



# The Red Door

November 2013

Martin, Francis and Nadia

*Note: Some people tell that it's a bit more to follow the sermon when it's bilingual, so I'm sharing the reflection preached on Reformation Sunday.*

For all the historical impact that the Reformation had, its beginning is quite ironic and humble. In a very real sense, the movement started with Martin Luther's realization of something that we consider very basic in our Christian understanding. Namely, that we are sinful. That our human nature has the tendency substitute God's will for our own. Which is what Adam and Eve did in the beginning. The temptation was "to be like God" (Gn. 3:5). They tried to take over things. To be in control of their own destiny. They tried to live without God. In the end, what happens is that we become slaves of ourselves and of those things we give control over our lives. Martin Luther knew himself to be a sinful person. Not only that, but he also knew very clearly that he couldn't do anything about that. He could not fix his nature. He could not change who he was. He could not do anything to satisfy his sin or avoid its consequences. That thought excruciated his soul to the point that he began to fear, instead of love, God.

I began to think about our Reformation service some weeks ago when they published the interview they did of Pope Francis (Spadaro, A. (Sept. 30, 2013) A Big Heart Open to God. *America*). In it, he has said something very important that is true to him, to Martin Luther and to each one of us. When he was asked to describe himself he said, "I am a sinner. This is the most accurate definition. It is not a figure of speech, a literary genre. I am a sinner." As he continued explaining what he meant, he described a painting in one of the churches in Rome that he used to visit as a cardinal. In the painting "The Calling of St. Matthew" by Caravaggio, Jesus is pointing to Matthew, the tax collector, and calling him to be his disciple. In his interpretation of the painting, Matthew reacts by grabbing his money as if saying, "No, not me. No, this money is mine". Pope Francis then says of himself: "That finger of Jesus, pointing at Matthew. That's me. I feel like him. Like Matthew. A sinner whom the Lord has looked upon." That's the truth that both Martin Luther and Pope Francis have come to understand about themselves.

The question is, where all this leaves all of us? If the reformer of the church, and one the most important Christian figures in the world, call themselves sinful people, what hope do we have? This is where Nadia Bolz-Weber comes in. Nadia, better known as Pastor Nadia, also knows herself to be a sinner. A recovering alcoholic and drug addict Pastor Nadia went from hoping to be dead to proclaiming life to her parishioners. Her story is very interesting and moving; and there's a whole lot that I can't share with you here because it would take too long, but I invite you to read her book [Pastrix: The Cranky, Beautiful Faith of a Sinner & Saint](#). But here's the point where I want to get: She came to know the truth about her sin. And that truth crushed her to a point where she thought she could never be put back together again.

But she also came to discover the truth that would ultimately liberate her. That's the truth of which the gospel talks about today. Jesus, the truth. Jesus, the life. Jesus, the way. Jesus, the good shepherd. Jesus, the Word made flesh. Ultimately the Reformation is not about this great historical event in the life of the church. Nor is it about the heroics or the courage of Martin Luther or anyone else for that matter. There is only one thing that matters not simply for the Reformation movement but to the whole of the Christian faith: That God revealed himself in the face and shape of Jesus Christ. That is the only truth we need to know. That is the only truth that can set you free. Jesus is that truth. He is God's response to the sin of the world. He is the one through which Martin, Francis, Nadia, you and I find salvation. That's what we celebrate on Reformation Sunday. Amen.

*The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and good news refreshes the body. Proverbs 15:30*

# Emanuel Community Center Treasurer's Report

October, 2013

## INCOME-EXPENSE STATEMENT

Beginning Balance	\$10,639.21
Income	\$2,307.50
Expense	\$2,612.04
Ending Balance	\$10,334.67

### Notes

3<sup>rd</sup> quarter income from Emanuel Lutheran Church was deposited in October with no other unusual income received, or expenses incurred for the month. Food Pantry costs have increased due to a combination of better quality foods and increased need in the community.

