# Reformation Lutheran Church

**"Come and See, Learn and Rejoice, Go and Tell!"**
**December 2025**

*"36{Jesus said,} 'But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.'"*- Matthew 24:36-39

One thing I don't like is to feel caught off-guard. I like to feel well-prepared, especially if something big is about to happen. But that isn't always how life presents itself. God warned Noah that he would bring a flood down on the earth, and God told Noah how to be well prepared for said event. Back in 2019, a Pastor was serving a two-point rural parish in Southeast South Dakota. Earlier in the week, Sioux Falls had experienced four tornadoes in one night. Later that week, they were planning to celebrate Homecoming in their town. But the weather report turned everyone's plans upside down.

One of the dams had broken up North of where one of the parishes was located. They'd had lots of rain waters, and were receiving word that the Jim River, which runs close to that small country church, would soon be filled with raging water, and they should expect the worst for flooding. Time was limited, but people in the community came together to sandbag and help put up a levy to keep the flood waters from damaging the little stone church. They didn't have a lot of time to prepare, but they had just enough. The waters came, but the church was safe. The news of flood waters coming their way, however, caught the congregation off-guard. They had to drop whatever it was they were doing and heed the warnings of others.

Jesus tells us that we will not know the day or the hour of when he will return to us. No one knows. Not the angels. Not even Jesus himself, the Son of God. However, God has given us plenty of time to prepare for that unexpected moment when Jesus will come back again. God has given us his gifts of grace, forgiveness of sin, and eternal life through the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. We wait for Jesus' imminent return, and as we do so, we witness the pain and heartache around us. We bear witness to conflict, violence, disease, and death. But we also bear witness to the promise that God is always with us. He comes to us through the waters of baptism and the bread and wine of Holy Communion. Thanks be to God! Come, Lord Jesus!
Pr.

**Mission and Ministry Outreach:** I believe we are finishing the year strong with Outreach projects! Through Amy's efforts, we just contributed needed items to a crisis pregnancy center. Tammy and I completed a project and shopping for FOCUS, there is a Thrivent card on the way that will assist one of my school families at Christmas, and we're likely to buy much needed pet food for the Harris County Shelter. If I counted correctly, that leaves us with one card that I know of. Let's think about how we can apply for something before the end of the year! We don't have to complete the project before the end of December, but we can apply and get ready. Those of us with Thrivent accounts will start fresh with new cards in January. 😉

**Fellowship:** Our first Advent Wednesday meal and service will be this Wednesday, December 3rd. Our meals start at 6:00 with service following at 7:00. There will be a sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall.

**Education:** Sunday Bible Study is paused through the month of December. We will resume January 11th at 9:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

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

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS TO CELEBRATE 😊

**December 10th – Chuck Hunsaker**

**December 11th – Dick Donovan**

**Wednesday – Dec. 3 – 6:00 p.m. Advent Meal; 7:00 p.m. Advent Service**

**Sunday – Dec. 7 – 10:30 a.m. Service**

**Wednesday – Dec. 10 – 6:00 p.m. Advent Meal; 7:00 p.m. Advent Service**

**Sunday – Dec. 14 –10:30 a.m. Service; Council after service**

**Wednesday – Dec. 17 – 6:00 p.m. Advent Meal; 7:00 p.m. Advent Service**

**Sunday – Dec. 21 – 10:30 a.m. Service**

**Wednesday – Dec. 24 – 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

**Saturday – Dec. 27 – Clean-up Day – 9:00 a.m.**

**Sunday – Dec. 28 – 10:30 a.m. Service**

| | Dec. 7 | Dec. 14 | Dec. 21 | Dec. 28 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Altar Guild** | Amy | Tammy | Amy | Carolyn |
| **Usher/Greeter** | Amy | Junior | Carolyn | Junior |
| **Lector** | Gabi | Amy | Tammy | Dick |
| **Music** | Amy | Amy | Amy | Teresa |
| **Children Time** | Pat | Pat | Pat | Pat |
| **Sermon** | Pastor | Gabi | Pastor | Pastor |
| **Thrive** | Gabi | Gabi | Wayne | Wayne |
| **Oaks** | Pastor | Pastor | Pastor | Pastor |

## COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Last Sunday was the last Sunday of the church year. Now we are in the season of Advent…Happy New Year! Scholars believe that during the 4th and 5th centuries, Advent was a season of preparation for the baptism of new Christians at the January feast of Epiphany. During this season of preparation, Christians would spend 40 days in penance, prayer, and fasting to prepare for this celebration; originally, there was little connection between Advent and Christmas.

By the 6th century, however, Christians had tied Advent to the coming of Christ. But the "coming" they had in mind was not Christ's first coming in the manger in Bethlehem, but his second coming in the clouds as the judge of the world. While Advent is certainly a time of celebration and anticipation of Christ's birth, it is more than that. It is only in the shadow of Advent that the miracle of Christmas can be fully understood and appreciated, and it is only in the light of Christmas that the Christian life makes any sense. Keep your lanterns filled with oil…we don't know when He will be coming, but he is coming…so be prepared.

Chuck Hunsaker
Council President

## WE CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF LUTHERAN HISTORY WITH "Warren A. Quanbeck: Lutheran Ambassador-At-Large"

How did an expert in the New Testament and Luther become a Lutheran ecumenical leader? For at least two reasons. After World War II, U.S. Lutherans played a major role in diaconal, missionary, and refugee work; now they were ready to become involved in wider leadership in the Lutheran world. Around 1960 a new generation of theological leaders was about to step onto the stage. Warren Quanbeck was one of this new generation, but ten years ahead, prepared to take part in this developing American Lutheran role. That was not without its problems. He liked to point out that because he had been cleared of "liberalism" by the Evangelical Lutheran Church's council of district presidents, he was one of the few who could state for sure that he was not a heretic.

From 1958-1 970 he was a member of the LWF Commission on Theology. As such he was directly involved at the LWF Assembly in Helsinki (1963) in the famous or "infamous" statement on justification, which was much maligned by press reports claiming that Lutherans had been unable to agree on their key doctrine of justification. But Quanbeck noted that the Helsinki Assembly actually succeeded in its purpose, which was to place justification in its contemporary theological and cultural context. He was on the Board of Trustees of the LWF Foundation for lnterconfessional Research, Strasbourg (1959-1971). At the LWF Assembly in Evian (1970) he was chairman of Section Two, Ecumenical Affairs. From 1971 to 1972 he was the LWF Lutheran Lecturer at Mansfield College, Oxford.

Quanbeck was a LWF delegate observer at the last three of the four sessions of Vatican Council II (1961-1965), in his own words "the single most important theological occurrence of the twentieth century." The observers met weekly for two to three hours with Roman Catholic bishops and staff of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, and they had a definite influence not only on the decree on ecumenism but also on the constitution on the nature of the church. When, immediately after Vatican II, the U.S. Lutheran/Roman Catholic Dialogue began, he was an obvious member. The Catholics challenged us by "running in their first team," he stated, and, because over half of the members had learned to trust each other through contact at Vatican II, the usual maneuvering and hesitation at the start of a dialogue process could be bypassed.

He was a member of the WCC Faith and Order Conferences at Oberlin (1957) and Montreal (1963). From 1958 to 1959 he was tutor at the WCC Ecumenical Institute, Coligny, Switzerland. He was a delegate to the WCC Assembly at Nairobi (1975) and elected there to the Central Committee of the WCC. This listing, this "ecumenical bibliography," is in no sense complete. Quanbeck was also, for example, a member of the U.S. Lutheran/Presbyterian Dialogue from 1962 to 1966. But what this listing does begin to show is how he became a Lutheran ambassador-at-large. Not only was he directly involved with Lutherans at the world level; he was also involved with Roman Catholics, Anglicans, the Reformed, and, through the WCC, with the Orthodox at the world level. Today, when it is frequently feared that ecumenism is "in a deep freeze" and its future is difficult to discern, it is important to look back two generations to a leader like Quanbeck who, to be sure, was standing on the shoulders of the giants before him, yet who also used his diplomatic skills to build bridges and forge deep other Christian leaders. Then, too, the battles were fierce. Could we trust the Roman Catholics? Would the Orthodox find their way into the ecumenical movement? Where were the Reformed going, anyway? What about apartheid and racism?

What was needed was trust. What Warren Quanbeck was able to develop, as a kind of Lutheran ambassador-at-large, was the confidence of those he spoke for, the Lutheran leaders who had come to know his work. At the same time, he was able to gain the trust of ecumenical partners. It was not simply a matter of endless travel, endless meetings, more debate, and more written statements of agreement. It was most of all a kind of ecumenical perception and integrity, learned and communicated. He wove a net of ecumenical alliances, bridges for wider Lutheran ecumenism.

But he was also a baseball fan, a skilled pianist, a frustrated architect, a social activist, a ready wit. And, not to be forgotten, he was an inspiring teacher (professor of Systematic Theology, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, 1958-1979).

**THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE**