

Lutheran Church of the REFORMATION

Fourth Sunday of Advent Service of Holy Communion December 21st, 2025 11 a.m.



212 East Capitol Street NE, Washington, DC 20003 www.ReformationDC.org Phone: 202-543-4200

Email: office@ReformationDC.org

A Reconciling in Christ Congregation

Embraced by God's love, Lutheran Church of the Reformation gathers, welcomes, and nurtures a spiritual community to love and serve the world in Christ's name.

Welcome to Lutheran Church of the Reformation! For 154 years, Reformation has enjoyed a unique location near the nation's Capitol. We celebrate God's presence in everyone, including the great variety of members and friends who call Reformation their church home.

Everyone matters to God. You matter to us. Reformation has long been involved in social justice and helping organizations throughout the D.C. area, including Samaritan Ministry. We have helped Good Neighbors of Capitol Hill to equip 180 apartments for refugees over the past few years.

Reformation runs an "emergency" food pantry, in that we provide a bag of food (and in the colder months, hand-knitted hats and scarves) to DC residents that contains items sufficient to sustain a family of four for two days as they make more permanent connections toward food security. It is open on Mondays and Tuesdays (closed on government holidays) from 9AM-5PM; please bring a government issued ID.

Reformation welcomes and supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer+ Christians and their families in all aspects of the church's ministry. Since 1987, we have belonged to ReconcilingWorks, a national Lutheran LGBTQ+ ministry. We honor the Nacotchtank and Piscataway peoples upon whose land we live and worship.

If you are new to Reformation and would like more information about our church ministry, a baptism, a wedding, or another interest, please fill out an information card found in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate.

Children are most welcome in worship. The Blue Room, to the left as you entered, is equipped with sound for caregivers. A professionally staffed nursery and restrooms with changing tables are on the lower level of the St. John's building. Sunday School will resume January 11th and is open to children 4-12 years old in our historic Children's Chapel on the 2nd floor. Children's Choir is from 9:45-10am; Bible Lessons from 10-10:45am. All children receive an age appropriate Bible to take home!

An all-gender/handicapped accessible restroom is on the sanctuary level, on the right front of the sanctuary near the elevator.

Reformation is in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (www.elca.org), one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States. It has 3.3 million members in more than 8,900 congregations across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region as well as 27 Lutheran Colleges and Universities, 7 Seminaries, 400 worldwide missionaries, hundreds of Lutheran camps and campus ministries, one of the largest non-profit social service networks in the U.S., and Lutheran World Relief.

🍕 🍕 GATHERING 🏞 🏖 🟖

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Prelude

Nun komm der heiden Heiland

J.S. Bach

Welcome

Consideration of and care for those in need (especially those "at our gate," visible to us, of whom we are aware) is an essential component of good stewardship. It is in the sharing of wealth that we avoid the snare of wealth. It is the one whom death could not hold—who comes to us risen from the dead—who can free us from the death grip of greed.

Gathering Hymn

Fling Wide the Door

ELW 259

Lighting of Advent Wreath

Blessed are you, God of Jacob, for you promise to transform weapons of war into implements of planting and harvest and to teach us your way of peace; you promise that our night of sin is far gone and that your day of salvation is dawning.

As we light the fourth Advent candle, wake us from our sleep, wrap us in your light, empower us to live honorably, and guide us along your path of peace.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord. Amen.

The candle is lit as we sing the following hymn from the hymnal: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW 257, verse 4).

O come, O Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny from depths of hell your people people save, and give them victory o'er the grave.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Prayer of Confession

Here we confess our individual and mutual sin before a gracious and forgiving God. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Gracious God, have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Words of Assurance

We hear God's forgiveness pronounced over us.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ⊕ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen.**

Greeting

These words are a mutual greeting which brings us together into union with our heavenly God.

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

Prayer of the Day

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, and enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

ss ss ss WORD to to to

God speaks to us in scriptures read, sung and preached.

First Reading Isaiah 7:10-16

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

¹⁰ The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." ¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." ¹³ Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

Word of God, Word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm Psalm 80: 1-7,17-19

The psalm for the day is sung.

- ¹Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock; shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the cherubim.
- ² In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, | and Manasseh, stir up your strength and | come to help us.
- ³ Restore | us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
- ⁴ O Lord | God of hosts,

how long will your anger fume when your | people pray?

⁵ You have fed them with the | bread of tears; you have given them bowls of | tears to drink.

- ⁶ You have made us the derision | of our neighbors, and our enemies laugh | us to scorn.
- ⁷ Restore us, O | God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
- 17 Let your hand be upon the one at | your right hand, the one you have made so strong | for yourself.
- ¹⁸ And so will we never turn a- | way from you; give us life, that we may call up- | on your name.
- 19 Restore us, O Lord | God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.

Second Reading Romans 1:1-7

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Word of God, Word of life.

Thanks be to God.

ELW 257

Please rise in body and/or spirit, as we greet the living Word, Jesus Christ, with praise.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Gospel Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

The Holy Gospel according Matthew. Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

Gospel Acclamation

Sermon Pastor Kevin

Silence for Reflection

We listen and meditate on the Word of God. We hold silence for the Spirit to speak.

Following the sermon, please stand as you are able to proclaim the Word of God together by singing the Hymn of the Day.

Hymn of the Day

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven

ELW 265

Apostles' Creed

The text of the Apostles' Creed was developed in southern Gaul around the 5th century from a lineage of professions of faith dating back to the 1st century A.D. It has been confessed by the Universal Church for centuries.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy universal church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

An assisting minister invites the congregation into prayer for the church, the world, and all those according to their needs.

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace, **hear our prayer**.

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth.

God of grace, hear our prayer.

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors.

God of grace, hear our prayer.

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill. God of grace, **hear our prayer**.

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace, **hear our prayer**.

Merciful God, we pray for all who experience exclusion due to sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, race, ethnicity, or any other distinction people would make. Enable us to confront the intersection of oppression in our society, work for inclusion, and make all your lambs welcome in your church universal.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your in love. God of grace, **hear our prayer**.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen**.

Sharing of Peace

The minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.

The Peace of Christ is with you always. **And also with you.**

Please share a sign of Christ's peace with one another by saying "Peace be with you."

Ministry Announcements & Minute for Mission

More information and announcements can be found starting on page 22.

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Musical Offering

We reflect on the gifts we have, and the gifts we can offer to the Lord: our selves, our time, and our possessions. If you would like to make a monetary offering to the work and ministry of Reformation, please place it in the offering plate as it comes by, or, to do so by phone/online, turn to page 19. All gifts are beautiful to God!

O Magnum Mysterium

by Paul Leavitt

O magnum mysterium
Et admirabile sacramentum
Ut animalia viderent Dominum natum
jacentem in praesepio!
Beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt
portare Dominum Christum, Alleluia

O great mystery,
and wonderful sacrament,
that animals should see the newborn Lord,
lying in a manger!
Blessed is the virgin whose womb was worthy
to bear the Lord, Jesus Christ. Alleluia!

Doxology ELW 884

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. **Amen**

Offering Prayer

Let us pray. God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

This portion of the liturgy comes to us, modified yet recognizable, from the 3rd century.

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

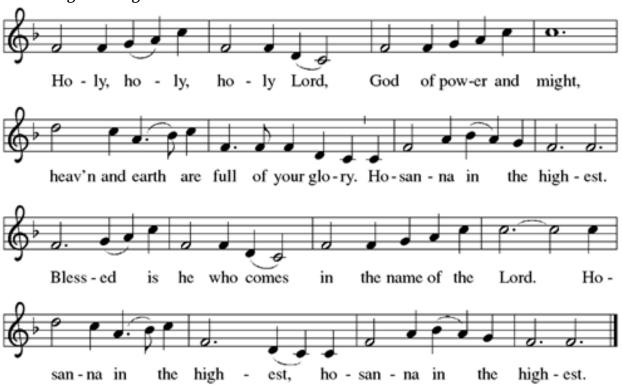
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy

All people join the angels' song.



Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9

Words of Institution

This is the portion of a Christian Communion service based on the words of Mark 14:22-24 and used as the grounds from Jesus Christ for the continued celebration of the Eucharist.

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4

We conclude the thanksgiving with the prayer Jesus taught us. You can say this or another translation you know by heart.

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated.

Invitation to Communion

We trust that God who raised Jesus from the dead to be alive with us now also joins us together in this moment of Holy Communion. Whether we are in the sanctuary or in our homes, the Holy Spirit comes and brings Christ's presence in, with, and under the bread and wine/juice when we share this meal together. You are joined to the body of Christ—the church—through this holy meal.

Lamb of God





Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949

Music: COLUMCILLE, Irish melody; arr. John L. Bell

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Prayer after Communion

Please rise in body and/or spirit.

Let us pray.

God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

ss ss se SENDING to to to

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Charge to the People and Blessing

Sending Hymn

Joy to the World

ELW 267

Sending Forth

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God!

Postlude

Variations Sur un Noël

Dupre

THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE!

Please join us for coffee and refreshments in the Parish Hall immediately following service.

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Your Offering Empowers Our Ministry

Thank you! Supported by your time, your talents, and your financial support, Lutheran Church of the Reformation continues its mission to gather, welcome and nurture a spiritual community to love and serve the world in Christ's name.

Regular donations can be set up at reformationdc.org/give or by reaching out to Julie Miller, our Director of Facilities and Operations, at 202-543-4200 or operations@ReformationDC.org.

Give today, simply and quickly:

Credit/Debit/Digital Wallet



ACH/Recurring



This Week at Reformation:

Sunday, Dec. 21 8:30 am Worship (in-person)

11:00 am Worship (in-person and online)

Wed, Dec. 24th 4:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship- Family Service

6:30 pm Choral Prelude- Saint-Saens' Christmas

Oratorio

7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service

Childcare Available beginning at 6:15 pm

Sunday, Dec. 28th 11:00 am One Worship Service only

Sunday, January 4th 11:00 am One Worship Service Only

Prayer List:

WE GIVE THANKS ...

For those who celebrate birthdays this week: Jonathan Mennuti (12/21), Roger Dahlin (12/23) Jackie Maddox (12/23)

For those who celebrate anniversaries this week: Alesia and Stephen Frerichs (12/22)

WE PRAY FOR ...

The people of Sudan, Congo, Haiti, Palestine, Israel, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Ethiopia.

- The families, friends, and communities affected by gun violence.
- Elder and homebound congregation members.
- The families, friends, and communities affected by natural disaster.
- Disability justice.
- Those experiencing anxiety, loneliness, and distance from family and friends.
- Those who have lost loved ones.
- The families, friends, and communities of various immigration statuses.
- The Anacostia River.
- Valerie Ashley, as she navigates health challenges.
- Liz Tuckermanty, as she navigates health challenges.
- George Hutchinson as he navigates health challenges.
- Clinton "Rusty" Lilyquist
- For all going off to college, that they feel God's peace and presence amidst transition.

For our congregational and family members in military and foreign service:

Drew Shealy, Jon Jones, Kim Loewecke, Matt Oskam, Melinda Manning, and family members of those in service here and around the world.

From our hearts for: Angela Braxton, Carolyn Walker, Emanuele and Emmajean Crupi, Gloria Wolf, Helen Stauderman, Madge Selinsky, Ron Rhine, and Thomas Winter

Please email your prayer requests to adunkel@reformationdc.org

REFORMATION HAPPENINGS

Have an announcement for the Weekly Word? Please submit it by Tuesday at midnight to adunkel@reformationdc.org.



Food Pantry Funding Update: As of August 26th, we have distributed 408 bags of food so far this year. These bags of food provided enough food to feed 832 from 298 households. This is good news, indeed! However, the Food Pantry funding (mostly exclusive to the congregation), has been reduced over time and is estimated to run out of funds by mid-2026 at the current distribution rate. Please read the

update by following the QR code for more details and consider making a one-time or recurring donation to provide food for our neighbors.

Nourishing our Neighbors Update:

The Nourishing Our Neighbors Thanksgiving Grocery Delivery was a success and appreciated by so many! Thank you to everyone who participated in various ways to make certain the 14 families we served received their chosen grocery items and were able to celebrate Thanksgiving with a turkey and the sides and dessert of their choice. Faithful and generous individuals from Reformation donated over \$1,000 towards the NON ministry—thank you! And the volunteers listed here shopped for, communicated with, and delivered groceries to one or more of the 14 families. Your time, effort, and care for these families was wonderful and so appreciated—thank you!

Chari Voss, Kristina Wilfore, Christine Montgomery, Jill and Eric Welch, David Ochmanek, Monica Fitzgerald, Jackie and Terry Maddox, Rebecca Lindhurst and Kip Dow, JP Barringer, Stacey Helberg and Craig Middlebrook, Karen and Rob Cowden

We look forward to continuing to serve our community through the Nourishing Our Neighbors ministry in whatever way the Spirit moves us to do so. If you are interested in getting involved in the future, please reach out to Jackie Maddox at jmaddox2380@verizon.net or Stacey Helberg at schelberg381@gmail.com.

<u>Piece of Cake - This year's 'Piece of Cake' Sales totaled \$1,500!</u> Thank you all for your generosity! Proceeds will support Samaritan Ministries.

Seeking: Confirmation Mentors: We are seeking volunteers to serve as Confirmation mentors. These mentors will be invited to spend time with their assigned Confirmand during their Affirmation of Baptism journeys. The commitment is to meet together once every other month, in person, or on zoom, for 1 hour. Preference will also be given to members over 60 years of age. All mentors will be required to submit to background checks.

<u>Altar Guild Opportunities.</u> Are you looking for a way to become more involved with worship at Reformation? The Altar Guild needs you, especially at the 8:30 AM service. Guild members prepare the sacrament of communion every week for both services, and clean up. Your commitment would be one Sunday per month (or less if enough people can help). If you are interested or would like additional information, please reach out to Sarah Stauderman (sarah.stauderman@gmail.com).

Join our Signal chat for a quick-response hub to support Reformation's mobilizing efforts. This is a space to share information and ways to take action together. This private chat is for our Reformation community– all members must join through an admin in an effort to protect the safety and focus of the group. Join the signal chat by scanning this QR code or via the link in the



Weekly Word. Ask Pr. Kevin if you need support getting Signal on your smart phone!

<u>Community Soup & Support Suppers</u>. In these politically, professionally, and/or emotionally trying times, we will be gathering weekly for a meal and fellowship on Thursday evenings at 6pm. We hope that these gatherings can be ongoing for the sake of sharing, nourishment, and mutual support. If you're able to bring something in a potluck style (particularly if you're a non-federal or adjacent ally), please do so. If you're not able to bring anything, that's okay too. Come out to support and be supported.

Recruiting all instrumentalists and singers! If you or someone you know plays an instrument, guitar, drums, winds, brass, harmonica, etc. or likes to sing, please let us know. We'd love to include your musical talents in our music ministry. Please contact Paul Leavitt: pdleavitt0918@gmail.com.

Thanks be to God for today's Worship Leaders...

Presiding Minister: Pastor Kevin Vandiver

Assisting Minister: Matt Cook

Altar Care: Joy Ernst

Tellers: Karen Cowden, Jackie Maddox

Reader: Alex Dunkel

Cantors: Gabbi Levy, Alexa Newlin, Jacob Mitchell, JP Barringer

Communion Assistant: Philip Moeller

Greeter/Usher: Kiri Nicholson, Andrew Robb

Stream Team: Kirsten & Corey Petree

Fellowship Host: Caitlin Jacobs **Acolyte:** Hannah Fuehrmeyer

Crucifer:

Minute for Mission:

If you are in need of pastoral care, please call the church office at 202-543-4200, ext. 103. You may also email Pastor Kevin at vandiver@reformationdc.org.

Senior PastorThe Rev. Kevin Vandiver, Ph.D.vandiver@ReformationDC.orgDirector of Music & ArtsPaul Leavittpdleavitt0918@gmail.comDirector of Facilities & OperationsJulie Milleroperations@ReformationDC.orgOffice AssistantAlex Dunkeladunkel@ReformationDC.orgCommunity HostEmmanuel Kabasaalaspace@ReformationDC.org

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