



Reformation Lutheran Church

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

May 2022

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” -Psalm 23:1- David, in this much-loved Psalm, paints such a beautiful picture of his walk with the Lord. The Lord is his loving companion and leader who remains with him throughout all the ups and downs of life. And, because of this, David proclaims that, with God at his side and leading him through life, all his needs are met. The Lord is his Shepherd: he lacks nothing.

God, David’s devoted Shepherd, not only continually remains with him, He relentlessly pursues him with oceans of goodness and mercy every single day of his life (see v. 6). Other translations of verse six use the words “kindness,” “faithfulness,” and “unfailing love” in place of “mercy and goodness.” In other words, God personally lavishes David with the beauty of His heart toward him. What an incredible awareness David had of God’s activity in his life. What an incredible awareness of His presence, pursuit, and intent toward him. What an incredible awareness of God’s character and His continual, personalized care of him. What an incredible awareness of God’s presence trumping and eclipsing even the deepest, darkest valley, and bringing peace even there (see v. 4).

Knowing all this about his Shepherd, David obediently followed Him, whether God led him to green pastures and still waters that brought nourishment, rest, and restoration (see vv. 2 and 3), or through dark and foreboding valleys where enemies conspired and crouched (see v. 5). He trusted that wherever God led, the path would be true, and God’s goodness, glory, and abundant provision could be found (see vv. 3 and 5). He knew that, ultimately, God’s paths led to eternal fellowship with Him (see v. 6).

In the New Testament, Jesus refers to himself as the Good Shepherd and to His followers as sheep, who hear His voice and follow Him (see Jn. 10:11, 27). So, we have the very same opportunity to experience what David did. We can experience God’s constant care, presence, and pursuit of us with His oceans of goodness, mercy, kindness, faithfulness, and unfailing love. We can experience His continual leadership, restoration, nourishment, protection, and provision as we follow and trust Him no matter where He leads. We, like David, can follow Him right into eternity and dwell with Him forever.

Pr.

“Never yet was a springtime, when the buds forgot to bloom.” - Margaret Elizabeth Sangster

I love this! What a great reminder of God’s wondrous plans for his creation. Every tree, plant, and flower is created to bloom at its proper time. You and I are also created according to God’s divine plan. If He gave that much care to flowers, how much more so for us – created in HIS image. When flowers bloom, we enjoy their beauty so much. Think about Callaway when all the azaleas and tulips are in bloom. Everyone wants to go see. Individually, we have a chance to “bloom” and share God’s beautiful gifts of love, peace, grace, and mercy every day. How much more beauty can we, at RLC, as believers rooted in His word, share with others in our community? Spread the word! Let’s do our best to invite people in to “Come and See!”

Peace be with you,
Gabi

Fellowship: Our Easter breakfast sure turned out well! Any thoughts or ideas of something to welcome in summer? Maybe a cookout at church? An ice cream sundae social for Mother's/Father's Day? Something for 4th of July? All ideas are welcome! A movie or game night complete with snacks wouldn't be a bad plan either.

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

Education: Reading the Bible for Faith! Want to learn how to take Bible study to a deeper, more engaging level? Ever wonder why people have different interpretations of the Bible? Want to understand how and why people arrive at different interpretations of the same passage? Do you sometimes find yourself confused or mystified about the meaning when reading the Bible? Want to learn a way to make sense of the Bible for the sake of faith? If your answer to any or all of these questions is yes, then this course is for you!

We have three classes of the 5-session course remaining. It is taught by Bud Thompson, of the St Paul Lutheran Seminary faculty. Pastor Thompson is a retired Lutheran pastor who has 35 years of experience as a parish pastor, 20 years of experience teaching the Bible to university students, and for many years has written on the Bible and Catechism for Connections magazine. It is held every Thursday, at 6PM Central, we will meet online for approximately 90 minutes each session. The sessions will be recorded should someone miss a live session.

Worship and Music: Easter is over, but the message of Easter is always with us. There is always an interesting discussion about the greatest season of the church year...Christmas or Easter. No matter which you choose, you're not wrong, but I've always felt it is Easter. Without the resurrection, there is no Christian Church, and belief of Jesus and His resurrection carries with it eternal life...what could be better than that?

We continue our services on Sunday morning at Reformation, Thrive and the Oaks. With Covid, our numbers have dwindled, but we are fully operational and hope that if you have not been coming, you will start seeing you again. Reformation is a special family, and we would love to have you back at our family celebrations...come and bring a friend or neighbor!

Mission and Ministry: So – we're a little slow on the get-go so far this year. I'd have loved to see up working on a project, but nothing has come together just yet. Let's work together to get something going! We have Thrivent grant card money just waiting to be used and we just need to find the right thing to get us going. Some ideas are pending, so keep a look out for any upcoming comments.



May 3rd – Sondra Coulter
May 15th – Mel Hanson
May 23rd – Linda Adams
May 24th – Samuel DeWinter

MAY CALENDAR

Sunday – May 1st – Executive Council

Sunday – May 8th – Mother’s Day

Sunday – May 15th – Council (We didn’t hold Council in April.)

(Thursday – May 26th – Last day of school for teachers in HC. Oh – I think I’m the only one that is concerned with that date!!! LOL!!! - Gabi)

Saturday – May 28th – Clean-Up Day 9:00 a.m.

Monday – May 30th – Memorial Day

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

WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH The Apostolic Lutheran Tradition”

Apostolic or Laestadian Lutheranism, with its roots in the nineteenth century revival of northern Scandinavia and Finland, remains arguably the most enigmatic aspect of North American Lutheranism.

The small size of this heritage coupled with the social isolation that is found among at least some of its congregations has caused many to overlook these Finnish-ethnic Lutheran groups.

Like other branches of American Lutheranism, Apostolic Lutheranism traces its roots to Pietistic awakening movements that swept across Europe from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. The awakening movement in question was led by Lars Levi Laestadius (1800-1861), a pastor in the State Church (Lutheran) of Sweden. Sometimes called the "Prophet of Lapland," Laestadius carried out his ministry in the region north of the Arctic Circle where Finland, Norway, and Sweden share borders. Therefore, the revival movement that bore his name influenced all of these Nordic countries to some extent, though it was in Finland that Laestadian influence took root most deeply.

In 1826, Laestadius received an appointment as the pastor of a remote parish in the Swedish Lapland. Though there was a spirit of stagnation in this parish regarding spiritual matters, Laestadius was not overly-concerned. In addition to theology, he had an interest in botany, and some commentators remark that his passion for the study of plants exceeded his passion for the gospel of Jesus Christ. He would come to understand later that what he taught during that time had more to do with "head knowledge" than with Christian conviction.

As Laestadius became seriously ill for the second time in his life in 1842, he reflected on his eternal destiny. His illness caused him to recognize his poverty of spirit and the same ungodliness that existed within his parish. Upon his recovery, he began to emphasize what others would call "living Christianity," something that moved beyond a focus on

doctrine and morals. For Laestadius, it is not enough to simply try to be a better person; what truly produces Christian people is the recognition that their emptiness can only be filled with the righteousness of Christ. Laestadius' new kind of preaching caught on in the Lapland, from which many thirsty souls drank deeply.

To this day, there are Lutherans in the Nordic countries that identify with the tradition of Laestadius. Due to Laestadius' emphasis on the need for a public recounting of sins. Laestadians in these countries are known for some peculiar regulations that organize their lives, such as a refusal to use curtains in homes so as to avoid engaging in secret sins. As immigration fever swept across Europe in the nineteenth century, Laestadians were among the many Europeans who sought a new home in North America for a variety of reasons.

Like other Lutherans, Laestadians in America could no longer rely on the state churches of their home countries. The roots of what would become known as "Apostolic Lutheranism" began in Calumet, Michigan, with the founding of a congregation in 1873. An official church body would not be formed, however, until 1928. As more Finnish immigrants came to America, the Laestadians among them formed congregations that are concentrated in Michigan, northern Minnesota, and Washington. Today, most American Laestadians are found within two denominational groups, the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America and the Laestadian Lutheran Church, though many other, smaller bodies exist, as well as independent congregations.

Space does not permit a full discussion of the matters of doctrine and practice that have caused this small group of Lutherans to fragment in so many directions. Suffice it to say that some Apostolic Lutheran congregations are more open to the modern world and resemble American evangelicalism. Other congregations are isolationist in their outlook and have been affectionately labeled "Lutheran Amish" due to their non-conformity in matters of dress and their discouragement of higher education. In spite of some peculiar theological emphases among certain Apostolic Lutherans, they do clearly fall within the boundaries of historic Lutheran teaching. Curiously, however, some groups of Apostolics claim that they are the only real Christians in the world, their form of "living Christianity" being the only legitimate form of Christian expression, a belief that has led some to label such groups of Apostolic Lutherans as "cults."

Perhaps in time a greater understanding will be reached between Apostolic Lutherans and other branches of Lutheranism in North America. Such would require intentional engagement with the leadership of these many and varied communities. Until then, the best source of information about Apostolic Lutheranism comes in a book by Carl A. Kulla: *The journey of an Immigrant Awakening Movement in America: A Brief History of Laestadianism and the Apostolic Lutheran Church*. For more information about Lars Levi Laestadius himself, see chapter eight of *They Lived in the Power of God: Lutheran Revival Leaders in Northern Europe*.

“THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE”