

"Deeper Discipleship  
& Closer Community  
with Jesus"

Vol. 1



# St Luke's *MESSENGER*

January/February 2019

## PASTOR'S CORNER

"Rescued from the power of our enemies..." (Luke 1:74)

Zechariah, the dad of John the Baptist, was silenced by the angel Gabriel because he would not trust the word of God. After Zechariah learned his lesson and submitted to the Lord's will, the Lord reopened his mouth and Zechariah became a prophet who spoke the word of the Lord. In his prophecy recorded in the Gospel of Luke chapter one, Zechariah states, "God has rescued us from the power of our enemies, so we might serve him without fear."

This is a beautiful and hopeful thought that has a lot of depth and intrigue to it. For as the Gospel unfolds it sure may not seem that Jesus or his disciples have been rescued from the power of their enemies. Jesus is executed by his enemies, so is Stephen, so is James, and as Acts closes, Paul isn't far behind. So what gives? Was Zechariah's prophecy wrong? Or is it only something that is manifested in some distant and far off future?

No, the fact is that Jesus, Stephen, James, and Paul had all indeed been rescued from the power of their enemies, because we see them serving God fearlessly. The "power of our enemies" is not in their ability to kill us, it is in their ability to paralyze us spiritually. When our enemies attack us they win when they derail us from our faithful obedience to the Lord. But our enemies have no power over us when their attacks cannot move us

even an inch away from our faithful obedience to the Lord. Our enemies have power over us if they can drive us to participate in violence and evil. But our enemies have no power over us if we always respond to their evil by embodying the good Way that Jesus taught us.

Jesus told us, "Do not fear those who can only kill your bodies and can do nothing else. But instead fear the one who can remove you from the presence of God." We must not let our fear over death or loss of resources, honor, status, dignity, family, or anything else keep us from our faithful obedience to the Lord. The only thing worth truly fearing is the severing of our relationship of faith with the Lord. Everything else is immaterial in comparison.

Therefore Jesus gives us the hope of bodily resurrection. This means that nothing taken away from us cannot be restored by God if he so chooses. It means that nothing has the power to separate us from God's love. There are no more enemies to fear, they have been made impotent and powerless by Jesus's victory on the cross. Our enemies cannot hurt us in any lasting way if we stay focused on Jesus and his word. So as the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "Let's throw away everything that distracts us and fix our eyes on Jesus."

Pastor Luke



### Worship and Bible Study Schedule

#### **Sunday**

- |          |                                     |
|----------|-------------------------------------|
| 9:30 am  | Holy Communion                      |
| 10:30 am | Food & Fellowship                   |
| 11:15 am | Text of the Week Study & Jesus Time |

#### **Monday**

- |         |                           |
|---------|---------------------------|
| 6:00 pm | Gospel of Luke/Acts Study |
|---------|---------------------------|

#### **Tuesday**

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 6:00 pm | Teaching of the Apostles (Jan 8, 15, 22, & 29) |
| 6:00 pm | Baptism Journey Group (Feb 5, 12, 19, & 26)    |

#### **Wednesday**

- |         |            |
|---------|------------|
| 4:00 pm | Jesus Time |
| 6:15 pm | Choir      |



## Baptism Anniversary

- Richard Vogel (1/1)
- David Sasnett (1/24)
- Jack Wagner (2/8)
- Robert May (2/23)



- Christina Bridge (1/3)
- Marsha Oyer (1/7)
- Julie Phillips-Kammrath (1/14)
- Kathy Sharp (1/19)
- Stephen May (1/25)
- Robert May (1/31)
- Jennifer Wagner (2/3)
- Jeanne Gardner (2/6)

## Wedding Anniversary

- Michael & Judy May (1/3/1971, 48 yrs)
- David & Marie Sasnett (1/27/2007, 12 yrs)



## **Communal Council Corner**

As we transition fully into a new church year, we encourage you to renew your commitment to participating in the purpose and vision of our St Luke's church: "Deeper discipleship and closer community with Jesus." Challenge yourself to make sure you are intentionally learning more about Jesus this year and also working to make closer relationships with those in our church. In addition to the studies offered by Pastor Luke, here are some other opportunities to do this in the days ahead: Join us for a Plaza Lights Tour on Thursday January 10. We will meet at the church at 5:30 and drive through the Plaza to Spin Pizza, 4950 Main St. After eating we will journey back through the Plaza and then head to Crown Center and downtown to see their lights. On Friday, February 15, we will hold our second annual Happy Hour Bingo night. It will held at the church beginning at 5:30. We are asking for a free will donation. Money will go to the Disciple Garden. Bring an appetizer to share and a white elephant to be used for the prize table. Also join us for a workday on Saturday, February 23, starting at 9:00 am as we will gather to work on preparing the parsonage for new residents. Bring cleaning supplies (including glass cleaner) and an industrious spirit! Finally, put the Wednesdays in Lent (starting March 6) on your calendar and make a special effort to join us on a special journey. We will be gathering at St Luke's every Wednesday in Lent to focus on intentional repentance and personal spiritual growth, it will be challenging but deeply rewarding.



## **Disciple Garden Corner**

This last month we met with all the parties involved in the permit review and approval process. It was a good face to face meeting and we are now working with our engineers to address all the comments from the different departments that will get the tiniest details of our plans approved. We continue to need great patience, trusting that God is working this timeline for the good of all.

After our intense drought this past summer, we sadly lost many of the trees we planted this past spring. This is a disheartening loss, but it definitely comes with the territory of gardening. Such moments can be deeply discouraging and can break our spirit if we aren't careful because they confront us with the reality that we are not in control. But such is the work and way of faith in all of life. Jesus teaches us that most will reject or fall away from his message of God's Kingdom. We are called to spread the seed of his word and truth, far and wide, to all we can reach. But most of those seeds will fall onto hardened, rocky, or cluttered soil. Most of the seeds will die and fail. But when the seed of God's word does take root it will produce an explosion of God's beautiful fruit of faith, love, and justice. And so we will continue to press forward, both in planting real trees and planting the seeds of God's word. Therefore we planted another 25 nut trees this past month at the Disciple Garden to help try and replace the ones we lost. And once again, we have no choice but to entrust them into God's hands. He alone has the power to make them grow and flourish.





## Community Ministry Corner

After being present with humans in the utero of Christian education for 23 years (as they near their middle-school 2nd trimester reality of enforced schooling and follow the rulings), I've been trying to put my finger on just what makes us tick, and just what is our problem.

From the KCK library, a line from the 1978 movie, *Days of Heaven* with Richard Gere, near the conclusion: "None of us is perfect. We've all just got half devil, and the other half angel." Videos of interviews and interrogations of sociopaths show the dark, inner, hidden life of the worst of the worst, as they reveal themselves through a quick look of deviance and defiance or a smirk of **contempt**. We quickly distance ourselves from these people we were able to catch in their web of lies, assuming we are the better half of humanity--the angels of light and the "normal" children.

As I reflect on the relationships and experiences of hundreds of middle-schoolers over thousands of days, I can see a sprinkling of everything that's right and everything that's wrong with humanity. That same quick flash of **contempt** (seen in sociopaths) is regularly captured in the disgruntled guise of students who are daily struggling and striving for independence and freedom from authorities. They want the freedom to be who they want to be, regardless of what others expect, request, or demand of them--whether for the good or bad of self, humanity, or creation. It's tough when there's so much right and wrong within each one of us. We are guaranteed to witness both beauty and beast within every individual, depending on a moment or interaction.

But we go on, crafting these human hero stories, about the good in every man, woman, and child. Yet Jesus kindly or abrasively (depending upon the hardness of your heart), corrects us (Mark 10:18): "Why do you call me (or yourself or it) good? No one is good but the Father!" Narratives of commendation, as well as patting each other and ourselves on the back, numb us, soothe us, and candy-coat our realities. Part of the reason I've come to this realization of our avoidance of owning the truth of the **contempt** that lies deep in our depths, is not just 23 years of experience with children, parents, and church workers, but the 46 years of my own denial of self (and not in the good way). The beast in me, the devil in me, has been allowed to remain alive behind the scenes, instead of listening to the call to die completely to oneself.

So I'm grateful for the time given in this life, to reflect and to be silent--to daily look deep into the depths of my own soul and address the devil in the details. The living God is patiently waiting for me to own the **contempt within me** as I learn to surrender every crevice, nook, and cranny of the beast within me (which I allow to deceive me and you). It's not easy to weave our way through into the deeper truths and confront the mistake of denying the contempt that lives within us. The beautiful plot and useful teachings of the movie *UPSIDE DOWN* have helped me continue to confront the tangled web of humanity/angels/devils and my hidden control issues and contempt. I am more rightly directing Jesus's light toward the work needing to be done in myself, as I **truly** allow God to deeply refine my inner impurities and daily allow Him to baptize and wash clean corners I'd rather not claim as part of my own, poor miserable sinning.

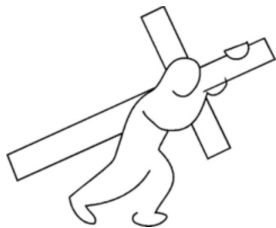
Kevin Dierks

### "Teaching of the Apostles" Study

Join us on Tuesdays at 6:00 pm in January (8, 15, 22, & 29) as we study the earliest Christian catechism. We will explore what the earliest church deemed to be the most important teachings of the faith that they passed along.

### Baptism Journey Support Group

Join us on Tuesdays at 6:00 pm in February (5, 12, 19, & 26) as we gather in a safe and non-judgmental group to do some soul-searching and sharing about our struggles and progress on our spiritual journeys.



Come check out our website and find access to great resources like the church calendar, sermons, online-giving, a full-color newsletter, and more!

[www.stlukeskck.org](http://www.stlukeskck.org)



### **"40 Days of Self-Denial"**

This Lent we will be embarking on a journey as a community of focusing on Jesus's call to self-denial. As Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness, letting go of the world's patterns and following his Father's way, so too we will spend our time in Lent intentionally growing in our walk with the Lord. Each of the six Wednesdays in Lent we will gather at St Luke's at 6:30 pm to focus on a particular area of growth. On Mar 6 and 27 we will gather at 5:30 pm to share a potluck before our time of worship and meditation. Please make every effort to commit to walking with us on this Lenten journey!

- Mar 6 - Loyalty to Civilization vs the Creator
- Mar 13 - Fear vs Patient Courage
- Mar 20 - Self-Indulgence vs Self-Discipline
- Mar 27 - Competition vs Humility
- Apr 3 - Ownership vs Generosity
- Apr 10 - Violence vs Kindness

### **Upcoming Dates**

"Teaching of the Apostles" Study - **Tues, Jan 8, 15, 22, & 29, 6:00 pm**

Plaza Lights Tour - **Thurs, Jan 10, 5:30 pm**

St Luke's Council - **Thurs, Jan 17 & Feb 7, 5:30 pm**

Baptism Journey - **Tues, Feb 5, 12, 19, & 26, 6:00 pm**

Bingo Night - **Fri, Feb 15, 5:30 pm**

Parsonage Workday - **Sat, Feb 23, 9:00 am**

Ash Wednesday - **Wed, Mar 6, 6:30 pm (5:30 potluck)**

### **Metro Lutheran Ministry** **Nov/Dec Emergency Assistance**

- IDs: 12 individuals
- Food: 862 individuals
- Utilities: 62 individuals
- Housing: 54 individuals

St Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
722 Reynolds Ave  
Kansas City, KS, 66101

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