

"Growing in Faith and Love through Jesus Christ"

CROSS WALK

Official Newsletter of Reformation Lutheran Church

October 2023

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR

Dear Reformation Nation,

It's been delightful to see some "early birds" already back in Lakeland and to receive updates about when more "snowbirds" will return!

Last year at this time, we were "counting our blessings" that Hurricane Ian did not inflict more damage here and we were also just beginning to figure out how to help those who were impacted on Fort Myers Beach and elsewhere. As I write this message, I am "counting my blessings" for the birthday wishes I just received from many of you and for the support I know I will receive this month as I accompany my husband through complex back surgery. Yup, I am definitely "counting my blessings" that we have good insurance, technology that facilitates ministry-on-the-go, three retired pastors in the congregation, and "prayer warriors" in our midst!

"What is God up to here?"

Later this month, as

members and committed friends of Reformation, you will receive the congregation's annual request to respond to God's blessings by quantifying your intentions to bless the Reformation's ministries through financial offerings (regular giving). Please also prayerfully consider automating your regular giving, whether through your bank or by using Vanco (our online giving option).

As we continue on our faith journey together, please keep listening to each other, our 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
- Plan for the Bishop
- How to "Follow" the Cross
- Attend Town Hall Meeting

Message from the President



Happy Fall! Tis the season of everything Pumpkin Spice, the snowbirds coming back, the temperatures coming down a little, and many activities starting back up again. October is a busy month here at Reformation as we anticipate Bishop Suarez coming to visit on the 22nd and the potluck luncheon following the service. It is a great honor to have the opportunity to meet him and for him to visit Reformation.

Council is still working hard on our Policies and Procedures and voting to accept them as they

are completed. And, of course, we hope that you are considering the possibility of running for a seat on Council, which is a great opportunity to work together to make Reformation a wonderful place of worship for all of us! May you enjoy the blessings of each and every day!

Vickey



2024 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

"The one who plants many seeds will have a large crop." 2 Corinthians 9:6b



Reformation has been continually blessed over its many years of service. The church has been a good steward of its resources and today the church stands debt free. We have responded to the call to expand our ministry within the community.

Stewardship is an integral part of our church life because it recognizes that everything we are and have comes from God. It involves a wise use of all the gifts God has given to us personally—our time, talent and material possessions—and the gifts He has given us as a society. The Bible tells us that part of this recognition and use is that we must return to Him the first

fruits of the gifts He has given us in recognition of our dependence on and gratitude to Him.

Most of us have heard many sermons regarding giving, tithing, financial support, etc. and the Bible clearly supports this emphasis. If you have been pledging, please continue. If not, please consider joining others in indicating your support on a Giving Intention Card. Being fiscally responsible and good stewards as a church only comes about if all of us individually do the same.

The annual Giving Campaign will begin Sunday, October 15, 2023, and continue through Sunday, October 29, 2023. If you are unable to be at church on the 15th, we will mail your giving packet. Please complete the Giving Intention Card for 2024 included in the packet by the 29th. The 2024 Spending Plan has to be completed to be presented to the council for approval at the November meeting.

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 October edition of "Reformation Information" is Sunday, October 1, 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”



Ladies, our summer hiatus has ended! On September 28th, 16 of us went to the Palace Italian Restaurant on 98N for lunch. We had one new person join the “regulars”. It was a noisy and fun affair as we all participated in a number of discussions.

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 October 26th at 12:15 pm, we will visit Smokey Bones on 98N. We haven’t been here in a year or so. Sign-up sheets will be out a couple weeks in advance. See you for lunch!!

Karen Hamilton, organizer



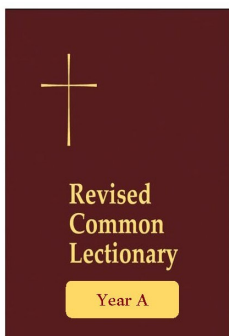
OCTOBER LECTIONARY (THE SUNDAY READINGS)

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 next Sunday.



DATE	FIRST	PSALM	SECOND	GOSPEL
10/1	Ezekiel 18:1-4,25-32	25:1-9	Philippians 2:1-13	Matthew 21:23-32
10/8	Isaiah 5:1-7	80:7-15	Philippians 3:4b-14	Matthew 21:33-46
10/15	Isaiah 25:1-9	23	Philippians 4:1-9	Matthew 22:1-14
10/22	Isaiah 45:1-7	96:1-9 [10-13]	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10	Matthew 22:15-22
10/29 ****	Leviticus 19:1-2,15-18	1	1 Thessalonians 2:1-18	Matthew 22:34-46

[] = optional verses

**** = or we might use the optional readings appointed for Reformation Sunday

THINK ABOUT BEING A COUNCIL MEMBER

How would you like to be on to fill three positions expiring There are two three-year term opening. Serving on way to share your time and activities of this congregation. you must be a voting months. Council meets on month at 6:30 pm on Zoom. report and we have good



Church Council? It is time on December 31, 2023. terms and one one-year Council is an outstanding talents to help in the life and In order to be considered, member for at least six the third Tuesday of each Each committee gives a discussions on the items

affecting Reformation, its congregation, and our community. If you would like to sit in on a meeting, please contact Vickey Zelazny, 863-859-0656. Visitors may not speak on business issues as they are not elected Council members, but it will give you an idea of how the meeting is conducted. If you would like to be part of Council, give your name to Vickey.

WHAT DOES A COUNCIL MEMBER DO?

Duties: A council member

1. Leads this congregation by approving long-term planning, setting goals and priorities, and evaluating activities.
2. Seeks to involve members of the congregation in worship, learning, witness, service and support.
3. Emphasizes support of the synod and ELCA.
4. Is responsible for financial and property matters.

Responsibilities: A council member

1. Attends worship regularly.
2. Supports the church financially.
3. Has been a member of this congregation for at least 6 months.
4. Actively participates in one of the Committees.
5. Is fully informed regarding the total operations of the congregation.
6. Is familiar with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions.

ATTENTION ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS!

Council Meeting for October has been changed to the 4th Tuesday.

Join these friends as they
celebrate their birthday or
anniversary in October.



10/03	ROBINSON, Carol	10/09	EDWARDS, Karen	10/22	GELISSEN, Nick
10/03	YAGER, Jeannie	10/09	ROY, Hilary	10/24	HOFFLAND, Sandy
10/03	EBBERS, Marilyn	10/11	WASON, Sam	10/26	WALTON, Beth
10/04	HODGE, Marilyn	10/18	WILLIAMS, Jim	10/29	GELISSEN, Janice
10/07	CHAPMAN, Pat	10/19	REHKOPF, Margaret		
10/08	WILLIAMS, Jim & Kay	10/14	HODGE, Doug & Marilyn		
10/11	YAGER, Dennis & Jeannie	10/28	SENGBUSCH, Dennis & Barb		

RECENT DEATHS

09/19	CABALLERO, Victor
09/22	HIGGINS, Bill

FOOD BARREL DONATIONS TO TALBOT HOUSE MINISTRIES



Thank you for reaching out beyond our walls to those in need in the community. This month's donation of non-perishable food to Talbot House came to approximately \$234.67. Talbot House provides over 21,000 meals monthly and has a food pantry which allows those who are in need to come and receive food. Those who receive the food at the dock when it is delivered are always so grateful.

Community Outreach Committee



BISHOP'S VISIT! REFORMATION'S POTLUCK!



Pedro Manuel Suárez, bishop of the Florida-Bahamas Synod, is scheduled to join us for worship on October 22, 2023. He will be preaching, and we will also have special music to celebrate the occasion!

The Bishop's wife, ELCA Deacon Aura Suárez, may join him. She often serves as his driver, but she is recovering from a recent ankle injury.

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 and has an M.Div. (Masters in Divinity) from the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. He and his wife have 2 adult children.

We are "bringing back" the Reformation Sunday potluck a week early as the main feature of our reception for the bishop. Please use the sign-up sheet in the narthex (church lobby) to let us know what you are bringing.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT!

Did you know we have a limited supply of medical equipment available for you to loan for as long as you need. We have walkers, canes, crutches, shower chairs, and wheelchairs. This equipment has been donated by members and friends who no longer need the supplies and wanted to share with others. To borrow this equipment, please contact, Marilyn Hodge, Chairperson of Congregational Care. The equipment is stored in the fellowship hall. There is a book in the church office in the Congregational Care mailbox that shows what is available. When the equipment is loaned, we take the borrower's name and date taken. We request that when you no longer need the equipment, please return it so others can have access to what is available. If you have equipment that is in "good condition" and no longer needed, we do take donations. Anything we cannot use because of storage space, we will donate to Talbot House but it would be up to you if you want to do that. They are always in need of this medical equipment.



COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Begin thinking about your written annual reports. They will be due in early November. More details will be in the November newsletter.

LUTHERANISM 101

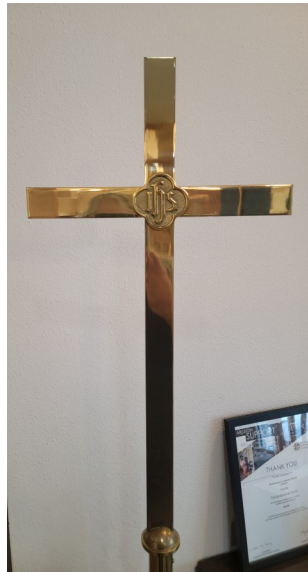
QUESTION ABOUT “FOLLOWING” THE CROSS

In the absence of a designated crucifer, minister can be to bring the sanctuary.

The presiding minister and anyone cross (literally) by walking behind it. cross (symbolically) by standing and would show respect to the standard Following the processional cross, visual sign that we are followers of

When someone enters the chancel side of the communion rail, including located), they typically “reverence” cross behind the altar. Some people is not doing so when they are carrying

When the processional cross is in the room. Specifically, it is the most Jesus promised to be present whenever two or more are of gathered in His name. As such, when the Assisting Minister (or designated crucifer) is holding the standard, they should not bow to anything else because anything else would be a less important symbol.

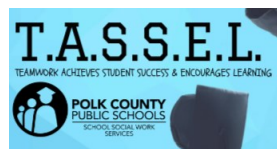


one of the duties of the assisting processional cross in and out of the

else in the procession follow that Other people in the room follow that turning to face it, similar to how one (most important flag) in a parade. whether literally or symbolically, is a Jesus Christ.

area (the raised platform on the other where the altar, pulpit, and lectern are - (bow to) the altar or the stationary have noticed that the assisting minister the processional cross. Why is that?

motion, it is the religious “standard” in important symbol reminding us that



It's beginning to look a lot like Guardian Ad Litem time! We will have Christmas wish list tags available at the end of October for the children in the Guardian Ad Litem program in Polk County. It's a wonderful way to help make a lonely child's Christmas brighter.

This year we will be adding 20 children from Padgett Elementary School through the T.A.S.S.E.L. Project, a program through Polk County School District. Watch for an e-blast when more information is available.



"GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS" OUTCOMES, TO DATE



September 10th was "God's Work, Our Hands" Sunday for our denomination, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Here at Reformation, we engaged in two GWOH projects after worship that day!

One project was to "love on" the teachers and staff of Padgett Elementary School. Some of us wrote a total of 50 encouraging "Thank You" cards for the teachers and paraprofessionals. Everyone who attended worship in-person had a chance to sign two "Thank Posters" (one each for the cafeteria workers and custodians). Pastor Lois delivered these items to school a few days later when she reported for ReadingPal volunteer duty.

Our other project was to assemble laundry kits to help people who might not otherwise be able to afford clean clothes because laundromats are so expensive. Each kit was designed to contain \$7 in quarters, six pods of detergent, some dryer sheets, and a note signed by the person who packed it. Our goal was to put together 60 kits, but we ended up with approximately 105 (77 complete and the remainder still needing quarters). The laundromat we wanted to work directly with has not been cooperative, so 20 of the complete kits have been provided to the same local homeless people that we pack lunches for one a month. We are still collecting quarters for incomplete kits and the plan is to provide them to needy families through our Padgett Elementary



Little Susie, a six-year-old, complained, "Mother, I've got a stomach ache." "That's because your stomach is empty," the mother replied. "You would feel better if you had something in it." That afternoon, her father came complaining that he had a severe headache all day. Susie perked up, "That's because it's empty," she said. "You'd feel better if you had something in it."

LET'S "DO" CHURCH!

Being a faithful believer up in-person or online for Sunday for worship. read scripture, hear receive the sacraments is offering your God-given and/or "gumption" to the

You might be able to serving in one of several available. You might be specific congregational projects through which to share and maybe even grow your talents. There is a three-ring binder on the credenza in the narthex (lobby) with sign-up sheets for you to peruse.

You might instead want to get involved with a committee to help select and plan congregational projects. There is a second three-ring binder on the credenza for you to use if you want to join a committee.

A very special kind of church committee is the congregational council. We will have at least one, and perhaps as many as four, openings on council to be filled in December. Please prayerfully consider running for council, especially if someone approaches you about the opportunity. If you do not feel suitable serving on council yourself, how about encouraging someone else to do so? You might see something special in them that they do not yet see in themselves!

Also, let's not forget to be church in the world for the sake of the world! If you work or volunteer for another non-profit organization, please let Pastor Lois know. We need to recognize these kinds of talent contributions, too!



means more than showing about an hour each Gathering to sing hymns, scripture interpreted, and important; however, so is knowledge, skill, experience, glory of God.

enhance our worship by worship assistant roles better suited to date-

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

"TOWN HALL" MEETING ON OCTOBER 29TH

One of the ideas we garnered from the Fall 2022 "Healthy Congregations" retreat was the concept of offering a quarterly "town hall" meeting in addition to our required annual meeting. The next one is scheduled for Reformation Sunday (October 29th) after worship.



A "town hall" meeting is intended to be an informal listening session, giving leadership a chance to hear directly from other members and friends of the congregation.

What questions, concerns, or dreams do you have about Reformation Lutheran Church? We will discuss them first. As time permits, we will unveil our "new and improved" website (if it is ready by then) or have a Reformation-themed activity. Please come!



OCTOBER 2023

What's Happening at Reformation Lutheran Church

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
1 8:45 Calico Choir 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live Reformation Information	2	3 9:30 Worship & Music Mtg 11:30 Chimes	4	5	6	7 11:00 Vic Caballero Memorial Service w/ reception
8 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live Coffee Hour	9	10 9:30 Evangelism	11	12	13	14
15 Food Barrel 8:45 Calico Choir 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live Pack Lunches for Homeless Stewardship Drive Begins	16 ←	17 Conference on Ministry PASTOR AWAY 9:30 Chimes →	18	19	20	21
22 Bishop's Visit 8:45 Calico Choir 9:15 Chimes 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live Potluck Reception	23	24 9:30 Chimes 6:30 Council	25	26 12:15 Lunch Bunch	27	28
29 Reformation 8:45 Calico Choir 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live Town Hall Mtg GAL Xmas Begins	30	31 Halloween 9:30 Chimes 				



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.