



Reformation Lutheran Church

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

16 And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, 17 and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ 18 And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.” 20 But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ 21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”- Luke 12:16-21 –

In the rhetorical technique of hyperbole, one exaggerates to prove a point. To this end, one might use a contrived example that is ludicrous and comical in its extreme as an exaggerated version of the problem one is seeking to expose. The purpose of doing this is to show how bad something truly is. This is precisely what Jesus does in the parable of the rich fool. He uses a contrived and exaggerated example to expose the stupidity of covetousness.

In the parable this stupidity is evident in the behavior of the rich fool. He is so blinded by greed that he tears down his existing barns and builds new ones just to hold more of his stuff. But we might well ask, “Wouldn’t it be cheaper to share one’s excess than to tear down one’s barns and replace them with new ones? And even assuming that one needed more storage space, wouldn’t it be cheaper to build additional barns than to replace the existing ones?” But this is just the point that Jesus is making. The rich fool is so blinded by his covetousness that he can’t think straight. As a result, he does comically stupid things.

According to the Apostle Paul, covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). And the blinding nature of idolatry is evident in the parable. The rich fool forgot that he was God’s creature and that God had given him all his stuff. He therefore forgot that God owned him and all his stuff. Instead, he worshipped himself and his stuff rather than God. As a result, he laid up treasure for himself and forgot to be rich toward God. And since he and his entire estate belonged to God in the first place, he actually defrauded God in his lack of generosity.

Sadly, the rich fool is a picture of us. In the rich fool, we see the bondage of our will in sin. In the rich fool, we see that we are truly curved in on ourselves in idolatry and self-worship. But there is some good news in the midst of this picture. If we are concerned about these tendencies of ourselves, this is a sign that God has already freed us from our bondage to sin by his powerful grace. By contrast, the rich fool went headlong into his idolatry, oblivious and unconcerned, until it was too late.

Pr.

Mission and Ministry Outreach: All the items needed for Scarlett's Closet have been purchased and are awaiting delivery! I have some leads on a few other places that may need assistance with supplies as well. If you hear about any need in our community, let's see how we can help!

Education: August 3rd marked the completion of our study on the book of Revelation. We will pause Sunday Bible Study, at 9:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall, until September. Pastor is exploring a couple of topics when we resume: The Lord’s Prayer and/or Relationships. However, he is open to other topic suggestions!

Fellowship: There is nothing planned at the moment. I'm still thinking about an end of summer potluck, or something. Game night has been mentioned as well as a movie night. Preferences? Any other suggestions? All ideas are welcome!

Property: Our August clean-up day will be Saturday, August 30th at 9:00 a.m. Helping hands are always welcome!

AUGUST CALENDAR

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS TO CELEBRATE ☺

August 7th – Amy Becker

August 7th – Bobbie Golden

August 8th – Gabi Owen

Sunday – August 3 – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service

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

Wednesday – August 13 – 11:30 a.m. Lutheran Men's Lunch – Cataula Creek

Sunday – August 17 – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service

Sunday – August 24 – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service

Saturday – August 30 – Clean-up Day – 9:00 a.m.

Sunday – August 31 – 9:15 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Service

	<u>Aug 3</u>	<u>Aug 10</u>	<u>Aug 17</u>	<u>Aug 24</u>	<u>Aug 31</u>
Altar Guild	Tammy	Carolyn	Amy	Junior	Tammy
Usher/Greeter	Carolyn	Amy	Junior	Carolyn	Amy
Lector	Amy	Chuck	Wayne	Dick	Gabi
Music	Amy	Amy	Amy	Teresa	Amy
Children Time	Pat	Pat	Pat	Pat	Pat
Sermon	Pastor	Pastor	Chuck	Pastor	Pastor
Bible Study	Pastor	Amy	Tammy	Tammy	Pastor
Thrive	Wayne	Gabi	Wayne	Gabi	Wayne
Oaks	Chuck	Pastor	Chuck	Pastor	Chuck

COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Go and make disciples of all nations. That is our mission. Our every day mission should be reaching out to others. Back to Church Sunday...September 21 this year...provides a special opportunity. It is the largest, single-day outreach event designed to help the local church reach unchurched people in their communities and invite them to get connected to the hope, care, and love that a church like ours can provide.

Right now in America 1 in 5 adults say they have no community in their life. 7 out of 10 Americans say they view Jesus positively. This rising spiritual openness is a great opportunity for congregations that want to grow.

Does that sound like Reformation? I think it does. I've often said if we can get someone in the door, there is a great chance they will return. Pat and I knew more people after our first Sunday at Reformation than we did after attending our previous church for a number of years.

We hope to have an article in the paper each week in the weeks leading up to Back to Church Sunday. That may bring in a family or two, but personal outreach is always the best.

Let's build Reformation Lutheran Church...why not bring a friend or neighbor with you on Sunday, but let's make a special effort on September 21.

Chuck Hunsaker, Council President

WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH "Polity and Piety: The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations 1962-2012"

Thief River Falls may seem like an unlikely location for a national church convention, but it was there that the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC) was organized over sixty years ago. The approximately 300 people who gathered there in October 1962 were almost all members of Lutheran Free Church (LFC) congregations, a church fellowship that finally approved (after three church-wide referendums) a merger with the American Lutheran Church, initially organized in 1960. The LFC decision in February 1963 had been approved by more than a two-thirds majority, in an unusual system that gave congregations 1-10 votes according to membership. Yet almost forty percent of the congregations had voted against the merger, and a concerned minority was committed to continuing the free Lutheran movement.

The Lutheran Free Church, a Norwegian-American church body, was organized in 1897 during a decade of revolt and revival. Centered at Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis and led by Professors Georg Sverdrup and Sven Oftedal, the revolt sought to maintain a distinctive system of pastoral training and to resist a new synodical structure that was perceived as authoritarian. In the midst of the painful and divisive conflict, many of the congregations were stirred during a powerful season of spiritual awakening, reminiscent of the Haugen movement in Norway.

Originally more of a movement than a structured denomination, the LFC operated for over sixty years under the Guiding Principles and Rules for Work, the first of which stated: "According to the Word of God, the congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth." This form of polity was strictly congregational, not synodical, and was seen as unique among American Lutherans. (Sounds much like LCMC – CH) A delegate system for the annual conferences was not adopted until 1959-60! Yet the founders also spoke of free and living congregations, emphasizing that polity was not an end in itself, but rather a means (the best means, they believed) to the upbuilding of spiritual life.

"Despite its disavowal of the synodical type of polity, the LFC more and more functioned like other Lutheran church bodies," wrote Eugene Fevold in his authorized history. A new generation emerged that saw the LFC simply as one of several smaller Lutheran denominations, whose destiny could best be fulfilled in a union with other Lutherans. But those who organized as the AFLC in 1962 wished to continue the distinctive polity and piety of the LFC. They feared the loss of congregational freedom in the new church body and seemed to discern a growing "high-church" spirit. Some expressed the concern that LFC congregations, primarily less formal in worship style, might be pressured toward uniformity in liturgical practice. Some resisted a requirement in the new church for district presidents to sign pastoral letters of call.

Piety, the second area of concern, may be broadly defined as an emphasis on personal spiritual life. A post-Reformation movement in Lutheran Germany known as Pietism spread to the Scandinavian countries and, with the immigrants, to America, promoting a "living" Christianity with a rich devotional life, a personal witness of faith with a stress on evangelism that would give birth to Lutheran world missions, a strong social concern, and a consecrated Christian walk. The founders of the AFLC believed that there was a growing toleration of "worldliness" within American Lutheranism, and that there was a place for a "wholesome" pietism to be emphasized.

Another aspect of the concern for piety was theological. Opponents of the merger were alarmed that the ALC was a member of the World Council of Churches, which represented a liberal ecumenism to them. There was also a growing awareness that a newer approach to Holy Scripture, called "neo-Lutheranism" by historian E. Clifford Nelson, was gaining a foothold in the Lutheran colleges and seminaries, challenging the "old Lutheran" confidence in the Bible as the infallible and inerrant Word of God.

The AFLC has grown from the original forty to fifty congregations to a worldwide fellowship of 280 congregations in the U.S. and Canada, with mission partnerships in Mexico, Brazil, India, Ecuador, and Uganda, plus missionaries on loan to other organizations.

A theological seminary and a Bible institute share a spacious campus in suburban Plymouth with the national headquarters, where the various AFLC ministries maintain offices. The Parish Education department publishes a complete Sunday school curriculum and Bible study materials, and a monthly magazine, *The Lutheran Ambassador*, is an important link between the congregations.

One of our LFC forefathers described his church as "a venture of faith ... an attempt to build an effective and orderly Christian fellowship with a minimum of human organization ... an experiment in extreme ecclesiastical democracy." The AFLC continues to be committed to this vision, convinced that there is still a place within twenty-first century Lutheranism for an emphasis on free and living congregations.

THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE.