



# Reformation Lutheran Church

“Come and See, Learn and Rejoice, Go and Tell!”  
January 2025

*“Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you . . .” - Isaiah 43:4*

We don't often get a crystal-clear explanation for why God does what he does for us. We have countless statements of what God is doing and has done. The Old and New Testaments are filled with accounts of God's activities. But in today's passage from Isaiah, we get a little glimpse into why God does these things. God's work on behalf of his people is driven by love. “You are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you.” That's why God gives ransoms in exchange for his people. That's why he has redeemed us. That's why he decided to be our God.

It is a strange thing to imagine that the Creator of all that is is concerned about you and me. It is strange to imagine that he could be driven by love to act on our behalf. And it is stranger still to consider just what he has done on your behalf. For your sake he took on sin and death. For your sake he became incarnate. For your sake he has handed over forgiveness and new life.

All this because he loves you. All this because he called you out as one of his chosen ones. All this because he is faithful to the promises he has made. The Holy One of Israel keeps the promises he makes, no matter the cost.

Israel hadn't done anything special to be chosen by the Living God. And they were continuously rebelling against him, continuously breaking the covenant they had made with God. But even this rebellion did not move God to turn away from them, because they were precious in his eyes, and honored, and he loved them. Their faithlessness was no match for God's unwavering faithfulness.

Of all the mysteries of the faith, this one is the greatest. The mystery of how or why God would be moved to love wayward people like you and me is something we cannot explain. But it's the way it is. God has declared it to be the case. He loves you. And out of that love he has moved mountains for you. He has given his life for you. He has taken your sin from you. He has given himself in exchange for you. Because you are precious in his sight, and honored, and he loves you.  
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**Property:** Our January clean-up day will be Saturday, January 25th, 9:00 a.m. Helping hands are always welcome!

**Mission and Ministry Outreach:** Happy New Year! It's a new year with fresh, new opportunities to reach out in the community and share God's word and His love! I'll be posting a chart that shows who has cards, along with a list of places we have used them, and places we may look into. All ideas are welcome!

**Education:** Please join us on Sundays, at 9:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall as we resume our Bible Study classes covering the Epistles and Revelation.

**Fellowship:** Thanks to everyone who contributed to our Advent meals. It's always something to look forward to.

Some ideas for future fellowship opportunities that we can discuss: A Super Bowl Soup Supper (lunch) - those who wish can make a pot of soup to share. "Entry fee" for eating could be cans of soup (or other non-perishable food.) The Super Bowl is on Sunday, February 9th. We could also have a bunch of snack foods that day instead. If we don't do either of those, we may want to have some cake and sweets for Valentine's Day, which is on a Friday this year. Lent begins on March 5 with Ash Wednesday. We'll do our usual Wednesday night service preceded by a meal. There will be five Lenten Wednesday meals. Again, all ideas are welcome!



**4<sup>th</sup> – Erik Benway**

**9<sup>th</sup> – Junior Erickson**

**18<sup>th</sup> – Charles Patterson**

<b>JANUARY CALENDAR</b>
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**Sunday – Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service**

**Sunday – Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service; Council after service**

**Tuesday – Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> – 11:30 a.m. Lutheran Men’s Lunch IHOP**

**Sunday – Jan. 19<sup>th</sup> – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service**

**Saturday – Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> – Clean-up Day – 9:00 a.m.**

**Sunday – Jan. 26<sup>th</sup> – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service**

	<b>Jan. 5</b>	<b>Jan. 12</b>	<b>Jan. 19</b>	<b>Jan. 26</b>
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Amy	Tammy	Junior	Caroline
<b>Usher</b>	Carolyn	Junior	Carolyn	Amy
<b>Lector</b>	Gabi	Chuck	Amy	Wayne
<b>Music</b>	Amy		Amy	Amy
<b>Children Time</b>	Pat	Pat	Pat	Pat
<b>Sermon</b>	Pastor	Pastor	Gabi	Pastor
<b>Thrive</b>	Gabi	Wayne	Gabi	Wayne
<b>Oaks</b>	Pastor	Pastor	Chuck	Pastor
<b>Bible Study</b>	Tammy	Tammy	Pastor	Amy

## **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

The holiday season is always a very special time of year. We've just celebrated the birth of Jesus, the most important man who ever walked the earth. Soon we will celebrate New Years. New Years is special in its own right. It gives us the opportunity to look back over the past year and evaluate the things that went right for us, and also the things that went wrong. It also gives us the opportunity to look into the new year with anticipation. What new challenges will we face? How can we prepare for them? Will this be the year that Christ comes again, and if so, will we be prepared?

What will 2025 be for you? Do you look forward to the challenges? If this is the year that Christ comes again...will you be ready?

Why not reach out and invite someone to Reformation? There is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Chuck Hunsaker  
Council President

## **WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH "American Lutherans Face War and Depression"**

In the short space of thirty years, from 1915 to 1945, American Lutherans endured two world wars, a social and economic boom, a crushing economic collapse, and a wrenching process of internal change and rearrangement that dramatically altered the face of Lutheranism in America. And in spite of all the challenges and upheavals, the number of Lutherans in America actually grew in this period of time, from 3.7 million baptized members in 1915, to nearly 5.7 million baptized members in 1945, proving that American Lutheranism can grow, even in the midst of challenges.

Prior to the American involvement in World War 1 in 1917, American Lutherans were a divided and often isolated group. Though a sizeable segment of Lutherans in North America traced their origins to colonial times (mainly in the east and south), the majority of Lutherans were nineteenth-century Mid-western immigrants, divided into separate ethnic denominations. Some felt a loyalty to fellow Lutherans in Germany, but most Lutherans were isolationist, wanting to keep out of foreign wars. When the United States abruptly entered the war in April 1917, American Lutherans were jolted out of their ethnic cocoons. They faced an eruption of popular sentiment not only against anything German, but also against foreign-ness in general. In the heat of war, American Lutherans jumped to prove their patriotism, very actively supporting the war efforts. Cancelling big pan-Lutheran plans to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Reformation in October 1917, they organized to provide military chaplaincy for the troops. Cooperative groups, like the National Lutheran Council and the Lutheran Brotherhood, trace their birth to this time.

After World War I, American Lutherans faced rapid changes in society, as well as in their congregations and denominations. Many Lutherans still worshiped in a foreign language, but the war accelerated the switch to English, which effectively happened in the decade of the 1920s. The pressure for consolidation led to three major mergers (in 1917, 1918, and 1930), while most American Lutheran groups were pulled into further conversations about unity. The weakness of European Lutheranism led to a crisis in Lutheran missions around the world, and American Lutherans were called in to lead Asian and African missions "orphaned" by the war. The number of Lutheran congregations in North America grew from 15,000 in 1915 to 16,500 in 1930, along with a similar growth in educational and social service institutions.

Yet through this period after World War 1, there were worrisome developments. The rapid changes within American Lutheranism, and in the wider society, brought conflict and fear. The vote for women, the "red menace," prohibition, and disputes over evolution, meant constant social ferment. The 1920s saw a disastrous economic decline for American farmers (previewing the greater Depression in the 1930s), problematic for the church because most American Lutherans lived in rural areas. Yet American Lutherans began to think more outside of their own boundaries, participating more in national and international efforts for mission and Christian cooperation.

Starting in 1929, the Great Depression of the 1930s was a wrenching challenge to American Lutheranism. The economic crisis of this time meant that the American form of voluntary religion suffered deeply; Lutheran congregations saw a dramatic drop in money, and Lutheran pastors often went without pay. Though there were greatly increased needs for religious and social services, Lutheran denominations and institutions, seeing benevolent giving drop by one-half, had dramatically fewer resources. There was also a "spiritual depression" in the United States, as attendance at worship and participation in religious activities also declined. Some Lutheran educational and social service institutions closed their doors during this time, and the rest struggled to survive.

As the world situation worsened during the 1930s, American Lutherans remained politically isolationist, strongly feeling that America should stay out of European affairs; there even was a small pacifist movement among them. Yet with the Nazi invasions of Denmark and Norway in 1940 and then Pearl Harbor in 1941, American Lutherans once again jumped full throttle into supporting the American war effort. They pulled together pastors and resources to minister to overseas troops and to large new communities of defense workers, while trying to maintain the life of their own congregations. In 1945, by the end of World War II, total North American Lutheranism had grown to over five million members. Because of their efforts in evangelism and mission, and in spite of the challenges of the past thirty years, they had emerged as a much stronger religious force in their North American communities.

**THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE**