

# CROSS WALK

June 2023

## MESSAGE FROM PASTOR

Dear Reformation Nation,

We have now begun the church season known as Pentecost (or what some call the "ordinary time" after Pentecost). The pascal candle was moved back by the font after the Day of Pentecost (5/28) and we have switched back to the easier-to-sing liturgy setting #3. We will also return to the Apostles Creed after a one-day encounter with the Athanasian Creed on Holy Trinity Sunday (6/4). After June 4, green will be "the" liturgical color and Matthew will be "the" Gospel until Reformation Sunday (10/29).

### *"What is God up to here?"*

The beginning of Pentecost this year coincides with Memorial Day weekend, the unofficial start of the "lazy days" of summer. Specific to Reformation, although Karen Hamilton gets a well-deserved two-month reprieve from compiling and publishing our monthly newsletter, summer is an "ordinary" and not "lazy" time for us. Our local ministry partners need our outreach efforts to continue, such as the monthly

"food barrel" for Talbot House (serving their kitchen and food pantry clients), and such as our annual school supply drive for Padgett Elementary (getting students ready to resume learning on August 11). And those who participate in congregational life year-round (whether in-person, online, or shut-in) still hunger and thirst for Word, Sacrament, and Christian community in the Lutheran tradition.

What is God "up to" here? God continues to call us into mission for the sake of the world, starting with loving one another and our neighbors on the northside of Lakeland. Nonetheless, out of love for us, God also continues to call us to Sabbath. Be sure to take "some" time this summer for rest, recreation, and reflection on all that God has blessed you with.

You are blessed to be a blessing!



+ Pastor Lois

### *Inside this issue:*

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### **Special points of interest:**

- What is God up to here?
- Write a new Psalm this summer
- Share your gifts for God
- Have ideas for GWOH projects?
- What would you add to our "wish list"?
- Support school supplies project for Padgett

## Message from the President

*Happy June!* I am here at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago waiting to fly back down home after a wonderful five day visit with our daughter and her family. I flew up to celebrate our twin grandchildren's 13th birthday, but I have also been to track meets, baseball games, gymnastics, Top Golf, birthday dinner, meeting new

friends, seeing old friends, and enjoying the beautiful city of Chicago where my parents honeymooned 75 years ago! I am exhausted, but very thankful to share this time with everyone. As summer quickly approaches, I hope you, too, have time to spend with your family and friends remembering old memories and making new

ones, catching up on all the "news", and most importantly, sharing the love with those dear to you as God has taught us to do. To all of you, have a great summer!

Vickey



## WANTED: YOUR PICTURES!

In addition to featuring the "Reformation was here" sign in pictures you take while you are away this summer (see separate article), we ALSO need you to take pictures about the congregation when you are here. OK? Seriously, one built into your Reformation's Smiling faces, "high demand" for Please send the



Preferably not of a fellow parishioner sleeping, whether you want to use a fancy camera or the cellphone, PLEASE take digital pictures of people, property, events, and outreach efforts. unusual perspectives, and candid shots are of the newsletter, Facebook page, and website. results to [lovinglutherans@gmail.com](mailto:lovinglutherans@gmail.com).



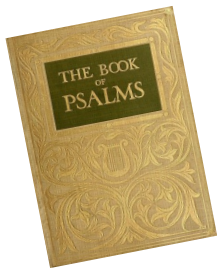
Please join us as we extend our sincere condolences to Al Williamson and family at the passing of his wife, Mary Lou, on Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>. Al and Mary Lou joined Reformation in 2006 and were active until Mary Lou's health required all of Al's attention.

There will be a Celebration of Life for Mary Lou at Reformation on Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 pm followed by a reception in the fellowship hall. All are welcome.

# SUMMERTIME WITH GOD: THE PSALMS

## *(part one of this month's stewardship tips)*

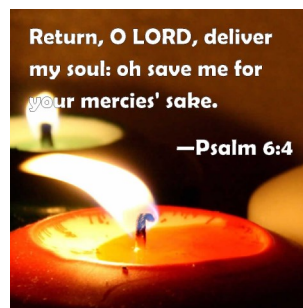
Pastor Lois here! At Reformation, we speak of stewardship as time *\*with\** God, talent *\*for\** God, and treasure *\*to\** God. Time *\*with\** God includes prayer, worship, and ongoing faith formation, whether independent study or organized adult education. In last month's newsletter, we had an article about Diakonia-Florida, our synod's school of lay ministry; for information about diakonia-Florida, be sure to visit <https://diakoniafl.org>.



If summertime isn't a good time for you to start an educational endeavor, I have another idea for you: read through the psalms and consider writing a new one yourself! The Biblical psalms are a collection of prayers in Old Testament, and they are considered the first 150 songs of the church. Although their original melodies have been lost, we have several "tones" in our hymnal that we can use to chant them and some of them have been adapted into contemporary worship songs.

To "read through" the psalms, you could simply divide 150 by the number of days you want to devote to this faithful practice. However, since they are everything from short poems to the incredibly long #119 (which has a stanza for each letter in the Hebrew alphabet), a better approach might be to count the number of pages devoted to them in your Bible and roughly divide that by the number of days. Another option is to find a prayer book which divides them for you (in For All The Saints, there is a twice-daily, 30-day regime). Any which way you divide them, read them aloud for maximum effect.

The psalms run the gamut of relationship with God. If you notice (praise and thanksgiving, petition and writing one yourself. For example, to two sentences for each of the following attention, a summary of your sad pain/anger/frustration (if possible, for God related to your lament, and a



human emotion and in-the-moment you gravitate to a particular kind forgiveness, or protest and lament), try author a psalm of lament, write one or components: a plea for God's circumstance, an expression of your using a metaphor), a question or two plea for deliverance. Give it a try!



June 13<sup>th</sup> is the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Pastor Lois's ordination. The closest Sunday is June 11<sup>th</sup>. We will celebrate with Pastor Lois with coffee, cupcakes, and fellowship in the conference room following worship. Please plan to stay to show your support.

# LET'S INVEST IN AN OUTCOME!

As I say each month, ***"Giving to church is an investment in an outcome"***, not just paying the electric bill. Yes, we do need to pay the electric bill but by so doing we are able to provide worship both in-person and online, furnish services to our community, like packing lunches for the homeless, collecting school supplies, providing Christmas for foster kids, and above all, receiving the spiritual health and blessings we all need.

What enhancements would you like to see at Reformation? The "wish list" is becoming a reality. Items/ projects/services we would like to see at RLC but are not in the budget can become a reality if we wish hard enough. Check out the wish list on page 14. Is there something you feel

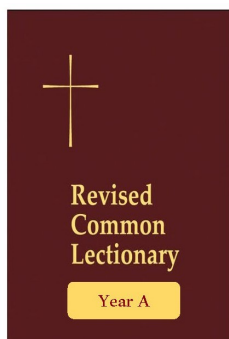
passionate about?



Finances through April are still strong! Our total giving is \$68,721 with budgeted expenses of \$63,288. We have projected an increase in expenses for the remainder of 2023.

As you contemplate future contributions, please consider electronic giving. Since its kickoff on March 5<sup>th</sup>, we have several congregants taking advantage of its use. It makes giving easy while you are away from Reformation this summer. The last page of this newsletter gives information on how to connect with Vanco, either with your computer or your cell phone. If you have any questions, please contact Barb Caballero or Karen Hamilton.

## JUNE LECTIONARY (SUNDAY READINGS)



DATE	FIRST	PSALM	SECOND	GOSPEL
6/4	Genesis 1:1–2:4a	8	2 Corinthians 13:11-13	Matthew 28:16-20
6/11	Hosea 5:15–6:6	50:7-15	Romans 4:13-25	Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26
6/18	Exodus 19:2–8a	100	Romans 5:1-8	Matthew 9:35-10:8 [9-23]
6/25	Jeremiah 20:7-13	69:7-10 [11-15] 16-18	Romans 6:1b-11	Matthew 10:24-39

[ ] = optional verses

# NEXT STEP - JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup>

## (a/k/a Reformation Information)

Are you considering the “next step” in your affiliation with Reformation (such as becoming an associate, seasonal, or full member)? Are you wondering something about Christianity in general or Lutheranism in particular? Are you looking to schedule a baptism or pre-plan a funeral with Pastor Lois? If so, “Reformation Information” is for you!



Join us in the conference room after worship on Sunday, June 4. If you are interested but not able to stay this time, feel free to contact Pastor Lois to make an appointment. She can be reached at the church during her office hours (or anytime at [pastorreformationlakeland@gmail.com](mailto:pastorreformationlakeland@gmail.com)).

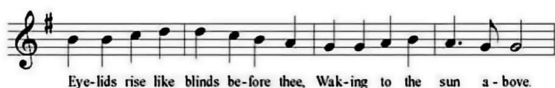
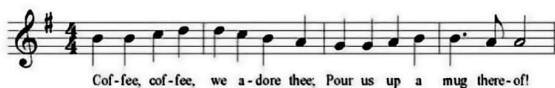
13

### Coffee, Coffee, We Adore Thee

*Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain. Rev. 3:2a*

The Church Curmudgeon

L. van Beethoven



HYMN TO JOY  
8.7.8.7.D

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What a way to end a worship service — join your friends and fellow worshippers in fellowship with a cup of coffee or glass of tea and a goodie! We will continue coffee following worship in the conference room on June 11 and August 13. Coffee on July 30 will be combined with the town hall meeting in the fellowship hall. Please plan to attend!

We are always in need of goodies for the coffee hour — either homemade or purchased. Any help you can give in that area is greatly appreciated.

Looking forward to joining you as we share our time with our friends and fellow worshippers at Reformation.



Join these friends as they celebrate their birthday or anniversary in June, July, and August:



06/05	HODGE, Doug	06/28	BOLTON, Bea	08/10	PEARSON, Olivia
06/06	DOVERSPIKE, Mel	06/30	STACKPOLE, Roy	08/11	HAINES, Karen
06/13	WEAVER, Chuck	07/08	LINEHAN, Ruth	08/12	WOOLDRIDGE, Marcia
06/14	GIBBONS, Maci	07/09	YAGER, Dennis	08/15	MUELLER, Yvonne
06/18	DOWNES, Tess	07/23	TEDESCO, Ava	08/17	NELSON, Beverly
06/21	MUSSER, Ellen	07/26	CLARK, Bette Lou	08/21	HIGGINS, Rose
06/24	PEREZ Jr, Eddie	07/29	CABALLERO, Vic	08/23	HEIL, Pat
06/25	SWEET, Larry	07/29	NOYES, Dale	08/27	ROY, Holger
06/26	CODY, Clayton	07/30	ZELAZNY, Vickey	08/29	JOHNSON, Judy
06/26	TEDESCO, Lisa	08/01	BROWN, Dina	08/30	HAMILTON, Karen
06/26	TEDESCO, Theresa	08/05	CLARK, Howie	08/30	RAILA, Doris
06/27	SARAKINIS, Andy	08/10	ATKINSON, Joyce	08/30	ROY, Liam
06/12	KNOLL, John & Elise	08/02	DOWNES, Bob & Tess		
07/06	HIGGINS, Bill & Rose	08/02	ROBINSON, Roger & Carol		
07/11	PEARSON, Renee	08/07	REHKOPF, Dale & Margaret		
07/15	CHAPMAN, Bruce & Pat	08/07	ZELAZNY, Phil & Vickey		
07/31	CLARK, Howie & Bette Lou	08/07	PACE, Bart & Leslie		

## FOOD COLLECTION FOR TALBOT HOUSE

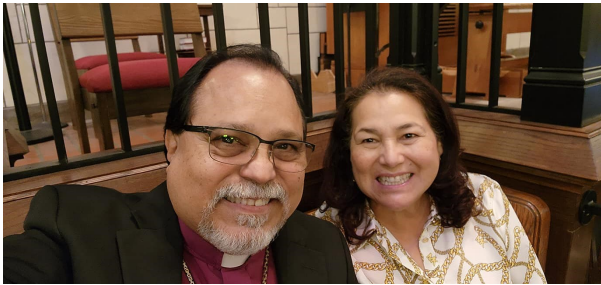
*The food was delivered to Talbot House on Monday, 5/22, and they were so pleased to receive our donations. Approximately \$379.97 was delivered to them. Please remember -- only non-perishable food is acceptable and **NO OPENED** food packages can be taken.*



*Thank you all so much for helping us to continue this community outreach ministry even during the summer when many are away. The need to feed the hungry does not take a break! Remember that donations can be dropped off during the week when the office is open, doesn't have to wait until Food Barrel Sunday...*

*Community Outreach Committee*

## SAVE THE DATE!



Pedro Manuel Suárez, bishop of the Florida-Bahamas Synod, is scheduled to join us for worship on October 22, 2023. We will have a special “coffee hour” reception for the bishop and his wife.

Bishop Suárez previously served as lead pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Pompano Beach. Prior to that, he served in Texas, Illinois, and Wisconsin. He was born in Venezuela, has an MDiv (Masters in Divinity) from the Lutheran School of Theology in

Chicago, and is married to ELCA Deacon Aura Suárez. They have 2 adult children.

## “LET’S DO LUNCH”

Ladies, sorry if you missed our visit to The Bistro at Hollis Gardens on May 25<sup>th</sup>. The fellowship was wonderful, food was delicious, and the weather cooperated so we could visit the Gardens.

There are no formally scheduled lunches until September 28th when we resume our monthly gatherings. There was some talk of small, informal groups getting together over the summer.



Be prepared with some location suggestions for lunch when we meet in September. I have already heard a couple new places thrown out. Just make sure they can handle a group of 15-18 which do have on occasion.

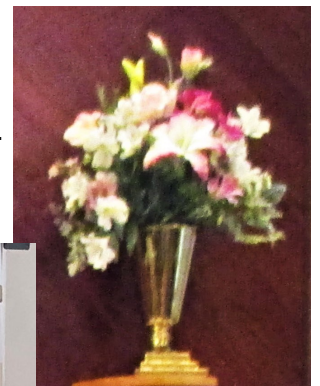
Enjoy your summer months.

*Karen Hamilton, organizer*

## FLOWERS—ETERNAL CANDLES

Summer is a wonderful time to have live flowers on the altar on Sunday morning. After worship, you can take the flowers home with you or designate them to be delivered to one of our shut-ins or someone on the prayer list. There are still a few vacancies during the summer months. The flowers/gardens are \$25.00 each and the candle is \$7.00 a Sunday. Sign-up in the book in the narthex and put your payment in your regular offering envelope and mark it “flowers” or “eternal candle” or use a “Buy” button our Vanco on-line giving site.

Thank you for helping to beautify the sanctuary and for remembering that special someone or event in your life.



# LUTHERANISM 101: WORSHIP “MEAL”

*(although this is a lengthy article, it is a summary of “narration” from our worship service on Sunday, April 23)*

The exact contents of worship service can vary from congregation to congregation and from season to season; however, all of our liturgical settings follow a basic 4-part pattern: Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending. Evangelical Lutheran Worship (our “cranberry” hymnal) describes the “Meal” part of worship this way: “God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.” It begins with the offertory and concludes with a post-communion prayer.

**OFFERTORY:** At Reformation, we generally listen to instrumental music (sometimes our chimes quartet!) during the offertory. The words “offertory” and “offering” comes from the Latin word “offere” (which means “to offer” or “to sacrifice”). In the early church, the weekly offering was a collection of “alms” (money), food, and other practical items that deacons would later deliver to widows, orphans, and other poor people.

Nowadays, the weekly offering consists of monetary donations which fund ministries of the congregation, and we collect these donations through online transactions as well as an offering plate. Collection of food and other practical items is done separately (as regular and seasonal outreach efforts), but all offerings are recognized as having the same theological meaning: in grateful response to the gifts we have received from God, we humbly offer some portion of these gifts back to God (through the local expression of the church).

We “set the table” (prepare communion) before bringing the bread and wine for the collection plate; however, in our “forward” at the altar and credence a sung verse and spoken prayer.



the altar and credence table for weekly offering to the altar. In some communion is brought forward with case, the bread and wine are already table. We complete the offertory with

**COMMUNION:** With very few exceptions, on every Sunday and on Christmas Eve (regardless of the day of week), those assembled for worship share Holy Eucharist (a/k/a “The Lord’s Supper” or “communion”). In the early church, it could take the form of a pot-luck feast; however, in response to external persecution and internal inequality, it was eventually reduced to church-provided bread (such as cracker-like wafers) and drink (juice and/or wine).

(continued on page 20)

*God is the one who enables  
us to savor the moment and  
grow older joyfully.*



# “MANY GIFTS” FOR GOD

*(part two of this month's stewardship tips)*

*“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;  
and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;  
and there are varieties of activities,  
but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.  
To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”  
– 1 Corinthians 12:4-7*

We tend to talk about stewardship as time *\*with\** God, talent *\*for\** God, and treasure *\*to\** God. Talent *\*for\** God means applying your knowledge, skill, experience, and/or “gumption” to foster the Kingdom of God here on earth. These are the “gifts” Paul refers to in his letter to the church in Corinth! How can you use your “gifts” for the glory of God through “services” and “activities” associated with Reformation?

In last month's newsletter, we listed six summer options (three that could be done by participants anywhere, three meant for participants who were “local, mobile, and able”). Let's take a closer look at two of those options!

**ADVOCACY:** Surely you can foster mercy and justice in have internet access -- whether friends and family, or summering in learning more about our (visit <https://www.elca.org/advocacy>). monitor a county or city by watching their meetings (cable meeting agendas and minutes. passion, inform yourself about that issue, and then call or write to the applicable elected officials. Do not get discouraged if you end up communicating with their aides, as they can help you learn more about the issue and discern other actions you can take.



devote an hour or two each week to accordance with God's will? If you home-bound, visiting scattered another state -- you can start by denomination's advocacy efforts. It would also be “eye opening” to commission, council, or committee or online) or reviewing their Find an issue for which you have

**OUTREACH:** Reformation will keep collecting needed items, such as food and school supplies, over the summer. We will also need quarters for an upcoming project. How about also volunteering for one of our ministry partners? Help in the office, library, or classroom at Padgett Elementary or some other Polk County school; you can fill-out an application and pay for the required background check online. Serve the clients of Talbot House as a kitchen assistant, food pantry assistant, or receptionist; each position has different time commitments, depending on program needs and skills involved. Help an abused or neglected child by training to be a guardian ad litem; you would impact their case by providing monthly contact, reviewing their records, monitoring hearings, and making recommendations.

# “REFORMATION WAS HERE”

The world needs a sign from us! If you are one of the “snowbirds” of Reformation, if you are going on a vacation sometime this summer, or if you “just” have a special event or day excursion somewhere near Lakeland, take a picture with the “Reformation was here” sign (page 11). Whether you take a “selfie” or have someone take the picture for you, please e-mail the result to [lovinglutherans@gmail.com](mailto:lovinglutherans@gmail.com) so that we can use it on our Facebook page and/or in our September newsletter.

## SAVE THIS DATE, TOO

It is more than a tagline or motto! “God’s work. Our hands.” (GWOH) is also the name of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) nationwide day of service. The designated date this year is September 10, 2023.



We will have at least two service projects, one of which will be something that people can work on at home or in the fellowship hall. If you will be in Lakeland sometime between June and early September, you can start working on one of the projects RIGHT NOW: save your quarters (or get a \$10 roll of them from your bank) so that we can offer a laundromat-related project for local “working poor” and unsheltered (homeless) people.



Do you have a suggestion for another project? Please talk to Karen Hamilton, Vickey Zelazny, or Pastor Lois. Don’t be shy about suggesting something that needs to be done on a different date or that we might want to continue. For example, our monthly project packing lunches for local homeless people began as a GWOH project two years ago.

*If you don't have wrinkles, you haven't laughed enough.*

PHYLLIS DILLER

Lutheran Church **+** E.L.C.A.  
**REFORMATION**  
God's Work. Our Hands.



... *was here!*

# “QUARTERS FOR LAUNDRY JAR”

As you enter the sanctuary on Sundays, right has the offering bulletin, and the Beginning June 4 and Sunday of the month the “Disaster Relief Jar” waiting for your loose bills. This money is whenever a disaster storm, hurricane, are here to help!! We

As you enter the the small table on your plate, the weekly “Disaster Relief Jar”. continuing the 1<sup>st</sup> throughout the summer, will be on display, change, either coins or used to assist others happens, whether it is a flooding, or a fire. We may be the next recipient of relief from others.



Until September 3<sup>rd</sup>, on the remaining Sundays, the “Disaster Relief Jar” will be replaced by the “Quarters for Laundry Jar”. One of our GWOH projects this year will be to provide quarters to help the local “working poor” and unsheltered (homeless) people with their laundry. Can you believe it costs over \$5 to operate the machines in a laundromat for one large load of clothes! Gone are the days when a dollar duz it!

Learn more in the summer weeks to come.

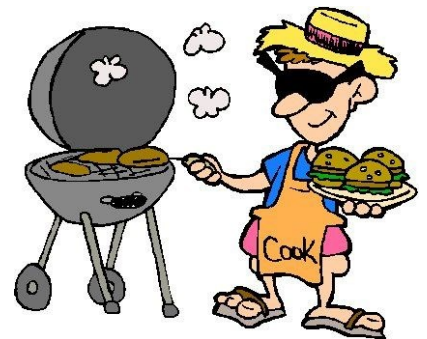
## “LET’S HAVE A PICNIC”

**JULY 2<sup>ND</sup> following worship**— We’re celebrating the birth of our nation a couple days early with a potluck indoor picnic with hot dogs and hamburgers done on the grill. Our cook, Fred Cox, will be manning the grill. Check with him if you want to flip a few burgers, too.

We feel it is safe to have a potluck so each of you are asked to bring your favorite picnic dish to share. We’ll enjoy good food and fellowship and maybe even a game or two. There will be a donation basket where you can drop \$3-5 per person to cover the cost of the sandwiches and sodas. Sign-up sheets will be available June 4<sup>th</sup>. I also need a few people to help serve and cleanup. Many hands make the work go smoothly.

See you as we celebrate and enjoy good food and fellowship.

Karen Hamilton, fellowship chair



# LUTHERANISM 101: WORSHIP “SENDING”

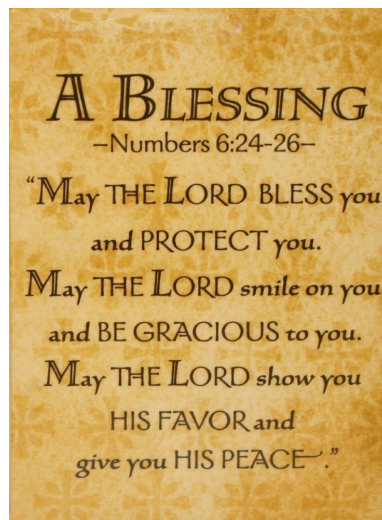
*(this is a summary of the REST of the “narration” that occurred during our worship service on Sunday, April 23)*

The exact contents of worship service can vary from congregation to congregation and from season to season; however, all of our liturgical settings follow a basic 4-part pattern: Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending. Evangelical Lutheran Worship (our “cranberry” hymnal) describes the “Sending” part of worship this way: “God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.”

Since we generally offer beginning of the service, “Sending” worship at Reformation. We end we gathered to worship God and order to be sent – fortified -- back Commission (see Matthew 28:19 or

If any layperson is going to shut-in later that day or during the rite to acknowledge that activity. consists of a Blessing (also referred and words of Dismissal.

The blessing and dismissal change with the church season. modifies them to include phrases “Sending” hymn is usually an uplifting and inspiring one (to quote Karen Wason, it tends to be “perky”).



announcements toward the is usually the shortest part of worship with the “Sending” because we received Word and Meal in into the world to fulfill the Great John 20:21).

bring “home communion” to a week, we would start with a brief Usually, though, our “Sending” to as the “Benediction”), a hymn,

are Biblical in origin, but they Sometimes the presiding minister from the day’s readings. The



## “WISH LIST” UPDATE

During the “town hall” meeting on April 30, we introduced the “wish list” and solicited more items to put on it. The “wish list” is a menu of items which are not part of the congregation’s operational budget but which either address a current need or support the congregation’s future vitality. It will serve many purposes, including: allowing members and friends to direct special gifts to what they are most passionate about, directing special gifts from unexpected donors toward items that have already been approved by the council, giving the council a means to experiment with a new project or fast-track a change if there is sufficient support instead of waiting for the next budget cycle (or tapping into contingencies), and building our general endowment fund (so that earnings on investments can become a reliable revenue stream). Check-out the current version of this list (on page 14) AND KEEP THE IDEAS COMING!



## REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH

## "Wish List"

5/25/2023

Item	Concern	Status	Estimate	Actual
Transom Window (1)	Glare and more (2)	Done!	\$920.40	\$ 815.63
Music Stands (six of them)	Chimes and other worship uses	Done!	\$300.00	\$ 300.00
Plantings under cross	Curb appeal (visitor welcome)	Work in Progress	\$500.00	
Plantings by handicap parking	Curb appeal (visitor welcome)	Work in Progress	\$500.00	
Sign holders (narthex windows)	Information (visitor welcome)	Available	\$40.00	
Sign holders (ramp door)	Information (visitor welcome)	Available	\$40.00	
"Raise the Roof" (one share)	Avoid borrowing to replace roof	Available	\$100.00	< 200 shares
Community event (booth fee)	Community engagement	Available	\$150.00	< each event
"Sidewalk" signs (two of them)	Directions & Reminders (6)	Available	\$200.00	
Registration scholarship (7)	Great Commission	Available	\$565.00	
Endowment Fund (one share)	Revenue stability from interest	Available	\$1,000.00	< 500 shares
Upgraded video system (9)	Improve online worship	Available	\$4,800.00	
Irrigation system near road	Curb appeal (visitor welcome)	Researching	TBD	
"Little Library" (3)	More community engagement	Researching	TBD	
Website (replace and upgrade)	Great Commission	Researching	TBD	
Fellowship Hall sign (by ramp)	Directions (visitor welcome)	Researching	TBD	
Camp scholarship (8)	Great Commission	Researching	TBD	
Tractor (replacement)	Property projects	Wait	TBD	
Raised beds near road	Curb appeal (visitor welcome)	Wait	TBD	
Plantings for raised beds	Curb appeal (visitor welcome)	Wait	TBD	
Prayer grotto (4)	More community engagement	Wait	TBD	
Seating near the fire pit (5)	Fellowship/Engagement	Wait	TBD	
Travel, food, and lodging (7)	Great Commission	Wait	TBD	
Projector/monitor in sanctuary	Improve in-person worship	Wait	TBD	
New roadside sign (10)	Curb appeal (visitor welcome)	Wait	\$6,000.00	

(1) Replace failing tinted film, add stained glass effect

(2) Resolve glare for musicians and video, fading of silk arrangements, and energy inefficiency

(3) Weather-resistant hutch with see-through door for books and other resources

(4) Area with a small garden,

(5) Picnic table and/or stone benches

(6) Directions (for visitors) and Reminders (events/requests)

(7) National Youth Gathering

(8) Luther Springs summer program weeks

(9) Wall-mount remote-control videocamera, associated hardware/software/installation

(10) Replace name and marquee areas with "lightbox" on each side (name and website)

# HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

*(last “town hall” meeting, next “town hall” meeting, and “praise and pinch” form)*

Our most recent “town hall” was held on April 30. As we reported during announcements the following Sunday, it was a great meeting! Not only did we share and gather ideas for our “wish list” (see separate article), but we also made a decision and secured funding for one of the items on it! Namely, the original tinted film on the transom (the two quarter-circle windows above the altar in the sanctuary) was failing, causing troublesome glare for our musicians and video cameras as well as allowing sunlight to fade our silk flower arrangements and increase our cooling costs. We viewed sample replacements, reached consensus on a selection that looks like stained glass artwork, and four people volunteered to pool their resources to pay for it. The work should be done by the time you read this article!



We try to hold a “town hall” during each month that has a “fifth Sunday” (so, 4-5 times a year). Each of these meetings, held in the fellowship hall after worship, is an informal chance for lay and ordained leadership to hear directly from other members and friends of the congregation. Our next “town hall” meeting is currently scheduled for July 30. Watch for details in an eblast when we get closer to that date!

REMEMBER: you do not need to wait for a “town hall” meeting to provide ideas OR feedback! If you are not sure who to talk to, or if you do not feel comfortable contacting Pastor Lois or anyone else on council, please use a “praise and pinch” form to communicate with us. A copy is included in this month’s newsletter (pages 17 & 18) and paper copies are available in the narthex (lobby).



***Wait until you see this in person!  
The picture does not do it justice!  
This is what a wish on the “wish  
list” can do.***



Florida-Bahamas Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# Synod Snapshot: Spring 2023

An overview of the Florida-Bahamas Synod of the ELCA—by the numbers.

## There are 41,046 baptized members of the ELCA.

In the Florida-Bahamas Synod, we have:

- 167 Active Clergy
- 253 Retired Clergy
- 18 Active ELCA Deacons
- 16 Retired ELCA Deacons
- 62 Active Synod Parish Deacons
- 31 Candidates for Ordained Ministry



## Our synod has 160 Organized Congregations.

- 41 Congregations in Transition/Call Process
- 7 Congregations Under Development
- 31 Growing, 21 Stable, 121 Declining
- We speak English, Creole, Spanish, Finnish, German & American Sign Language
- 36 Congregations have a school
- 88 Congregations recycle & 55 intentionally plan to reduce energy use
- Over 60% have a food pantry
- Over 50% have a feeding ministry apart or in addition to a food pantry
- 85% have online giving & online worship services



## Synod Operations

- There are 8 full-time and 2 part-time employees
- We have an active partnership with ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response
- Annual Operating Spending Plan: \$2.6 Million
- Through gifts from legacy congregations, this synod is in a place of extraordinary blessings and opportunities.



As people of God, we  
seek to boldly share  
Christ, passionately  
make disciples,  
and faithfully do  
justice in our  
communities.

Learn more at [fbsynod.com](https://fbsynod.com)

# INSTRUCTIONS

## Praise & Pinch Feedback System

This method of feedback deals with joys, concerns, feelings, and opinions you may have about what is (or is not) happening at Reformation. It provides opportunity for you to communicate about ways we are doing well in our ministry together and areas that might need attention. Such input and feedback helps us all to be faithful in carrying out our mission.

Here's how the system works:

1. There is a confidential box in the narthex for receiving "Praise & Pinch" forms. Copies of these forms (instructions on one side, blanks to complete on the other side) are kept near the box.
2. **Write out your praise(s) or pinch(es) on the form, sign it, and place it in the Praise & Pinch Box.**
3. Forms will be collected by a member of the "Praise & Pinch" Committee.
4. You will be contacted to let you know that your form has been received and to clarify with you the content of your input and what you would like to see happen.
5. Following this conversation (#3 & #4 above), you will then be told how your message will be handled.
6. Your message will be delivered to the appropriate committee, subgroup, or person. Follow-through will include communicating to you the final outcome of your feedback.

Throughout this process, **confidentiality** will be maintained.

*Approved by Congregational Council: 01/18/22*

## “PRAISE AND PINCH” FORM

Thank you for taking the time to communicate about the ways we are doing well at Reformation Lutheran Church and the areas that might need attention. As a congregation, we are committed to voicing our praises and “not sitting on our pinches” with each other. If there is anything in our life together that brings you joy (praises) or causes you concern (pinches), here is your opportunity to share your thoughts and feelings!

To be a healthy and faithful community, we need to be open with one another about what we expect in all areas of our life together. As such, if there is a specific question, suggestion, or concern you would like to discuss directly with a particular staff member, Council member, or committee member, please indicate that desire below.

### Praise(s):

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### Pinch(es):

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### Desired Outcome (Solution):

I would like our congregation to move forward with \_\_\_\_\_

I wish we could implement/initiate \_\_\_\_\_

I am more comfortable with/when \_\_\_\_\_

I would like us to \_\_\_\_\_

### Here is a specific question, suggestion, or concern;

I would like to discuss it with \_\_\_\_\_:

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Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Ph. # \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

Please return this form to the “Praise and Pinch” box in the Narthex.  
It will be collected by member of the “Praise and Pinch” Committee,  
and you will be contacted about your message and how it will be handled.

Rec'd: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

Contacted:

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_



# “BUTTS AND BUCKS”

Although it is important to measure our congregation's progress and mission impact using multiple metrics, traditional metrics include participants (“butts”) and giving (“bucks”). Looking at our most recent parochial report to our synod office and our denomination's headquarters, here are four numbers we can be proud of:

- ✓ We have 97 confirmed members, up 4 from the previous year, as of December 31, 2022
- ✓ We have 117 active participants, up 25 from the previous year (“active participants” are members, whether or not they are confirmed, plus non-member repeat participants)
- ✓ Our regular giving was over \$146,000 last year, up from about \$130,000 the previous year (“regular giving” includes mailed and electronic contributions as well as offerings on Sundays)
- ✓ Our mission support was almost \$9,800 last year, up from about \$7,700 the previous year (“mission support” is the congregation's “regular giving” to the synod to support its staff, programs, and contributions to churchwide efforts)

## PICTURES FROM ICE CREAM SOCIAL



# ★ STARS — STUDY, TRY, ACHIEVE, REACH FOR SUCCESS

School is not out yet and here I am anxiously awaiting time to prepare for one of my favorite projects of the year - our school supply project for Padgett School. You know me, I love shopping for notebooks, crayons, erasers, paper, and my favorite - Ticonderoga pencils! This year the theme of our project is STARS - Study, Try, Achieve, Reach for Success. We will kick off our project on July 9th and it will run from July 16th to July 30th. I will be contacting Padgett for a list of items that will be needed and we will hand out the list on the 9th. I know from my many years of teaching how important it is for all students to start school on a positive note, so it is wonderful that we can help these children be successful and appreciate the education which they receive!

Vickey Zelazny, project chair

## LUTHERANISM 101: WORSHIP “MEAL”

(continued from page 8)

More elaborate forms of communion bread and drink are still permissible, as is variation in distribution method. The “common cup” (drinking from a single chalice) is probably closest to the original practice, but churches now use a variety of practices for various practical and hygienic reasons.

Regardless of the form and distribution method, a minister of Word and Sacrament (ordained pastor) or someone specifically authorized by the synod bishop must preside over communion. The presiding minister leads the people through the actions as well as sung or spoken words (including segments called the Great Thanksgiving, the Preface, and the Words of Institution), promising that Jesus is indeed really there, in the meal. Although the actions and words are Biblical in origin, there is “some” flexibility (in the leader’s version of our hymnal, for example, there are 12 options for the preface and 11 options for the words of institution).

At Reformation, our bulletin includes two paragraphs as matter of hospitality. The “Spiritual Communion Prayer” is provided for those choosing to not receive (or unable to consume) communion. The “Sacramental Communion” instructions are for those who intend to receive communion but may not be familiar with how it is distributed here.

POST-COMMUNION: After the left-over bread and wine is re-covered (to be consumed or reverently dispatched later), the “Meal” concludes with a brief post-communion “thank you” prayer.

JUNE 2023

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
				1	2	3
4 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live <b>Reformation Information</b>	5	6 9:30 Chimes	7	8	9	10
11 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live <b>Coffee Hour</b>	12	13 9:30 Evangelism	14	15	16	17 1:00 Mary Lou Williamson Memorial/Reception
18 <b>Father's Day</b> <b>Food Barrel</b> 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live <b>Pack Lunches for Homeless</b>	19	20 9:30 Chimes  6:30 Council	21	22	23	24
25 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live	26	27 9:30 Worship & Music 9:30 Chimes	28	29	30	

← SYNOD ASSEMBLY—PASTOR GONE →





## Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.

*(in-person and Facebook Live)*

## Lectionary Bible Study

*(3 online devotions/week)*

*Liturgical Worship  
 Congregational Singing  
 Weekly Communion  
 Mostly "55+" Members*



### **Rev. Lois Sorensen, Pastor**

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	<b>Online</b> Visit <b>Facebook/Reformation Lutheran Church</b> or <a href="https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z95R">https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z95R</a> and click GIVE to set up a one-time or recurring donation to the ministries of Reformation Lutheran Church.
	<b>QR CODE</b> Scan the QR code to visit our online giving page.



**FATHER'S DAY, JUNE 18**