



Reformation Lutheran Church

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

August 2021

“And he began to teach them many things.” (Mark 6:34)

The Christian faith does not come easily or naturally to us. We must be taught to be a Christian, or as some say, faith must be “caught.” We submit to God’s Word for teaching and we learn what it means to be Christians.

At the end of Matthew’s Gospel (28:19), Jesus says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” Jesus commands us to teach. No one is born with knowing the gospel, you can’t just “think it up” on your own. Someone has to teach it to you and someone has to preach it in your hearing in order for the good news of Jesus Christ to be yours as a free gift.

After an outburst of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:42, the church “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching.” Being a disciple of Jesus is not the same as being a sensitive, caring, or “good” person. It’s not enough to say, “I was born in the US, which is basically Christian, so I became a Christian by breathing the air and drinking the water.” The saving news of Jesus Christ is opposite of the way the world saves. Disciples are those who have heard the good news of Jesus Christ, are transformed by the Holy Spirit, who then live in a world counter to the ways of the world.

One of the titles for Jesus is “rabbi,” which means teacher. Jesus traveled through villages teaching. Now the disciples come back and report to Jesus about their mission and he says to them, “Let’s get away and rest a while.” They go to the desert but when they get there it is anything but deserted. Jesus begins to teach the crowd and satisfies their hunger with a miracle of fish and bread. Isn’t it interesting that the first thing Jesus does for the people is not feed, but rather teach?

The crowds see themselves as hungry and in need of bread. Jesus sees them in need of teaching, and before Jesus meets their physical needs, he meets their need for instruction, explanation, and teaching. Perhaps Mark, by telling the story, means to remind us that there is a hunger for bread but also for “every word spoken by God.”

Jesus feeds us our daily bread, but he also gives us the spiritual bread which is God’s holy Word. Amen.

Pr.

“Summer’s lease hath all too short a date.” - William Shakespeare

Raise your hand if you agree with Mr. Shakespeare. I know I do! I think we all remember when summer seemed to last longer and school wouldn’t start until after Labor Day. Well, here we are. I know many of our RLC folks are retired and the start of school may not register with them as much. I think we all have a subtle shift in our thinking though. Folks tend to be home from vacations and getting back into a routine of sorts. We start thinking about fall and what we could do for outreach, fellowship etc. The slower pace of summer starts to pick up again. Maybe we need to pick up the pace in our faith life as well! More time spent in God’s word. More time sharing His word. More time showing His love to our community. Let’s encourage one another in all these ways! Peace be with you, Gabi

Treasurer's Report: Thank you to those who are keeping up with their tithes over the summer while traveling etc. It really helps our budget stay fairly stable. We've been going backwards just a bit but holding our own overall.

Blessing to you, Judy

Fellowship: We are working out the details for the German Deli food truck to come in late September after service on Sunday. The menu is not set at the moment, but tickets will be sold ahead of time. This will be something you will definitely want to invite your friends and family to!

Property: Our August clean-up day will be Saturday, the 28th, 9:00 a.m.

Education: We're going to try doing Bible Study through ZOOM on Wednesday, August 11th at 7:00. Pastor will share the ZOOM link nearer to our meeting time. We'll see how that goes and decide how to proceed from there.

Also, the new Portals of Prayer for July – September are now on the table at the back of the church.

Worship and Music: We are back to a normal service on Sunday morning. If you have not been attending due to Covid, we invite you back and hope to see you on Sunday mornings. The church is where God's people are taught God's Word so they can grow spiritually. We will continue to send out the Sunday service to those who don't attend, but we hope to welcome you to a service in person

We have started up our weekly Bible class. We've been meeting at 11:00 on Wednesday mornings, but we will begin doing it in the evening on Zoom. We are looking at the book, Being Lutheran. It is available from Amazon, but you do not have to purchase it. Even for life-long Lutherans, it is a great review of Lutheran theology and why we are Lutheran.

We have finished the Lutheran Liturgy as part of our Monday devotion. This coming Monday, we will begin an in-depth look at the Lord's Prayer.

Mission and Ministry: Yes – our Thrivent project is slow to get going! (My bad!) We should be fully involved in it in the next few weeks for sure. As always, everyone is part of outreach and all ideas are welcome!



August 7th – Bobbie Golden

August 8th – Gabi Owen

August 18th – Matthew DeWinter

August 31st – Kathy DeWinter

AUGUST CALENDAR

**Wednesdays – August 11th, August 18th, and August 25th – ZOOM Bible Study
 “Being Lutheran” at 7:00 p.m. -- (An access link to be shared.)**

Sunday – August 15th – Council

Saturday – August 28th – Clean-up day beginning around 9:00 a.m.

	August 1	August 8	August 15	August 22	August 29
Altar Guild	Judy	Junior	Judy	Junior	Judy
Usher	Junior	Judy	Junior	Judy	Junior
Lector	Lynne	Junior	Chuck	Gabi	Tammy
Sermon	Pastor	Chuck	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor
Thrive	Gabi	Chuck	Pastor	Gabi	Gabi
Oaks	Pastor		Chuck		Pastor

WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH “Henry Muhlenberg: A leader of American Lutherans”

One of the most important and influential American Lutherans that ever lived was born 300 year ago in Hanover, Germany. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg (1711-1787) came from a middle-class family, but through his efforts (and with some aid) became a pastor. In 1741 he was commissioned as a missionary; though his first desire was to go to India, he was sent instead to several Lutheran congregations near Philadelphia, where he arrived in November 1742.

Muhlenberg found upon his arrival in North America a growing Lutheran population but one that was weakly organized, poorly led, and riddled by disputes. For the next forty-five years, though his call was primarily to serve the Philadelphia congregations, in reality he became the acknowledged leader of most Lutherans in North America. Muhlenberg organized the first synodical organization of American Lutherans in 1748-the Ministerium of Pennsylvania-and provided it with a Henry Melchior Muhlenberg constitution, liturgy, and hymnbook.

His direct influence covered Lutheran congregations from New York to Virginia and occasionally as far south as Georgia. He traveled constantly, founding new congregations, maintaining established ones, and frequently arbitrating disputes among and within them. He also served as an influential leader for German-Americans in colonial America and became adept in defending Lutheran interests in the tempestuous world of colonial politics, especially during the traumas of the Revolutionary War.

When Muhlenberg arrived in North America he had little direct support or money, and initially had to deal with direct opposition from elements of his congregation. The transition to the North American context was very difficult for the Lutherans who

encountered a strange new world of voluntary pluralism and democracy, no state support, and the religious domination of English-speaking Reformed Protestants. Muhlenberg worked especially closely with other German-American Protestants-Reformed, Moravian, and others-but also worked with the "English" (as in, English-speaking) churches around him. Though firmly Lutheran, he was open to new groups and peoples. He knew and advocated for Native Americans and called for the evangelization of enslaved African-Americans. He also provided occasional pastoral services to African-Americans in Philadelphia at no charge. He was acquainted with many of the colonial religious and political leaders, such as colonial evangelist George Whitefield and Benjamin Franklin.

As Muhlenberg struggled to establish and define his vision of Lutheranism in the American colonies, he had direct competition from three other groups. In New York and New Jersey, the Lutheran leader was William Berkenmeyer, a German pastor sent to America by the Lutheran church in Hamburg. In Pennsylvania and the middle colonies, there was an established group of German Moravians under the guidance of Count Nicolas Ludwig von Zinzendorf. And because of its religious toleration, Pennsylvania was the home to numerous different groups of German Anabaptists and Radical Pietists, including Mennonites, Amish, Dunkers, and Brethren.

Berkenmeyer was too rigid in his approach and unable to adapt to the new American context, so he was drawn into numerous battles among local pastors and congregations. Muhlenberg was unwillingly dragged into a number of these conflicts but often was able to bring about resolution where Berkenmeyer could not. Increasingly, Muhlenberg's influence grew among the New York and New Jersey congregations. When Berkenmeyer died in 1751, Muhlenberg faced little competition for control from other local Lutheran pastors.

In the 1740s Zinzendorf made two trips to North America to promote his union plans, and when he failed to push them through, he turned to meddling in local Lutheran congregations, seeking to place Moravian preachers in Lutheran parishes. This was a direct and immediate threat to Muhlenberg when he arrived in 1742, and he worked hard to counter the Moravian influence among the Lutherans, which faded after 1748. In a similar vein but much less organized, the German Radical Pietist and Anabaptist groups also sought to gather immigrant Germans into their congregations, and away from Muhlenberg's Lutheran congregations.

In all of this, Muhlenberg sought a center position. The Lutheranism that Muhlenberg established in North America was essentially a "churchly" Pietism, a moderate form of Pietism that sought to work within the confessional boundaries of Lutheranism, warmed by a healthy dose of Pietist spirituality. This movement took a broad view of the Christian community and essentially held to a "folk church" understanding of the Christian community. While stressing the Lutheran centrality of justification, it also maintained a parallel sense of sanctification, with an emphasis on a life lived in response to grace.

In his congregations he stressed living a life of personal moral integrity, the duty of all Christians to share the gospel, and the Bible as the central living narrative that informs the Christian life. It was this sense of the church and Christian life, and the ways in which they were formed in an American context, that was Muhlenberg's lasting contribution to American Lutheranism.

“THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE”