

MARCH 2023

# The Communicator

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE LIVING CHRIST

From Pastor Matt Helfrich

## Spring Cleaning!

Our Lenten journey is taking us into some of the not-so-beautiful places of our spiritual lives. Many people are unfamiliar with the tradition of Lent and why some Christians observe it, while others don't. Honestly, many people don't think of Lent at all, unless they are referring to something fluffy in the corner of their pocket (lint).

If you find lint in your pocket and you are like me, you pull it out and throw it away. Much like lint, the point of this Lenten journey is mainly to get people to pull the hidden and sometimes forgotten things out. We don't throw them away immediately; instead we have a deeper examination of God, the scriptures, and our lives in order to grow in our relationship with the Most High God.

It is my hope that people won't dismiss Lent as an "old fashioned tradition" but rather a time to grow by focusing NOT on the shortcomings of others or our individual private or professional lives. Instead, we DO focus on our spiritual lives, our relationship with God, our individual attitudes toward faith, our activity in the community of faith, and how well we are living according to God's word.

The tendency of all of us is to hear a high calling to devotion, morality, or wisdom and immediately identify someone (other than ourselves) who is a failure in one of those aspects of life. However, during Lent, God's word isn't pointing at someone else, it is beckoning for us to look inside our own lives, to consider our own commitments, habits, dreams, failures, and successes. God truly wants the church to be a lively community of people who are led by Christ and God's word. So often people in the church are led away by somebody or something other than Christ and God's teaching.

It is surprising just how often I run into people who "used to go to church". I ask them why they don't anymore. About 75% of the time their honest answer is something related to "the sinners/hypocrites" in the church. Whether it is the hypocrisy, judgment, laziness, anger, rudeness, gossip, complacency, lack of caring, or "country club" like atmosphere...they don't feel welcome or eager to return. Instead of being part of the solution, they are the victims, the ones who have been burned, the spiritually demoted, or the impious-unworthy.

So, what does that say to those of us in the church? If we look honestly inside our own lives, we must ask, "am I one of those people who have contributed to the hypocrisy, judgment, laziness, anger, rudeness, gossip, complacency, lack of caring, or "country club" like atmosphere in the church? Seriously, what does that look like and where are we guilty?"

***continue pg 2***

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Find us on Facebook - Lutheran Church of the Living Christ ELCA

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## Weekly Gatherings

### SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:15am, in-person and Zoom

### ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

10:30am, in-person

### TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

10am, in-person

7pm, Zoom

## LCLC Staff

### PASTOR

MATT HELFRICH  
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### SECRETARY

CYNTHIA SWAN

### CHOIR

### DIRECTOR/ORGANIST

DAVID EGGERS

### PIANIST

GREG OTT

January Announcements  
Due March 21

Have you discouraged someone from participating because you don't perceive that they have the right skills, connections, experience, or demeanor? Have we been blind to our own hypocrisy, saying, "We should go out and invite more people", then neglecting to actively do that? Have we chosen to hold on to conflicts and situations that are now preventing us from participating in the work of God? Are you able to stomach the reality of an honest, truthful, and loving answer?

People like to think they are generally good, but under a little scrutiny, we find that all of us are lacking. We all fall short; we all have things we'd like to hide from God and others. It's not joyful or fun to talk about. But, that is the "valley of death" we are sometimes called to pass through in order to discover the abundant life God has for us. We need to come face to face with the truth of our own weaknesses and faults before we experience the fullness of God's grace.

Do you know someone who will be both loving and brutally honest with you about you? Are you able to ask them to help you take a look? Are you capable of hearing them say things in love that might bring you to tears? If not, you need to ask Jesus to soften your heart, ask Him to shine His light in the dark places of your life. Do you want to be the kind of person who is hardened to God? I don't, and I know from scripture that a hardened heart is a heart that is distanced from God. Someone once said, "hard words make soft hearts", like a type of tenderizer. If your heart is hardened, try to soften your heart to God, allow the one who created your heart to enter in and work on some of the build-up in your soul. Reclaim your faith in Christ as something that has its foundation in the actions of Jesus. Go beyond the outer layers of life and join the priesthood of all believers in seeking God and God's ways.

Identify the weak spots in your life. Be determined to allow God to conquer them. Receive God's grace. Welcome others in without judgment or false virtue. Help the world witness real humility and love through your life, love, and commitment to Christ in this place. Join me in ministry wherever you are and let's hang the sin on the cross of Christ and allow Jesus to conquer and lead us to new life this Lent and Easter.

## MOCKINGBIRD

What's the Point? Not Every Story Has a Moral  
Some Days Are Just Terrible  
Sam Bush / 2.21.23

Have you ever had trouble making sense of a particular period in your life? You might try to put the pieces together, but still fall short of a coherent picture as to why exactly your 20's were so aimless or why your first career was such a flop or why you stayed in a relationship for so long.

In our search for meaning, we are naturally inclined to add a moral to a story in order to give it a sense of purpose. Our fruitless first career was not in vain because it taught a valuable lesson which led to a more successful second career. We learned things about ourselves in our 20's that led us to right the ship in our 30's. Failure and suffering are made more palatable if they teach us lessons that lead to success.

Finding a moral to every story pushes us to identify places of divine favor and divine displeasure in our own lives. When people like Oprah tell us, "Your real job in life is to figure out why you are here," our existence is no longer a gift but a means to an end. After all, what good are our lives if there isn't a clear, decipherable point? Within this framework, it isn't long until we turn into scientists, dissecting ourselves for places where God is moving or seems absent.

And yet, the most lasting stories refuse to resolve so easily. They do not preach, but, rather, persuade. Rather than making sense of everything, they show that tying a bow on a story can make it difficult to unwrap and explore the contents. The meaning is not found in a lesson to be learned at the end, but within the story itself.

It brings to mind Peter Baker's delightful essay on the classic children's book, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. For Baker, Alexander's ability to endure through the ages comes from the self-restraint to leave the story alone. The author, Judith Viorst, seems to believe in the guided principle that, when a story begins, it's best for the author to keep their own mouth shut. Yes, a story's shape is determined by the storyteller, but it is far better to state the facts and let the reader put the pieces together.

Take the story itself. Alexander starts his day waking up with gum in his hair and then trips on his skateboard climbing out of bed. From that moment on, his day is full of various mishaps and misfortunes. He doesn't get to sit by the window while carpooling to school; his mom forgets to pack a dessert in his lunch; he loses a marble down the drain during his evening bath. From start to finish, the day seems just as bad as Alexander says it is.

And yet, the sun sets without an upshot. No epiphany brings his life into focus and shows him what he has been missing. No repentance turns him from his own self-pity. There is no moral takeaway, no silver lining to persuade him to be grateful, no one there to remind Alexander that his day could have actually been much worse. In fact, the only solace his mother has to offer (which happens to be the very last line of the book) is that "some days are like that." The day ends as unredeemed as it began.

***continue pg. 4***

Of course, there's plenty of room for readers to draw their own lessons. Maybe Alexander should learn to not fall asleep with gum in his hair or to put away his skateboard. But Baker commends Viorst's restraint, saying she "offers no easy lessons about working through tough days, or tough feelings. Instead she puts the tough stuff on the page and lets us do what we will with it." His own son, who is obsessed with the book, is drawn to "the coexistence of Alexander's boundless foul mood with the refusal of any clearly formulated conclusion about how to respond to foul moods or anything else." In other words, the message does not speak to how things should be, but, rather, how they are. And his kid can't get enough of it.

Many contemporary children's books are fixated on an end-goal (whether it's encouraging your child to use the potty or challenge the patriarchy), but the classics refrain from telling a person what to think. The Giving Tree simply gives everything it has to the boy. The Mother Bunny relentlessly chases after her little bunny. Max's supper is still waiting for him and it is still hot. While many children's books today project an optimistic bright-side to every hardship, the ones that have stood the test of time let the story speak for itself.

Likewise, the story of the Gospel allows the Word to speak for himself. It is not a lesson on how to live, but an account of the one who lived and died for us. While there are plenty of takeaways to extract from its message, there is no moral to the story. The death and resurrection of our Lord is not an event that points to a greater message; it is the message.

Part of the reason why the Gospel is the greatest story ever told is because it refuses to be pinned down into one catch-all slogan other than "For God So Loved the World." Its preternatural ability to speak fresh insight is because it does not bother to explain everything away. There is always something new to discover for those who walk by faith and not by sight.

What would it be like for our lives to be stories with indiscernible significance? What if the point of it all is simply that we are loved, regardless of the ups and downs of everyday life?

The hope for Alexander is the same hope for you and for me, that grace is a tapestry which will not be fully revealed until the entire story is complete. When one has faith in a God who is benevolent and gracious, who has been definitively revealed in the death and resurrection of Jesus, he is not taxed with having to wonder who God is in the day to day or to find cosmic meaning in each situation. Instead, he is simply free to live.

Whenever we wake up with the proverbial gum in our hair, we need not interpret it as a reflection of God's judgment or a lesson to learn. Life being what it is, we may have terrible, horrible, no good very bad days, weeks or even years. And yet, we can trust that God is somehow weaving the golden thread of grace through and through. Perhaps that is the point, after all.

# Council President

*Randy Henning*

I am not sure what to talk about this month, but let me address a couple of things. Pastor Matt has been a big help in solving some of the technology issues we have had. However, we still have work to do on that score and we will get it right as soon as we can. In the meantime, I apologize to those of you that attend on Zoom. Rest assured, we are diligently working to fix those issues. Please bear with us and continue to attend that way or come to church and join us in person.

Secondly, Easter is approaching and we are taking part in an Easter event that will require a lot of help to accomplish. If you can help in any way with whatever talents you might or maybe you have none at all (like me), please contact Cathy Lehr. She can sure use the help in any way you can give it.

Finally, just keep giving support to our programs, missions, and yes, finances as we go forward into the year. There is nothing in the Bible that says serve 100 hours (or any number for that matter) and you don't have to do anymore. Our faith and our commitment to God means we serve where we can, when we can and how often that happens has no limit. We were very lucky to find Pastor Matt in such a short time. It is our responsibility to support him wherever we can and show him how great this family is. I sincerely appreciate all of you and I know Pastor Matt will grow to feel that way too.

May God's inspiration continue to lead us on the path.

# Treasurer's Report

January 2023 Treasurer's Report

<u>Category</u>	<u>January Actual</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>\$10,395</b>	<b>\$10,395</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$14,011</b>	<b>\$14,011</b>
Congregation Coord	\$0	\$0
Cong Vitality Team	\$0	\$0
MISSIONS	\$1,000	\$1,000
OFFICE	\$504	\$504
OUTREACH	\$0	\$0
PASTOR FUND	\$0	\$0
PROPERTY	\$3,198	\$3,198
STEWARDSHIP	\$0	\$0
SUPPORT	\$2,008	\$2,008
WAGES	\$7,081	\$7,081
WORSHIP	\$220	\$220

Total YTD Income     \$ 10,395  
 Total YTD Expenses    \$ 14,011  
 Total YTD Difference   - \$ 3,616

The expenses for the month of January were \$14,011 and the income for the month was \$10,395. We have started the year with expenses \$3,616 more than income. We still have 11 months this year to more than make up the difference.

2023 General Funds paid to missions are as follows:

Central States Synod    \$ 1,000  
 Local Missions         \$ 0

If you have any questions, please feel free to call or

email me. Thanks.

Dave Endorf, Treasurer  
 dave.endorf@gmail.com  
 314-867-2289

## March Nurse's Note – Cathie Lehr MSN, RN



### March is National National Kidney Awareness Month ... March 11 is World Kidney Day

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is a progressive condition in which kidneys don't work as well as they should to filter waste, toxins, and fluids from your body – which can cause serious health problems.

#### Kidney Disease Statistics:

1. 37 million Americans have kidney disease.
2. Kidney disease is growing at an alarming rate. It currently affects more than 1 in 7 (15% of American adults).
3. Black Americans are 3.4 times more likely to develop kidney failure.
4. 9 out of 10 people with kidney disease are unaware they have it.
5. Diabetes is the top cause of kidney failure.  
About 1 in 3 adults with diabetes have kidney disease.
6. Nearly 570,000 Americans are on dialysis.
7. Nearly 240,000 Americans are living with a kidney transplant.

#### The symptoms of kidney disease:

Symptoms may vary depending on what stage you are in, and many people don't experience symptoms until the later stages when kidney failure occurs. However, it's still beneficial to be aware of and look out for the following symptoms of early stage kidney disease:

- High blood pressure
- Swelling in hands/feet
- Swelling in legs
- Weakness or fatigue
- Foamy urine
- Dry itchy skin
- Frequent urination
- Muscle cramps

Diabetes can lead to damaged or weakened blood vessels, preventing the kidneys from filtering waste and toxins from your blood.

High blood pressure can damage your blood vessels over time, including hardening and narrowing of arteries around the kidneys, preventing them from functioning as they should.

Cardiovascular disease can lead to narrow or blocked blood vessels, reducing the supply of oxygen-rich blood supplied to the kidneys, which may lead to kidney disease.

If you have a family history of kidney disease, you may be at higher risk for developing CKD.

Can early stage kidney disease be reversed?

Unfortunately, most early-stage kidney disease cannot be reversed. However, taking action early to protect your kidney health can help you slow the progression of the disease. Take control of your health by making healthy lifestyle choices and speaking with your health care provider frequently to identify any changes in your health or how you are feeling.



## LADIES LUNCH BUNCH



MARCH LUNCH BUNCH TO MEET AT  
THAI KITCHEN

The Lunch Bunch will meet Thursday, March 9, at 11:30 at Thai Kitchen 8458 Lindbergh Blvd 63031. For reservations contact Judy Holmes at 314-355-1125 or mickey.holmes@att.net. All are welcome.

### REPORT ON FEBRUARY LUNCH BUNCH

Fourteen ladies and five gentlemen gathered at Chimi's in Florissant for good Mexican food and lively conversation on February 9.



### Congregational Vitality Team

(CVT) are in the process of planning our annual spring community Easter Event and.....

**WE NEED HELP !!!!!!!** Please consider volunteering to help with:

- Obtain Thrivent Funding
- Purchase Easter egg hunt supplies
  - Prepare Easter eggs
  - Manage Easter egg hunt
- Assist with food/drink purchase, preparation, and distribution
  - Plan, purchase supplies, and assist with cake walk
- Coordinate with neighboring communities with event planning Additional assistance as identified

**SAVE the DATE: Saturday, April 1**

## FIFTY PLUS NEWS

Fifty Plus March Activity

A tour of the **Kaplan Feldman Holocaust Museum** is scheduled for Thursday, **March 16.**

The address is 36 Millstone Campus Dr., St. Louis. The tour is scheduled for 11:30 am with lunch to follow at a restaurant to be determined. The ticket price per person is \$10. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board. Is this too late to be in the announcement section for Sunday? It gets harder every time!.



**Daylight Savings Is March 12**

THANK  
YOU

thank  
you

THANK  
YOU!

Dear LCLC Family,

On behalf of God's Helping Hand, I would like to thank you for the generous donation of \$1,000.00 to support God's Helping Hand's ministry. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and will benefit those we serve in our program. Thank you so much for your support of our ministry.

God's blessings,

Janis Hutchinson  
Coordinator  
God's Helping Hand

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## *Habitat Happenings*

BY BOB FAYMAN

Hello LCLC ... There is a lot going on once again, all around the area, from Habitat on South Grand, Cardinal Glennon Children Hospital, to University City, and up on the bluffs approaching Chain-of-Rocks-Bridge.

**LOOKAWAY** = Suprisingly is within the City of St. Louis, up on the bluffs, above Riverview Drive. Habitat built 7 houses in 2016. Now returned to build 7 more houses. The first of the new design is approaching completion. Thanks to Alberici Constructors the remaining 6 have had basements excavatd and footing poured. 3 have forms installed for basement walls. Pictures are on the bulletin board in the coat room.

**GATE** District = 5 Houses have been built across the street, to the East, of Cardinal Glennon's Children Hospital. They are going thru final clean up, punch list items, and installing fencing. Pictures will be posted on the bulletin board.

**University City** = Selected as the 2022 KMOV Home for the Holidays House still going thru some final punch list items to have fencing installed ... weather delays. Pictures will be updated, and posted.

**Volunteer Orientation** = will be scheduled for sometime in March. This had to be canceled begining in 2019 because of COVID. It is held in Habitat's Main Office to anyone interested in being involved as a Weekday Crew. It is a good way to understand the "World of Habitat for Humanity" ... we used to have eats too!!!

**QUESTIONS** = Talk to me: Bob Fayman



# Celebrate March!

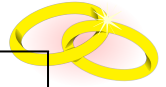
## *Birthdays & Anniversaries*

### Birthdays



Maureen	BUCHEK	4
Dennis	CHAPPELL	12
Elisabeth	NEFF	22
Pr. Matt	HELFRICH	22
Sheila	SMART	24
William	KAEPPEL	29

### Wedding Anniversaries



Rodney and Maureen	Buchek	3rd	53yrs
Dave and Toby	Barnes	6th	60yrs
Levaughn and Sheila	Smart	9th	36yrs
Mark and Susan	Beins	17th	13yrs

### Baptismal Anniversaries

Albers	Glen	2
Kaepfel	William	10
Pierce	Madeline	23
Schultz	Trisha	30

### Council Bullets

- The Bell Choir is recruiting new members. No experience is necessary. Rehearsals are on Thursdays at 6 pm.
- A Lending Library will be in place on LCLC property and will be ready to receive books by some time in the spring.
- Save the date for the next Congregational Meeting – Sunday, May 21 following worship.
- CVT is planning a community Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 1 in coordination with Wedgwood HOA. Lots of volunteer opportunities are available. Cathie Lehr is coordinating the event.
- Volunteers to serve on a Prayer Chain contact Laurie Brown.

# *March Worship Assistants*

## **March 5, 2023**

Preaching/Presiding: Pr. Matt  
Assisting Minister: Randy Henning  
Lector: Terry Calderwood  
Zoom & Slides: Erle Craig  
Musician: David Eggers  
Usher: Jim & Doris Stoechner  
Greeter: Kathy Endorf  
Altar Guild: Karen Haynes & Sheila Smart

## **March 12, 2023**

Preaching/Presiding: Pr Matt  
Assisting Minister: William Kaepfel  
Lector: Gary Brown  
Zoom & Slides: Laurie & Gary Brown  
Musician: Greg Ott  
Usher: Dave Endorf & Randy Henning  
Greeter: Joyce Meyer  
Altar Guild: Joyce Wolf & Ann Schultz

## **March 19, 2023**

Preaching/Presiding: Pr. Matt  
Assisting Minister: Angela Bennett  
Lector: Laurie Brown  
Zoom & Slides: Rod Wallace  
Musician: David Eggers  
Usher: Marilyn Wiley, Cathie Lehr & Gloria Broderick  
Greeter: Jeanne Calderwood  
Altar Guild: Doris Stoechner, Marilyn Wiley & Bill Kaepfel

## **March 26, 2023**

Preaching/Presiding: Pr. Matt  
Assisting Minister: Randy Henning  
Lector: Jeanne Calderwood  
Zoom & Slides: Erle Craig  
Musician: Greg Ott  
Usher: Jann & Glenn Mueller  
Greeter: Gloria Broderick  
Altar Guild: Maureen Buchek & Marjorie Becker

**\*\*\*If you are unable to serve on your assigned date,  
please swap with someone or find a replacement\*\*\***

# MARCH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 6:30pm Girl Scouts	2 11am Exercise Class 6:00pm Bells	3	4 5:30pm Noble Guard 2
5 9:15am Worship In-person & Zoom 10:30am Adult Ed 11:00am True Vine Church	6 5pm Noble Guard 1 7pm CVT	7 10:00am Bible Class 11am Exercise Class 7:00pm Bible Class (ZOOM)	8	9 11am Exercise Class 11:30am Ladies Bunch Lunch (see pg 6) 6:00pm Bells	10	11 10:00am Girl Scouts 5:30pm Noble Guard 2
12 9:15am Worship in-person & Zoom 10:30am Adult Ed 11am True Vine Church	13 5pm Noble Guard 1 7pm Council	14 10:00am Bible Class 11am Exercise Class 6:30pm Wedgewood 7:00pm Bible Class (ZOOM)	15 6:30pm Girl Scouts	16 11am Exercise Class 6:00pm Bells 7:00pm NCOTC (LL)	17	18 10:00am Jost Farms Comm.. meeting 5:30pm Noble Guard 2
19 9:15am Worship In-person & Zoom 10:30am Adult Ed 11am True Vine Church	20 5pm Noble Guard 1	21 10:00am Bible Class 11am Exercise Class 7:00pm Bible Class (ZOOM)	22	23 11am Exercise Class 6:00pm Bells	24	25 10:00am Girl Scouts 5:30pm Noble Guard 2
26 9:15am Worship 10:30am Adult Ed 11am True Vine Church	27 5pm Noble Guard 1	28 10:00am Bible Class 11am Exercise Class 6:00pm AAUW (LL) 7:00pm Bible Class (ZOOM)	29	30 11am Exercise Class 6:00pm Bells	31	

Zoom links for events can be found on our website:  
[www.lc-livingchrist.org/calendar](http://www.lc-livingchrist.org/calendar)

