

The Beatles song "All you need is love"
was the anthem of the summer of love.

Composed in 1967
by John Lennon
for the event called "our world",
the song was first performed
for the first televised worldwide link up event.
Over 400 million people tuned in to the broadcast in June 1967.

The song tells a deep truth-
About us,
About our Beloved Community.

We both need
And are sorely lacking
in love-
for ourselves,
For each other,
For all those others around us.

The song was controversial from the beginning.
It was a number one hit on the record charts.
But Leftist radicals across the country
Claimed that the Beatles were a sellout.

What do you mean all you need is love?

We don't need love,
That silly emotion.

We need to organize,
protest,
take over,
and bring down the establishment!

500 years ago this week,
Martin Luther nailed a series of theological propositions,
95 of them to be exact
,to the door of the church in Wittenberg.

The young Augustinian Monk declared war
on the establishment of his time.

Eventually, Luther's insights
spread like wildfire through Christendom-

from Germany- to Switzerland to England to France.

But Luther's song would be quite different than the Beatles
– if he were a composer, his song would be entitled
“All you need is faith.”

Which is it?

Are we saved by what we believe?

That's what I was raised to think..

My parents forced me to spend every Wednesday afternoon and
Most Saturday Saturday mornings
for two years studying this little blue book.

It's Luther's small catechism,
complete with questions and answers and explanations.

As Missouri Synod Lutherans,
we were required to read mark, inwardly digest a
nd memorize all these articles of the faith
and their explanations.

Unless you think that this intellectual property
is a quirk of the Missouri Synod Lutherans,
take a look at our own Book of Common Prayer.

Largely as a result of Luther's revolution –
The Episcopal Church has our own 39 articles.

I'm not here to disparage that heritage,
that legacy,
those truths.

However,
I think we need a bigger picture.

What if the Beatles are right?
What if it is the love that saves us?

The apostle Paul says at the tail end
of first Corinthians chapter 13
faith hope and love by, but the greatest of these is love –

There, Paul is speaking the deepest truth –

He and the apostle John don't agree on a lot of things –

but they do agree on this-
that God is love
And that God calls us to love.

These two writers
are only echoing Jesus words
about the two greatest commandments –

Love God, love others.
says Jesus.

And then comes the famous sentence–
The one some of us grew up hearing every Sunday
from the Book of Common Prayer
on these two commandments hang all the law and the profits.

So it is not the little blue book, or are 39 articles that say but it is love.

This love is not the fruit of some of emotion with flower power,
Some of you remember that.

In spite of the way our society has interpreted love,
it's not at its base and emotion.

It's an act of the will.

Anyone who has stayed in the marriage more than a few years, can testify to the truth of this.

And emotion fades, but commitment lives on.
Anyone who is built a successful career, knows this truth.

Sometimes you love your job – and those are good moments.

The alarm goes off and you wake up with a smile and you said yourself what's on deck for today?

But there comes a time in our relationships
in our career
in our families
in our neighborhood,
when you continuing to be committed is sheerly an actor of the will. We stick with it.
Period.

So how does that will save us?

This is not the stubborn Scandinavian
or German or Polish

or Hungarian or Italian will that keeps on going no matter what.

I admire those people –
but the love that God speaks out,
the act of the will doesn't come from us it comes from God – i
n that sense Luther was right –

We cannot save ourselves – God must do the saving.

That is the truth Luther told-
And reminded the Church of it.

The most distinctive part of that good news
is that God wills to do that saving it through us.

So go ahead and feel special today –
feel loved-
And then turn around
and offer that active will to those around you –

Hug them close – allow them the freedom to love you in return.

This is good news.
This is our Reformation.
This is our gospel.

This is our Beloved Community.
St John's episcopal Church.

All you need is Love.

Amen.