

## The True Church

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. –Ephesians 1:3-4*

“Where the word of God is, there is the true church.” Jan Hus preached this simple message as chaplain of the University of Prague in the fourteenth century. He was leading a “mini-Reformation” throughout Bohemia (today known as the Czech Republic and Slovakia), insisting that everyone should be able to read the Bible in their own language, that communion be given in both bread and wine, that clergy should marry if they wish like anyone else, and that the political powers of bishops and popes should end. He was tried and executed at the Council of Constance, saying, “Today you cook this goose. [Hus means goose in the Slovak language]; in a hundred years there will come a swan whose song you will not be able to silence.” Many thought his prophecy was fulfilled in Dr. Martin Luther. When pushed by Johannes Eck in the Leipzig Debate, Luther admitted his sympathies for Jan Hus, and to his friends began to even call himself “a Hussite” for a time. By Luther’s day, Hus’s spiritual legacy had grown into the Unitas Fratras, or the United Brethren, which today is known worldwide as the Moravian Church. Along with them and the Anglican Communion, we commemorate Jan Hus on July 6<sup>th</sup>.

Where the true church is, there are the signs of faith working through love. Ephesians 1:3-4 quoted above notes some of the signs of the presence of the true church: being blessed and being a blessing to others, being holy and blameless because God chose us to know and trust Christ, living our whole life under God’s watch and loving our neighbours. Let us thank God for the signs of the presence of the church at the foot of the Broadway Bridge in this congregation Zion Lutheran. Let us pray God to strengthen and increase the signs of the presence of the church here at the foot of the Broadway Bridge in Zion Lutheran! To that end may God the Holy Spirit increase in us a desire to know and share the word of God. For where the word of God is, there is the true church.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, thank you for the life and faith of Jan Hus. Thank you for the people who have shared your word with us. Renew us in the Christian life that we may share your word with others. In your name we pray. Amen