



Reformation Lutheran Church

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

“Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things!” - Psalm 98:1 –

It doesn't always feel like God is doing marvelous things; as a matter of fact, sometimes it feels like He has abandoned us. We see suffering all around and even experience it in our own lives. Despite this, God's good works are so worthy of praise that even the creation sings along with the song from the heavens to the earth; the sea roars, the floods clap their hands and the hills sing. God's faithfulness is forever and it reaches everywhere. Best of all His works, God has promised salvation to His people. Though we will not see the fulfillment of that promise in this life, we can walk in faith and rest in the knowledge that God has done what we cannot do: He has overcome the world for our sake. We can't be saved by our own strength or righteousness. Christ saved us on the cross and covers us with His righteousness.

The psalmist calls us to sing about God's faithfulness and His lasting love for His people. We praise God with our voice; we sing a new song. We praise Him with a harp and trumpets. We sing God's praise as we worship together, as we are fed, body and soul, through the Word and Sacraments. We praise God by getting to know Him in our Bible studies. We praise God in prayer and in the fellowship of believers.

The worship and praise does not stop at the doors of our churches, however. We praise God when we share a word of hope with someone in distress and when we give a cup of water to the thirsty. We praise God when we pray for the healing of the nations and our neighbors. We praise God when we introduce others to the saving grace found through Jesus Christ our Lord. As we do so, let's remember that our thanksgiving is not just for those things from the past, but for everything God is doing and will do in our lives. We are most thankful for the one thing that He has done that will not be fulfilled until the end: our salvation.

It might seem at times as though God has abandoned us, but today's difficulties will pass. For today, let's remember that God is God and that He has done marvelous things. Pr.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S CORNER

May is a busy month in the church. On May 9 we have Ascension Sunday...on May 19 we have Pentecost and on May 26 we begin the season of Trinity. At His ascension, Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do." That message is as valid today as it was 2,000 years ago...grow the church. That mission really began following Pentecost. The disciples received the Holy Spirit and truly began the travels that began the growing of the church throughout the world.

I said when I took over as council president, that one of my biggest points of interest was growing the church. 2024 is the year of the member. As part of that emphasis, beginning this past Thursday, the Harris County Journal will include an ad which will run for the next month. If you take the Journal, look for it...if you don't take the Journal, stop by one of the locations that sell it and pick up a copy. The ad alone will not bring in members. It will certainly help, but we are part of that job as well. There are unchurched people in the area, and there are people who are unhappy with their current church...we welcome all of them. Reach out to friends and neighbors...let's grow Reformation!

Trivia Question – Only 18% could answer this correctly: Who replaced Judas as the 12th disciple?

-Matthias

-Saul

-Timothy

-Silas

Chuck Hunsaker, Council President



3rd – Sondra Coulter

MAY CALENDAR

Saturday – May 4th – 10:30 a.m. Memorial Service for Mr. Kenneth Ramming – Luncheon following.

Sunday – May 5th – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service

Sunday – May 12th – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service

Sunday – May 19th – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service; Council after service

Tuesday – May 21st – Lutheran Men’s Lunch at 11:30 a.m. at Pies and Thighs

Saturday – May 25th – Clean-up Day – 9:00 a.m.

Sunday – May 26th – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service

	May 5	May 12	May 19	May 26
Altar Guild	Carolyn	Amy	Tammy	Junior
Usher	Amy	Carolyn	Junior	Carolyn
Lector	Tammy	Dick	Chuck	Amy
Music	Amy	Amy	Teresa	Amy
Sermon	Pastor	Gabi	Pastor	Pastor
Thrive	Wayne	Gabi	Wayne	Wayne
Children Time	Pat	Pat	Pat	Pat

Mission and Ministry Outreach: Whoo Hoo! Our yard sale went off without a hitch! As best I know off hand, we made close to \$400.00. The weather cooperated and a good time was had by all! A HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who helped out! I can see us doing this again next year!

We have a Thrivent project approved and in the works that will benefit the House of Heroes. Thanks to Chuck for heading this up for us! Wayne and Carolyn will continue to help stock the food bank at Focus on a quarterly basis. I've been reaching out to different organizations and hope to get a good lead and another project in the works soon. As always, all ideas are welcome!

We continue to host AARP Safe Driver's Classes here at RLC. The most recent one was held on April 24. Those are scheduled every few months. We've been hosting them for several years now.

Property: Our May clean-up day will be Saturday, the 25th, 9:00 a.m. Helping hands are always welcome!

Fellowship: We've gotten off track with what we were hoping to do with a monthly birthday celebration. After some discussion, we decided to go with celebrating quarterly. Our celebration for 2nd quarter (April, May, June) birthdays will be June 30. We didn't really discuss if we wanted just cake or go potluck style. I vote potluck, but then again, I like to eat..... Just sayin!

Education: Our Bible Study classes covering the topic of Saint John's letters and Revelation will began April 28th. Please join us at 9:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Worship and Music: Weekly memory challenge verses:

Week of May 5, 2024 - Matthew 6:9–13 - Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."

Week of May 12, 2024 - Mark 10:45 - For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Week of May 19, 2024 - Acts 2:38–39 - "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

Week of May 26, 2024 - Numbers 6:24–26 - The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH "Lutherans Go Latin: Hispanic Lutheranism"

It all started with a Swedish-American theological student from Rock Island, Illinois, who in 1898 decided that the people of Puerto Rico needed to hear the Lutheran proclamation of the gospel. Never mind that he himself had only been in America for nine years, that he was not ordained, and had no official or financial backing-no, he was going to Puerto Rico. And one other thing-he didn't know a word of Spanish. But Gustav Swensson traveled to Puerto Rico, learned the language quickly, and began to preach in San Juan in 1899, the beginnings of Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Lutheranism that now counts over one million Lutherans in Latin America, and tens of thousands of Hispanic Lutherans in the United States.

There had been Lutherans in Latin America for centuries-not in Spanish or Portuguese territories, but in the Virgin Islands and Guyana. In the nineteenth century, European Lutherans began to immigrate

to South America, especially Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, and founded Lutheran congregations there. But they founded immigrant congregations in their immigrant languages, especially in German. Though they lived in countries that spoke Spanish or Portuguese, they did not initially consider an outreach to their neighbors who used those languages. Mission work, it seems, was proper to Africa and Asia, but not to Latin America.

All this changed in the twentieth century. Swensson's initial efforts in Puerto Rico were taken over by one American Lutheran group, while another started a mission in Argentina in 1908, and a third began in Columbia and Bolivia in the 1930s. In the 1940s and 1950s, American Lutherans began serious efforts to reach out to Latin American populations in over eighteen countries in the region. And the descendants of European Lutherans in Latin America began to make the transition to the use of Spanish or Portuguese within their communities, and to reach out themselves to the local populations. After World War II, there was a serious growth of Lutheranism and Lutheran churches in Latin America, which soon became autonomous and independent of their mission sponsors.

Spanish-speaking Lutheranism in Mexico and the United States actually began north of the border, then was taken back into Mexico by Hispanic converts and American Lutheran missionaries. As early as 1916, a few pastors from the Texas Synod began work among Mexican-Americans in the Rio Grande Valley, which eventually grew into a full-fledged home mission project. The Texas District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod also began outreach to Mexican-Americans there in 1926, and their official records in 1932 list Spanish (Mexican) mission work in Chicago and Los Angeles as well. Both of these were considered "home" missions (rather than foreign missions), and both included the formation of Spanish-speaking congregations as well as Lutheran periodicals, theological books, and worship materials translated into Spanish. The Missouri Synod even established a Spanish-language edition of its popular radio ministry, the Lutheran Hour.

It was from these bases in the southern United States that American Lutherans eventually took Lutheranism south of the border into Mexico. Building on earlier efforts among German immigrants to Mexico, the Missouri Synod began mission work in Mexico in 1940 and eventually formed the Lutheran Synod of Mexico. In 1936 Myrtle Nordin of Lake Lillian, Minnesota, who had studied Spanish as an independent missionary in Columbia, gathered a group to form the Latin American Lutheran Mission (LALM). They began outreach with Spanish-speaking populations in south Texas and northern Mexico, forming congregations in Mexico that would eventually form the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mexico. Beginning in 1945 the World Mission Prayer League began their own mission work in Mexico, leading to the formation of the Lutheran Apostolic Alliance of Mexico (1977). Finally the American Lutheran Church began work in Mexico in 1947, building off the earlier work in south Texas, which led to the formation of the Mexican Lutheran Church (1957). There are currently about 10,000 Lutherans in Mexico itself.

Although a few Hispanic Lutherans in the United States came by way of immigration (notably Puerto Rican Lutherans to New York), most of the Spanish-speaking Lutherans in America converted to Lutheranism while in this country. Outreach to Hispanic Americans had begun early in the twentieth century in Texas (as we have seen), but this work really took off after 1960 or so, with specific and targeted home missions work. By 2000, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America listed 180 congregations that used Spanish in worship (including those in Puerto Rico), with a total Hispanic membership of over 39,000 people. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod listed 120 Hispanic congregations, with 96 "Hispanic workers" on its rolls. Both denominations have special associations or conferences for Hispanic work. With the Hispanic population in the United States growing rapidly, this portion of the population will continue to be an important sector for Lutherans in America.

THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE