



Reformation Lutheran Church

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

“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” - 2 Corinthians 4:6

Saul, also known as Paul, knew what it was like to be blind. He was on his way to Damascus with permission for the leaders to destroy the followers of ‘the Way.’ Saul wanted to stop this new way of seeing, but God had something different in mind. Jesus appeared to him as a bright light and a voice that asked, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” Jesus called Saul into the ministry of Light. He was blind for three days during which he fasted and prayed. A man named Ananias was also called by Jesus to heal Saul’s sight, are for him in his recovery, and help him see the truth. From that day forward, Saul also known as Paul, ministered to the Light.

It is natural for Paul to talk about the Gospel in terms of light and blindness. He had experienced it himself in a powerful way. He had been blind, both spiritually and physically, and he had been healed of both. We may not be physically blind, but human beings are blinded by the things of this world. We are spiritually blind in many ways, ways in which we obviously fail to recognize. By the power of the Holy Spirit we are called to believe in God’s grace and forgiveness. We are healed of our blindness and ushered into the Light.

Once in the Light, we are then called to go forth, sharing the Gospel message. It isn’t about us; we are the messengers who take the Gospel out to the world. The Holy Spirit works in those meet to lift the veil off their eyes so that they too might come to believe. It is God that shines in their darkness. It is God who makes them see.

Do you have a story you can share with others about how you came to see the light? Of course you do, and can. Our stories may not be as dramatic as that of Paul. We may not even be able to identify a time or place when we were blind and then could see. However, our eyes have been unveiled because of the witnesses who have willingly shared the Gospel with us and we are called to be witnesses to others in the same way. God has promised to shine through our hearts into the world so that all may stand in the Light.

Pr.

FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

2024 is off and running. In just a few weeks we will have Ash Wednesday, Lent and Easter...all very important events in the church year and in the life of every Christian.

One of the discussion items at our last council meeting was our finances. Right now, we are doing OK, but it is still important for us to increase our bank account for several reasons. We need to be prepared for loss of revenue, we need to be able to plan for events that will showcase Reformation and create the possibility of new members, and we need to keep up with inflation. With that in mind we are going to take a serious look at the revenue generating possibilities that we created last year.

The first of these events will be held on April 20 in the recreation area of Coca Lake. They will be holding their annual spring yard sale and spring flower sale. We will set up tables in their recreation area for our spring sale. If you have anything to donate, please bring it to the church or simply set it aside and bring it on April 20.

And don't forget to pray for Reformation...we are thankful that we live in a country where we are free to worship and to partake of the sacraments...BTW, have you asked a friend or neighbor to join us on a Sunday morning?

Trivia Question for the Month:

Which Angel Announced the Birth Of Jesus To Mary? Michael - Gabriel – Raphael – Uriel

Chuck Hunsaker, Council President



February 26th – Karen Washington

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Sunday – February 11th – Council

Saturday – February 24th – Clean-up Day – 9:00 a.m.

	Feb 4	Feb 11	Feb 18	Feb 25
Altar Guild	Amy	Wayne	Carolyn	Junior
Usher	Junior	Carolyn	Junior	Wayne
Lector	Tammy	Amy	Dick	Chuck
Sermon	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor
Thrive	Pastor	Gabi	Wayne	Pastor
Oaks		Chuck		Chuck

Property: Our February clean-up day will be Saturday, the 24th, 9:00 a.m. Helping hands are always welcome!

Fellowship: Lent will start before you know it! Ash Wednesday is February 14th this year. The men will serve a pancake supper at 6:00 before our service at 7:00. (Will the pancakes be heart shaped? Asking for a friend..... 😊) We will have our usual Wednesday meal and service each Wednesday after that. There will be a sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall.

Education: We have started our 9:30 a.m. Sunday Bible Study classes. Please join us as we cover the topic of Prayer.

Mission and Ministry: It's a new year with new opportunities to be missionaries in our community! We have a total of twelve Thrivent cards available to us - that's \$3000.00 dollars to use in our efforts. There will be a poster on one of the bulletin boards where any and all ideas can be shared. This year, I'd love for us to make use of everything available to us!

One event we have scheduled is a yard sale. It is set for April 20th. We'll be setting up in the recreation area right inside Coca Lake. This is also the day of their big neighborhood yard sale. Start gathering your items together! I sent out a list of ideas. If in doubt, bring it to church anyway! Don't hesitate to ask any questions or share concerns.

Worship and Music: Ash Wednesday is February 14. We will have dinner at 6 pm with a service following at 7 pm, where all are welcome to receive the imposition of ashes, which is a gesture of repentance and a powerful reminder about the meaning of the day.

The sermon series on the Lord's Prayer will continue into the month of February. Here is what Luther's Small Catechism says about it:

The Introduction

Our Father who art in heaven.

Our Father in heaven.

What does this mean? With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

The First Petition

Hallowed be Thy name.

Hallowed be Your name.

What does this mean? God's name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in the petition that it may be kept holy among us also.

How is God's name kept holy? God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God's Word profanes the name of God among us. Protect us from this, heavenly Father!

The Second Petition

Thy kingdom come.

Your kingdom come.

What does this mean? The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.

How does God's kingdom come? God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.

The Third Petition

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Your will be done on earth as in heaven.

What does this mean? The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is God's will done? God's will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. This is His good and gracious will.

The Fourth Petition

Give us this day our daily bread.

Give us today our daily bread.

What does this mean? God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

The Fifth Petition

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

What does this mean? We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

The Sixth Petition

And lead us not into temptation.

Lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean? God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.

The Seventh Petition

But deliver us from evil.

But deliver us from evil.

What does this mean? We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

The Conclusion

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.* Amen.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever. Amen.*

What does this mean? This means that I should be certain that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Amen, amen means "yes, yes, it shall be so."

*These words were not in Luther's Small Catechism.

February Colors:

Green: Epiphany's message of Christ's revelation to the Gentiles along with the season's traditional emphasis on extending Christ's kingdom through missions, calls for the use of green—the color symbolic of growth.

White: White is the color of purity and completeness, and is the appointed color for festive Sundays, including the Last Sunday after the Epiphany, also known as Transfiguration Sunday.

Black: Black is seen very seldom during the year. The calendar calls for its use only twice; on Good Friday and Ash Wednesday. There's no mistaking the message that this sober color gives. Black is the absence of light. Good Friday, or Black Friday in combination with Ash Wednesday, calls for sober reflection on the cost of our redemption. Without Christ's sacrifice on the day the sky turned dark and hid the light

Purple: Purple, like black, is a penitential color, in contrast to a festive one. It is appropriately used during Lent and, still in many parishes, during the season of Advent. The forty days of Lent, including the six Sundays that fall during this season, use this deep, rich color which has come to represent somberness and solemnity, penitence, and prayer.

Violet or purple was a very cherished and expensive color in the world Jesus lived. The dye used to make the color was painstakingly acquired by massaging the neck of a Mediterranean shell fish that secreted a special fluid. It was therefore afforded only by the rich and worn most exclusively by the royalty.

Jesus, the king of the Jews, wore a purple robe only once. As the soldiers mocked and tormented him, the Scriptures record they placed on him a “purple garment” in order to ridicule him and belittle the claim that he was a monarch.

Therefore, purple is used during this penitential season of Lent as a vivid reminder of the contempt and scorn he endured, and the subsequent sacrifice he made for our eternal salvation. Ecclesiastical purple should remind all Christians of their daily need to humbly give attention to leading a life of repentance.

Source: <https://www.lcms.org/worship/church-year/colors-of-liturgical-seasons>

WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH “Come to the WELS! Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod”

The English word "synod" is derived from a Greek word that means "going the same way." In the early church, synod meant a meeting where bishops from a regional area met to discuss theological and organizational issues. In Protestantism, synods were conceived of as a permanent way for pastors and congregations to organize themselves. When Lutherans in America began to form congregations, they followed this pattern. Though the first two organizations were called by the term "ministerium" (gathering of ministers), the lay leaders of the congregations soon demanded and got representation; thus the gatherings of clergy and congregational representatives were called synods. Individual pastors and congregations voluntarily associated with a given synod, but while belonging to that organization they were bound by its communal decisions. The term "synod" however can take on two different meanings among Lutherans in America: it can mean either a regional or a national body. In the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America synods are regional parts of the whole; there are sixty-five synods in the ELCA. However, the term "synod" can also refer to a national church body, such as the Lutheran

Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) or the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), which both have congregations in many states across the country.

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod began as a regional synod in Wisconsin, but over its history has grown to include congregations in forty-seven American states and four Canadian provinces, with almost 1,300 congregations and nearly 400,000 members. By means of merger and expansion, it is the third largest Lutheran denomination in North America, although much smaller than either the ELCA or LCMS.

WELS has its roots in the German Evangelical Ministerium of Wisconsin, founded in 1850 by German Lutheran pastors in that state. When it was incorporated in that state in 1864, they added the word "Lutheran" to its title. In German immigrant communities in the United States there was often a mixture of Lutherans and Reformed (Calvinist) Protestants, and often cooperative efforts developed. But the Wisconsin Synod became increasingly conservative and exclusively Lutheran, especially as it came into contact with other American Lutheran groups who were not as strict as it had become. The question that developed between Lutheran groups concerned fellowship or cooperation with other Christian groups, especially the amount of theological agreement that had to be reached before such fellowship could be allowed. The Wisconsin Synod, along with the Missouri Synod, took on a very strict position on fellowship; to them it meant complete agreement on all points of doctrine and practice. These two groups had grave doubts about whether other American Lutheran groups were orthodox enough, and in 1872 Missouri and Wisconsin formed a new cooperative organization along these lines, the Synodical Conference.

In 1892 the Wisconsin Synod affiliated with the Michigan and Minnesota Synods. In 1917 this group, along with the Nebraska Synod, formed the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States. In 1959 the name was changed to the present Wisconsin

Evangelical Lutheran Synod. In the twentieth century, the WELS has grown into a national denomination, though still roughly half of its members and congregations are located in the state of Wisconsin and even more in contiguous states such as Michigan and Minnesota. After World War II, the WELS leadership became increasingly worried about what they saw as "liberal" trends within the Missouri Synod, which created conflict within the Synodical Conference. WELS broke fellowship with Missouri in 1961, and today it is only in fellowship with several other, very small Lutheran groups.

WELS takes the question of fellowship very seriously, wishing to avoid any hint of cooperation with any other religious (or quasi-religious) groups with which they have not negotiated a theological agreement, so they have no interaction with local ecumenical religious groups or even most other Lutherans. They shun fraternal groups, such as the Masons, Elks, Moose, or Odd Fellows, and even discourage their children from joining the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts because of religious concerns. The WELS has an extensive network of private, parochial schools-334 elementary schools and twenty-three high schools, as well as two colleges and a seminary, with a total of 41,000 students. They see this network as necessary to assure that their children are educated in the orthodox Lutheran faith and to assure that they have church leaders and pastors in the same mold.

Though WELS was traditionally located in the Upper Midwest, it has actively spread into southern and western states, where it has established mission congregations. A number of LCMS members and even some congregations have left Missouri in the 1970s and 1980s to affiliate with WELS. WELS has also been active in mission outreach-in the United States with the Apache Indian Mission in Arizona, and missions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE