



REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH

LENT 2008

The Cross of Christ the Glory of God

by Pastor Russ

"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32).

Why was Jesus crucified? That is the question for us this Lenten season. In truth this question is always before us just as it has been before every Christian throughout history. In the early church, the crucifixion of Jesus was an embarrassment. As Justin explains,

"They [opponents of Christianity] say that our madness consists in the fact that we put a crucified man in second place after the unchangeable and eternal God, the Creator of the world" (Apology 1, 13.4).

You have to understand that the crucifixion appears to be a story of failure. Jesus was betrayed by one of his followers. He was arrested and beaten. He was subjected to a humiliating and painful death. How could he be a true king if he could not rule his own? How could he be the exalted Son of God if he died such a lowly death? You can begin to see why the early church struggled with the death of Jesus.

We struggle as well. Even though we are proud to wear a cross around our neck, we struggle with what the cross actually means. How can the cross be glorious? The resurrection is glorious. The exaltation is glorious. Victory and success is glorious. How can the cross be glorious?

You have to understand that the death of Jesus is both a victory and a success. The victory is over the ruler of the world. The Devil ruins us with lies and murder. Jesus confronts the Devil with truth and life. The cross is also a success because it clearly declares the love of God. Jesus shows love in a way that all people can understand, namely, he lays down his life. There is not a clearer picture of God's love than the death of Jesus. Talk about glorious.

This Lenten season I would like all of you to come to church on Sunday mornings as well as Wednesday eve-

Update on the new sanctuary

The City planning department okayed the new sanctuary on November 7 and the congregation gave its approval to a \$2.2 conceptual budget at the annual meeting in December. After we received the city approval, the architects were able to move forward with the actual construction documents. They should be submitting those plans to the city building department for their review and corrections within the next 2 weeks. That review should take no longer than 6 weeks, less if we are fortunate and they aren't too busy. They will give us any corrections they may have which the architect will make and resubmit. That shouldn't take over a week or two and we would then be issued our building permit. In the meantime, we will be entering into the bidding process to select a General Contractor. If all goes well, we may be able to begin actual construction within the next 8 - 10

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Wednesday Evening Lenten Services

February 6 (Ash Wednesday)	Why do we hang a cross on the wall?	I Cor 1:18
February 13	Jesus vs. the World	John 18:1-9
February 20	Was Peter a disciple? Are you?	John 18:10-27
February 27	Who is really the guilty one?	John 18:19-32
March 5	Jesus before Pilate or Pilate before Jesus?	John 18:33-40
March 12	We have no king, but Caesar	John 19:1-16

SOUP SUPPERS (6:00 PM—NO SUPPER ON ASH WEDNESDAY)

SERVICE (7:00 PM)

Holy Week Schedule



Passion (Palm) Sunday Service:	March 16 (8:30 am & 11:00 am)
Maundy Thursday Service:	March 20 (7:00 pm)
Good Friday Service:	March 21 (7:00 pm)
Easter Morning Service:	March 23 (8:30 am & 11:00 am)
Pancake Breakfast:	March 23 (9:00 am to 10:30 am)

Prepare yourselves for worship by reading the Scriptures beforehand

	<u>O.T.</u>	<u>Epistle</u>	<u>Gospel</u>
February 3	Exodus 24:8-18	II Peter 1:16-21	Matthew 17:1-9
February 10	Genesis 3:1-21	Romans 5:12-19	John 12:31
February 17	Genesis 12:1-9	Romans 4:1-8	John 3:1-16
February 24	Exodus 17:1-7	Romans 5:1-8	John 4:5-26
March 2	Isaiah 42:14-21	Ephesians 5:8-14	John 9:1-41
March 9	Ezekiel 37:1-14	Romans 8:1-11	John 11:1-41
March 16	Isaiah 50:4-9	Philippians 2:5-11	John 12:12-36
March 23	Acts 10:34-43	Colossians 3:1-4	John 20:1-18
March 30	Acts 5:29-42	I Peter 1:3-9	John 20:19-31

God's Stewards are God's Stewards

Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family the church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes. This means that God's stewards are stewards by virtue of creation and re-creation in Holy Baptism; therefore, they belong to the Lord.

When you first hear the words of this principle you may think it's just another example of double-talk. But it's not. Rather it is the articulation of the foundational principle that God is the Creator of all things and that He has redeemed, or re-created, us in Holy Baptism.

Therefore, stewards do not "belong" to the congregation in the sense that the congregation insists only those things done for the congregation are examples of good stewardship. Stewards "belong" to God and, as they mature, they seek out God's will for their stewardship attitudes and practices. They have a right to know what God is up to in this world and to support that work with their time, talents and resources as they are led by the Spirit.

Genesis 1:1 underscores the basic truth that God created all things, visible and invisible, and thus He is the rightful Owner of all things. If we do not have this basic principle of "ownership" in the proper perspective, then we are tempted to believe that all the things we surround ourselves with are ours to do with as we please.

Isaiah 43:1 affirms that God is our Creator and Redeemer. He loves us so much that He knows us by name and cares about how we live our lives. St. Paul confirms this truth when he writes: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Verses 8-10 of Ephesians 2 eloquently state the truth that we are God's workmanship and this is all a matter of grace. It is so comforting to know that our salvation does not depend upon us and our works; if it did, we would never have the assurance that we have done enough. Make sure you spend some time reflecting on verse 10. We Christians have not just been "saved from" but we have also been "saved for," that is, saved for doing good works which honor God and bless others.

*Lord, help us to use ourselves and all that is yours
for your glory and our neighbor's need.*

Financial Updates

Budget 2008

Income 265,100

Expense 265,100

Building Fund

Pledged: 570,000

Actual: 307,823

Youth News

The youth leaders met to develop a vision and goals for 2008. Our vision comes from Colossians 2:2, "That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery which is Christ." Our goals are as follows:

- Present the gospel in a clear manner to the youth of the church
- Help to bring visitors into the group so that they can hear the gospel
- Use the catechism with the youth groups
- Encourage servant attitudes within the youth
- Better connect the youth with the congregation
- Develop a youth committee consisting of staff, parents, and youth

Please pray for us and the youth ministry at the church!

Blood Drive



When: Thursday, March 6, 2008

Time: 2:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Where: Reformation Lutheran Church

Got Blood? We need it! Some things cannot be manufactured. With the American Red Cross, Reformation is sponsoring a blood drive. You can sign up on-line at www.givelife.org sponsor code: ReformWest. There will be sign up sheets in the narthex soon, or call the church office and make your appointment today. Contact: Patti (714) 893-5183.

Web Page Update

The technology team has been busy sorting through a variety of website and church management tools. We found an exciting and innovative technology solution that meets our needs as a growing congregation. Currently we are testing the tool (we are doing our homework "due diligence"). These are some of the benefits:

- **Visitors** will be able to meet Reformation Lutheran Church online, as well as interact dynamically with ministry leaders.
- **Church members** will be able to update and manage their church records, view personalized calendars, receive timely updates on important events, and download media (sermons, articles, music, and enrollment forms). Just think, you can take a time and talent inventory online!
- **Ministry leaders** will be able manage their ministries collaboratively online by communicating with members, creating ministry web pages, scheduling events, conducting meetings, assigning tasks, and recording attendance.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the church as we strive to move Reformation from an individual driven church to a congregational led church. Stay tuned!

