



Reformation Lutheran Church

**“Come and See, Learn and Rejoice, Go and Tell!”
October 2023**

“Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live.” -Ezekiel 18:31-32-

So often we read throughout Scripture how God pleads with his people to stop their sinning and return to him. These verses from Ezekiel are no exception. Living lives with or without faith is a matter of life or death, respectively. Throughout chapter 18 of Ezekiel, God condemns our human tendency to justify ourselves. We want to somehow make ourselves righteous, but that is simply not possible. If we are left to our own devices, we will fail every time, and the result is death. However, if we believe and live out a life of faith, the result is life and salvation. As Martin Luther states, “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him; but the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith.”

God so deeply desires that all people would repent and be saved by his grace and redeeming love through Jesus Christ. We cannot make for ourselves a new heart and a new spirit. We must rely on God to do that for us. Through his son Jesus Christ, God has provided for us the means for such a change of heart.

We are called to daily repentance. We confess that we are in bondage to sin. We will always have sin to contend with, but we also know that sin no longer has dominion over us. God has given us a great gift in the ability to repent, to stop in our sinfulness and return to him, tail between our legs, asking once again for his forgiveness.

God promises to bestow his forgiveness on us each and every time. We will never be without sin; that’s the cold, hard truth. But God has given us the ability to start anew. Our God pleads, “Turn and live.”

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to be mindful of our need for your grace and forgiveness. Give us strength to turn away from sin, to repent of our sin, and to return to you, so that we might receive your gift of everlasting life. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Pr.

Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him. Psalm 62:1

Fall is in the air – finally! We know what that means! Cooler weather (maybe), cozy fires (see previous maybe,) sweater weather (ditto,) and hopefully a little slower pace of life. At the beginning of next month, we will “Fall Back” and turn our clocks back so we get that “extra” hour to get things done. So many of us are running ninety to nothing to try and keep up with all we have going on in our own lives and trying to keep up with all that’s going on in the world. We run ourselves to the point of exhaustion. I think this is a perfect time to slow down. An extra hour of sleep may be nice for our physical bodies but what we need more than that is what Jesus offers. He wants us to fall back into a deeper relationship with him. Fall back into His word. Fall back into His guidance. Accept the rest that Jesus gives. The rest that will give us refreshment for our souls. Peace be with you, Gabi



October 16th – Ingrid Hanson

October 23rd – Pat Hunsaker

OCTOBER CALENDAR

Sunday – October 1st – NO Bible Study this morning; Service – 10:30 a.m.

Saturday – October 7th – Clean-up Day – 9:00 a.m.

Sunday – October 8th – Bible Study – 9:30 a.m.; Service – 10:30 a.m.; Council after service.

Sunday – October 15th – Bible Study – 9:30 a.m.; Service – 10:30 a.m.

Sunday – October 22nd – Bible Study – 9:30 a.m.; Service – 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday - October 25th - AARP Safe Driver’s Class – 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Saturday - October 28th – Clean-up Day (if needed) – 9:00 a.m.

Sunday – October 29th – Reformation Sunday! Bible Study – 9:30 a.m.; Service - 10:30 a.m. – Potluck meal following service.

	Oct 1	Oct 8	Oct 15	Oct 22	Oct 29
Altar Guild	Junior	Amy	Wayne	Carolyn	Junior
Usher	Carolyn	Wayne	Junior	Carolyn	Wayne
Lector	Amy	Chuck	Gabi	Wayne	Lynne
Sermon	Wayne	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor
Thrive	Wayne	Pastor	Gabi	Pastor	Wayne
Oaks				Chuck	Chuck

Fellowship: Our monthly birthday celebrations have been a big hit! That said, I’m all for turning that into a potluck meal for this month so we can celebrate Reformation Sunday and birthdays!

Property: Our delayed September clean-up day will be Saturday, October 7th, 9:00 a.m. If needed, our regularly scheduled October clean-up day will be Saturday, the 28th, 9:00 a.m. Helping hands are always welcome!

Education: We began our Sunday Bible classes, starting at 9:30 a.m. It is based on the book, *The Sword and The Mask – Building an Antifragile Approach to Spiritual Warfare* by The Rev. Dr. Jon C. Furgeson. Also, a prerequisite for the class was to read or listen to the YouTube audio of *This Present Darkness* by Frank Peretti. *“For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness...”* Ephesians 6:12

Worship and Music: The Season of Trinity is quickly coming to an end. We only have three more Sunday services and then the biggest day in the Lutheran Church. Reformation Sunday is October 29. Although the Reformation is considered to have started with the publication of the Ninety-five Theses by Martin Luther in 1517, he was not excommunicated by Pope Leo X until January 1521. The Diet of Worms of May 1521 condemned Luther and officially banned citizens of the Holy Roman Empire from defending or propagating his ideas. Luther survived after being declared an outlaw due to the protection of Elector Frederick the Wise.

How many of us really remember the “what does this mean” from our days in catechism class? Here is this month’s review.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT – Honor your father and mother.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN – We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them. preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

Mission and Ministry: We have two projects that we’re trying to get underway. One is to restock the Focus Food Bank and the other is to help House of Heroes with supplies they need. The holidays will be here before we know it, and now is the perfect time to think of projects we may do at that time. All thoughts are welcome!

WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH “Icelandic Lutherans in North America”

Although they were never a sizable part of the Lutheran community in North America, Icelandic Lutherans nevertheless formed their own distinctive portion of it. Mainly centered in the areas of north-eastern North Dakota and southern Manitoba, Icelandic Lutherans formed their own synod in 1885, which remained independent until uniting with a larger denomination in 1940. Congregations with Icelandic roots today are generally associated either with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

A small island in the North Atlantic between Norway and Greenland, Iceland has been Lutheran since the Reformation. Icelandic immigration to North America between 1870 and 1900 is estimated at about 15,000 people, out of a total population of only 70,000. Though their main settlements were in and around the colony of New Iceland (near Winnipeg, Manitoba), other groups formed scattered communities, especially in the Puget Sound region of Washington.

The first Icelandic settlers struggled to establish local Lutheran congregations in North America, led by two Icelandic pastors, Pall (Paul) Thorlaksson and Jon Bjarnason. Thorlaksson was a part of the Norwegian Synod, educated at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, while Bjarnason was educated in Iceland. Eventually in 1885, Bjarnason, along with a newly ordained pastor Hans Thorgrimsen, organized the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod of America, with a total of twelve congregations. This Synod remained independent for the next fifty-five years, though because of its small size it had to

rely on larger Lutheran groups (usually Norwegian) for ministerial training and other assistance. When, in 1940, the synod voted to become a separate ethnic synod within the

larger United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA), it consisted of fifteen pastors, forty-six congregations, and 6,760 baptized members. In 1962, when the ULCA merged with other Lutheran groups to form the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), the separate Icelandic Synod was disbanded.

Icelanders have a general reputation for being tough, independent-minded, and sometimes stubborn people, perhaps coming from their centuries-long struggle to survive on a barren, wind-swept island in the North Atlantic. Those who came to North America have generally shown these traits; one Icelandic-American writer bemoaned the fact that his people walked over hundreds of miles of rich farming territory in the Midwest, settling instead in a sandy-soiled region that reminded them of home. Iceland has strong democratic institutions and traditions going back to the tenth century, with equally strong traditional rights for women. The Icelandic Synod was noteworthy for being the first Lutheran denomination in North America to allow women to vote and hold congregational offices and to be voting delegates to synodical meetings. Lay people took control in the synod, far outnumbering clergy delegates at synodical meetings.

These traditions worked to keep the synod independent as long as it COULD, but often resulted in internal conflicts, as well. When, in the 1870s, early pastor Thorlaksson wanted to affiliate with the Norwegian Synod, lay leaders of the congregations refused, fearing that the synod "would be in complete control, and we would have no say." The immigrant colony in New Iceland held a two-day community meeting in which religious issues and organization were vigorously (and at times, heatedly) debated. Historian Valdimir Eylands commented, "People who hardly had shelter over their heads and in many cases didn't know where their next meal was coming from, spent two whole days to hear debates on ... scholarly (religious) themes."

The tendencies toward strong and independent thought within the Icelandic community also led some members of the community toward free and radical thinking, challenging Christian orthodoxy within the congregations. In the 1880s one such Icelander, Bjorn Petursson, adopted liberal, Unitarian views, and became the first Unitarian missionary" to North America, gathering a small following of scattered groups in the upper Midwest. In 1891 Icelandic Synod pastor, Magnus Skaptason, preached a series of sermons calling into question various parts of traditional Christian theology; he was expelled from the synod, and several of his congregations followed him. These elements formed the Icelandic Conference of Unitarian Churches in North America in 1891. Another pastor in the synod, Frederik Bergmann, came under Magnus Skaptason the influence of the new liberal theology during ministerial study in Norway during the 1880s. He soon came into theological conflict with Bjarnason, and in 1909 Bergmann and six congregations left the synod. Eylands commented, "The ardor of the battle led both of these eminent leaders to extreme positions which they no doubt regretted in later life."

Besides the establishment of congregations, the legacy of the Icelandic Synod is a distinctive form of Lutheranism in North America, where lay people took theological issues seriously and debated them passionately. Although conflict like this can at times be debilitating, it can also be a sign of religious vitality, where ordinary Christians take ownership of the faith once given to them.

“THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE”