

CROSS WALK

Official Newsletter of Reformation Lutheran Church

November 2023

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR

Dear Reformation Nation,

This time last month, we were getting ready for my husband to have complex back surgery. Besides family preparations, there were "church family" preparations like lining-up pastoral care and "pulpit supply" (preaching and presiding) to make sure you were taken care of, especially if there had been major complications. Thank you for your prayers and other forms of support.

In the coming weeks, I pray that you will continue to extend the same consideration to others among us who are caring for parents, spouses, or their own medical challenges. Just as we were able to call upon three (supposedly) retired pastors and also postpone certain work to

"What is God up to here?"

temporarily lighten my load, please be open to sharing your talents (whether previously proven or hidden) to lighten someone else's load and to more fully engage in life

of the congregation. This might take the form of helping on a particular date with a particular task or even deciding to step-up, so that someone else can step-down from a leadership role. After all, "love your neighbor" includes the neighbor next to you at the communion rail and the neighbor participating online with you in worship.

As we continue on our faith journey together, please keep listening to each other, other neighbors, and the Holy Spirit for answers to this question: What is God "up to" here?

+ Pastor Lois



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Special points of interest:

- What is God up to here?
- Annual Giving Campaign
- Be a council member!
- Annual Reports
- Step Up Now!
- Help Make a Child Happy!
- What is E.L.C.A. Perspective on the War?

UPDATE: 2024 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

"The one who plants many seeds will have a large crop"

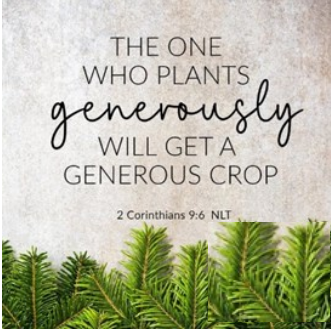
"The one who plants generously will get a generous crop"

Those are two different translations of 2 Corinthians 9:6b, the Bible verse for our current annual giving campaign, which is part of the "treasure" (financial) portion of Reformation's ongoing stewardship efforts.

Data collected during the annual giving campaign factors into our budget development process. It feeds into the revenue portion of our "2024 Spending Plan" which is reviewed by the congregational council in November and then made available for approval at the annual congregational meeting on December 12.

The annual giving campaign started October 15, when we handed-out and mailed packets containing an "intent" card. Although we asked for the cards to be returned by October 29, we will still accept them through November 5. We are asking for a "large crop" of 100% participation (return of every "intent" card, even if someone is not able to offer a generous 5% increase in their financial support).

Did you misplace or never receive your packet? A copy of the "intent" card is included below, for your convenience.

	<h2>My Giving Intention for 2024</h2>	
<h3>Time with God, Talent for God, <i>Treasure to God</i></h3>	Name: _____	
Address: _____	Current Expenses: \$ _____	
_____	Please circle : <i>weekly</i> <i>monthly</i>	
_____	Roof Campaign: \$ _____	
Envelope Number: _____	Please circle : <i>weekly</i> <i>monthly</i>	
<p><i>Reformation</i> <i>Lutheran Church</i> <i>460 Old Polk City Rd</i> <i>Lakeland, FL 33809</i></p>	<h2><i>"The one who plants many seeds will have a large crop."</i></h2>	
	<small>(2 Corinthians 9:6b)</small>	
	<p>Please return your Intent Card by October 29, 2023</p>	

READING PALS

(More Volunteers still needed)



ReadingPals is a program at Padgett Elementary and several other schools in Polk County. Volunteers sign-up for a one-hour shift in which they work with two groups of two children (30 minutes each group) each week.

The goal is to expose underperforming children to extra reading during Kindergarten. Studies have demonstrated that this improves the likelihood that they will be reading at age-level by third or fourth grade, which will help their academic abilities from that point forward.

An entire school year's worth of books are pre-selected and sitting in a box in the classroom you are assigned. Each week, the program coordinator e-mails a summary of the next book and a link to a video of someone reading it.

Up to four volunteers are assigned the same classroom (one each for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings). The Monday and Wednesday volunteers share four kids, and the Tuesday and Thursday volunteers share four kids, so each kid is usually exposed to the same book twice. If a kid is absent, the teacher selects a substitute who would also benefit from the program.

Pastor Lois is a Wednesday volunteer at Padgett. The last time she was at school, one of the children noticed the cross she was wearing and called it her "Jesus necklace." See how community outreach can become a means of "Preach the Gospel at all times; if necessary, use words" (a saying attributed to Francis of Assisi)!

Interested? There is an informational poster in the narthex (lobby), or you can talk to Pastor Lois or simply "google" the program.

REFORMATION INFORMATION

The November edition of "Reformation Information" is Sunday, November 5, in the conference room right after worship.

If you are reading this after the fact (or were unable to stay for the session), rest assured that you do not need to wait until the next "first Sunday" to get an answer to any question about Christianity in general, Lutheranism in particular, or Reformation-specific (including membership opportunities). Feel free to contact Pastor Lois directly. You can stop by during office hours, make an appointment, call/text her cellphone (813-494-4052), or send an e-mail to pastorreformationlakeland@gmail.com.



“LET’S DO LUNCH”



On October 26th, 17 ladies enjoyed lunch and fellowship at Smokey Bones. Many of our regulars along with some snowbirds who have returned and several guests were present. It was great to see everyone!

Lunch Bunch meets on the third or fourth Thursday of the month to celebrate the fellowship we receive with our female friends (along with their friends/relatives). Sorry Guys, this is women only!



On November 16th (a week early because of Thanksgiving) at 12:30 pm, we will visit Tapitio's Restaurante Mexicano on E. Memorial. We haven't been here in several years. Sign-up sheets will be out a couple weeks in advance. See you at lunch!!



Karen Hamilton, organizer



NOVEMBER LECTIONARY (THE SUNDAY READINGS)*

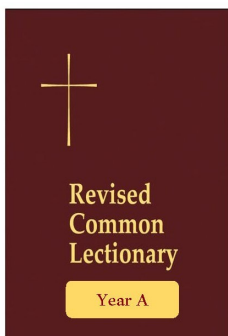
**Remember:*

If you watch all three devotions on Facebook each week

(First reading on Monday, Second reading on Tuesday, and Gospel reading on Wednesday),

you have participated in a Lectionary Bible Study for the following Sunday.

The devotion on Wednesday is normally "live" at 12 Noon.



DATE	FIRST	PSALM	SECOND	GOSPEL
11/05	Revelation 7:9-17	34:1-10, 22	1 John 3:1-3	Matthew 5:1-12
11/12	Amos 5:18-24 *or* Wisdom 6:12-16	70 *or* Wisdom 6:17-20	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	Matthew 25:1-13
11/19	Zephariah 1:7, 12-18	90:1-8 [9-11], 12	1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	Matthew 25:14-30
11/26	Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24	95:1-7a	Ephesians 1:15-23	Matthew 25:31-46

[] = optional verses

THINK ABOUT BEING A COUNCIL MEMBER

How would you like to be on a mix of one, two, and three-total) that start in January. outstanding way to share in the life and activities of this considered, you must be a six months. Council meets month at 6:30 pm on Zoom. report and we have good affecting Reformation, its community. If you would like to sit in on a meeting, please contact Vickey Zelazny, 863-859-0656.



Church Council? We have year terms (five positions Serving on Council is an your time and talents to help congregation. In order to be voting member for at least on the third Tuesday of each Each committee gives a discussions on the items congregation, and our

THRIVENT SUNDAY

Brian Heipp, our local Thrivent representative, will worship with us on November 5.

As part of our year-round stewardship efforts, he will offer a “temple talk” announcement about RMDs and he will also be available in the conference room as part of “Reformation Information” to answer any questions you may have about RMDs and Thrivent financial services.

“RMD” stands for Required refers to the minimum from your retirement are ways to accomplish a your taxes and maximize (including Reformation Lutheran Church).



Minimum Distribution and amount you must withdraw accounts each year. There distribution which minimize your donation to any charity

You generally must start taking withdrawals from IRA accounts (traditional, SEP, and simple) when you reach age 73. Account owners in a workplace retirement plan (for example, 401(k) or profit-sharing plan) may be able to delay RMDs until the year they retire. Roth IRAs may not require withdrawals until after the death of the owner. Clear as mud? Talk to Brian!





11/02	PACE, Leslie	11/11	TEDESCO, Tony	11/23	THARP, Ginny
11/06	DOWNES, Bob	11/13	NELSON, Don	11/30	BOUTWELL, Leigh
11/07	WEAVER, Mary	11/14	DUNCAN, Barbara	11/30	WILLIAMS, Kay
11/09	EDWARDS, Linda	11/19	SOLOVITZ, Steve		
11/11	WRIGHT, Larry & Linda				

NEW MEMBER

10/01 SHAW, Sylvia

FOOD BARREL DONATIONS TO TALBOT HOUSE MINISTRIES

A BIG THANK YOU to those who contribute to the food barrel each month, so we are able to help Talbot House Ministries feed the less fortunate. Your donations are always so appreciated. In October, we gave approximately \$346.

Please remember that you are welcome to bring your items anytime during the month and place them in the food barrel in the narthex. Also, large cans or small cans are good as they can be used in the kitchen or at their food pantry as well as large and smaller packaged items. They appreciate large container spices which they use in the kitchen.

We want to thank Doug Hodge for faithfully totaling and delivering our goodies to Talbot House each month.

Thank you for all that you give. Blessings,
Community Outreach Committee



BISHOP'S PASTORAL VISIT



Many thanks to everyone who made Bishop Suárez's "Pastoral Visit" on October 22 a rousing success! This includes Elise Knoll, Pastor Jeannine Sweet, and everyone else in the choir as well as worship "worker bees" (Doug Hodge, Barbara Duncan, Phil Zelazny, and our communion crew) and the fellowship committee (Karen Hamilton, Dawn Cornell, Ellen Musser, and others).

Pedro Manuel Suárez, bishop of the Florida-Bahamas Synod, arrived with his wife, ELCA Deacon Aura Suárez. Deacon Aura, in addition being involved with the Academia Ecuénica de Liderazgo (the Lutheran-Episcopal-Methodist successor to the ELCA's Latin Lutheran Academy for lay church leadership), often serves as her husband's driver so that he can make calls, answer messages, and conduct other synod business while traveling.



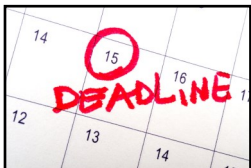
After Pastor Jeannine graced us with a vocal solo, our dear Bishop "fed" us. He spoke from the heart, preached on Matthew 22:12-22,



and presided over Holy Communion. He also took the time to meet and greet individuals before he and Deacon Aura joined us in the fellowship hall to be fed by us at a potluck-style reception. He told Pastor Lois he was impressed by the warm welcome, energy level, and generosity of the congregation.



ANNUAL REPORT CONTRIBUTIONS DUE!



All committee reports and other contributions for the congregation's annual report are due to lovinglutherans@gmail.com by Wednesday, November 15.

If you are a committee chairperson or lead a subcommittee, you should have received an annual report template on October 21 (the same one that was given to council members as a draft on February 20). Did not get it? Please contact Pastor Lois immediately.

If you are a committee chairperson or lead a subcommittee, you are also invited to one of two report planning sessions that have been scheduled to clarify expectations and share ideas. They will be held on Wednesday, November 1 at 10:30 a.m. and Wednesday, November 8 at 10:30 a.m. in the conference room. If you cannot attend either meeting, please contact Pastor Lois immediately.

LUTHERANISM 101

WHEN TO COMMUNE



What the what? In some churches, the presiding minister and assisting minister commune (serve each other the communion bread and wine) first, but in others, they commune last.

We have seen it both ways here at Reformation. Which way is correct? Well, it depends!

As an expression of hospitality, communing first makes sense. Why? Because any visitors (or long-absent members) are shown the basic actions to take and hear the words to be said (both by the one serving and the one receiving).

On the other hand, as an expression of humility, communing last makes sense. After all, the presiding minister and assisting minister are not the actual hosts of The Lord's Supper; they are serving others on Christ's behalf.

Do you have a question about Lutheran worship or some other aspect of the faith? Please send a message to Pastor at pastorreformationlakeland@gmail.com.

“SAVE THE DATE” FOR ANNUAL MEETING

Reformation's annual congregational December 10, starting at

Our annual meeting is the forum in Spending Plan and elect council Ideally, we also elect a “voting in June and elect a nominating council identify people for

If you would like to watch the please email lovinglutherans@gmail.com by Friday, December 8.



meeting will be held on Sunday, approximately 11:15 a.m.

which we approve the 2024 members (see separate article). member” for the synod assembly committee that will help our leadership roles in 2025.

annual meeting on Facebook,

**PLAN AHEAD! First Sunday in Advent,
December 3—Attend the Spaghetti Luncheon!**

STEP UP NOW!

“God does not need your good works, but your neighbor does.” – Martin Luther

Some of our members (in-person communion rail and online you) are going through challenging to “step aside” for a season or they have enjoyed. How will you -- in doing so -- offer your or “gumption” to the glory of God?

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you serve on the congregational council member, including Pastor Lois, or at least prayerfully consider saying “yes” if they approach you.



neighbors next to you at the neighbors watching worship with times right now. They may need “step down” from a leadership role “step up” to ease their burden and knowledge, skill, experience, and/

can read about an opportunity to council. Interested? Contact any

How about serving as Reformation’s “voting member” next June? This involves attending the synod assembly, with the congregation paying for your hotel room. Contact any council member.

How about serving on our 2024 nominating committee? This involves identifying and encouraging the next batch of members who seem to “have what it takes” to either serve on the congregational council or serve as our “voting member” at synod assembly. Again, contact any council member.

Do you want to get involved with a group who selects and plans congregational projects? There is a three-ring binder on the credenza in the narthex (lobby) for you to sign-up to serve on a committee.

Afraid to commit to serve in any of these capacities, but willing to help with a particular project on a defined date? There is another three-ring binder (and sometimes clip boards) on the credenza with specific opportunities. Training is provided!

HARVEST SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH



Harvest Sunday 2023, are we going to celebrate this occasion? Of course we will. At this time of year it is common for people to attend church, pass out food, sing songs and pray. It is our way of giving back for all the good fortunes we have received all year and help out the less fortunate. Celebrating Harvest Sunday goes

back many years when people brought food from their crops to share with others. We do not bring crops but we can bring nonperishable food for the needy, this is our way of celebrating and giving thanks. This is an extension of our food barrel for the month and we are hoping you all help us to decorate our narthex with baskets of food to show that we really care at Reformation Lutheran and will help others have a Happy Thanksgiving. Yvonne Mueller Community Outreach

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR KIDS

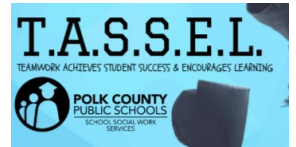
Our Annual Christmas Project kicked off Guardian Ad Litem program for foster have added T.A.S.S.E.L. Joy Boxes for



Padgett
For details on
visit the table
sign up for
children. Be sure to take a letter which explains



October 29th. This year we have our kids in the 10th Judicial Circuit PLUS we kids in Polk County Schools, in particular Elementary School. these two programs, in the narthex and one or more



each program in more detail. All gifts are to be returned, UNWRAPPED, by Sunday, November 19th. If you want to participate but don't/can't shop yourself, provide funds by way of check or cash to a member of the community outreach committee and we will be happy to shop for you. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Karen Hamilton, Project Chair



E.L.C.A. PERSPECTIVE ON THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

For those of you who have not been able to attend worship in-person or online the since the conflict broke-out, here is what Pastor Lois has been sharing:

- We abhor the violence and suffering inflicted upon the people of Israel by Hamas.
- We abhor the violence and suffering inflicted upon on the people of Palestine (especially those in Gaza and the West Bank) by Hamas and the state of Israel.
- We pray for peace and justice for ALL impacted people. This includes the safety of our neighbors in Lakeland (Jewish, Muslim, and Arabic descent).

Reverend Khader El-Yateem, our regional assistant to the bishop, is an American citizen but was born in Bethlehem and still has loved ones in Gaza and the West Bank. Please specifically pray for him.

Take a moment to support our ministries to have an impact now and into the new year. Try online giving with VANCO. See last page of this newsletter or the insert in a pew rack at church!

NOVEMBER 2023

What's Happening at Reformation Lutheran Church

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
			1 12:00 Devotions on Facebook Live	2	3	4
5 8:45 Calico Choir 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live Reformation Information	6	7	8 12:00 Devotions on Facebook "Live"	9	10	11
12 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live Coffee Hour	13	14 9:30 Evangelism	15 12:00 Devotions on Facebook "Live"	16 12:30 Lunch Bunch	17	18
19 Harvest Sunday Food Barrel 8:45 Calico Choir 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live Pack Lunches for Homeless	20	21 6:30 Council	22 12:00 Devotions on Facebook "Live"	23 Thanksgiving 	24	25
26 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live Coffee Hour	27	28	29 12:00 Devotions on Facebook "Live"	30		



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

460 Old Polk City Road

Lakeland, FL 33809

863-859-2264

lovinglutherans@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/lovinglutherans



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

Cross Walk is the monthly (September - June) newsletter of Reformation Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are the "loving Lutherans" with a brick-and-mortar presence on the northside of Lakeland, Florida. To receive the newsletter by e-mail or send a draft article, please contact us at lovinglutherans@gmail.com.