



Reformation Lutheran Church

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

November 2021

“...your redemption is drawing near.” (Luke 21:28) What do you make of this reading? Do you explain it, adjust it to fit something else, or somehow apply it? Perhaps we shouldn’t do anything with it, but rather allow the reading to do something to US! There are such wild images, it causes us to tremble.

When Jesus was preaching and he wanted to shake the foundations, rip things apart and upset people, he used this style of apocalyptic, “cosmic” preaching. Jesus is perhaps trying to use only mere words, although it is wholly inadequate to describe how God is coming. That’s what this means. God is coming and it’s scary because either God is coming to redeem us or God is coming to judge us. Either way God is coming and everything is changing dramatically and things will be out of control. Jesus tells us there will be signs in the sun and the moon and the stars, nations will be in pandemonium, they will be confused by the roaring of the seas and the waves. People will faint from fear and from what is coming, the power of heaven will be shaken. Wow! Signs of dismantling the earth, big, cosmic changes with the chaos that accompanies massive change, and it’s all interpreted as signs of redemption. That’s why Jesus says, “Straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

We are uncomfortable with this sermon from Jesus. People who are on top of the world get worried when hearing this. Those who are on the bottom, those who are hurting, those who are small and poor, those who have little to gain, tremble with joy upon hearing that redemption is coming for them.

The roaring waves and rising seas is the gospel, good news. God is coming. But take notice. Whether you hear it as bad news as law, or good news as gospel, depends on a great degree where you happen to be when you hear it. It is bad news if we are weighed down in dissipation, drunkenness, and the cares of this life when we hear it. It is good news if we are standing on our tiptoes, ready, waiting for nothing less than our redemption drawing near.

Where are you standing? Are you weighed down with pain or trouble, yet, you find that you can stand and raise your head, because you are sensing that your redemption is drawing near?

Pr.



This time of year, we see this phrase everywhere. Do you ever wonder what is the difference between being grateful and being thankful? It seems we use them interchangeably, but they are subtly different things. Gratefulness is usually the result of many small, positive things that come together to shape a mindset of appreciation. Someone is sick, we’re grateful for our health. We hear about someone homeless and are grateful for our home. Thankfulness, on the other hand, is a conscious act we engage in after we receive some sort of benefit. It’s the response (often fleeting) we have after someone does something specific for us or gives us a specific gift. Think of all that the Lord has done and continues to do for us. All he gives us every day. We have so much to be grateful and thankful for. We are abundantly blessed!

Peace be with you, Gabi

Treasurer's Report: We've still been holding our own overall. Thank you to those who are keeping up with their tithes. Blessings, Judy

Fellowship: Nothing is planned for November at the moment. If anyone has any thoughts, please share! Otherwise, we'll take a break until Advent services and meals start in December.

Property: We are in the process of getting the leaking roof repaired. Our November clean-up day will be Saturday, the 27th, 9:00 a.m.

Education: Bible study will be scheduled after the holidays. We are considering a study of the different faiths of the world.

Worship and Music: October 31 is Reformation Sunday...a most special day for Lutherans. Our daily devotions have been highlighting some of the special issues of the Reformation.

We are looking at a couple of new ideas for our Bible Study. We recently finished reviewing the book, Being Lutheran. If you were not part of the Bible study, you may be interested in reading the book. It is available at Amazon in both hard back and e-version.

Some special days are upcoming...Thanksgiving Day is November 25 and the first Sunday of Advent is November 28. We will be holding Wednesday evening Advent services. Come...and bring a friend or neighbor.

The October-December Portals of Prayer have arrived and are located on the table at the back of the church. Please feel free to take one. It contains a day-by-day devotion, and makes a great way to begin each day...take one for a friend as well.

Mission and Ministry: Our two Thrivent grant card projects are complete! Food has been bought (LOTS of food!) and will soon be delivered to The Hope Center. What's next? The upcoming holidays are often our busy project time. All ideas are welcome!



November 22nd – Cheryle Wadsworth

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

Sunday – November 7th – Daylight Savings Time Ends – “Fall back” – Turn clocks back at 2:00 AM to 1:00 AM, Sunday morning

Sunday – November 14th – Council

Saturday – November 27th – Clean-up day beginning around 9:00 a.m. (Unless rescheduled due to the Thanksgiving holiday.)

Sunday – November 28th – First Sunday in Advent

	Nov. 7	Nov. 14	Nov. 21	Nov. 28
Altar Guild	Junior	Judy	Junior	Judy
Usher	Judy	Junior	Judy	Junior
Lector	Lynne	Tammy	Karen	Chuck
Sermon	Gabi	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor
Thrive	Gabi	Pastor	Gabi	Pastor
Oaks		Chuck		Pastor

WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH “Praise the Lord: Lutherans and American Revivalism”

When thinking about American revivalism, many images come to mind: Tent-meeting revival services on the edge of small southern towns, with sawdust, pounding gospel music, and hell-fire preaching. Perhaps a Billy Graham crusades in a big city auditorium, with the music of George Beverly Shea and the final altar call invitation to the music of "Just As I Am." Or perhaps Dwight Lyman Moody or Billy Sunday. But my guess is that you would never associate revivalism with American Lutherans. Guess what? Some American Lutherans did practice revivalism, and many congregations still do use elements of the evangelistic approaches honed in the fire of American revivalism. American religion was fundamentally shaped by revivalism.

Revivalism as we now know it developed after the American Revolution, during the period from 1790 to 1810 called the "Second Great Awakening." Organized religion was very weak in colonial America, and when, after the war, Americans started pouring into the frontier areas west of the Alleghany mountains, Christian churches faced an almost impossible task in "churching" this new territory. Too few in numbers to reach the settlers in any traditional ways, pioneering preachers had to develop new techniques to match the new situation.

Methodist circuit riders and Baptist lay preachers went wherever they needed to reach the settlers. Other preachers decided to gather settlers from far and wide in "camp meetings," where preaching and socializing went hand-in-hand. Unable to reach most settlers consistently for long periods of time, preachers pioneered new ways of influencing their audiences with an emotional, immediate offer of salvation—one that hit home to thousands of people at a time.

News of these great and wonderful revivals of religion from the American frontier filtered back to settled congregations and preachers along the eastern seaboard, and excited spontaneous revivals there too. A New York lawyer-turned-preacher, Charles Grandison Finney, reasoned that these spontaneous revivals could in fact be turned into planned revivals orchestrated to reach masses of unchurched people in the new American republic. Using Finney's techniques, nineteenth-century American preachers brought millions of Charles Grandison Finney new converts into formal affiliations with Protestant congregations. Moody, Sunday, and Graham took the basic elements of American revivalism and adjusted them for urban audiences and modern listeners.

With all the religious excitement going on around them, American Lutherans could not help but be swept up in revivalism. In the period before the Civil War (1800-1860), many American Lutheran pastors cooperated with other Protestant leaders to organize area-wide revivals, and they also held Lutheran revival services in their congregations and among their institutions. These pastors saw the hand of God at work in the revival, bringing about a new wave of reform in American Lutheranism. One account of a four-day revival among Lutherans in South Carolina in 1831 approvingly reported that "hundreds were bathed in tears, a solemnity pervaded the whole assembly, more than one hundred individuals accepted the invitation given to those who desired to be personally conversed with on the subject of their soul's salvation." Hundreds of such accounts were regularly published in some of the Lutheran newspapers of the time.

This is not to say that revivalism was universally or uncritically accepted among American Lutherans. There were some wilder elements of American revivalism, including emotional outbursts and intense pressure that most Lutherans rejected. In 1841 one Ohio Lutheran synod passed a resolution on revivals that stated that they "recommend opposition to all disorder and ultraism [while] we earnestly encourage our Churches to promote genuine revivals by faithful preaching of the word, by prayer, and by other means in accord with the holy religion of our Redeemer." But more moderated forms of revivalism gained widespread acceptance within Lutheran congregations, though most agreed that conversions gained in such situations needed to be followed up with further Christian education.

Other Lutherans, however, totally rejected American revivalism as being un-Lutheran and un-Christian. One angry writer in 1838 chastised a Lutheran newspaper editor for his eager support of revivals, saying, "You and the other Revival Boys are advocating this Rail-Road Christianity according to which they become sinlessly perfect in an hour (so that) our people might not desert to the Methodists." Newly arrived Lutheran immigrant pastors, along with other conservative Lutheran preachers, spoke out regularly against revivalism and for traditional Lutheran worship. Nothing new about the contemporary American Lutheran "worship wars."

Revivalism remained important in American religion, and one can trace elements of it in many areas still today. For example, the revival tradition of "camp meetings" eventually evolved into the Bible camps that we know today. Gospel songs and direct preaching of their effects and techniques are still an important part of American Protestantism, even American Lutheranism.

“THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE”