

River of Life Lutheran Church

"Ripples" Monthly Newsletter October 2021

Our Purpose Statement: We are a community of faith called to - glorify God - grow in faith and love, and - go into the world with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ.

[Visit our Website](#)

From the Pastor's Desk

I grew up in a church full of music and the singing of traditional hymns. As a child I was reminded of the different seasons of the church year by the hymns: "Holy, Holy, Holy" meant it was Pentecost; "Joy to the World" meant it was Christmas time; and singing "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" meant that it was Reformation Sunday.

This month on Sunday, October 31st, we will again celebrate the Reformation. My Reformation memories are rich and varied: from large inter-church gatherings with choirs and Bishops, to everyone dressing with the color red, to hearing church choirs, bell choirs, and great organ music!

Perhaps that's why today, when I struggle to know how to talk to God, or when I know I want to be close to God but unsure of how to make it happen ... hymns and songs and music have often been the answer. Words of "How Great Thou Art" or "On Our Way Rejoicing" have popped into my head, almost as a call to praise, as I wash my face in the morning, or go about my daily routine.

But the world has drowned out many of those sounds. For example, today the date of October 31st doesn't bring to mind the Reformation for most people – it simply means Halloween and trick or treating. And if that were not enough to drown out the sounds of the celebration of Reformation, then came a pandemic. Recommendations for no large indoor gatherings were announced. Choirs were told not to perform. We responded by choosing caution and safety for the love of our neighbors. And yet, I declare: the

Reformation continues! Let me explain.

When Martin Luther helped awaken the church transformation, known as “The Reformation,” his focus was on reforming the church. The need was for a correction so that the practices and message of the church were truly centered in the gospel of Jesus. The heart of our faith and life needed to be the good news of God’s gift of salvation found in the loving grace of Christ!

We need to remember that the reformation took place in Europe of the 1500s. People at that time had their lives turned upside down by dozens of major political revolutions, including the Thirty Years War. This was the century of five recurring pandemics of the bubonic plague with estimates of 20% mortality. This was the time of scientific revolutions, such as Copernicus announcing that the earth was not the center of the universe.

In other words, at the same time that daily life was a huge challenge for people, the Spirit of God was also at work to bring new life back into the church. Even as the world around them was shaking, people found their faith revived, hope renewed, and their relationship with God buzzing with vitality!

We are living through a time when it feels like the world is turned upside down. Life is a challenge in new ways for many. River of Life is a reformation church, a Lutheran church, which means we always need to work hard at keeping our practices and message truly centered in the gospel of Jesus.

We are committed to preaching and teaching in alignment with our core beliefs. We are determined to nurture caring connections in our community of faith. We are committed to being a partner with families to nurture faith in our children. And we are focused on reflecting the love of Jesus as we serve our neighbor.

But this also means we are open to change. As we continue our building process, we will need to strive to keep what is most important while at the same time being agile, creative, and re-imagining ministry and the church for this new season we are living in.

We won’t always get it right, but the work of the Holy Spirit will continue at River of Life, because we are steeped in the Reformation, focused on the good news of Jesus, and striving to meet the needs of this present moment. Let the Reformation continue!

To the glory of God!
-Pastor Bill Ottum

Sunday Worship Service

We worship at 11:00a.m.
in the downstairs fellowship hall of
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Chugiak
on the Old Glenn Hwy.

Drive around to the right side of the church and park in the lower parking lot. Enter through the kitchen door! You're welcome to bring your own seat cushion!

Upcoming Event - This Saturday!

You're invited!

River of Life will have a table at the craft bazaar "**Nordic Market**" being held this **Saturday, October 9** at the Viking Hall, 8141 Briarwood Street in Anchorage.

The bazaar will be open from **10:00-4:00pm**.

Come see us there and check out all the goodies! We appreciate your support!

Construction Activity

Construction is happening at our building site! Take a drive by and check it out. (Please don't enter the property, just view from the road.) We are SO excited to move forward!

Thank You!

Thank you to Traci Wanner for her years of service
as our **Administrative Assistant**.

We are especially grateful for all the time and effort Traci gave to keep the office functioning, *especially* during the pandemic and the building fire!

Noisy Offering

This quarter's "Noisy Offering" goes to the Chugiak Eagle River Food Pantry.

The *Noisy Offering* is the fourth Sunday of each month.

River of Life Holiday

Fall Bazaar

*Saturday, November 13th, 10:00am-4:00pm
in the fellowship hall at
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
on the Old Glenn Hwy.*

Prayer Concerns and Celebrations

Our Congregation

We pray for the health and vitality of ROL's Ministry & Mission.

Family and Friends

We pray for continued healing, encouragement, and strength for: **Liam** (Cindy's nephew); **Bob Reupke**; **Stewart Mee**; Joel & Padi's friend **Jack** (cancer); **Gloria** (Elaine's Friend); Terry's friend **Bill Ellis** (radiation treatment); Padi's cousin **Lindsay**; Linda H's friend **Amelia** (recovering from surgery); **Dee** (breast cancer); and, **Joel** (surgery).

Prayer Partners

We pray for the health and vitality of the ministry of our other Knik Cluster congregations and their pastors (**Joy, Eagle River; Trinity, Palmer; Good Shepherd, Wasilla; Table of Grace, Bethel**), and our prayer partner for October – All "Specialized Ministries" through the Alaska ELCA Synod.

Compassion for Others in Our Community

Dear Father in heaven, Creator of what is good, beautiful, and full of joy, so that all may work in harmony with you - we thank you for all the good that comes to us. May we be your children, joined together to serve you. May our life bring joy to others, and may we do good without ceasing through your great, strong love, which moves us, strengthens us, and helps us every day, however hard life may be. May your name be praised throughout the world. May your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as in heaven. Amen.

Thank you, God, for the body of believers who are called to serve you, who are proclaiming the Good News to all who will hear. From those who minister across the country to the men, women, and youth here at home, send us out to be a light in the dark. Send us out to speak life, to extend grace and mercy, to feed the hungry, to befriend the lonely, and to find the lost. Open the doors of this church and fill it with the broken, the angry, the hurting. Let them find forgiveness and comfort here in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

October Birthdays & Anniversaries

9 - Jeremy Ottum
11 - Steve Twohy
20 - Kay Norton
21 - Becky Durst
27 - Pastor Bill Ottum
29 - Cindy Lietzau

6 - Jim & Mary Ann Hartzog
7 - Harold & Gerry Cronquist

An Experiment...

We're trying a new way to deliver your monthly *Ripples* newsletter. It's a service called Constant Contact that allows us to add graphics and links to our newsletter, making it a more dynamic way to communicate. This is a trial and for this first one, we're going pretty basic. Let Pastor Bill know what you think! We'd love your feedback!