



# Reformation Lutheran Church

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

*And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.- Luke 8:36-39 -*

Jesus casts “a legion” of demons out of a man who had become a social menace. Under demonic possession, the man had worn no clothes and had lived among the tombs. He had been guarded and bound with chains and shackles. But whenever the demons seized him, he broke these chains and shackles and was driven into the desert. Finally, when Jesus cast the demons out of him, they entered a herd of pigs and drove this herd into the sea. The presence of these pigs tells us that Jesus was in Gentile territory among a people who did not know the God of Israel.

When the people of the city and the surrounding countryside heard what Jesus had done, they came out to see it for themselves. When they arrived, they saw this formerly crazy man sitting calmly at Jesus feet, clothed, and in a sound mind. But rather than thanking Jesus for what he had done, they were seized with fear and asked Jesus to leave. Why did they react this way?

As mentioned above, these people were Gentiles who did not know the God of Israel. In Jesus’ action they clearly saw an act of divine power, but they did not know the character of the God who had wielded this power. In the Christian understanding, God’s power is constrained by his wisdom, knowledge, goodness, and holiness. Thus, God’s acts of power are always good and wise, not arbitrary. However, since these Gentiles were likely polytheists, they probably viewed Jesus’ act as an event of raw divine power devoid of any moral constraint. As far as they knew, Jesus was just a powerful magician who had overcome the demons. So they asked him to leave.

Until God opens our eyes to see Jesus and opens our hearts to receive him, you and I are in the same boat. We may even acknowledge Jesus’ divinity but be terrified of it. However, God has his ways of breaking through. In this case, Jesus told the man to return home and tell everyone what God had done for him. Through his witness people would not only see the undeniable work of grace in his life, but over time would also come to see the gracious character of the miracle-working God who had done it. And maybe then, they could receive Jesus into their hearts after having once sent him away.

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**Mission and Ministry Outreach:** Other than FOCUS, we don't have a set project for June. I'm going to be talking to the folks at Thrive and calling around to some other places to see if there are any needs we can help with. As always, all ideas are welcome!

**Education:** We continue our Sunday Bible Study at 9:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall, currently covering the book of Revelation. Please join us!

**Property:** Our June clean-up day will be Saturday, June 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. Helping hands are always welcome!

**Fellowship:** We don't have anything in particular planned for the summer.....yet! I believe we'll be having a birthday celebration in June. In July, I love the idea of us planning a 4th of July cookout after church on the 6th. We can discuss that later. All ideas are welcome!

<b>JUNE CALENDAR</b>
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**JUNE BIRTHDAYS TO CELEBRATE ☺**

**June 8<sup>th</sup> – Carolyn Ramming**

**June 21<sup>st</sup> – Lynne Rowe**

**Sunday – June 1 – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service**

**Sunday – June 8 – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service**

**Sunday – June 15 – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service; Council after service**

**Tuesday – June 17 – 11:30 a.m. Lutheran Men's Lunch – at IHOP**

**Sunday – June 22 – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service**

**Saturday – June 28 – Clean-up Day – 9:00 a.m.**

**Sunday – June 29 – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service**

	<b>June 1</b>	<b>June 8</b>	<b>June 15</b>	<b>June 22</b>	<b>June 29</b>
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Amy	Tammy	Junior	Carolyn	Amy
<b>Usher/Greeter</b>	Carolyn	Amy	Carolyn	Amy	Junior
<b>Lector</b>	Dick	Gabi	Tammy	Amy	Chuck
<b>Music</b>	Amy	Amy	Teresa	Amy	Amy
<b>Children Time</b>	Pat	Pat	Pat	Pat	Pat
<b>Sermon</b>	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor	Wayne	Pastor
<b>Bible Study</b>	Amy	Tammy	Pastor	Pastor	Amy
<b>Thrive</b>	Gabi	Wayne	Gabi	Wayne	Gabi
<b>Oaks</b>	Pastor	Pastor	Chuck	Chuck	Pastor

## **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

Pentecost is nearly here and we will soon be celebrating Trinity Sunday and the beginning of the Trinity season. The color of the season of Trinity is green, which signifies growth. We should always be looking for people to either ask to attend or bring to a service, but a church season that emphasizes growth is the perfect time to put out some extra effort. Back to Church Sunday is September 21, and we are planning to have an article in the Harris County paper each week beginning in late August. Special thanks to Dick for recommending the theme for these articles and for writing the first one.

Go ye therefore and make disciples...that's a missionary mission. What If Every Member Saw Themselves as a Missionary? Imagine a church where every member embraced their God-given role in His mission. What would change? How would our community be impacted? What would Sunday mornings look like?

The early church was about people, mission, and transformation, not programs. If each of us can reclaim this vision, we can develop a culture of disciple-making and mission-focused outreach.

Let's stop watching ministry happen and start engaging in it. We can see our church awaken, engage, and impact.

Let's build Reformation Lutheran Church...why not bring a friend or neighbor with you on Sunday.

Chuck Hunsaker, Council President

## **THOUGHTS FROM RLC COUNCIL'S V.P.**

WHO IS OUR TARGET AUDIENCE? We have agreed that articles in the Harris County paper for Back to Church Sunday are a good idea. So, who is our target audience? It's not "Start to Church" it's "Back to Church". Well, who stops going to church? Why? Maybe:

1. Wasn't getting anything out of the service.
2. Work schedule problems.
3. Married a spouse of a different faith or Christian denomination.
4. Difficult relationship(s) with former fellow parishioners.

There are probably almost as many reasons as there are lapsed Christians out there. It would be impossible to address all these issues. So, instead, it might produce better results to simply focus not on "why you left" but rather something along the lines of "It doesn't matter why you left or how long you've been away, just c'mon back! Here's what's waiting for you at your local church".

"INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS (IRAs)" were invented to allow untaxed income to be set aside until participants were older and/or retired, and in a lower tax bracket. After age 70.5, IRAs must be distributed in at least minimum annual amounts. Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) are normally taxed when paid to the owner of the IRA (taxes are withheld and sent to the IRS). However, if the owner of the IRA uses the RMD as a contribution to a charitable organization (e.g., a church) there is NO TAX on the distributed amount. These are statements of fact, not advice. You might discuss such a way of using your RMD with your financial advisors, all of whom are familiar with this procedure.

Dick Donovan, Council Vice President

## **WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH “The Church May Not Just Doze: Confessing in Indonesia”**

A dozen Indonesian churches belong to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). These Lutherans are a minority within a minority. Protestant Christians are the second largest of the five religions recognized by the government of Indonesia; nonetheless, together with Roman Catholics they constitute only about ten percent of the population. Hindus and Buddhists number less than five percent. The vast majority of Indonesians are Muslims.

In this context the Lutheran impulse toward confession generated a new statement, rather than merely affirming Sixteenth-century documents. Introducing its Confession of Faith (1951), the Huria Kristen Batak Protestant (HKBP) church asserted: "Therefore the church may not just doze, content with former confessions, but rather in every age must renew and reform them." Citing examples from the early church, the Reformation, and the Barmen Declaration (1934), its authors set out to establish their faith, oppose heresy, and provide a basis for cooperation with other Christians.

As elsewhere in Asia, Christianity was carried to Indonesian first by traders, likely from Persia and India. They were motivated by desire for commercial exchange more than evangelistic zeal. The same overlapping, and yet sometimes conflicting, interests characterized the Portuguese Catholics who arrived in 1511 and the Dutch Protestants who replaced them later in the century. During the 200 years the Dutch East Indian Company controlled trade, it excluded Catholics and restricted Protestant missions.

When the trading company went bankrupt, just as the nineteenth century was turning, the Dutch government assumed responsibility. Both Catholics and Protestant were alert to new opportunities for evangelism opened by the government's policy of religious freedom. Dutch, British, American, and German missionaries were sent to work at various locations on the several islands.

The German Rhenish Mission (RMG) sent Ludwig Nommensen to the Toba Batak people in North Sumatra. He arrived in 1862 and labored there until his death in 1918. During those decades, he saw much fruit from his collaboration with German pastor, Peter Heinrich Johannsen, and Raja Pontas Lumbantobing, an early Barak convert.

A recent history of Christianity in Indonesia observed that they suggested that "new life in Christ could penetrate and renew, rather than annihilate and destroy, the traditional world of the Barak". Nommensen's interaction with Batak people involved serious dialogue more than polemical assertions.

Early opposition to Christianity prompted establishment of a Christian village, Huta Dame (Village of Peace). Soon, however, the number of Christians increased enough that they could remain in their homes. From the outset schools were an important element of the mission. Self-reliant congregations were the goal.

Nommensen's linguistic facility and his astute negotiation of the interaction between Christianity and Barak customs, or adat, contributed to his leadership. Generally, he accommodated previous practices, though he opposed ancestor worship. The church order he devised provided a liturgy, governance, and guidance for behavior.

Among his linguistic accomplishments was translating the New Testament and Luther's Small Catechism into Batak, both accomplished in 1874. These choices may have reflected Nommensen's largely Lutheran training.

The RMG's confessional position encompassed the evangelical Lutheran as well as the Calvinist Reformed streams of the Sixteenth-century Reformation. Both contributed to the development of independent Batak churches and are evident in the HKBP's confession.

By the early twentieth century, Batak Christians were moving toward independence. During World War I, when German missionaries were interned by the Dutch, the Barak assumed greater leadership. In 1930 the HKBP was organized as autonomous body, nearly two decades before Indonesian won political independence. Since then, the HKBP has been active in global and regional ecumenism and several other churches have been formed.

In the 1950s Ephorus (presiding bishop) justinus Sihombing guided the HKBP into the LWF. Unlike other LWF members the HKBP did not subscribe explicitly to the Augsburg Confession. Instead, emulating the reformers, it wrote its own confession. In it the church demonstrated its affirmation of Lutheran teaching and addressed the context of twentieth century Indonesia.

Like the Augsburg Confession, the HKBP Confession makes positive statements of faith and rejects false teaching. Positive statements highlight what is shared among Christians, providing the basis of cooperation. In agreement with the Augsburg Confession, article eight identifies the gospel and sacraments as marks of the church. The addition of church discipline shows the influence of the Reformed tradition.

The Confession also distinguishes the HKBP from other Christians-such as Adventists, Pentecostals, and Catholics-and from Animists, Muslims, and various secular ideologies. For example, it rejects traditional Batak beliefs regarding ancestors and opposes the view that poverty is the cause of sin.

Affirming the ultimate authority of Scripture, the HKBP declares that its confession is subject to examination. In doing so its members commit themselves to stay awake: to engage with the customs and culture of their time and place, and to ongoing Reformation for the sake of the gospel.

**THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE.**