

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The other day as I stopped for a traffic light, I noticed a sticker on the back of the vehicle in front of me. The sticker read, "Soli Deo Gloria." (See attached photo.) You may recall these words from the hymn of the same name in Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW). It begins like this--

O God of blessings, all praise to you! Your love surrounds us our whole life through. You are the freedom of those oppressed; you are the comfort of all distressed. Come now, O holy and welcome guest: *Soli Deo Gloria, Soli Deo Gloria* (#878, verse 1 and chorus, ELW).

I recall a parishioner at a previous church where I served asking me how to say these three words. While he seemed to be asking, because he thought we shouldn't be saying words in other languages (in this case, Latin), I offered the following cues--

Instead of saying "Solo" (So-low) say, "*Soli*" (So-lee). Then, think of the words from the refrain of the Christmas hymn, *Gloria in excelsis Deo* ("Angels We Have Heard on High," #289, ELW), which means "Glory to God in the highest." We know how to say these words, "*Gloria*" and "*Deo*," because they are in the hymn's refrain. Then put the three words together.

By now you may be wondering--what does it mean? ***Soli Deo Gloria* means "to the Glory of God Alone."** It is one of the Five Solas of the Christian Reformation. It is also one of the core tenets of the Lutheran faith.

Would you have imagined that a sticker with three little words on the back of a vehicle could mean so much? But it does. On Pentecost, people celebrated hearing praises to God given in many different languages. May we keep these three words in mind as we meet in worship today and during our Annual meeting: ***Soli Deo Gloria* (To the Glory of God Alone).**

Peace,

Pastor Cathy