

# CROSS WALK

April 2024

## MESSAGE FROM PASTOR LOIS

Dear Reformation Nation,

Some of our "snowbirds" have already started to fly (or drive) away, and more will do so this month. If you missed the seasonal "farewell and godspeed" blessing that was offered at the end of worship on Palm Sunday, be sure to watch it on Facebook ( <https://fb.watch/r1MY4-O61R/> ).

As I write this message and compose other contributions for the newsletter, Holy Week is underway. Palm Sunday is done, a private off-site memorial for Gloria Tedesco is done, Elise Knoll and others continue to prepare to share their talents on Triduum (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday), bulletins for Maundy

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

Thursday and Good Friday are complete and already e-mailed, the bulletin for Easter Sunday is "getting there" (thanks to Karen Wason), and I am working on sermons (yes, plural) as well as other presider-related details. On

Holy Saturday, Yvonne Mueller and her decorating crew will be on campus to change paraments, display Easter Lilies, and otherwise enhance our sanctuary for worship.

Chances are, you are reading this message on (or right after) Resurrection of Our Lord (Easter Sunday). Alleluia, He (Christ) is Risen! Alleluia, she (your pastor) is recovering! Next up: catching-up with home visits, updating our website, and drafting stewardship-related policies.

As always, please pray that our ongoing and future endeavors are always guided by faithful discernment of this question: "What is God up to here?"

*+ Pastor Lois*



### ***Inside this issue:***

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

- What is God up to here?
- What did we do for VISTE?
- Show Us Your Talent
- What is the Interfaith Coalition?
- What is our Mission?
- Time with God
- Learn about Easter
- What does PEACE do?
- How you can help at the SPD Retreat in April



## JOIN US FOR FELLOWSHIP

A total of 62 people gathered for 2 coffee hours in March. Carol Robinson and Linda Petrarca provided the goodies for St Patrick's Day and Jeannie Yager and Barb Caballero for our Spring/Bird House celebration.

We will talk about "memories" on April 14 and enjoy fellowship on April 28. There will be coffee/tea and goodies following worship. Thanks to all of you who stepped up and signed up to bring goodies. There are still a couple of empty spots. Check out the Fellowship page in the notebook on the credenza and sign-up if you want to furnish goodies.

Karen Hamilton, Fellowship chair



## TREASURE HUNT!

**Forget to use your "extra" envelopes for "extra" offerings?** It's not too late to use them. Alternatively, just add a line to your next "regular" envelope for a supplemental donation in recognition of a recent special day, such as Good Friday or Easter Sunday.

**Received a tax refund or redeemed a winning scratch-off ticket?** Consider donating 5-10% of such "found money" to Reformation.

**Getting forgetful or going to be away awhile (whether for the summer or just a few weeks)?** Automate your regular giving by using Reformation's online (Vanco) giving page.

**Belong to an HOA or other group that needs a place to meet?** Have the meeting organizer contact [lovinglutherans@gmail.com](mailto:lovinglutherans@gmail.com) to inquire about using our facility in return for a modest donation.

**Considering a future legacy gift from your life insurance or "can't take it with me" assets?** Refer to last month's financial stewardship article to get started.



# VOLUNTEERING IS SHARING THE ESSENTIALS 2024 LENTEN PROJECT

Thank you, thank you, everyone  
For helping get this project done.  
You are the group that gives it all  
And always ready to help out at beck and call.  
Thank you, thank you, everyone  
For helping get this project done.

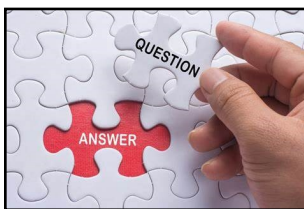


Thank you so much for your generous response to my hat announcements. Because of your generosity I was able to wear my hat for a big success to this project. After my committee of Bev Nelson, Jeanne Yager, Barb Caballero and I counted the value of all the things, we had a total of **\$2052** worth of goods. WOW!!!! From a small church, that is amazing. My delivery crew, Harold Mueller, Al Williamson, Dennis Haines, and Doug Hodge, delivered it right away and VISTE welcomed the goods. Thanks again for supporting us in this Lenten project and all the projects this church does. You are the most generous group of people I know!

Yvonne Mueller Project Chair

## “REFORMATION INFORMATION”

APRIL 7 - FELLOWSHIP HALL - AFTER WORSHIP



Do you have a question about Christianity in general, Lutheranism in particular, or Reformation Lutheran Church specifically? For example, do you want to arrange a baptism or consider becoming a voting member of the congregation?

This monthly meeting is an informal opportunity to ask questions. If you are unable to stay that day (or are reading this invitation “after the fact”), feel free to contact Pastor Lois directly. You can stop by during office hours, call/text her cellphone (813-494-4052), or send an e-mail to [pastorreformationlakeland@gmail.com](mailto:pastorreformationlakeland@gmail.com).

*Thank You,  
Jeannie!*

If you attended “coffee hour” on Palm Sunday (March 24), you KNOW what I am talking about!

Thank you, Jeannie Yager, for the bird and butterfly houses that graced the tables and also served as door prizes.

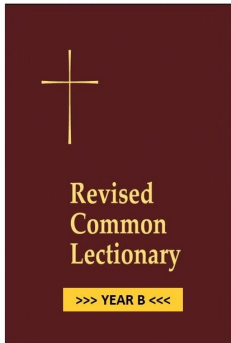
Jeannie has been storing some of these crafts for (literally) years, since they were to be used at our next Ladies Tea, but Covid changed everything. In the meantime, she also added to the collection by restoring or decorating more. My “Mills River Tea” shop (pictured) is not a functional bird (round hole) or butterfly (elongated holes) house, but the lid comes off, so I can use it to hold tea bags or whatever I fancy.

Help me “catch” someone doing good for our congregation or in the community by telling me what you want them to be thanked for doing!

Pastor Lois +



# APRIL LECTIONARY (WORSHIP SERVICE READINGS)\*



DATE	FIRST	PSALMODY	SECOND	GOSPEL
04/07 (2 Easter)	Acts 4:32-35	Psalm 133	1 John 1:1-2:2	John 20:19-31
04/14 (3 Easter)	Acts 3:12-19	Psalm 4	1 John 3:1-7	Luke 24:36b-48
04/21 (4 Easter)	Acts 4:4-12	Psalm 23	1 John 4:7-21	John 15:1-8
04/28 (5 Easter)	Acts 8:26-40	Psalm 22:25-31	1 John 5:1-6	John 15:9-17

*\*Remember: If you watch all three devotions posted 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!*

## “TALENT SHOW” (ON CAMPUS)



Followers of Jesus practice the “3 T’s” of stewardship: time with God, talent for God, and treasure to God.

Talent for God is not limited to gifted church soloists (although we certainly give thanks for those with gifts in that “department”).

Maybe “talent” isn’t even the right word to use, because doing something FOR God is often more of a matter of teachability (eagerness to gain the needed knowledge) or tenacity (a confident willingness to attempt) than talent itself (innate ability).

With our “snowbirds” gone (or soon to be), we depend on year-round residents to “show up” over the summer months. Take a look at the clipboards and three-ring binders in the narthex to survey the wealth of in-person opportunities. Look at it this way: if you are concerned about doing something “new-to-you” well enough to give glory to God, lighter Sunday attendance provides a low-key (less stress) environment in which to learn. Besides, we are Lutheran, so there is “always” grace.

Want to offer a talent for God that does not seem to have a sign-up sheet? Please send an e-mail or talk to Pastor Lois, and she will put you in touch with the appropriate council officer or committee.



# JUSTICE OUTREACH (PART 1 OF 2): INTERFAITH COALITION OF POLK COUNTY

You have probably already heard of the Interfaith Coalition of Polk County. An earlier version of the coalition folded several years ago, after the then-leader unexpectedly died; the current version came to life in December 2022, in response to a neo-Nazi group protesting at a local art gallery hosting a fundraising event that included a G-rated drag show.

The neo-Nazi group tried to disseminate divisive hate in the greater Lakeland area, showing up with anti-Jewish and anti-LGBTQ+ signs and slogans. Instead of division, their actions brought faith leaders together from various Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, and other religious traditions to re-form the coalition. Pastor Lois (from Reformation Lutheran Church) and Pastor Pam (from Grace Lutheran Church) have been among these faith leaders.

In response to the neo-Nazi protest, faith leaders first issued a joint statement (which some of you signed in January) denouncing the hate. Since then, they have met in each other's houses of worship to reconstitute the coalition and learn about each other's faith traditions. Some of them also spoke at last year's "Faith in Pride" interfaith service, provided a ministry of presence at the synagogue after the Israel-Palestine conflict began, and began planning coalition events.

Most recently, we were invited to the coalition's "Hands Across the Water" celebration of unity and diversity of faith. It was held on March 24 at the water dome on the campus of Florida Southern College (see pictures).



HEAR YE, HEAR YE:  
"TOWN HALL" MEETING ON  
APRIL 7<sup>TH</sup>

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.

We endeavor to hold these sessions once a quarter (on the fifth Sunday of each month that happens to have five Sundays). However, since the fifth Sunday in March happened to also be Easter Sunday, we scheduled it a week later than normal.

What questions, concerns, or dreams do you have about Reformation Lutheran Church? We will discuss them right after Pastor Lois takes a few minutes to offer a special edition of the normal "first Sunday" Reformation Information session (see separate article for details). As time permits, leadership might also have some questions, concerns, or dreams to share with you!

Meeting will be held in the fellowship hall, as usual.



# TIME WITH GOD—APRIL EDITION

Followers of Jesus practice the “3 T’s” of stewardship: time with God, talent for God, and treasure God is not limited to about an hour a week other followers of involves making a daily form of at least 15 to 20

7 OUT OF 10 UNCHURCHED PEOPLE HAVE NEVER BEEN INVITED TO CHURCH IN THEIR WHOLE LIVES.

to God. Time with showing up for to worship God with Jesus. It also effort, usually in the minutes of prayer.

Here are some suggested prayer topics for April:

- As a follow-up to the “Godspeed” offered right before the final blessing during worship on March 24, pray for our “snowbird” members and friends. May they travel safely, experience joyful homecomings, and (God willing) return in the fall.
- Offer a prayer of gratitude for everyone who planned and implemented the special Holy Week services last month. May our amazing volunteers, Elise, and Pastor Lois find opportunities for rest and renewal this month.
- Pray for the un(der) churchd in our area. If they were too shy or ashamed to join us for Easter Sunday, may God put one of us (or something from our Facebook presence) in their path to inspire them to check us out.
- Pray for Reverend Pam Smith, the pastor of our “sister” congregation on the southside of Lakeland, who is retiring on April 7. Give thanks for her years of ministry at Grace-Lakeland, Grace-Clearwater, and elsewhere.
- Pray for the new and ongoing endeavors of Reformation Lutheran Church. May our members and other ministry supporters provide the talent and treasure required.



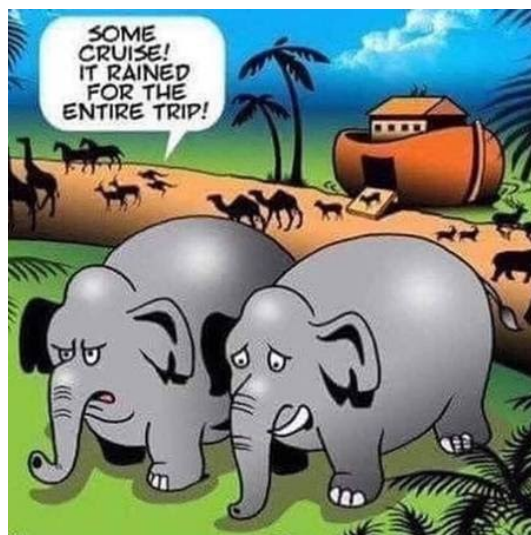
Join these friends as they celebrate their birthday or anniversary in April:

### Birthdays

- 04/12 COX, Fred
- 04/13 SENGBUSCH, Dennis
- 04/16 HARNEY, Bobbie
- 04/21 GETTIG, Mary
- 04/22 BLEACHER, Sue
- 04/25 GRIFFIN, Nicholas
- 04/27 PARKER, Betty
- 04/29 ZELAZNY, Phil

### Anniversaries

- 04/20 STACKPOLE, Roy & Iris
- 04/24 MUELLER, Harold & Yvonne





# LUTHERANISM 101: EASTER (PART 1)

Easter. Pascha. Resurrection of Our Lord. Whatever you call it, the “Western” Church (including our denomination) celebrates “the” day on March 31 this year. Like Christmas, however, Easter is technically a season (not a single day); this is why you may hear people refer to Eastertide or Eastertime. We’ll have more to say about the “season” in our May newsletter.

Although the commercialization of Christmas (and its intrusion into Advent) might lead you to think otherwise, Easter is considered “the” principal festival of the Church. The Church actually has three major festivals: Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost.



**Why isn't Easter (the day) on a fixed date, like Christmas is always on December 25?** The short answer is this: Easter “moves” to retain some semblance of the original relationship between Holy Week events and the Jewish calendar. Jesus made his final journey to Jerusalem when people were starting to arrive to celebrate Passover; this annual festival takes place on 15 Nisan (the 15<sup>th</sup> day after the first full moon after the spring equinox in northern hemisphere, which means the day of the week varies from year to year). Jesus was crucified on the “day of preparation” (the day before the weekly Jewish sabbath, which starts at sunset on Friday) and Jesus was resurrected by dawn of “the first day” (the day after the Jewish sabbath; so, Sunday morning). Some early Christians celebrated Easter on 16 Nisan, regardless of what day of the week it was any particular year; however, others opted for a consistent “first day” celebration every year. By 325 CE, the “Western” Church decided that Easter should be observed on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox.

**Why do some people say Easter is a Christian appropriation of a pagan holiday?** Part of the problem is the word “Easter” itself. Back in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, an Anglo-Saxon scholar (a monk named Bede) theorized that the word was derived from Eostre, the name of a pagan goddess of spring and fertility. However, modern scholars propose a more convoluted origin: the English word “Easter” comes from the German word “Ostern” which is derived from the Old High German “eostarum” which morphed over time from the phrase “in albis” (an ancient Latin name for the first week of Eastertide, which translates to English as the plural of “dawn” or “white”). Interestingly enough, though, “in albis” can mean “in the dark” in Spanish. Now you know why some churches now choose to call it Resurrection Sunday!

**In my mind  
i'm still 24,  
but my back is 55,  
my knee is 67,  
and my left hip  
turns 79 next week.**

**AS YOU GET OLDER YOU'VE  
GOT TO STAY POSITIVE.  
FOR EXAMPLE, THE OTHER DAY  
I FELL DOWN THE STAIRS...  
INSTEAD OF GETTING UPSET  
I JUST THOUGHT,  
“WOW, THAT'S THE FASTEST  
I'VE MOVED IN YEARS”**



# WE NEED YOU TO BE OUR “VOTING MEMBER” FOR SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Would you like to be Reformation’s “voting member” at the synod assembly this year?



It takes place from the afternoon of Friday, May 31, through the morning of Sunday, June 2. Pastor Lois will be arriving a day or two earlier for First Call Theological Education classes.

The event will be held at the Embassy Suites - Lake Buena Vista, and your two-night hotel stay and assembly registration fees have been budgeted by the congregation. You may bring a spouse or other guest with you. Each suite has a microwave and refrigerator, a breakfast buffet is offered downstairs, there are several restaurants nearby, and Pastor Lois and her husband will take you to dinner one of the two nights.

This will be a “workshop year” (less synod business, more time for break-out sessions on interesting topics). The keynote speaker will be Reverend Rafael Malpica – Padilla, who holds a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Puerto Rico, a Master of Divinity degree from the Lutheran

Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (now part of United Lutheran Seminary), and several honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees.

Serving as the “voting member” means voting as needed on synod business, attending workshops of interest to you, and authoring (or being interviewed for) an article for the congregation’s newsletter. Interested? Send an e-mail to [lovinglutherans@gmail.com](mailto:lovinglutherans@gmail.com) or contact Pastor by May 8th, as this is the last day to register at “early bird” rates.

## “LET’S DO LUNCH!!”

Seventeen ladies met at Reececliff Family Diner for Lunch Bunch on March 21st. It had been several years since we were last there. Food was delicious but seating was less than ideal. We had to set at three different table arrangements. Fellowship was great with those sitting at our individual tables but we could not share with the other tables. What a way to spend a portion of your day!



On April 25th we will meet at 12:30 at the Back Porch/The Barn in Lake Alfred. All ladies and their female friends are welcome. Watch for the sign-up sheet on the credenza in the narthex. It’s good to take a break and meet with friends for good conversation. Look forward to seeing you for lunch.

*Karen Hamilton, Fellowship chair*

## JUSTICE OUTREACH (PART 2 OF 2): POLK ECUMENICAL ACTION COUNCIL FOR EMPOWERMENT



If you have heard about the Polk Ecumenical Action Council for Empowerment (PEACE), it was probably not through Reformation. The one exception might be if you closely read a recent newsletter article that used the organization's definition of justice. Here it is (referring, in part, to Micah 6:8 and Nehemiah 5:1-13):

When we say justice, we are referring to the Biblical meaning of justice—not a definition held by any particular political party or social group. Biblically, justice means to hold the kings and nobles accountable for the fair treatment of all people, especially the poor, widow, and the orphan, or the most vulnerable in our communities. In our time, that means holding people like the Mayor or School Superintendent accountable to protect and serve the most vulnerable people in Polk County. We “act justly” or “do justice” by coming together with other congregations and using our people power to get commitments from public officials to accomplish needed changes in our community.

PEACE, unlike the Interfaith Coalition of Polk County (see another article on page 5), focuses on one main issue a year. Since the organization relies on consensus from a broad spectrum of Christian traditions (Lutheran, AME, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Baptist, and more), the issue tends to be non-controversial in nature. For example, in 2024, the main issue is elder care.

During its February meeting, Reformation's congregational council received a presentation from PEACE. During its March meeting, the council discussed whether to join the organization. After two members offered to donate enough to cover the congregation's \$1,000 membership dues (so that there will be no impact to the 2024 budget), council voted to accept those donations and join on a one-year trial basis.

Want to learn more and maybe even get involved? PEACE will host its annual “Nehemiah Action” meeting on Monday, April 29, at 6:30 p.m. at Resurrection Catholic Church in Lakeland. You are invited! Please contact Pastor Lois for details.

My favorite childhood memory is my back not hurting.

**Never seen anyone jogging and smiling, so that's all I need to know about that.**

# SYNOD PARISH DEACONS RETREAT AT REFORMATION



Reformation will be hosting the Florida-Bahamas Synod’s annual retreat for Synod Parish Deacons (SPDs) on April 19 (4 p.m. – 9 p.m.) and April 20 (8 a.m. to 2 p.m.). The theme this year is “Refresh and Renew” and the event is open to current and prospective SPDs as well as their pastors.

What’s an SPD? A layperson with a combination of “some” theological training (such as our synod’s School of Lay Ministry, formerly known as diakonia Florida) and practical experience (hands-on training gained by volunteering within a congregation) who serves as a deacon for that congregation under the general oversight of their pastor. Pastor Lois served as an SPD before realizing she was called to ordained ministry, so ask her if you want more information.

What’s going to happen during the retreat? Worship, including the affirmation of everyone’s baptism. Education, including speakers and a panel discussion about the future of congregational ministry. Fun, including ice-breaker activities and fellowship during meals.

What’s this got to do with me? Maybe you would like to help us host the event (take a two-hour shift as a “go-fer” – sign-up sheet is on the credenza). If you are active in the congregation and feel called to collaborate in ministry with your pastor in a way other than serving on council, maybe you would rather attend the whole thing (talk to Pastor Lois and then pay a \$65 registration fee).

A moment of tension in Vatican. If the bishop moves forward the queen can take him.



**THE OLDER YOU GET  
THE MORE YOU APPRECIATE  
BEING AT HOME DOING  
ABSOLUTELY NOTHING.**



## “TALENT “SHOW” (OFF CAMPUS)



Are you away for the summer or not able to come to campus? Here are some suggestions of ways you can put your talents to use anyway:

- Author an article, compose a poem, or send a joke for next month’s newsletter (please contact Karen Hamilton to help in any of those ways).
- Call a member or friend of the congregation, whether someone you know is a shut-in or simply someone you have not talked-to in a while (or ever).
- Help our Facebook page get more visibility by commenting on Reformation’s posts, mentioning Reformation in your own posts (or when you comment on somebody else’s posts), or sending possible material for posts (pictures, sayings, or links) to [lovinglutherans@gmail.com](mailto:lovinglutherans@gmail.com).
- Send an “encouraging word” to one of our talented/teach-able/tenacious volunteers (or write an anonymous “thank you” for them that we can put in the newsletter).
- Critique pages on our current website, look at other church websites to gather ideas for us, or offer to help proof-read new pages when we upgrade our online presence (please contact Pastor Lois to help in any of those ways).

### AltarMinistry

Would you believe that spring is here again, and it is almost time for Harold and I to head back to the North Country to spend the summer with our families. We won’t be leaving until April, but this is the last newsletter before we go.

While I am gone, Doug Hodge will be handling the altar ministry along with Becky Whipple. I hope you can help them by supplying the help they need to keep worship going on Sunday mornings. Remember, you only need do it one Sunday at time.

The flower and eternal candle charts have a lot of empty spaces if anyone would care to purchase one or the other for a worship service in memory of, or in honor of someone or something. The flowers are \$25 per bouquet, \$35 per dish garden, and the candles are \$7 per Sunday.

Hope you all have a good summer and if all goes well, and the good Lord willing, we will see you in October!

Yvonne Mueller Altar Ministry

# APRIL 2024

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
3	1 8:00-Noon AARP	2	3 10:30 Outreach 12:00 Devotions on Facebook Live	4 8:00-Noon AARP	5	6
7 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live <b>Reformation Information + Town Hall Meeting</b>	8 8:00-Noon AARP	9 9:30 Evangelism	10 12:00 Devotions on Facebook Live	11 8:00-Noon AARP	12	13
14 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live <b>Coffee Hour</b>	15 8:00-Noon AARP	16 9:30 W&M Mtg  6:30 Council	17 12:00 Devotions on Facebook Live	18	19 <b>← SYNOD PARISH DEACON RETREAT (At Reformation) →</b>	20
21 <b>Food Barrel</b> 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live <b>Pack Homeless Lunches</b>	22	23	24 12:00 Devotions on Facebook Live	25 12:30 Lunch Bunch	26	27
28 10:00 Worship w/communion In-Person & Facebook Live <b>Coffee Hour</b>	29	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**

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

*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](mailto:lovinglutherans@gmail.com).