



Reformation Lutheran Church

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

March 2021

“Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.” - Genesis: 22:2

A disturbing text, especially this awful command from God to Abraham. “Take your son,” seems like an unbelievable command for any God of love to give. Even Martin Luther’s wife, Katie, once said to her husband regarding this passage, “Martin, I don’t believe God would ask anyone to sacrifice his only son.”

We heard earlier how Isaac had been a gift from God to Abraham and Sarah in their old age. We heard how God had given them a promise of many descendants, and through those descendants all of the families of the earth will be blessed.” Isaac had been born to start the line of those descendants, and now God is saying kill him. WHY? Sometimes God accomplishes his works through human faith. The question is, does Abraham have that faith? Having been given Isaac, which does Abraham trust more? The GIFT or the GIVER?

In each of the Gospels, we also have the picture of a Father and Son, going to a place where the Son will be sacrificed. Jesus trusts his Father with his life, just as Isaac trusted Abraham. No words are exchanged on this journey, only a brief conversation in Gethsemane, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not my will, but yours be done.” And the answer Jesus received was the same one Abraham implied to Isaac. The sacrifice must be carried out. So, Jesus, too, must choose between disobedience and this obedience. This obedience...in which Jesus also carries the wood up the hill to the place of offering. This obedience...in which Jesus also is laid upon the wood. This obedience...in which hammers are raised over the nails of Jesus’ cross just as the knife was raised above Isaac’s chest.

THIS is where the stories become very different, because there is no substitute ram to rescue Jesus from this terrible fate. But it is not the end of the story, because God did not forsake Jesus any more than He forsook Abraham and Isaac. In this obedience, there is provision. In this obedience, we share Christ’s victory over the grave. This obedience...in which the broken are made whole, and in which all curses are swallowed up in blessing. This obedience is God’s loving gift for you and for all people. Amen.

Pr.

Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 43:18-19

When someone asks how things are going with you, how often do you say, “Same old, same old”? While there’s nothing wrong with that (at least things aren’t worse!) same old, same old can be frustrating – especially when you’re trying to get ahead or you’re wishing/praying/hoping for better things. Our spirit feels weary and worn. With world events being as they are, the despair can be ours individually, or as the Church, collectively. But...take heart! Just as every Spring God makes the Earth fresh and beautiful, He will do the same for our weary, old spirit. Even better, we don’t have to wait

for a certain season. His mercy, grace, forgiveness, and renewal are available to us always! Every. Single. Day. So, as we are getting ready to “Spring Forward,” I pray that we each feel His presence in our lives refreshing us as only He can do.

Peace be with you, Gabi

Treasurer’s Report: We're off to a really great start this year! We will be investing some of our money to be good stewards with our blessings. Thank you so much all of you for keeping up with your tithes. God has truly blessed this congregation!

Fellowship: As seems to be the way with us lately, our fellowship will revolve around food! There is a sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall for our Lenten meals. Any contributions will be welcomed. 😊

Property: Our March clean up day will be Saturday, the 27th, 9:00 a.m.

Education – In-person Bible study will resume, hopefully, sooner than later. 😊 Thanks to Chuck for sending our regular email studies.

Worship and Music: Things are getting better, people are getting the vaccine, and COVID cases are down, but attendance is not going up. We will continue to hold our Sunday service at 10:30 with socially distanced chairs and masks. We will also continue to send the service and Pastor Jon’s audio sermons to everyone who doesn’t make the Sunday morning service. Let me know if there is someone you feel would like to receive our Sunday service, and I will gladly add them to the distribution list.

We are holding Lenten services each Wednesday evening with dinner at 6:00 and the service at 7:00. All are welcome.

We did get some good news this week. Thrive has asked us to begin our Sunday service there beginning on Sunday, February 28. All of their residents have received the vaccine, so they will open up for us on Sunday mornings.

We have begun our look at the Lutheran Liturgy on Mondays along with our daily devotion. The devotion is a special Lenten journey and is written by Pastor Jim Cavanagh from Holy Trinity in Springfield, GA.

Mission and Ministry: The Outreach Committee is always looking for opportunities to share our blessings and God's love with those in the community around us. We're hoping to be able to provide help to Hope Closet as we have in the past. We're awaiting word on their current needs. If you hear of any possible opportunities, please let us know about them! Good news! Thrive is ready for us to come back and begin chapel services on Sunday mornings! Please keep this ministry and all our chapel friends in your prayers.



March 2nd – Eli Ervin
March 15th – Karen Erickson
March 27th – Don Grigsby





MARCH CALENDAR

Wednesday – March 3rd – Lenten Meal at 6:00 with Worship at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday – March 7th – Executive Council

Wednesday – March 10th – Lenten Meal at 6:00 with Worship at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday – March 14th – Council

– Daylight Savings Time: Turn Clocks ahead one hour.