### INCOME/EXPENSE THROUGH OCTOBER 31, 2013

	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>In-Kind</u>
Food Pantry	\$ 17,579	\$ 19,904	\$ 16,597
Creations of the Heart	-	500	-
ESL	-	100	-
Unidos Podemos	1,200	960	-
Operating Expenses	5,114	9,324	-
Angel Tree Program	-	-	-
Summer Reading Program	2,000	2,599	728
Back to School Carnival	3,760	4,064	2,617
Totals	\$29,653	\$ 37,451	\$ 19,942

## November 2013 Church Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Creations of the Heart 9 a.m.	2 Global Village 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
3 English service – 10  DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS  Spanish service – 12:15  Global Village – 12 – 3 p.m.	4 Family Hair Care class 1 pm  6:30 The Future of the Church	5 Food Pantry – 8 a.m.  Election Day	6 Healthy Kids – Healthy Families 1 pm  Animate Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	7	8 Creations of the Heart 9 a.m.	9 PLANES 9 am
10 English service – 10  Spanish service – 12:15	11  Columbus Day	12 Food Pantry – 8 a.m.	13 Healthy Kids – Healthy Families 1 pm	14	15 Creations of the Heart 9 a.m.	16
17 English service – 10  Spanish service – 12:15	18	19 Food Pantry – 8 a.m.	20 Healthy Kids – Healthy Families 1 pm	21	22 Creations of the Heart 9 a.m.	23
24 English service – 10  Spanish service – 12:15	25	26	27 Healthy Kids – Healthy Families 1 pm  Thanksgiving service	28 Thanksgiving Day	29	30



**Birthdays for the Month of November:**

2 Claudia R. Ortiz	19 Roger Knipp
4 Roberto L. Hernandez Cathy Zwernemann	21 Annalisa Brault-Jordan Dorothy Chambers
7 Alice Parsons Paige Schafer	22 Neal Baker
14 Consuelo Gomez	24 Vesta Jenson
16 Monica V. Ortiz	26 Elizabeth Good Aracely Jasso
17 Jackie Carlson	27 Pricilla Hernandez Tony Reyes
	28 Pilar Martinez
	29 Martin Trevino
	30 Anakaren Cruz



As anyone could see at the Reformation bi-lingual service, we have a very enthusiastic junior choir at Emanuel. The children sat very quietly in the first pew for a very long time which impressed Gaynelle, Barbara and Donna! They sang well and loudly. Nathan, one of the choir members, answered the question "Who are we singing for?"- 'For God!' Other choir members are Nathaniel, Hector, Andrew, Noelle, Sonia, Christian, Diego, Emily. Thanks to all our singers as well as Gaynelle and Barbara for helping.

The senior choir will be singing a couple of times in November. Buzz, a visitor to Emanuel, has asked to join the choir and will be singing with us. Welcome, Buzz! Another recent addition to the choir is Jim Hyland. He is singing tenor and the choir is grateful for his assistance! Anyone who enjoys singing is welcome to join the choir. Reading music is not a requirement.

A big thanks goes out to John Pinkston for making another music holder for the organ. John is also working on staining the piano in Fellowship Hall (Pastor Jensen`s piano which was donated to Emanuel by his family.)

*Donna*

## Your Call To Gracious Living

Mary Jo, a middle-aged divorcee with two children at home, sat quietly in the last row of seats in her church listening as the pastor gave his Sunday morning sermon. She was surprised when as he was nearing the conclusion of his talk on living life in God's good graces, he pulled a dollar bill from his pocket, waved in the air and said, "I'll give this dollar to anyone who'll accept it. It's free money; a gift. I invite anyone who wants the cash to come and take it; anyone!"

Mary Jo watched as most of the worshippers paused, shuffled their feet and looked blankly at each other. A wife elbowed her husband who shook his head. A five-year-old boy started walking down the aisle, but his mother pulled him back. Finally Mary Jo stood up and said, "I'll take it." She walked to the pulpit; the pastor gave her the dollar bill; and she returned to her seat.

The pastor then turned to address the others at worship. "Why didn't you others take my offer? I'll answer my own question. It's likely some of you would have been embarrassed to admit you actually needed a single dollar. Others were afraid I had a trick up my sleeve, a catch of some sort in my offer; something I'd ask you to do in return for the dollar. And then, I'm sure there are those among us who thought, "Nah, I've already got lots of dollars in my pocket; one more won't mean a thing."

"Whatever your reason, you were reluctant to accept my free gift of a single dollar bill. And, you know what, many of us are equally reluctant today to accept a free gift from God – His free gift of forgiveness of our sins; His free gift of grace to make us right in Him. Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans, '*All need to be made right with God by His grace, which is a free gift. (We) need to be made free from sin through Jesus Christ. God gave Him as a way to forgive sin through faith in the blood of Jesus.*' But while God's good grace is free to all, only a few choose to stand and trust in Him. Unlike Abraham who decided to focus on the promise rather than the problems of having a child at his age, many of us choose to sit and wait for something more, something different or something better.

"Why are we so reluctant to believe in God's promise to gift us His grace? The answers are similar to those of my free dollar bill. To accept my dollar bill, you'd have to admit things are pretty bad and a single dollar would, indeed, make a difference right now. To accept God's forgiveness, you'd have to admit you've sinned; that you may not be as righteous as you've led others – and perhaps yourself – to believe.

"And then there's the 'It's too risky; He'll probably ask me to give up something or start doing something – or worse, stop doing something I really enjoy' excuse. Or the "It's too good to be true; God may forgive you for whatever you've done, but He's not going to take a chance on letting me off the hook' excuse.

"But that's not how God works; His gifts are truly free. As with Abraham, all God expects of us is that having received His grace, we live a gracious life. Having been made right with Him, we live a righteous life among His children. Having been loved by Him we love others in turn. Having been blessed by Him, we bless those around us in need.

"That's how grace works. The same God who gave a child to Abraham has promised grace to us. What's more incredible in your mind, Sarah telling Abraham he was finally about to become a father or God calling you and me righteous?

"Both ideas could be thought absurd.

"Both ideas are, in fact, almost too good to be true.

"But, in the end, both ideas are God's ideas."

*Jim Hyland*

# Announcements



**Global Village** – This is an invitation to come to the Greenland Hills UMC to buy your Christmas gifts from some thirty non-profit groups, including our own ECC. There will be handcrafts and coffee, tea and chocolate from small cooperatives around the world. Great gifts for family, friends and coworkers. The market will be open next Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Sunday from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. Greenland Hills is located at 5835 Penrose Ave. For more information, contact Judy Kline, 214-923-3232 or email [judyalk1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:judyalk1@sbcglobal.net).

**Animate** – Come join our new Bible study series dedicated to explore the central topics of Christianity. It uses a journal to suggest discussion topics and to track our journey. Themes are meant to delve deep into faith by asking some difficult but meaningful questions. We will begin on Wednesday, November 6 at 6:30 p.m. Bring a snack to share and come prepared for lively discussion. Please RSVP with Pastor Julio to make sure that we have enough materials for everybody. We hope to see you there!

**We are making an effort to reduce** our lot mortgage by 20% so that we can reduce the amount of interest that we must pay on our \$100,000.00 balance. Our goal is to raise \$20,000.00 all of which would be applied to the loan principal, by Sunday, November 10, and we already have received \$14,500.00 of that amount. We are asking you to consider a special gift to help raise the last \$5,500.00. If we are successful in reaching our goal, we will reduce our interest expense by about \$50.00 a month and that much of our monthly payment will then be applied to the remaining principal.

**Check Before You Leave** – Occasionally we have found AC units left running through the night. We need your help making sure that all the lights and AC units are turned off before leaving and locking the building. A bit of savvy usage goes a long way.