



# Reformation Lutheran Church

“Come and See, Learn and Rejoice, Go and Tell!”

July, 2019

\*\*\*\*\* For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. - Galatians 5:13

When you're perfectly free, you rarely think about freedom at all. We are blind to the fact that we can work and get paid, vote for who we want to serve in office, speak our hearts and minds in public, marry who we want to, go to school, and so much more! Only when we're not free, when we lose our freedom, or when we go to a place where freedom is not a daily reality, only then do we open our eyes to see what a treasure we truly have in our free country and in our Christian liberty. Perhaps you're thinking to yourself, "There are very few places around the world that are not free," but according to Freedom House, a freedom watchdog group founded in the US in 1941, only about 45% of the world's polities are truly free. That's just 40 percent of the world's population. Also, there are some countries that are "partly free," but partly free isn't truly free.

Physical freedom, emotional freedom, and spiritual freedom are all vital to the human psyche. If you live in a free country but are held captive by an abusive person, then you are not truly free. If, for some reason your feelings and emotions are unduly restrained by others or even by yourself, you are not truly free. If you are spiritually free in your heart and mind but live under, for example, a harsh dictator who puts some kind of limits on spirituality, you are not truly free. God desires true and complete freedom for all of his children. Only in freedom can we thrive. In all other conditions we are just in survival mode, hungering for some escape. Jesus didn't come to this earth to die for us so that we could just survive. He put an end to the bondage of sin and death, political systems and emotional systems, so that we will be truly free. As St. Paul reminds us, when we are free, we are to use that freedom to serve and love others including sharing His Word and truth with others. We cannot take it for granted.

With freedom comes great responsibility. One of the great reformers, Martin Luther, made that clear in his writing called, "On the Freedom of a Christian." In this writing he said correctly that we are free only because Christ has made us free. With that freedom we can do everything.... or we can do nothing at all. However, by our fruits we will be known as belonging to Christ, as partakers in the freedom He won for us. We don't work for freedom for others in order to gain God's grace and salvation for ourselves. We work for the oppressed, we work for those in bondage and captivity because they do not know Christ, we work to bring glory to His name and to serve His people. It is God himself who opens our eyes to the plight of our neighbors near and far who are not free, whether that lack of freedom is physical, emotional or spiritual. May we be bearers of Christ to all so that all will know true freedom. May we continue to pray that our nation and her people would respect true freedom in Christ. May we not take for granted the freedoms Christ gives to us.

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*"Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness." Hebrews 3:13*

God commanded that his people encourage each other because he knows we need it. We live in a broken world where everything calls us toward selfishness and despair. Sin steals joy, our bodies break down, our plans falter, our dreams die, our resolves weaken, our perspective dims. Encouragement is shared with the hopes that it will lift someone's heart toward the Lord. It points out evidences of grace in another's life to help them see that God is using them and is with them! It

points a person to God's promises that assures them that all they face is under His control.

Let's all do our best to encourage each other and continue to show God's presence all around us!

Peace be with you, Gabi

**Treasurer's Report:** Please remember to put a note in the memo line of your check if you have funds directed for a specific purpose. It's a bit of a hassle to go back after the fact and make changes. Thanks! Thank you also to everyone who is making up their tithes for Sundays they are absent It's a big help in keeping our account balance looking good! Speaking of looking good, are you noticing how our building fund is slowly growing? The "Plus \$10" that many of you are doing the first Sunday of each month, is really making a noticeable difference.

Yours in Christ,  
Matthew DeWinter

**Fellowship:** The Fellowship committee is planning a game night with banana splits on Saturday, July 27 at 6:30. Bananas and ice cream will be provided. Bring your favorite toppings for a fun night! See you then!!

**Property:** Work day for July will be Saturday, July 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Worship and Music:** Over the next several weeks you will be seeing a change in our Sunday morning bulletins. We will be removing some of the current items. By doing this we will have a bulletin that is much more like those in other churches, but more importantly it will significantly reduce the amount of paper and the amount of ink used. We will use this new system for a month, and then discuss at council if we want to continue it or go back to the old system.

Confidence in Organized Religion - Americans' confidence in the church or organized religion continues to erode, with 36% now saying they have "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in organized religion, establishing another new low point in Gallup's trend. Americans have the least confidence in television news (18%) and Congress (11%). Confidence in organized religion topped confidence in all other institutions from 1973 to 1985, but after the televangelist scandals in the 1980s it began to erode. Since then the sex abuse scandal in Catholic Church and more recently the sex abuse scandal in the Southern Baptists have further eroded the public confidence. In many ways this is an example of the cover-up being worse than the crime. The downward trend in confidence in organized religion is also partly attributable to the rising share of Americans who identify as having no religion -- a group that has little confidence in organized religion, and now comprises about one-fifth of the U.S. population. But confidence in organized religion has also declined among those who are religious, including Catholics and Protestants. How can we help? Be a Christian example in our workplace and neighborhood...and bring a friend or neighbor to church.

**Education:** There will not be a summer VBS program this year. Unfortunately, it's been difficult to plan a time when we can get all the young folks together.

**Mission and Ministry:** We've had a slow summer, but look for things to pick up as we head toward fall! That's always a busy time for us, as we have several opportunities to share God's love in the community. Stay tuned!



## July Birthdays

- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Tammy Jensen
- 10<sup>th</sup> – Stephanie Stephens
- 11<sup>th</sup> – Keith Owen
- 12<sup>th</sup> – Pastor Jon
- 18<sup>th</sup> – Jay Jordan
- 23<sup>rd</sup> – Wayne Ramming

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**Sunday – July 14<sup>th</sup> – council**

**Saturday – July 27<sup>th</sup> – Clean up day beginning at 9:00**  
**Game Night and Ice Cream Social! - 6:30**

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	<u>July 7<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>July 14</u>	<u>July 21<sup>st</sup></u>	<u>July 28<sup>th</sup></u>
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Judy	Junior	Linda	Wayne
<b>Worship Asst.</b>	Chuck	Chuck	Amy	Gabi
<b>Comm. Asst.</b>	Amy	Gabi	Junior	Chuck
<b>Usher</b>	Mel	Junior	Judy	Carolyn
<b>Lector</b>	Mel	Lynne	Matthew	Junior
<b>Sermon</b>	Pastor	Wayne	Pastor	Pastor
<b>RP/Thrive</b>	Pastor	Gabi	Chuck	Wayne
<b>Oaks</b>	Chuck	Chuck	Pastor	Pastor

