



Reformation Lutheran Church

“Come and See, Learn and Rejoice, Go and Tell!”
January 2024

“Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.” - Psalm 139:16

In his book “Restoring Your Spiritual Passion,” Gordon MacDonald writes about Paul’s need for friendship. “The apostle Paul was clearly a man committed to raising up a band of special friends. He knew who they were, and he regularly recognized them for their contribution to his spiritual passion. His friends were a resource upon which he obviously depended and without which he would not have survived.”

Though we may be blessed with many friends there are usually just a few that we consider our best friends. As someone once said, “A real friend is someone who walks in when everybody else walks out.” Our best friends will be honest when we need correction and will be present when we need comfort. They know us so well that they can almost read our minds and tell us what we are thinking. They will stop us from doing something stupid and encourage us to do the right thing. Even when we make a mistake, they are quick with forgiveness and slow to remember our faults.

It is a blessing to have friends who stand with us and help us through this life, but even those relationships are fragile. Childhood friends grow up with conflicting ambitions; we grow apart as we make different life choices. Families move to new places and promises of lifelong friendships get forgotten. Even the best of friends can have an argument that creates irreparable damage to a relationship. We are human and, in our imperfection, it doesn’t take much to build walls that separate us forever.

There is one relationship, however, that will stand forever. God knows us better than anyone, and He loves us despite knowing even the hidden secrets of our hearts. He knew us before we were born and knows what we have not yet learned about ourselves. We cannot hide from Him. He created us and laid our path before us. He gives us His life and His Word so that we can live in this world. In faith we know that God will always be there for us whenever we need Him. He will guard and protect us; He will mold and guide us. We can trust Him because he is faithful. He is our best friend, and He has promised to be with us forever. Pr.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year! We welcome in 2024 and also a new church year.

A new year is always a good time to look back and think of the things we did well and the things we can do better. It’s also a time to look forward and make plans for this new, and hopefully, exciting new year.

2023 was actually a very good year for Reformation. We added new members, and our financial status is pretty solid. That puts us in a good position to move forward and do some things we have not been able to do...so 2024 can be a very exciting year.

As we look forward to our first council meeting of the new year, I would like to make this the year of the new member. Jesus gave us the mission to go and make disciples. It doesn’t matter if these are people who are first time believers or simply people who have not been attending church...we can

bring them in and grow Reformation. Certainly face-to-face why don't you come to church with me works, but there are other things we can be doing to get our name more recognized and to meet potential members. Let's put on our thinking caps.

Many of you have probably heard me say this, but Reformation is a very friendly church. Pat and I knew more people after our first Sunday at Reformation than we knew in our other church after attending for several years. If we can get people to come, I firmly believe we can encourage them to stay. This is not Mission Impossible, but it is our mission if we chose to accept it.

Gabi started a great tradition of praying for Reformation. We need to continue that and work to make Reformation a bigger Christian/Lutheran presence in this area.

Look to Jesus for strength, endurance, and courage to remain faithful to Scripture.



January 4th – Erik Benway

January 9th – Junior Erickson

January 18th – Charles Patterson

JANUARY CALENDAR

Sunday – January 21st – Council

Saturday – January 27th – Clean-up Day – 9:00 a.m.

	Jan 7	Jan 14	Jan 21	Jan 28
Altar Guild	Amy	Carolyn	Wayne	Tammy
Usher	Carolyn	Wayne	Junior	Carolyn
Lector	Gabi	Dick	Tammy	Junior
Sermon	Wayne	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor
Thrive	Wayne	Pastor	Gabi	Wayne
Oaks	Chuck			Chuck

Property: Our January clean-up day will be Saturday, the 27th, 9:00 a.m. Helping hands are always welcome!

Fellowship: Thank you to all who contributed to our Advent meals! Wonderful food as always! Celebrating birthdays monthly has worked out to be a fun event! We can continue to do that and plan to celebrate with snacks either in the middle of the month or the end of the month. Let's discuss and see what might work best.

Education: We have completed the Bible Study on spiritual warfare. Toward the end of January, we will resume our 9:30 a.m. Sunday Bible classes on the topic of Prayer. Pastor will let us know the start date on the second Sunday of January.

Mission and Ministry: We ended 2023 with a few Thrivent projects that benefitted FOCUS. My goal for 2024 is to have several projects quarterly, if possible. I'm going to post a board that will be visible for everyone to add their thoughts and see what others may have in mind as well. All ideas are always welcome!

Worship and Music: The Epiphany of our Lord will be commemorated on Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024. After focusing on the Incarnation of our Lord — God becoming flesh — during the 12 days of Christmas, the season of Epiphany emphasizes the manifestation or self-revelation of God in that same flesh of Christ.

Liturgical color for Epiphany: White, the color of purity and completeness, adorns the altar to commemorate the Epiphany of our Lord. In His light we see light, and by Him “though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.” Christ’s incarnation and His resurrection, His Gospel and its message to all nations are cause for our rejoicing. His purity before His Father becomes our purity. White reinforces this message of joy.

Three-Year Series B and One-Year Series Lectionaries

Scripture readings for Epiphany

· Isaiah 60:1–6 · Ephesians 3:1–12 · Matthew 2:1–12

Psalms

· Series B — Psalm 72:1–11 (12–15) · One-Year Series — Psalm 24

Lectionary summary

The Lord God Is Manifested in the Incarnate Son

The Feast of the Epiphany centers in the visit of the Magi from the East. In that respect, it is a “13th day” of Christmas, and yet it also marks the beginning of a new liturgical season. Where Christmas has focused on the incarnation of our Lord, that is, on God becoming flesh, the season of Epiphany emphasizes the manifestation or self-revelation of God in that same flesh of Christ. For the Lord Himself has entered our darkness and rises upon us with the brightness of His true light (Is. 60:1–2). He does so chiefly by His Word of the Gospel, which He causes to be preached within His Church on earth, not only to the Jews but also to the Gentiles (Eph. 3:8–10). As the Magi were guided by the promises of Holy Scripture to find and worship the Christ Child with His mother in the house (Matt. 2:5–11), so does He call disciples from all nations by the preaching of His Word to find and worship Him within His church (Is. 60:3–6). Source: <https://calendar.lcms.org/event/epiphany/>

WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH “Reindeer and Hunger and Hope: Brevig Mission and Shishmaref Lutheran Churches”

There had been years of famine in the land. For the Inupiaq, an indigenous people living north of Nome, Alaska, and south of the Arctic Circle, hunger gripped them in the early 1890s. A government

leader and teacher, Sheldon Jackson, suggested that introducing reindeer and reindeer husbandry into these communities might alleviate their suffering. Herds of reindeer were located across the Bering Strait in Siberia. It was also known that Laplanders from the northern regions of Norway had the expertise and the skills needed to make the plan work. A hungry people, a herd of reindeer, a government official, and Laplanders, three continents and a variety of languages and cultures is the stuff of legend; it's the stuff of mission and the work of the Holy Spirit. A recipe for a church plant? Not yet! It was the spiritual needs of the Laplanders which sent the call out to seminarians training at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, "We need a pastor!" So, across the plains of Montana in a train carrying Pastor T. L. Brevig, his Norwegian bride Julia, a group of Lapland reindeer herders, and a Lutheran deaconess left to meet the hunger of a community on the banks of the Tuxuk and the Bering Sea. This place became Brevig Mission, Alaska, where the first (old) American Lutheran Church (ALC) congregation in that state began in 1894.

Almost ninety years later in 1983, a just married, newly ordained clergy couple left to serve among the Inupiaq community birthed from the intersection of reindeer and hunger and the gospel. Elsie Kuzruk, born upriver in an umiak (boat) remembered the missionaries gathering the colorful Lapland reindeer herders into a wall tent singing songs in an unfamiliar language. She told me, one of those newly minted pastors, that story and described the scene in which she was just a child, outside the tent looking in: Strangers had entered into her world, uninvited(?), a vibrant established Inupiaq community, armed with a faith, the gospel and the skills of reindeer husbandry.

A flu epidemic ravaged the villages of the Seward Peninsula in the years between 1914 and 1918. Trained deaconesses, nurses, young women of faith were called to tend to the orphaned children left behind. Sister Anna Huseeth, Sister Helen Frost, and many others raised the children, tended to the sick, and cared for the spiritual needs of these young Inupiaq at the orphanage in Brevig Mission. Long before words like cross-cultural and multicultural became fields of study and intent, Brevig Mission and Igloo, Alaska, were a study in cross-cultural ministry. Many of the Inupiaq elders in the village shared stories of these women who taught them to sing hymns in their first language, Norwegian, and to knit colorful gloves and mittens in the patterns brought with them from Norway and Denmark.

This context is a snapshot of the development of leadership among women in the immigrant Lutheran churches. It was the cry and vision of Sister Anna Huseeth and the missionary zeal of the newly formed Lutheran Daughters of the Reformation (LDR) that planted the church in Shishmaref, Alaska, in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Sister Anna knew that there was an entire village that had not heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. On one of her furloughs, she met with the

young women of the church and the church leaders (at that time only men) and told them of the need for a church in Shishmaref. Out of the offerings of the women, funds were secured to build a church and call a pastor. Now, almost 120 years later, the communities of faith-in Nome and Teller, Brevig Mission and Wales, Shishmaref and Alaska Native in Anchorage-proclaim the gospel in English and Inupiaq and continue to nurture leaders for their villages and towns and cities and state. Polar bears are harder to find, and the warming of the ice cap means the ocean is rising and taking back the once-thriving Village of Shishmaref. A forced migration of people is leaving this island for Brevig Mission and Nome and Anchorage. The role of the church has emerged as the primary tool in helping to preserve the Inupiaq language and culture through the translation of hymns and the exploration of new forms of worship which include traditional dance and drumming. Young adults shaped in these communities of faith have taken on the challenge of governing their communities for future generations.

THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE