



Reformation Lutheran Church

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

September 2022

“But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man [Jesus] welcomes sinners and eats with them.” -Luke 15:2 NIV

Imagine the scene: teachers of the law and Pharisees, known for scrupulous observance of the Mosaic law including purity laws that separated “clean” Jews from “unclean” gentiles and sinners, witness Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners (see Lk. 15:1). How appalling! Jesus not only ignored the purity laws by eating with known sinners but also, as if to add insult to injury, Jesus’ offensive dinner companions included detested tax collectors. Jews of Jesus’ day despised tax collectors because they collected taxes for the hated Roman government and often demanded more money than required to fill their own pockets. In addition, these tax collectors were Jews themselves and, thus, considered traitors by their fellow Jews. The plot thickens: in addition to ignoring purity laws and associating with loathed tax collectors, Jesus ate with them. For Jews in the first century, sharing table signaled fellowship, acceptance, and even covenantal relationship. So, in eating with these people whom the religious authorities rejected, he welcomes them wholeheartedly into relationship with himself. How ironic: Jesus, the only truly righteous person present sought out the lost and rejoiced over their repentance (see 15:3-7), whereas those who considered themselves righteous did the opposite and shunned the lost. Still today, Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, remains the only truly righteous one present in our lives. And he continues to seek out the despised, the sinners, and the people who fail miserably, and he invites them to dine with him (see Rev. 3:20), to repent and receive his gifts. Jesus, in Luke 15, teaches us that we need never exclude ourselves from his forgiveness, love, and acceptance because our sins deem us unworthy. Rather, he seeks us out and rejoices when we respond to him by repenting and walking in relationship with him (see 15:7). Then he tells us to tell others how he seeks them too. And notice that he initiates, he seeks us. We do not need to hunt him down or try to clean ourselves up first to entice him to accept us. We simply respond to his unconditional love with repentance and abiding in him (see Jn. 15:4-5).

Pr.

“September fattens on vines. Roses flake from the wall. The smoke of harmless fires drifts to my eyes. This is plenty. This is more than enough.” Geoffrey Hill – September Song

Sometimes I’m not sure how I feel about September. I’ve already been back to school for a month. It’s still hot outside. It’s supposed to be coming up on Fall, but it feels too early (and hot) to put out my pumpkins, scarecrows, and such. There’s no major holiday to celebrate. Just thirty days ofdays. But you know what? It is plenty. It is more than enough. We have a chance to catch our breath after a busy summer and before we come to a busy holiday season. My friends, let’s take time to reflect on our blessings. Let’s worship together. Let’s be in God’s word to refresh our spirits and nourish our souls. This is plenty. This is more than enough.

Peace be with you,

Gabi

Fellowship: We're overdue for a fellowship event! I'm thinking it would be a grand idea to have a potluck to officially ring in Fall. We could do it at the end of the month. Something to think about. All ideas are welcome!

Property: Our September clean-up day will be Saturday, the 24th, 9:00 a.m.

Education: Initially, a ZOOM Bible Study was planned to begin on Wednesday evenings to learn about different religions. However, that is still on hold. We are waiting for a few more of RLC members to express an interest in attending. We look forward to hearing from you. Until then, keep watch for upcoming dates and information.

Worship and Music: We continue our worship during the season of Trinity. We will continue to be in the season of Trinity until the last Sunday of October which is a very special Sunday in the Lutheran Church...Reformation Sunday.

We still hope to start up our Bible class in the not-too-distant future. Stay tuned. I believe you will find it to be quite interesting.

Our services at Thrive and the Oaks, and we continue with good attendance at both locations.

The new Portals of Prayer have arrived and will be on the table at the back of the church. Be sure to pick one up.

Interesting story....A man and his wife were discussing who should get the coffee started each morning. Each had their own idea, and the discussion went back and forth for several minutes. Finally, the wife said, "You need to do this. It's even says so in the Bible." The husband said, "Show me." She got the family Bible, opened it and said, "See, I told you. It says "Hebrews."

Mission and Ministry: We really have been pretty slow on using our Thrivent cards so far this year. Again, all ideas are welcome. We know we always have things to use them for around the holidays. Please keep a lookout (listen out?) for ways we can work in the community.



September 18th – Donna Maness

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

Sunday – September 11th – Executive Council

Sunday – September 18th – Council

Saturday – September 24th – Clean-Up Day 9:00 a.m.

	Sept. 4	Sept. 11	Sept. 18	Sept. 25
Altar Guild	Junior	Wayne	Junior	Junior
Usher	Wayne	Carolyn	Junior	Junior
Lector	Lynne	Junior	Chuck	Gabi
Sermon	Chuck	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor
Thrive	Wayne	Wayne	Gabi	Gabi
Oaks		Chuck		Pastor

WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH “The Clash at Koshkonong: Eielsen and Dietrichson”

Given their commitments and their temperaments, it was inevitable that they would quickly come into conflict. Though these two young pastors were from Norway, and ministering to Norwegian immigrants settling in Wisconsin in the 1840s, these two men were as different as could be. Elling Eielsen was a low-church lay preacher out of the Hauge revival movement in Norway, whereas J. W. C. Dietrichson was a university-trained state church pastor, committed to the order and ritual of the Church of Norway. When they met, they clashed, but in their conflict, they set the parameters for a vibrant Norwegian-American Lutheranism that put down deep roots in North America.

First on the scene was Elling Eielsen. A fiery lay evangelist in Scandinavia, in 1839 he was forced to come to America to continue his work. Following in the mold of the Pietist leader Hans Nielsen Hauge, Eielsen pushed for a strict, moral Christian life and a commitment to a deeply personal Christian faith, things that he saw lacking in the congregations and the pastors of the Lutheran Church of Norway. Though he wished to remain a lay preacher in the United States, he soon saw the need for ordination to fully serve the immigrant communities, and he was ordained in 1843. Dietrichson arrived a bit later, in 1844. He was an aristocratic young man, university trained and "properly" ordained by a bishop into the ministry of the Church of Norway. He was deeply committed to the formal Lutheran theology and ritual of the state church, with a high view of theology and ministry. Both men have been described as stubborn, passionate, and tactless, and the clash between them was inevitably explosive.

After Dietrichson arrived in America in 1844, he soon took over the Lutheran congregation at Koshkonong, Wisconsin. Seeing himself as more than just a pastor, but as carrying the authority of the Church of Norway in this new country, he soon set out to create a "proper" Norwegian Lutheranism in North America, under his guidance. One of his first targets was Eielsen, who had already gathered together a string of Norwegian congregations and preaching points in Wisconsin and Illinois. A meeting was arranged between these two young pastors which, of course, did not go well. The aristocratic Dietrichson took it upon himself to challenge Eielsen's lack of education and the validity of his ordination. As to the challenge about his training and ministerial examination, Eielsen retorted that he had been called by God and examined as had been the apostles, by "persecution, wakefulness, nakedness, and hunger." Eielsen detested almost everything that Dietrichson stood for, and when Dietrichson pronounced that Eielsen's ordination was invalid, Eielsen hotly lashed out, grabbed Dietrichson by

the beard, and exclaimed, "Listen to me, you pope, I intend to plague you as long as I live." So much for intra-Lutheran cooperation. (Sounds a bit like ELCA vs. LCMC – CH)

Actually, neither of these two pioneer pastors had successful, long-term careers in North America. Dietrichson never achieved the kind of leadership he imagined in America and returned to Norway around 1850, where he had similar problems with local Norwegian congregations. Eielsen remained in America until his death in 1883, but he alienated many of the Norwegian-American Lutherans, and the church organization that he founded remained a small player within American Lutheranism. This said, it is clear that both Dietrichson and Eielsen were still very important figures in Norwegian-American Lutheranism, as each of them symbolically defined both the parameters and the limits of this movement. These two pastors represented two wings of Lutheranism in nineteenth-century Norway—the warm lay pietism of the Hauge movement and the educated, formal Lutheranism of the state church. But beyond their personal foibles, these two pastors also demonstrated the limits of transplanting these traditions into North America. Hauge Pietism was a movement in Norway, but in North America it had to become a church and take on some of those churchly trappings that it had always resisted. Similarly, state church Lutheranism of the Norwegian variety also could not be directly transplanted into North America, but took on both Pietist and American features.

Norwegian-American Lutheranism grew rapidly and developed a rich series of traditions and structures, all within the limits initially set out by Eielsen and Dietrichson, but also creatively adapting its Norwegian traditions and to its North American context. The vitality of these Norwegian-American Lutherans often verged into conflict, but they also creatively developed a tradition of churchly Pietism, between the two extremes. This Lutheranism drew from both positions in a creative manner that was appropriate to the immigrants and their children, and which was also definitely American. It was also very successful. By 1960 Norwegian-American Lutherans numbered over one million members. Not bad, considering the somewhat rocky beginnings!

“THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE”