



**Redeemer Lutheran Church of Leisure World and
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Message from the Interim Pastor:

Times of Transition and Reformation

Jesus said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Revelation 21:5

Dr. Phyllis Tickle (1934-2015) was an academic, author, and devoted member of the Episcopal Church. In her book, ***"The Great Emergence,"*** published in 2012, she writes about the significant transitions and re-formations of the Christian Church, which took place about every 500 years. She quotes an Episcopal Bishop who said, "It seems like every 500 years, the Christian Church has a huge rummage sale."

The first of those great transitions began with the collapse of the Roman Empire in the late 5th Century. With hordes of barbarians overrunning the lands and people of Europe, and with the disintegration of an empire that had at one time dominated and brought some kind of civility to much of Europe and the Mediterranean world, the Christian Church responded with what is called the **"Rise of Monasticism."** The leaders of the church-- nuns, priests, bishops and popes--were the most educated and influential in those days. They helped to stabilize and reshape the church, society, and culture as empires were falling, and Europe began a 500-year time often called "The Dark Ages."

The second time of transition and upheaval is called **"The Great Schism."** After nearly two centuries of debating and disagreeing about some matters of faith, in 1054 AD, the Christian Church officially divided into the (Western) Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church. It was a very dramatic shift in the witness and history of the Christian Church after its first 1000 years, and it was a huge change in world history, too.

About 500 years later the third transition took place. Prominent leaders of the Western Church cried out for reform for more than a century. Dr. Martin Luther, surrounded with a group of clergy, priests, and professors, led the church in Germany and then beyond, in what would be called the **Lutheran** or the **Protestant Reformation**. The significant date attributed to the official beginning of that movement is October 31, 1517, the Eve of All Saint's Day (sometimes called "All Hallow's Eve" from which we get the word "Halloween.") Again, there was great disruption and transition happening in the Christian Church and in the world during those years before and after 1517.

In each of these three historical moments, significant shifts, challenges, and transitions took place within the Christian Church and, at the same time, with the societal and cultural populations of Europe, Asia Minor, the Middle East, and the new lands being discovered.

So, we fast forward another 500 years to approximately October of 2025... now... today. **Is the Church of Christ Jesus experiencing yet another transition, upheaval, re-formation?** With the technological and scientific advances surrounding us, with the world population growing from 6.2 billion people in 2000 AD to 8.2 billion in 2025 AD and with that population migrating all over the globe, with current political and economic shifts, challenges, and changes happening from one day to next, with wars raging, including in the land where so much of our biblical history took place, with climate and environment changing right before our eyes, we are in the midst of yet another great time of transition for the Church and for the world.

And, like the previous three transitional times, the Church of Christ Jesus will emerge. Phyllis Tickle's subtitle for her book is *"How Christianity is Changing and Why."* We are experiencing yet another *"great emergence"* and we do so empowered, uplifted, and sustained by the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit. The people of Jesus' Church will cling to his words to *"love God first and foremost, and then love one another as God loves us."* We will ground ourselves in the stories of faith and the words of the Holy Scripture and discover how alive for us today are those ancient words. We will pray fervently, worship together frequently, sing joyfully, approach the Holy Table humbly, read and study the Scriptures regularly, and give generously our offerings of time, talents, and financial resources. We will be a people in this transitional and reformational times calling ourselves Redeemer Lutheran and St. Theodore of Canterbury Episcopal Church, but even more accurately we will go into these next 500 years as the **beloved people of God** and the **Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ**.

+Pastor Murray D. Finck

The Rev Murray D. Finck, Bishop Emeritus