



Reformation Lutheran Church

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

“And all the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord; I bring low the high tree, and make high the low tree, dry up the green tree, and make the dry tree flourish. I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it.” -Ezekiel 17:24

It has been said that one way to dispose of an old, tattered bible is to bury it in the earth and plant a tree on top of it. Why? The idea is that the bible was written down on paper—paper that came from a tree. Burying it beneath a new tree allows the tattered pages to be returned to the earth, to nourish the new growing tree. Then, perhaps, that tree might one day be used to make paper for a new bible. And so the cycle comes full circle.

We find countless images of trees throughout Scripture. Here in this passage from Ezekiel we have a few verses that are reminiscent of Jesus’ parables. The Lord uses the images of a tree and birds as a way to talk about the Kingdom of God. Birds find refuge in a tree. It’s a place of safekeeping for them. Ezekiel speaks of a “sprig of Judah” in verse 22. This image might sound a lot like Isaiah 11: “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.” This “shoot” or “sprig” we know to be Jesus Christ.

Jesus grows like any human being, from a tiny infant into an adult. As he becomes an adult, he is sent forth to complete the work and mission God intended for him. As this tree grows and spreads its branches, birds will flock to it, finding refuge in its shade and branches. All the other trees will know that this tree is different. All the other trees will know God and will fear God, acknowledging his power and wisdom. It is God who brings the low tree high and the high tree low.

It is God who dries up the green tree and makes the dry tree flourish. God is the one with the authority and power to make these things happen. It is not up to you and me. God is bigger than the human authorities and power. He always has been, and he always will be. And that’s great news for us because God is always ready to restore us to life and salvation with him, finding refuge in him, much like a bird finds safety and refuge in a large tree.

The image of birds in a tree also drums up the image of a family tree. Indeed, we are members of the family of God. May we find refuge and security in Jesus Christ, the source of life and salvation.

Pr.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT’S CORNER

The last Sunday in May was Holy Trinity Sunday, so we are now in the season of Trinity. It is the longest season of the church year. The colors in the church are now green. Affectionately called the season of the “green meadow,” these Sundays emphasize the subject of growth. Green is a neutral color, but there is nothing colorless about our need to grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ. That’s why the “green meadow” time of the church year is so lengthy. Time must be given to encourage all worshippers to maintain their faith through the constant use of God’s means of grace.

We normally don’t say the ATHANASIAN CREED during our Trinity Sunday service, but you should look it up and read it through...it’s great preparation for the season of Trinity.

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

Trivia Question – Which Council Affirmed the Doctrine Of The Trinity In Christianity?

Council of Nicaea Council of Trent Council of Chalcedon Council of Ephesus

Chuck Hunsaker, Council President



8th – Carolyn Ramming

21st – Lynne Rowe

JUNE CALENDAR

Sunday – June 2nd – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service

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

Sunday – June 16th – Father's Day – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service; Council after service

Tuesday – June 18th – Lutheran Men's Lunch at 11:30 a.m. at Pies and Thighs

Sunday – June 23rd – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service

Saturday – June 29th – Clean-up Day – 9:00 a.m.

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

	June 2	June 9	June 16	June 23	June 30
Altar Guild	Carolyn	Amy	Tammy	Junior	Carolyn
Usher	Amy	Junior	Carolyn	Amy	Junior
Lector	Gabi	Dick	Tammy	Chuck	Amy
Music	Amy	Amy	Amy	Amy	Amy
Sermon	Pastor	Gabi	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor
Thrive	Wayne	Gabi	Wayne	Wayne	Wayne
Children Time	Pat	Pat	Pat	Pat	Pat

Mission and Ministry Outreach: The great project hunt is on! We've recently completed a few Thrivent projects and are looking for more! With school out it's easier for me to make calls or actually go visit some places and talk to people. Any situations you hear of where we may be of help, just let me know! All ideas are welcome!

Property: Our June clean-up day will be Saturday, the 29th, 9:00 a.m. Helping hands are always welcome!

Fellowship: We will celebrate second quarter birthdays with a potluck on June 30th.

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

Worship and Music: Thank you, Lord, for the gift of music! It's beautiful, fun, and helps us to learn Your Word. The ultimate purpose of music and our entire lives is to worship and give glory and honor to You! May we seek to use our emotion and intellect as we sing your praises during Sunday worship. "I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also." 1 Corinthians 14.15

WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH "Richard Reusch: Cossack, Scholar, Missionary, Teacher, Pastor"

In a seminar room in the Old Main building of Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota, are the portraits of a number of retired faculty members. Most of these pictures are generally the same, with the interesting exception of one. In this picture, a rather fierce looking middle-aged man glares out at the world, cradling a heavy shotgun across his chest. This is a portrait of Gustav Otto Richard Gustavovich Reusch (generally called Richard), whose life seems like something out of a sweeping Russian novel. And if perhaps some of the stories about his life are a bit exaggerated, it is certain that if even half of them are true, he lived a very adventurous life.

Reusch was born in 1891 in southern Russia, into a family of German Lutheran settlers and grew up in a time of famine, plagues, and political instability. Some of his family were military officers, while others were pastors and professors, so as a young boy Richard was sent to be educated and trained among the Cossacks in southern Russia, attending a rigorous military academy as a youth and serving with the Cossack regiment on the Persian border. But Reusch eventually decided to take his life in another direction. In 1911 he resigned his commission and headed to the university at Tartu, Estonia. He intended to get a doctorate in history and ancient languages, but was drawn toward preparation for the Lutheran ministry as well. In 1917 anarchy and violence hit Estonia, with German troops battling Communist forces. He was caught up in the chaos and eventually made his way to Germany as a refugee. During this time he developed a deep aversion to the Russian communists, who had killed the emperor to whom he had pledged his loyalty.

From 1919 to 1923 he worked in Germany and Denmark in pastoral roles, but there was nothing permanent for him. He was contacted by the Leipzig Mission Society for missionary work in Tanganyika (Tanzania); this former German colony had been taken over by the British, and German missionaries were not allowed to remain in the country. Seeing that he was a Russian citizen, Reusch would be allowed in the country and could join American missionaries from the Augustana Synod who were trying to maintain the Lutheran mission work. He arrived in East Africa in 1923 and served there as a missionary for the next thirty-one year-four terms through 1954. His early years in Africa were very difficult; the chaos of war had decimated the Lutheran missions, and they were extremely short-handed. By all accounts Reusch did heroic work in the 1920s and 1930s to keep the missions going and growing. The missions were staffed by Swedish and American Lutherans; Germans were later allowed to return, but were driven out again during World War II. The political situation was often very difficult, especially dealing with the British colonial officials.

Reusch seemed to thrive on the mission field, and in 1927 he married a nurse missionary from the Augustana Synod, Elveda Bonander, with whom he had several children. While on furlough from their missionary terms in Tanganyika, the Reusch's traveled the United States, speaking at Augustana Lutheran congregations with vivid stories of the mission field, stories that sometimes

got more vivid with repeated retellings. Reusch was an avid big game hunter (hence the shotgun), and his story about killing a charging lion with his shotgun never failed to captivate audiences. From his time in the Caucus Mountains, Reusch was also a keen mountaineer, and he climbed Kilimanjaro and other East African peaks many times, helping to survey these mountains. For one ten-month period in 1929 he traveled through the Muslim regions of the Middle East, learning about and reporting on Islam and the peoples of this region. But it was his mission work with the Masai people of East Africa that truly engaged his heart. It is easy to see how these warrior nomads of the African plains would appeal to the former Russian Cossack officer. He spent a great deal of time with them, and continued to raise funds for the Masai mission after he left Africa.

In 1954 the Reusch family left Africa for good. Seeing that he had an advanced degree, he was hired as a professor of religion at Gustavus Adolphus College, where he taught for ten years, until retirement in 1964. Former students have commented on what a remarkable figure he was on campus. After his retirement from teaching, he became the pastor of a small Lutheran congregation in Stacy, Minnesota, where he served until his death in 1975.

To say that Reusch had an adventurous life would be an understatement. But it was his loyal service to God and the Lutheran church that he would probably claim as his chief accomplishment.

THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE