

December 17, 2023

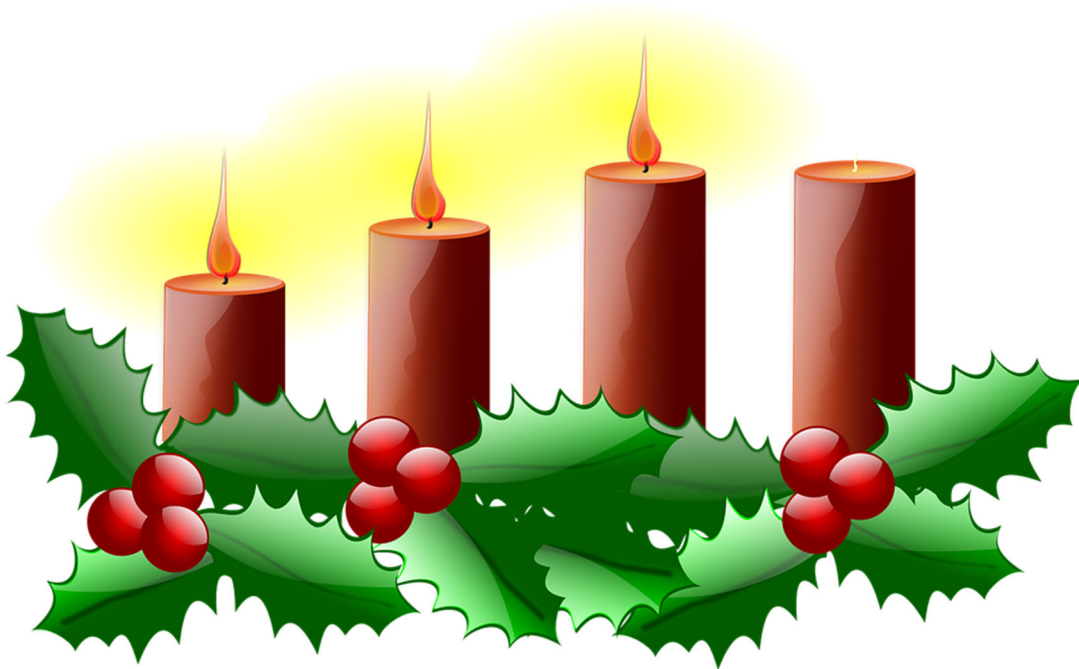
Third Sunday of Advent

8:30 & 11:00 AM

REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH

613 Lakeview Avenue

Milford, Delaware 19963



Phone: 302-422-9117

www.rlcmilford.com

Fax: 302-422-9184

Email: office@reformation-lutheran.net

Office hours (*Closed holidays*):

9:00am-12:00pm, Monday–Friday

Gail Kelso

Director of Music / Organist

The Rev. Eric W. Evers & The Rev. Paige G. Evers

Pastors

Third Sunday of Advent

8:30 & 11:00 am service

You can find videos of this Sunday's service and our past services (along with downloadable bulletins) at www.rlcmilford.com/connect. Share these with your friends and family on social media so we can touch more lives with God's Word!

Please silence cell phones before worship begins. Thank you!

Welcome to Reformation!

We are especially glad to welcome visitors to worship. We hope you experience God's love for you this morning! Visitors are invited to sign the pew pads so we can be in touch with you.

Holy Communion

All baptized Christians are welcome to receive Holy Communion. Please follow the usher's directions to come forward down the center aisle to receive the bread and wine. If you prefer a gluten-free wafer or grape juice, please inform the server. Those who do not yet receive Communion are welcome to come forward to receive a blessing.

Lutherans believe that in Communion, we receive the Body and Blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins, the renewal of our faith, and the strengthening of our Christian community. Come, taste and see that the Lord is good!

Prayer Requests

To add someone to the prayers of the Church, please write their name on the list behind the altar.

***"Being transformed by Jesus so that, through us,
he is transforming the world."***

Reformation's Mission is to:

Welcome people to faith. Make disciples. Live what we believe.

Gathering

** indicates the congregation is invited to stand, as able*

Announcements

Prelude

Reformation Ringers

***Confession and Forgiveness**

P: We gather in the name of the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires are known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the forgiving and healing power of your Holy Spirit, so that we may reflect your glory as we grow in holiness and faith, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

P: God of mercy and life,

C: we confess that we have turned from you and have fallen under the deadly power of sin. Our thoughts, words, and deeds have broken our fellowship with you and with our neighbors. Forgive us, we pray, and set us free from sin and death, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, both now and forever, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

P: In the mercy of Almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and in him, we are freed from sin and death. His Holy Spirit renews us and leads us into life. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

***Gathering Hymn** “My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness” **No. 251**

***Apostolic Greeting**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

***Hymn of Praise & Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

“Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah,” v. 1-3

No. 240

***Prayer of the Day**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray...

C: **Amen.**

Children’s Sermon

Word

First Reading

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with

the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

A: The Word of the Lord. **C:** Thanks be to God.

Psalm 126 (read in unison)

¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.

²Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."

³The LORD has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.

⁴Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses in the Negeb.

⁵May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.

⁶Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

A: The Word of the Lord. **C:** Thanks be to God.

***Gospel Acclamation**



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

***Gospel**

John 1:6-8, 19-28

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 1st chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pastor Rod Kopp

***Hymn of the Day**

“Fling Wide the Door”

No. 259

***Prayers of Intercession**

A: Lord, in your mercy, **C:** Hear our prayer.

***The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, as we
 forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever
 and ever. Amen.**

Meal

***Peace**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

Please share a sign of peace with those around you.

Collection of the Offering

Reformation Ringers

Offertory "Prepare the Royal Highway" (v. 1, 3) **No. 264**

Prepare the royal highway; the King of kings is near!
Let ev'ry hill and valley a level road appear!
Then greet the King of glory, foretold in sacred story:
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!
Then fling the gates wide open to greet your promised king!
Your king, yet ev'ry nation its tribute too may bring.
All lands will bow before him; their voices join your singing:
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!

***Offertory Prayer**

A: Let us pray:

C: **Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness
you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our
possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the
world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us,
Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

*The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.


C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.


C: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*Proper Preface

*"Holy, Holy, Holy"




Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes



in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*The Words of Institution

"Lamb of God"



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

The Distribution of Communion, Standing, at the Altar Rail

Communion Hymns: No. 815, "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light;" No. 260, "The King Shall Come;" No. 241, "O Lord, How Shall I Meet You;" No. 593, "Drawn to the Light"

*Post-Communion Blessing

Congregation responds with Amen.

*Post-Communion Prayer

Congregation responds with Amen.

Sending

*Benediction

Congregation responds with Amen.

*Sending Hymn

"Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers"

No. 244

***Dismissal**

*Congregation responds with **Thanks be to God.***

Postlude

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*Thank you to Pastor Rod Kopp for preaching and presiding today while
Pastors Eric and Paige are away for Pastor Eric's father's funeral.
They will return to Delaware mid-week.*

SERVING TODAY

December 17	8:30	11:00
Usher	Carol Benner-Chaffinch	Todd Hannah
Lay Reader	Mickey Chaffinch	Kelsey Oldland
Worship Assistant	Eric Valentine	Ken Newell
Acolyte	Kristin & Kailani Schlegel	Lexi Caccamise
Healing Prayer		Joy Rowe
Altar Guild	Janice Weiner	Deb Davis
Live Stream Operator	Jack Pencek	
Fellowship Host	Sandi Shea	

SERVING NEXT SUNDAY

December 24	10:00
Usher	Edith & Steve Weipert
Lay Reader	Sally Newell
Worship Assistant	David Krantz
Acolyte	Soren Evers
Healing Prayer	Joy Rowe
Altar Guild	Janice Weiner
Live Stream Operator	Sigrid Evers

THIS WEEK AT REFORMATION

Today	8:30 am — Worship Service
	9:45 am — Coffee Fellowship
	11:00 am — Worship Service
	3:00 pm — Decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas
Tuesday	7:00 pm — Council Meeting
Thursday	6:00 pm — Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00 pm — Choir Rehearsal
Next Sunday	10:00 am — Choir Cantata & Worship Service
	4:00 pm — Christmas Eve Worship Service
	7:00 pm — Christmas Eve Worship Service

ANNOUNCEMENTS

You are invited to come and help **decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas** TODAY at 3 p.m.! There is a signup sheet in the Narthex. Come and enjoy fellowship as we prepare the Sanctuary for Christmas.

The Christian Services Committee is again hosting an "**Advent Reverse Giving Calendar**" to support the Food Bank of Delaware. We're inviting you to add a food item to your very own Advent box each day to **give** a gift to help those with food insecurity in Delaware.

The Calendars are available in the Narthex. We encourage you to post it on your fridge and mark off the days as we approach Christmas, or use it for ideas of the needs of the Food Bank and give as you can. We will have a container in the Narthex to bring gifts weekly through Christmas Eve. All gifts will be delivered to the Food Bank in Milford for their pantry.

The Mitten Tree is back! Please see the information in the narthex and note that all gifts must be here by TODAY, to ensure that the gifts are delivered by Christmas. Please do not hesitate to call Suzanne Madanat at 302-382-6065 with any questions.

The **Women of the ELCA (WELCA)** will meet on Thursday, January 4th at 1:00 at the Church Annex. All women are welcome, and we hope to see you as we start 2024!

Financial Update: Thank you for your generous support of Reformation's ministries. A summary of Income and Expenses for January through November 2023 is posted on the bulletin board across from the kitchen.

Give By Text: You can make a financial gift to Reformation by sending a text with a dollar amount to (302) 204-1410 and follow the instructions you receive back. However you give, your support matters! Thank you!

Sign Up for Church News! If you aren't receiving Reformation news through Constant Contact, please send an email to Pastor Eric at pr.eric@reformation-lutheran.net, and he will add you to this distribution list. It's a great way to keep up with what's going on at Reformation.

Happy Birthday to: Lydia Petersen today, Pastor Eric Evers on the 19th, John Eustis on the 20th, and Lezlie Eustis on the 23rd

Advent and Christmas Special Services & Events

*All 8:30 or 10:00am Sunday worship services and special services are **on-site and online** unless noted*

Sunday, December 17th at 3:00pm:

Decorating the Sanctuary for Christmas

Sunday, December 24th at 10:00am:

One 4th Sunday of Advent service—Choir Cantata & Holy Communion

Sunday, December 24th at 4:00pm:

Christmas Eve Service with young musicians

Sunday, December 24th at 7:00pm:

Christmas Eve Service with Choir (in person only)

Sunday, December 31st at 10:00am:

One service of Lessons, Carols, and Communion

Sunday, January 7th, 2024 at 8:30 & 11:00am:

Celebrating the Festivals of the Epiphany and the Baptism of Our Lord, removing sanctuary decorations after the 11:00 service.



REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Christmas Poinsettia Order Form
~ 2023 ~



If you would like to purchase poinsettia plants to decorate the Church Sanctuary for Christmas, please fill out the form below and include it with your payment by **December 17**. Please make checks payable to **Reformation Lutheran Church** with “Poinsettias” noted on the memo line and place in the offering. Cash may be placed in an envelope with your name and “Poinsettias” on the outside. If you prefer, you may give an offering to the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund. A list of dedications will be included in the Christmas Eve bulletins.

Our poinsettia plants are provided by Pepper Greenhouses. Each plant has 5-6 blooms and comes in a 6.5 inch pot wrapped in green foil.



Name: _____

Number of plants: ____ x \$12.00 each. Total for plants: \$ _____

Donation to the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund: \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Dedicated in **honor** of: _____

Dedicated in **memory** of: _____

*Please be sure to pick up your plants on or before Sunday,
 January 7, 2024 . Unclaimed plants will be discarded.*

Spread the word!

Please “Like” Reformation’s **Facebook** page for news, announcements, and photos of church events!

www.facebook.com/RLCmilford

Check in and **tweet** or post about what’s going on with the hashtag #RLCMilford, or post on Facebook and tag *Reformation Lutheran Church*.

Reformation is on **Instagram!**

Please follow our church’s profile: @rlcmilford