



Reformation Lutheran Church

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

“But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” -2 Corinthians 12:9

Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to him belong; they are weak, but he is strong. When I was a youngster and we sang this in Sunday School, I remember singing that last line, “They are weak, but he is strong.” I pictured Jesus as some sort of muscle-bound superhero—so strong, he could kick Satan all the way back into the Garden of Eden! As I’ve grown and matured in years, I’ve heard that line in a new light. Sure, Jesus is strong enough to wipe out anyone; he is God! But his strength is more than just physical strength like we picture in our minds as children.

Saint Paul has been dealing with a “thorn in his flesh” (see 2 Cor. 12:7). Paul has some sort of ailment; he doesn’t go into detail, but it certainly causes him pain and suffering. He has begged God to relieve him of his anguish, but God hasn’t done so. It’s in his suffering that Paul realizes how much he depends on God. And isn’t that true for us?

We go through life with its ups and downs. Some trials are just little bumps in the road we have to navigate. Others seem like mountains that we’re trying our best to climb and survive. It’s in those moments we are reminded of our limitations. Like Paul, we feel insufficient. But it’s also in those moments we are reminded of God’s strength and grace.

We are weak, but he is strong. Jesus told Paul that his grace is sufficient for Paul. God’s grace is enough for us. When Jesus hung on the cross, he said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Jesus completed what he needed to do for us. His grace is sufficient for you, for Paul, for me.

And as Paul says, that gives us reason to celebrate and boast of our weaknesses. Why? “So that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” Most of the time, we don’t like to boast of our weaknesses and shortcomings. But for the life of a Christian, it’s in our weaknesses that we experience God’s grace and strength. We depend upon him for all we need: food, clothing, shelter, good health. Jesus promises that God will always take care of us. If God takes care of the birds and clothes the lilies, he will certainly take care of us (See Matt. 6:25-34). Pr.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT’S CORNER

We have ended the first month of the season of Trinity. The color of Trinity is green to signify growth. That emphasis on growth is really a two-part emphasis. First, it’s our individual growth as Christians and second, our growth as a church. Growing Reformation is a collective job and every member has a part to play in it. Go and make disciples of all nations is direct plea to all of us to build this congregation. Growth is one of the key characteristics of a living church. A primary phase of institutional growth is word of mouth...so start where you are...use what you have...and do what you can.

Reach out to friends and neighbors...let’s grow Reformation!

Chuck Hunsaker, Council President

Trivia Question – What Is the Symbolic Meaning of The Number Seven in The Bible?

Completion

Wisdom

Righteousness

Love



2nd – Tammy Jensen

10th – Stephanie Stephens

11th – Keith Owen

12th – Pastor Jon Jensen

23rd – Wayne Ramming

JULY CALENDAR

Sunday – July 7th – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service

Sunday – July 14th – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service; Council after service

Sunday – July 21st – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service

Tuesday – July 16th – Lutheran Men’s Lunch at 11:30 a.m. at Pies and Thighs

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

Sunday – July 28th – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service

	July 7	July 14	July 21	July 28
Altar Guild	Tammy	Amy	Junior	Carolyn
Usher	Amy	Carolyn	Amy	Wayne
Lector	Gabi	Dick	Amy	Chuck
Music	Amy	Amy	Amy	Amy
Children Time	Pat	Pat	Pat	Pat
Sermon	Pastor	Pastor	Chuck	Pastor
Thrive	Gabi	Wayne	Chuck	Gabi

Mission and Ministry Outreach: We have some service project possibilities to explore! I’ve spoken with the activities director at Thrive and will meet with her in person in the next week or two. Hopefully, we’ll also get some feedback from our local animal shelters about the needs they may have. I’ve also gotten back in touch with Harmony House. If you hear of any needs or have any ideas, please share!

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

Fellowship: We will celebrate second quarter birthdays with a potluck on June 30th. All fellowship ideas are welcome.

Education: Please join us on Sundays, at 9:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Our Bible Study classes covering the topic of Saint John's letters and Revelation continues.

Worship and Music: *The morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy.* **JOB 38:7** Music is often linked with our emotions. But the word music calls us to use our minds. It comes from the Greek *mousa* where we get the term "muse"—to meditate, think carefully and thoroughly. For us as Christians, this also means to think biblically. Not doing so would lead to music being merely for our amusement, negating the very meaning of the word. Paul said, "I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding" (1 Cor. 14:15).

In Job 38, God spoke to Job out of a storm: "Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge?" "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand" (vv. 2, 4). We can ask ourselves a related question: Do we sing on Sundays only with emotion or with knowledge and understanding?

In Job 38, we discover that there was musical worship when the Lord laid the earth's foundation, when "the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy" (v. 7). A faithful pastor once said that "singing is as old as creation. Singing was there before the creation of the very world you and I inhabit...the DNA of singing is worship to God. It was there in the heavens before we ever enjoyed it here on earth." Apart from God— from whom comes all knowledge, understanding, and truth—music and our singing in praise and worship is meaningless.

Whether we sing in public or private, work or leisure, church or home, it is important to understand the divine design and purpose of music (and our entire lives): to worship and to give glory and honor to the living God. We worship Christ, the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20) who laid the cornerstone (Job 38:6). "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD" (Ps. 150:6)!

Go Deeper

What has been your personal experience with music and worship? Have you ever experienced music in a way that made you both feel and think?

Pray with Us: Lord Jesus, how incredible to realize that even the stars sing, and the angels shout Your praises. What a privilege to join this eternal choir! May our hearts understand Your divine design for music in our lives.

BY BRIAN LEE, Today in the Word Devotional

WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH "Lutherans and the Lodge"

When most people these days think about the term "lodge," their minds most likely picture some rustic main building at a lakeside resort. So when they hear the American Lutherans have, at times, fought long and hard about the "lodge issue," they are rightly confused. But in this case the term "lodge" has nothing to do with summer camp, but is rather a synonym for social, fraternal organizations such as the Masons and many other similar groups that used to be very popular in America. So why did a large swath of American Lutherans decide that being a lodge member was antithetical to being a good Lutheran Christian?

While groups like the Masons, Rosicrucians, and the Illuminati had a long history, back to the Middle Ages (and were in their origins a religious alternative to Christianity), most of these fraternal organizations—such as the Odd-Fellows, Knights of Pythias, and dozens of others—are of nineteenth century origin. By that time, these groups functioned as fraternal societies for men, providing not only a social outlet but also valuable professional contacts and even financial support. Many of these groups were general in nature, while others targeted specific groups of individuals—early labor brotherhoods and college Greek fraternities for example. They were a widespread part of male life in nineteenth and twentieth century America.

Many of these lodges (sometimes referred to as "secret societies") were highly organized, with very detailed and ornamented rituals, complete with secret ceremonies. Some of the groups were organized on a quasi-religious but non-sectarian basis, complete with chaplains and rituals that paralleled and mimicked traditional religious belief. There were generally no doctrinal requirements for membership, and the "brothers" could be from a variety of religious groups, including many forms of Christianity and Judaism, as well as those who were Deists and other forms of "free-thinkers." American Roman Catholics, generally not accepted at the time as members in some of these groups, formed their own parallel fraternal society, the Knights of Columbus. The major doctrinal issue that some Lutherans had with these "secret societies" was the question of "unionism," or of being in religious fellowship with others without being in doctrinal agreement with them.

Many of these groups did have definite religious elements, even if many lodge members ignored or downplayed them, and their membership was often religiously mixed. As one Lutheran critic of the lodges wrote in 1899, "In most of these societies, members join in stated religious rites and exercises conducted by religious officers, chaplains, priests, etc. according to accepted rituals or books of forms." Further, they did these things in mixed religious company. Whether or not you actually believed these rituals or found them religiously persuasive, you were in essence (these critics suggested) worshipping with them.

There was a second, more practical set of issues. In essence, these fraternal groups were competitors to the Christian churches for the time and affiliation of men. Though many members of these secret societies were also members of local congregations, there was often a rivalry and tension between lodge and church. Church members tended to be a majority of

women, and it was often a struggle to get men to commit to being active church members. Sometimes the activities and rituals of the lodge could come into conflict with congregational life, especially funerals. As evidence, the Lutheran Book of Worship funeral service includes the following warning: "The ceremonies or tributes of social or fraternal societies have no place within the service of the church."

Since these groups were so popular, Lutherans struggled to determine the best approach to dealing with them. In some Lutheran groups, lodge membership was not a major concern, and laymen and even many pastors were members of them. Other Lutheran denominations believed that a pastoral and persuasive approach to the issue was necessary; they would try to convince their members that lodge membership was not proper for good Lutheran Christians, and try to wean them away from the lodges. Still other Lutherans took a firm approach to the issue, suggesting that lodge membership was never allowable, threatening disciplinary action against lodge members in their congregations. It even became an intra-Lutheran issue, with some Lutherans suggesting that other Lutherans were "soft" on the lodge issue.

In the twenty-first century, this issue has faded in importance, primarily because membership in these secret societies has plummeted. Still, it is a concern for some Lutherans, especially the question of divided loyalties and participation in quasi-religious organizations.

THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE