



JOY

Lutheran Church

Bringing Joy to the Heart of Rockwall...

The 'Joyful Noise' Newsletter –September 25, 2026

"Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!" (Psalm 100:1)

302 N. Goliad Street • Rockwall, Texas • (214) 716-7539 • www.joylutheranchurch.org

Ladies'
Bunco
Night for fun & friendship!



This Wednesday, September 30th at 6:30 pm.

Bring a dish to share and \$5.00 to play. Our hostess will provide a dessert.

No experience necessary! Invite a friend!

Note: our men are invited to Pastor Martin's home while our ladies are at Bunco – all are welcome.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CONTINUES THIS SUNDAY

Adult Class: "THE FINAL APOLOGETIC" - *studies in Christian community* at 9:15 in the fellowship hall. Class notes are on the welcome table.

Youth Class: "GIFTED AND CALLED" - *Who Is the Holy Spirit? What Is My Talent? What Is My Calling?* 9:30-10:15 on the 3rd and 4th Sundays.



Our next **Young at Heart Luncheon** is on Wednesday, October 14th at 11:45 at *Onassis* in Rockwall. Please sign up on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall and invite a friend to come and share this great opportunity for fun and fellowship!

GET READY! OUR OKTOBERFEST IS SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18TH

Join us for our Oktoberfest celebration after church on October 18th. A sign-up sheet has been posted. Come enjoy a wonderful time of German food, dark beer, fellowship, and fun with our church family. Invite a friend!



LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THIS COMING SUNDAY –

First Reading- Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Second Reading- Philippians 2:1-4, 14-18

Responsive Reading- Psalm 25:1-10

Gospel- Matthew 21:23-27 [28-32] *

** We will concentrate on Matthew 21:28-32 in the sermon on Sunday even though the regular reading ends at verse 27.*



- Sunday School – this Sunday, September 27th at 9:15 (adult) and 9:30 (youth).
- Artists Gathering – Tuesday, September 29th at 10:00 am in the fellowship hall.
- Ladies Bunco – Wednesday, September 30th at 6:30 pm – sign-up sheet is posted.
- Men's Gathering – Wednesday, September 30th – Pastor Martin's home, 903 Windham Dr.
- Young at Heart Luncheon – Wednesday, October 14th at 11:45 at *Onassis* in Rockwall.
- Oktoberfest – Sunday, October 18th after our worship.
- Church Council Meeting – Wednesday, October 21st at 6:00 pm.
- Reformation Sunday – October 25th at 10:30 am.
- NALC North Texas/Oklahoma Convocation - December 12th at San Miguel Lutheran in Ft. Worth.



Leon, Sharon, Jodi, Patty, Tommy & Laurie, Danielle, Fred, Mary Kay & Mike, Mary, Annette & Charles, Bonnie, Rich, Andrea, Helen, Weston, Kelli & Brian, Padyn, Doyle, and Paul.

Sign-up Sheets are on the **BLESSINGS BOARD** in the Fellowship Hall. Please review these opportunities and see where God may be leading you to serve our church family.



CIRCUMCISED EARS – PASTOR'S DEVOTIONAL TO PREPARE US FOR SUNDAY'S WORSHIP

Circumcision was given as a concrete sign to Abraham and his descendants that they were a people set apart and loved by God.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.... Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised..." -Genesis 17:1-2, 9-10

The outward rite of circumcision rested on the Gospel promise proclaimed to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Abraham's descendants. In the New Testament, we receive something even greater than circumcision and the rites and ceremonies of the Old Testament. Luther said,

[God] presents Himself to us in the Word, in the use of the Keys, in Baptism, and in the Lord's Supper... If Abraham had seen the kindness God shows by speaking and associating with us through the daily ministry in Baptism and in the Lord's Supper, he would have died from wonderment and joy. -Martin Luther, *Commentary on Genesis*

Whatever else circumcision signified, it visibly distinguished Israel from neighboring peoples as a nation set apart for the Creator – holy and consecrated. After the Exodus, the Law extended this imagery from the body to the *heart*. Physical circumcision continued, but being set apart and consecrated increasingly meant living with *behavioral distinctiveness*.

Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer . . . The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. -Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6

Circumcision becomes less a marker of ethnic identity and more a matter of *obedience* and *love* for the Lord God. Paul echoes this shift in the New Testament, arguing that “true circumcision” is not merely a physical sign but obedience to the Law – a matter of the heart.

Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. So then, if those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker. A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God. -Romans 2:25-29

Here, circumcision takes on a spiritual meaning: it concerns obedience to God more than the flesh. This imagery extends beyond the body and heart to a third part of the body – the *ears*. The Old Testament prophets repeatedly emphasize the ability to hear God's Word with openness and receptivity, warning against ears that are “closed,” “deaf,” or “stopped up.”

Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people. They have eyes to see but do not see and ears to hear but do not hear, for they are a rebellious people. -Ezekiel 12:2

Hear this, you foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear . . . To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ears are uncircumcised, they cannot listen; behold, the word of the Lord is to them an object of scorn; they take no pleasure in it. -Jeremiah 5:21; 6:10

But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and covered their ears. -Zechariah 7:11

In the gospels, particularly in His parables, Jesus also draws attention to the ears: “**He who has ears to hear let him hear.**” In the New Testament it is Stephen, in his sermon before the Sanhedrin, who makes the explicit connection between spiritual deafness and uncircumcision:

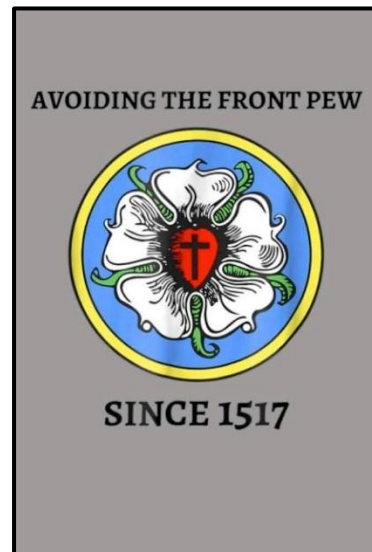
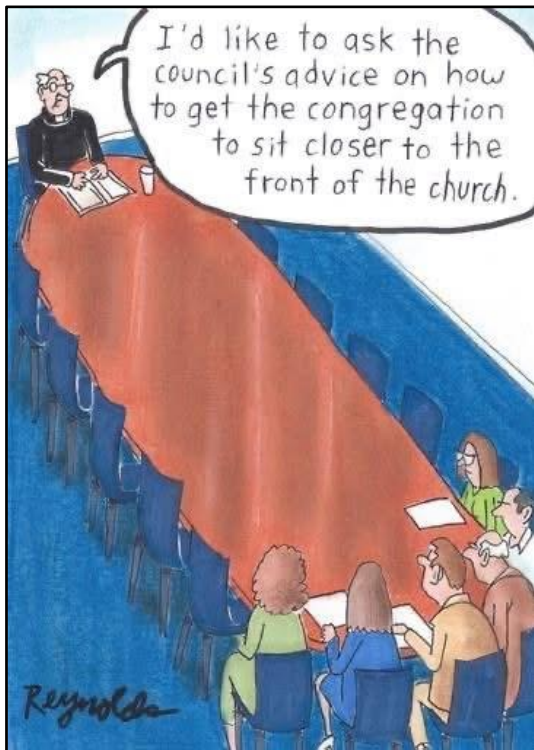
You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! -Acts 7:51

In his *Confessions*, St. Augustine offers a fitting prayer for entering the sanctuary on Sunday or for whenever we open God's Word:

Tell me, in the name of your mercies, you, Master, who are my God, what you are to me. Say to my soul, 'I am your salvation.' Say it in such a way that I hear it. Bend down to my soul's ear, O Lord; open it, and tell my soul: 'I am your salvation.' I will run after the sound of your voice and lay hold of you. Do not hide your face from me. Let me die to see it; for if I do not see it, I shall die. -St. Augustine, *Confessions*

-Pastor Martin

And now for something completely different... (Thanks to Sharon J. for this week's funnies)



"A joyful heart is good medicine, but depression drains one's strength."

(Proverbs 17:22, God's Word Translation)