstone Reminder

“I speak of Thy testimonies before kings, and I am not ashamed.” (Psalm 119:46)

Engraved on the cornerstone of St. Peter’s Lutheran Church, located to the left of the main church doors, are the letters U.A.C. Many visitors and members of our congregation ask, “What is the U.A.C. all about?” Here’s the answer that you can share with those who ask:

On January 21, in the year of our Lord 1530, the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Charles V, decreed that the heads of state in his realm were to meet in the city of Augsburg, Germany, beginning in April of that year. Among the issues that they were to consider was the division between the Lutherans and the Roman Catholics.

Elector John, ruler of Saxony, ordered Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon, along with others, to prepare a Lutheran confession to present at the Diet of Augsburg. They immediately prepared a document called the Torgau Articles, which they delivered to the Elector in the city of Torgau. From there they made their way to Augsburg, stopping in the city of Coburg, where Luther had to remain because it was unsafe for him to appear in Augsburg. Melanchthon took with him the Torgau Articles, along with two other documents written chiefly by Martin Luther—the Schwabach Articles and the Marburg Articles.

Upon his arrival in Augsburg, Melanchthon discovered that the Roman Catholic theologian John Eck had prepared 404 Propositions that misrepresented the Lutheran position. Melanchthon realized that the Torgau Articles would not be a sufficient confession of the Lutheran Church. Using Luther’s teachings as drawn from the Schwabach, Marburg, and Torgau Articles, Melanchthon composed the Augsburg Confession. He sent it to Martin Luther for his approval. Luther wrote, “I am well pleased with it, and know nothing to improve or to change in it; neither would this be proper, since I cannot step so gently and softly. Christ, our Lord, grant that it may produce much and great fruit, which, indeed, we hope and pray for. Amen.”

On June 25, 1530, at three o’clock in the afternoon, Chancellor Beyer appeared before Charles V and read the Augsburg Confession in the German language. The reading lasted about two hours. Dr. Beyer read with such a clear and plain voice that the crowds out in the courtyard could hear every word. The Roman Catholic Duke William of Bavaria declared, “Never before has this matter and doctrine been presented to me in this manner.” The Roman Catholic theologian John Eck assured him that he could refute the Lutherans with the writings of the church fathers, but not with the Scriptures. Duke William replied, “Then the Lutherans, I understand, sit in the Scriptures and we of the Pope’s Church beside the Scriptures.”

From that moment on the Augsburg Confession became the creed of every truly Lutheran Church. Martin Luther had said that there was nothing to improve or change in it. Unfortunately, his sidekick Melanchthon, who always sought to compromise with the opponents, did not agree. In the following years he took it upon himself to change portions of this confession in order to make it more palatable to the other side. Because of this, the Lutheran Church had to repudiate Melanchthon’s variations of the Augsburg Confession because they compromised the truth of God’s Word. In 1567 the Lutherans wrote, “We confess the old, true, unaltered Augsburg Confession, which later was changed, mutilated, misinterpreted, and falsified.”

June 25th is the 490th anniversary of the reading of the Augsburg Confession. By God’s grace, our congregation still confesses the truth of God’s Word as explained in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. It is only fitting and right that our cornerstone bears the initials U.A.C.

Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word;
Curb those who by deceit or sword
Would seek to overthrow your Son
And to destroy what he has done.

Lord Jesus Christ, your pow’r make known,
For you are Lord of lords alone;
Defend your Christendom that we
May sing your praise eternally.

Pastor Zuberbier

After sharing this devotion with your family, take the time to read Matthew Chapter 10.