Wednesday – March 17th – Lenten Meal at 6:00 with Worship at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday – March 24th – Lenten Meal at 6:00 with Worship at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday – March 27th– Clean-up day beginning around 9:00 a.m.

Sunday – March 28th – Palm Sunday

LOOKING AHEAD:

Friday – April 2nd – Good Friday Worship at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday – April 4th – Easter Sunday Worship at 10:30 a.m.

	March 7	March 14	March 21	March 28
Altar Guild	Wayne	Junior	Carolyn	Judy
Comm. Asst.	None needed as we are currently using intinction during communion.			
Usher	Junior	Judy	Wayne	Carolyn
Lector	Chuck	Wayne	Tammy	Karen
Sermon	Pastor	Pastor	Gabi	Pastor

WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH Lutherans in the Caribbean

When winter drags on, many Lutherans in the cold, northern climates begin to think about getting away from the snow and ice, moving somewhere warm. Wouldn't it be nice to settle on a tropical island somewhere, like in the Caribbean, and be done with winter once and for all. So why don't we do this-move to the Caribbean?

Well, I know what you are going to say: "I'd love to move to the Caribbean, but then wouldn't it be impossible to find a good Lutheran church?". Well, I have news for you: There are Lutherans in the Caribbean! Many of them! (Start packing your boxes.)

There have been Lutherans in some parts of the Caribbean for almost 400 years, and in some other places Lutheranism has been present for equally long periods of time. There are substantial numbers of Lutherans in the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guyana, and Suriname, with scattered congregations in Antigua, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Cuba, and Haiti. One of the Sixty-five synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is wholly in this area, the Caribbean Synod, which consists of congregations in the Virgin Island and Puerto Rico. As of 2010, there were more than 27,000 Lutherans around the Caribbean basin.

Historically, Lutheranism came to the Caribbean as the religion of white European, and later, American settlers. But in time some of these churches opened their doors to local inhabitants—Hispanics, African-Americans, and Native Americans—and some of these congregations have become truly indigenous and multicultural ministries.

More recently, North Americans moved and settled in some parts of the Caribbean, beginning other congregations for expatriates and vacationers. There is quite a variety of different Caribbean congregations: Some are independent church bodies, while others are related to American Lutheran denominations, such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS).

The oldest Lutheran congregation in the Caribbean was founded in the Virgin Islands in 1666 by the Danish settlers on the island of St. Croix, the Prederik congregation in Charlotte Amalie.

They later founded other congregations on islands of St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas in the eighteenth century. Although these congregations were originally intended for Danes, by the Frederik Lutheran Church, Charlotte Amalie 1750s they were doing mission work with the enslaved Africans on the islands. When the Danes sold these islands to the United States in 1917, these congregations affiliated with American Lutheran denominations. There are also several congregations of Virgin Island Lutherans on the mainland of the United States, most notably in New York City.

Similarly, Dutch Lutherans founded congregations in the area of Guyana and Suriname in the eighteenth century, as the Europeans planted colonies there. Congregations generally consisted of white settlers and their descendants until the middle of the nineteenth century, when they began to reach out to other populations. Guyana is especially racially diverse, and the Lutheran congregations there include African-Americans, Native Americans, East Indians, and some Chinese. Though served by pastors from Europe and America for quite some time, these Lutheran churches eventually became autonomous. These two churches now contain approximately 17,000 members.

Though it has a long history of European colonization, Lutherans did not become established on Puerto Rico until it became a part of the United States in 1898. In that year a young student, Gustav Swenson, moved to Puerto Rico and eventually started a Lutheran congregation there. He was eventually followed by a number of pastors and missionaries from the United States who began to preach in Spanish to the local population. Eventually, by 2005, there were twenty-eight congregations in Puerto Rico, with some 5,000 members, as a part of the Caribbean Synod of the ELCA.

Lutheran congregations exist in some of the other islands of the Caribbean as well. There was a small Lutheran presence in Cuba up to the revolution of 1961, and some scattered congregations may still exist. There is a WELS congregation in Antigua, founded in the 1970s. There is one ELCA congregation in Bermuda, and two Lutheran congregations in the Bahamas, an LCMS congregation in Nassau, and an ELCA congregation in Freeport. There is also a Lutheran presence in Haiti, connected with the Church of the Lutheran Confession in Alsace and Lorraine (France).

Though many of these Caribbean Lutheran congregations were begun by European or Americans, either as settlers or missionaries, most of their members are now predominantly local people—Virgin Islanders, Guyanese and Surinamese, Puerto Ricans, and others.

They may be Hispanic, Native American, African-American, or other local populations, worshipping in Spanish, English, French, or other local languages. These congregations enrich the palate of world Lutheranism and help spread the gospel of Christ into every corner of the world.

“THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE”