  **Reformation Lutheran Church**

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

*“And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.”* - Mark 16:6

A boulder blocked the entrance to the tomb. It was sealed and Roman guards watched over it. There was no chance for tampering. The disciples were in hiding, afraid to show their faces to the world. They did not know what awaited them. If Jesus, who was so good and truthful, was dead, what must become of them? As morning approached, the women awakened to the sad task of preparing Jesus’ body for permanent burial. They were surprised by what they saw. The tomb was empty.

What amazing love is this? Tears cloud our eyes when we hear the proclamation of the Gospel and sing the Alleluias in an atmosphere of brightly colored banners, sweet smelling flowers, and talented musicians. It is no wonder we become emotional on Easter Sunday. The emotion is a mixed bag: we regret our own failures and we rejoice that God loves us with a grace that is greater than any human can comprehend. We don’t deserve His loving embrace, and yet Jesus reached out His hands to draw us into His heart for eternity. He lived, died, and rose again so that we might be saved. We are overcome with awe and thanksgiving.

He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! How will you respond to this good news? Will you be like the women who were afraid? Will you be like the disciples who did not believe the story? Will you be like Peter who had doubts but went to the tomb to see? Will you be like Mary who wept because the body of her Lord was missing? Will you hear His voice and believe?

This is a joyous time for Christians, but there are still those in our world who are afraid, who do not believe, and who continue to weep because they do not know the joy. This joy is part of the promise. Christ’s death and resurrection give us life, not only in the future eternal promise, but also in the here and now. We are Easter people, not just on this Resurrection day, but every day. Today we can take a moment to experience the emotions that flood our hearts as we worship our amazing God and then go out into the world with that joy taking God’s grace to those who still need to believe.

Pr.

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**COUNCIL PRESIDENT’S CORNER**

Each year we have a lot of important events. For Christians, however, we have two very important events…Christmas and Easter. As we look at those days, I always think which is the more important one. You can argue that Christmas is because without it we would not have a Savior.

But…without the resurrection, and the promise of eternal life, there would be no reason for the Christian Church. It is that event on Easter morning, the empty tomb, a resurrected Jesus and the promise to all believers that we will also have eternal life that is so special. So which day is more important? For me, it is Easter.

Our next important day is May 9…Ascension Sunday.

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.

Trivia Question for the MonthWhere Did Jesus Pray Before His Arrest?

Gethsemane – Eden - Olive Grove – Bethany

Chuck Hunsaker, Council President

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 **No birthdays this month for RLC members.**

**APRIL CALENDAR**

**Sunday – April 14th – Council after service**

**Tuesday – April 23rd – Lutheran Men’s Lunch at 11:30 a.m. at Pies and Thighs**

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

 **April 7 April 14 April 21 April 28**

**Altar Guild** Amy Carolyn Junior Tammy

**Usher** Carolyn Amy Carolyn Junior

**Lector** Amy Chuck Gabi Junior

**Sermon** Gabi Chuck Pastor Pastor

**Thrive** Wayne Gabi Wayne Pastor

**Mission and Ministry Outreach:** We’ve been a bit slow with our cards so far, but we should be picking up projects very soon! Wayne would like to get the food bank at Focus stocked once a quarter. Chuck is gathering information from House of Heroes. I have emailed several shelters and am waiting for more information from them. All ideas are welcome! If you hear of a need somewhere, let us know!

**YARD SALE!** Our yard sale is coming up quickly! It’s scheduled for Saturday, April 20th at the pool area in Coca Lake. There are plenty of opportunities for you to help! We’ll plan days/evenings where we meet at church to sort and price. We’ll need everything done beforehand. Please continue to bring items for the sale. The more we have, the better!

**AARP Safe Driver’s Class** – We will be hosting a class here on Wednesday, April 24th. The class is from 9:00 – 4:00 with a break for lunch. The fee is $25 for non-AARP members and $20 for members. All materials will be provided. Contact: Krys Tuten – 706-478-7077. Please spread the word about this class!

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

**Fellowship:** Thank you to everyone who provided food during our Lenten meals each Wednesday. Everything was delicious and much appreciated! Our Easter breakfast caps off any fellowship times we had planned. Let’s see what we might come up with next! As always, all ideas are welcome!

**Education:** Our Bible Study classes covering the topic of Saint John’s letters and Revelation will begin April 21st. Please join us at 9:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

**WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH “Bold Woman Day”**

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America designates an annual Sunday in February to recognize "women who are bold, women who take risks on account of the gospel, women who believe more boldly still in Jesus Christ." Unattached to a dramatic event or historic meeting, not linked to an influential leader or a high-profile project, the day provides an excellent starting place for considering the ministry of thousands of women's organizations in American Lutheran churches. These organizations-including local ladies' aid groups, the Hauge Synod Mission Dove, the Lutheran Free Church Women's Missionary Federation, and the Joint Synod of Ohio Women's Missionary Conference-cultivated and were guided by remarkable women whose leadership multiplied the steady work of a multitude of members.

Lutheran women's organizations founded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century had much in common with other Protestant women's groups of the time. These Christian women came together regularly for prayer and study, for companionship, and to share in various projects. Sometimes they met in the church, but often they met in one another's homes, admiring and enjoying the hostess' culinary skills. By the turn of the century local groups were federated into national bodies that sponsored missionaries, supported charitable intuitions, and produced educational materials.

Like Methodists and Presbyterians, Lutheran women in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Wisconsin, in General Synod, Iowa Synod, and Augustana Synod congregations gathered to support their congregations' ministries and one another. Since the second wave of Lutheran immigration to the United States from Scandinavia and Germany coincided with these developments, some women's groups were founded prior to their congregations. The women's organizations functioned as mothers of the congregations.

Nothing in Luther's Small Catechism exempted women from either receiving God's grace or excused them from the admonitions to love their neighbors; nonetheless most congregations prohibited them from voting, and no Lutheran church ordained women. Although many of their members might not have recognized it, these groups were part of the woman's rights movement that flourished in the same years. Just as advocates of woman's suffrage insisted that all citizens were entitled to the responsibility of voting, these Lutheran women insisted on being active participants in the church and its work.

Among immigrants of that time, women were central to establishing new churches in an unfamiliar setting. In the state-supported, folk-churches they left behind, membership had been assumed. In the United States things were different. Here church membership was voluntary; there were many sorts of churches to choose from; and all of them needed to be self-supporting. By their volunteer work and their fund raising, women helped forge a more participatory understanding of church membership, more suitable to American conditions.

While the specifics in each group varied, there were general patterns and common activities such as an annual mission festival featuring a visit from a missionary. He would preach and tell about his work in India or China or Madagascar. Women prepared the several hearty congregational meals. They provided the handcrafted items auctioned to raise funds.

Once the clean up was complete, the women continued to support the missionary. Through correspondence and updates in church publications, they stayed in touch with him, with his family, and with their church community. In these ways women fostered an expansive, global sense of the church knit together by personal relationships, informed prayer, and financial support. They understood that the church extended beyond their, congregation and circled the world.

The church also was closer to home, of course. In those early decades each social ministry or charitable institution managed its own finances, rather than depending upon a unified national church budget. When cash was in short supply, rural pastors received bushels of apples, baskets of eggs, and loaves of bread to supplement their salaries. Similarly women's groups sent gifts in kind to orphanages and homes for seniors, to hospitals and schools operated by Lutherans. The jars of jam and bushels of potatoes, bed linens and curtains bound the women who sent them to the work being done in those places. They were partners in these ministries where faith was active in love.

In their congregations, women's work extended their activities in their homes: feeding and cleaning and teaching. Confirmation records suggest that their basic theological knowledge was comparable to their brothers' in kind and at least as good, if not better, in quality. Women with musical gifts could lead the congregation from the keyboard or by directing a choir. In general, however, their opportunities for formal leadership in the congregation were limited to the women's organization or with children.

Women were able to exercise influence on congregational matters even without having a vote. If the women who had raised the funds judged that an organ or a furnace was more needed than some other item, the organ or the furnace was what would be purchased. This strategy allowed women a voice in the body. It recognized that women played an essential role to the congregation's life and work. However, it also promoted an unhealthy linkage of financial contributions to decision making. Certainly the body of Christ is not intended to do the bidding of those who have money.

Within their own organizations women both offered one another support and cultivated their own leadership. In some instances the pastor attended their monthly meetings to lead the Bible study and offer prayers. Some men thought women incapable of doing these things, while others feared that, once women assumed these responsibilities, they would come to desire others as well. Most often women took the lead themselves. Frequently the pastor's wife was the founder of the local group, and many served as officers in the federated societies. By the mid-twentieth century the national organizations provided instruction that encouraged any woman to prepare Bible study or chair a meeting.

The changes in women's lives beyond the churches were also evident within Lutheran women's organizations. Once there had been a North Aid and a South Aid with membership determined by geography. Later circles might be organized for young mothers or for professional women. Bible studies continued, but new programs also turned members' attention to social conditions that restricted women's lives. Today women have opportunities to take public leadership, both lay and ordained.

Without these women's efforts many Lutheran congregations and social ministries would have done less. and their work would have been less effective. Their lives remind us the central truths about church membership-that is active with responsibilities to worship, to learn, to give support. It is local, but it is also in a church with ministry that includes works of love extending around the world.

**THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE**