



# Reformation Lutheran Church

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

December 2022

*“And Jesus answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.’” – Matthew 11:4-5*

These verses from Matthew 11 find John the baptizer in prison. His crime? He spoke the truth, albeit in a rather boisterous manner. Nevertheless, John spoke the truth about sin, repentance, and Jesus Christ. And now he’s imprisoned for it, and his days are numbered. John knew that Jesus is the Messiah and that he had come to the save the world. But now that he’s behind prison walls, maybe he’s second-guessing if it really is the Messiah that is among them. Maybe he’s just not sure. We call that “doubt.” Certainly we all have doubts about God and his presence in our lives. It’s apart of our human sinfulness. So John sends a couple of his followers to go find Jesus and ask him if he is the Messiah--the one they have eagerly been waiting to arrive.

Earlier in the book of Matthew we witnessed John the baptizer pointing us in the direction of Christ. In Matthew 11, it appears the tables are turned a bit. Jesus encounters John’s followers, and Jesus sends them back to John with a message of what they themselves have seen and heard, what they have witnessed with their very own eyes and ears. Jesus responds with Scripture, verses from the prophet Isaiah (see Isaiah 35:5-6). And so John’s messengers return to him with words from Isaiah, sent from Jesus, the Messiah himself. John’s messengers serve as preachers for John! John needed to hear and be reminded that Jesus was indeed among them. “Go and tell,” Jesus urges. “Go and tell John what you have seen and what you have heard.”

We, too, are encouraged to “go and tell” others about the good news of Jesus Christ. We are called to serve as witnesses of God’s goodness and proclaim forgiveness of sin, life everlasting, and salvation with all who will hear and listen. That’s a big job for us, but it’s an important job. God uses us to bring his presence to others.

Prayer: Gracious God, use us as your instruments to bring the gospel to a world so desperately in need. We give you thanks for all who have and continue to bring your Word to all people. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Pr.

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*<sup>9</sup> And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.<sup>10</sup> And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.<sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.<sup>12</sup> And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,<sup>14</sup> Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Luke 2:9-14*

Good news! Great joy! Don't we need that right about now? The world seems more chaotic by the day and we have our own share of struggles, both individually, and as a church. "Sore afraid" might be exactly how we feel. We need some good news! We want to feel that great joy! My friends, look no further than the manger. That humble scene is a reminder of how very much God loves us. The gift of His son is for us. For our peace. For our great joy. Let's continue to encourage one another and look ahead ahead together – all the while praising God for His good will toward us all. Fear not!

Christmas Blessings!

Gabi

**Prayer for the Church:** Heavenly Father, we know you have plans for your church – specifically for Reformation Lutheran Church – that are for your glory. The Bible says the church is your house, you dwell in the midst of your people. We ask your wisdom and support as we seek to honor your purposes for us. May Christ dwell in our hearts through faith so that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may have the strength to know and share the love of Christ that surpasses all understanding. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**Fellowship:** We have started our Wednesday night Advent meals and services. Meals are at 6:00 with service following at 7:00. We have some excellent cooks, so this would be a great opportunity to invite your friends and neighbors to join us!

**Property:** Our December clean-up day will be Saturday, the 24<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 a.m. Helping hands are welcome!

**Education:** Initially, a ZOOM Bible Study was planned to begin on Wednesday evenings to learn about different religions. However, that is still on hold. Keep watch for upcoming dates and information.

**Worship and Music:** Happy New Year! The new church year has begun, and we are in the season of Advent...a season of preparation. Advent is a period of spiritual preparation in which we make ourselves ready for the birth of the Lord, Jesus Christ. We celebrate Advent not only by thanking God for Christ's first coming to Earth as a baby, but also for his presence among us today through the Holy Spirit, and in preparation and anticipation of his final coming at the end of the age.

The two most important days in human history are Christmas and Easter...the birth of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus. Many people only attend church on these two days. If you haven't been attending, please take advantage of our Wednesday evening soup suppers and worship services and also our Sunday morning services. What a great way to begin a new year. Come...bring a friend or neighbor. Let the Holy Spirit open your heart for worship every Sunday of the year.

**Mission and Ministry:** We have one Thrivent Project completed! Focus Food Bank was very appreciative of our food donation! We are so blessed to be able to partner with Thrivent to help our community as we do.

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**December 10<sup>th</sup> – Chuck Hunsaker**

**December 11<sup>th</sup> – Jarrod Ervin**

<b>DECEMBER CALENDAR</b>
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**Wednesday – December 7<sup>th</sup> – Advent Dinner at 6 PM; Service at 7 PM**

**Sunday – December 11<sup>th</sup> – Annual General Meeting/Council Elections**

**Wednesday – December 14<sup>th</sup> – Advent Dinner at 6 PM; Service at 7 PM**

**Wednesday – December 21<sup>st</sup> – Advent Dinner at 6 PM; Service at 7 PM**

**Saturday –Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – 7:00 PM**

**Sunday – December 25<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Day Service – 10:30 AM**

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	<b>Dec. 4</b>	<b>Dec. 11</b>	<b>Dec. 18</b>	<b>Dec. 25</b>
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Junior	Tammy	Carolyn	Junior
<b>Usher</b>	Carolyn	Junior	Carolyn	Junior
<b>Lector</b>	Lynne	Gabi	Tammy	Karen
<b>Sermon</b>	Chuck	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor
<b>Thrive</b>	Gabi	Pastor	Gabi	Pastor
<b>Oaks</b>	Chuck		Chuck	

**WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH “Danes Enriched the Mix”**

Denmark is a small country and, compared to other immigrant waves, Lutherans arriving in the U.S. from Denmark were a small group. But like salt and spice that improve the flavor of already good food, the Danes in America had a salutary effect.

There were lots of Lutherans, European immigrants all, who were already in North America when the Danes began arriving. Their big migration came in the late 1800s. Between 1851 and 1860, 3,749 Danish Lutherans arrived in North America. In the following decade there were 17,094; in the next ten years, 31,771; then came the flood, between 1881-1890, when 88,132 arrived.

Where did they go? Mostly to the Upper Midwest-Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska and Minnesota. And when they came, the Danes brought along two kinds of baggage, cultural and theological.

Like other ethnic Lutheran groups, they were keen to preserve Danish culture as best they could. That led, among other things, to the establishment of a half-dozen very successful "Folk Schools."

Lutheran sensibilities and Danish culture thrived in these resident, non-academic establishments, founded at Grant, Michigan; Elk Horn, Iowa; Nysted, Nebraska; Solvang, California; Dalum, Alberta, Canada; and Tyler, Minnesota.

None of the Folk Schools survive, although the school at Elk Horn, Iowa, contributed to the founding and growth of Dana College in Blair, Nebraska. The demise of the Folk Schools was due to the same dynamic that led to the decline of Norwegian Lutheran academies (there were once fifty of them in Wisconsin alone) and German Lutheran parochial schools in predecessor ELCA church bodies. As Lutheran ethnic groups Americanized themselves, they stopped trying to look like carbon copies of their European forebears.

The theological energies that came to North America with the Danes were of two types, and they accounted for an early split in the Danish ranks. Some immigrants were enamored of the influence of the great Danish churchman N. S. Grundtvig, a powerful preacher, prolific hymn writer, and in many ways a highly unconventional theologian. (He seemed to attribute more authority to the Apostles' Creed than to Holy Scripture, which he said was not "the Word of God" but, instead, "contained" God's Word.)

Grundtvig's theology caused consternation for a great many Danes who identified themselves with the "Inner Mission" movement and were, consequently, more inclined to embrace the impulses of Pietism. This European-born emphasis stressed spiritual change and tended to identify true religion with outward behavior, including purity of life. Pietism sometimes led to revival meetings, the encouraging of conversion experiences, staying off the dance floor, and a lifestyle that demonstrated godly living.

Two groups that championed Inner Mission sensibilities combined to create what became the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (UELC). At Blair, Nebraska, they founded Trinity Lutheran Seminary and, a few years later on the same campus, Dana College. This branch of the American Danish church came to be known as the "Holy Danes" (for obvious reasons). While Pietism accomplished impressive things, among Lutherans both in Europe and North America (one historian argues that all U.S. Lutheran groups were founded by pietists), it demanded a rigorous lifestyle that for some in the Danish church was the wrong approach.

Those Danes within the Grundtvigian movement organized themselves into what came to be known as the American Evangelical Lutheran Church (AELC). Their center became Des Moines, Iowa, where their seminary was founded and, shortly thereafter, Grand View College (now Grand View University). By choice or by accident, they came to be known as the "Happy Danes."

The UELC, anticipating a coming merger with Germans and Norwegians into the "new" American Lutheran Church (there was also an "old" ALC), closed Trinity Seminary in the late 1950s and sent its faculty, students, and library to Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. In 1960, the ALC was created through a merger of the (Norwegian) Evangelical Lutheran Church, the (German) American Lutheran Church, and the UELC. It was, it should be noted, at the prompting of UELC leaders that the merger negotiations actually began.

A few years later the AELC merged with the (German) United Lutheran Church in America and the (Swedish) Augustana Synod. Grand View Seminary was merged with Maywood Seminary, as was Augustana Seminary, to create the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. The combining denominations took the name Lutheran Church in America (LCA). In 1988, when the ALC and the LCA became the ELCA, the two Danish Lutheran denominations in the U.S. finally ended up in the same church family.

A sad footnote to the Danish Lutheran story in this country is that in the middle of the first decade of this new century, Dana College, seriously short of funds, Old Main, Dana College was forced to close its doors. That leaves Grand View University as the institutional reminder of the Danish Lutheran presence in North America.

**“THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE”**