



# Reformation Lutheran Church

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

June 2021

“The kingdom of God is...” (Mark 4:26)

The simple, straightforward opening line of Mark’s Gospel announces the theme right off the bat, “The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

But when the story turns to Jesus and his ministry, we discover the story is not so simple or straightforward. The first words out of Jesus’s mouth proclaim that the good news about God is that God’s kingdom has now come near, and he calls for his hearers to change their hearts and lives. Though not in Mark’s Gospel, Matthew and Luke tell us that Jesus taught his disciples to pray “your kingdom come.” But as Martin Luther said in the Small Catechism, “God’s kingdom comes on its own without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that it may also come to us.”

What does God’s coming kingdom mean for us who are attempting to follow Jesus?

The kingdom is like a sower who sows seed enthusiastically, even wastefully, on different types of soil, but the seed grows secretly and the sower “knows not how.” Still the seed grows and the harvest comes. Are we hardworking type people sure we want to hear Jesus say that the kingdom comes without us doing anything? The kingdom is not really under our control and is utterly independent of our efforts. The parable of the mustard seed contrasts its small size and the large shrub. Imagine that, from seed to shrub without our intervention or help!

But that doesn’t mean we’re not to respond. Four times in this section Jesus calls attention to how important hearing is (vs. 9, 20, 22, 33). What are we to do for the kingdom? Listen. The point seems to be on the mysterious, secret nature of the kingdom of God and that it is a gift of God for us.

This parable about the seed secretly growing is hard for us to listen to because we think of ourselves as “movers and shakers.” We believe that anything we set our minds on is possible, even achievable, if we work hard and trust our own abilities. But perhaps Jesus is saying that the things we need most in life like love, purpose, and joy, can’t be self-produced. If we are to have them, they will be as gifts, as mysterious, unplanned, and unearned grace from God to us. Now that’s good news! Amen.

Pr.  
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**"And since all this loveliness cannot be Heaven, I know in my heart it is June." – Abba Woolson**

Some of our folks have big travel plans, others are planning smaller adventures and maybe spending more time at home. Whatever your plans and wherever the summer takes you, take some time to enjoy the beauty of God's creation around you. I've seen the Grand Canyon in its majesty, but was equally delighted with a pasture of cows and wildflowers in Kansas. Look around and enjoy it all! I wish everyone a safe, happy, and restful summer!

Peace be with you, Gabi

**Treasurer's Report:** The first quarter is looking pretty good financially. Thanks to those keeping up with tithes. Council voted to invest our recent donation plus some, into a Jackson account where it has more potential than with the current interest rates at the bank. That investment is currently in process. We are certainly blessed!  
Blessing to you, Judy

**Fellowship:** Mark your calendars for Sunday, June 6th. It's POTLUCK time! Whoop hoo! After a year of social distancing and not much in the way of getting together - it's time to put on a spread! We don't really need a sign-up sheet as everything seems to always work out. (I don't see a problem if we have ten desserts. (Just saying'...🙄)) Plan on joining us for fabulous food and fabulous fellowship!

**Property:** Our June clean-up day will be Saturday, the 26<sup>th</sup>, 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:** As I said last month, the Covid issue continues to improve. The CDC has now said you don't have to wear a mask if you have had the vaccination. From talking with members on Sunday mornings, I believe virtually everyone has received the vaccine, so masks are optional. I hope to see more of you back on Sunday mornings.

We have been fully operational at Thrive with a 9:15 service each Sunday. The leadership at the Oaks has been a bit more cautious, but they have begun to open up, and we will be able to begin services there on June 6.

We have covered a good portion of the Lutheran Liturgy on our Monday devotion, so if you have a part of Lutheran theology that you would like to have on Mondays following the liturgy, please let me know.

**Mission and Ministry:** We have a project in the works! We're applying for two Thrivent grant cards to provide food for the Hope Center (formerly known as Hope Closet.) Summer seems to be a slower time, but this will take care of some great needs the center has.

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**June 8<sup>th</sup> – Carolyn Ramming**

**June 21<sup>st</sup> – Lynne Rowe**

**June 23<sup>rd</sup> – Judy Grigsby**

<b>JUNE CALENDAR</b>
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**Sunday – June 6<sup>th</sup> – Executive Council following the POTLUCK Meal**

**Sunday – June 13<sup>th</sup> – Council**

**Sunday – June 20<sup>th</sup> – Father's Day**

**Saturday – June 26<sup>th</sup> – Clean-up day beginning around 9:00 a.m.**

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	<b>June 6</b>	<b>June 13</b>	<b>June 20</b>	<b>June 27</b>
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Judy	Junior	Judy	Junior
<b>Usher</b>	Junior	Judy	Junior	Judy
<b>Lector</b>	Karen	Chuck	Tammy	Lynne
<b>Sermon</b>	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor	Gabi
<b>Thrive</b>	Pastor	Gabi	Pastor	Gabi
<b>Oaks</b>		Pastor	Chuck	Chuck

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**WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH  
 “From Salzburg to Georgia”**

Being Lutheran was not easy in the region around Salzburg in Austria in the early eighteenth century. By the end of 1731, it was not even permissible. On November 11 of that year, the Archbishop of Salzburg issued a decree giving Lutherans in the territory two choices-convert to Catholicism or leave.

The order kept the arrangement made following the religious wars stemming from the Protestant Reformation. Under the treaty that ended the Thirty Years' War in 1648, the ruler of a territory determined which religion-Catholic, Lutheran, or Calvinist-would be permitted in that territory. For practical reasons, rulers did not always enforce the decree. But by the end of the 1720s, Salzburg's Catholic archbishop, who also held the political authority for his territory, decided the time had come.

Within a year, about 20,000 Lutherans left. Most journeyed north to settle in Prussia in eastern Germany or in the Netherlands. But for forty-one religious exiles, another destination awaited. England needed settlers for a new colony. The colony's organizers, aware through their German connections that these Salzburgers needed a home, offered to settle the emigrants in the land soon to called Georgia, named after England's King George II.

By the end of 1733, the rag-tag group of exiles had made their way to Rotterdam. Joining them there were the two pastors appointed to lead them across the Atlantic and into their new life in America. Johann Martin Boltzius and Israel Christian Gronau had been educated in Halle, Germany, the center of German Pietism, a brand of Lutheranism that stressed the practice of Christian faith in a life of inward spiritual experience and outward service. From Rotterdam the group sailed to England, and from England to America, arriving in Savannah on March 12, 1734.

James Oglethorpe, the governor of the colony, assigned to the Salzburgers a plot of land along the Savannah River, about four hours' boat ride, or twenty-five miles, from the town of Savannah. The exiles named their settlement Ebenezer, "Thus far has God helped us" (1 Samuel 7: 12).

When the land proved unsuitable, the fledging community relocated a few miles to New Ebenezer. Here, the people and their pastors resumed building their town and their lives. In time, houses replaced huts and the community expanded beyond the confines of their small town to larger farms in the surrounding area. Their numbers also grew as children were born as well as by the addition of more transports of emigrants who made the voyage across the Atlantic. Not all of these newcomers were Salzburgers, but rather natives of the German territory of Swabia. By the early 1740s, the population of Ebenezer reached close to 250 adults and children.

But adjusting to the new land provided major challenges. Illness, especially in the form of malaria, became a constant companion. Pastor Boltzius himself battled malaria off and on for the better part of twenty years. Tragedy struck when the Israel Gronau, the junior of the two pastors, died in 1745. The community also struggled to develop a healthy economic life through agriculture, milling, silk-making, and lumber.

Circumstances in Georgia brought their share of surprises-Boltzius reports his first encounter with a new root called a "potato" – and also disappointments. Missionary work among the Indians did not yield the results Boltzius had hoped and, despite the pastor's best efforts, slavery eventually made its way into the colony and into Ebenezer.

From Ebenezer, Boltzius gained a vantage point for observing the religious life of the American colonies. He became acquainted with John Wesley while the future Methodist leader served as an Anglican priest in Savannah. And he followed the situations of Lutherans in neighboring South Carolina and as far away as Pennsylvania. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, the future leader of Lutheranism there, made Ebenezer his first stop, meeting with Boltzius before undertaking his own ministry to the north.

By the time Boltzius died in 1765, the town of Ebenezer already was in decline, in large measure because of the success of the surrounding farms where the colonists settled. But the legacy remains. Jerusalem Lutheran Church continues as an active Lutheran congregation on the site of the settlement.

The sanctuary, envisioned by Boltzius but constructed a few years after his death, is the second to occupy the site. Visitors who look closely at Jerusalem Lutheran Church, Ebenezer, Georgia the bricks of the building can still see the imprints of fingers that made them. A vibrant retreat and conference center also welcomes thousands of visitors every year at the location once planned as the settlers' permanent home.

From forty-one original exiles and their two pastors, across an ocean and across more than two and a half centuries, the legacy continues in the descendants of those original settlers who left Europe and made Ebenezer their home.

**“THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE”**