

"Deeper Discipleship
& Closer Community
with Jesus"



St Luke's *MESSENGER*

March/April 2019

PASTOR'S CORNER

"He came to his senses..." (Luke 15:17)

Jesus's parable and story in Luke 15 is one of the most famous, but also most important stories, in the whole of the Scriptures. It is usually and popularly called the story of the "prodigal son." But I think calling it the story of "the lost sons" is far better. Both sons in the story are lost and both need to be "saved."

This story from Jesus is so important because it offers us the clearest window into the character of our heavenly Father, the trouble we have gotten ourselves into, and what it means to be "saved." Sadly, many in the church have "lost" the true concept of what it means to be "saved." Popular notions center on us needing "salvation" from some "after-life" fate.

But Jesus's framework is very different. Jesus understands that we need to be saved from ourselves (our hearts), our current lifestyles (our habits), and our social situations (our habitats). This is a very present moment, today-centered, political, and economic issue. We don't primarily need to be saved from the "after-life" (the "after-life" is just an extension of now), we need to be saved from life as we currently live and experience it. Therefore, we are either like the younger son or the older son in the story. Both are lost and both have wandered from their Father.

The younger son becomes lost by completely leaving his Father's house in order to pursue life on his own terms and to chase his own dreams. He greedily takes what he thinks belongs to him and tries to make it on his own. But he

eventually realizes (while he is alive, not in any after-life!) that everything he has chosen for himself is a dead-end. He realizes that being autonomous and self-sufficient and lord of his own life does not and cannot work. He realizes his habitat (the world around him) is a living hell. He realizes his habits (his choices for living) are also a living hell. He finally realizes his heart (his impulses and desires) are also a living hell. It is in these realizations that he "comes to his senses." He suddenly wakes up to seeing his life as it really is. And so he tucks his tail and comes home to his Father.

The older son has also wandered from his Father's house, but has done it in a much more subtle way. The older son has stayed superficially within the fold, but we find out that he has cut himself off from the Father by his competitive, greedy, and unforgiving heart. His heart has created habits that now drive him from the habitat of his Father's home at the end of the story. The story ends with the Father begging the older son to come back home. But, hauntingly, we are never told if the older son ever "comes to his senses."

This is a very powerful, moving, and challenging story. We need saving, not in the after-life, but TODAY. We need saving from our hearts, habits, and habitats. We have all wandered from the Lord, one way or another, and Jesus is begging us to wake up and "come to our senses." We do indeed need saving from hell, but hell is right now, all around us and within us, if we are not careful.

Pastor Luke



Worship and Bible Study Schedule

Sunday

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| 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 | Resurrection Bible Study
(Apr 23, 30, May 7, 14, 21) |
|---------|---|

Wednesday

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 4:00 pm | Jesus Time |
| 5:30 pm | Lent Potluck (Mar 6, 27) |
| 6:30 pm | 40 Days of Self-Denial
(Mar 6, 13, 20, 27, Apr 3, 10) |



Baptism Anniversary

- Stephen May (3/6)
- Roxanne Deines (4/5)
- Yvonne Brown (4/10)
- Marcus Dierks (4/24)
- Donna Hopkins (4/26)
- Kathy Polzkill (4/26)
- Makayla Deines (4/28)



- Gavin Frazell-Nelson (3/5)
- Roxanne Deines (3/6)
- Makayla Deines (3/18)
- Ann Hauser (3/21)
- Michael May (4/6)
- Marcus Dierks (4/8)
- Yvonne Brown (4/12)
- Joanne Leive (4/13)
- Naomi Glynn (4/14)
- Lisa Dierks (4/24)

Wedding Anniversary

- John & Karen Wagner (3/15/1980, 39 yrs)



Communal Council Corner

In the last month the Council recommended a 2019 budget to the congregation for approval. The congregation unanimously approved the 2019 budget that is almost identical to our 2018 one. In the midst of that approval we must continue to give great thanks to our generous Lord. The Lord has faithfully brought St Luke's through seasons of famine and drought. If the Lord wills it, there will be more of those for us in the future. But, in the meantime, we continue to give praise that the Lord has eased our financial burdens and continued to provide exactly what we need every day of our lives. May we continue to live by faith in the Lord's provision and never become anxious or greedy.

As we continue to try and be the very best stewards of God's resources, the Council has decided to eliminate the church office phone system. The phone was rarely receiving calls and so the Council has decided to make Pastor Luke's cell phone (913-303-0977) the main church phone. If you have any church related questions or needs, please reach out to him. Additionally, the Council is also moving forward with transitioning our newsletter communications to a mostly digital platform. If you have access to email or the internet, then please make that your preferred way to access our newsletter starting in July. If you do not have access to the internet, then please reach out to Pastor Luke and get yourself on a reduced mailing list. Please know that there will always be hard copies at the back of church for our members to pick up.



Disciple Garden Corner

When we started this journey with the Disciple Garden we thought the biggest obstacle would be fund raising. But, boy, we were wrong. The Lord has been SO generous to us and has made the fund raising process of the Disciple Garden a completely stress-free and worry-free process. To date the Lord has given us \$412,759 for the Disciple Garden. No debts. No loans. All generosity from the Lord and his beautiful people. Amazing. Faith can indeed move mountains. Never forget that. Yet, despite the Lord's abundant generosity, he has deemed it important that we do a lot of waiting on this journey. We have not waited on funding, but we have waited on city (and now state) bureaucracy. We continue to inch forward in that process as we are now awaiting State of Kansas approval for the sewer infrastructure. We also have a few small (TINY!) details the city planning group wants to get in line (like wanting parking stripes on the plans). Our prayer is that these final two obstacles are removed by the Lord in a timely fashion that allows us to begin construction as soon as this long and hard winter breaks. We look forward to the construction phase and all new the waiting and obstacles that will bring. We trust that the Lord's timing for the Disciple Garden is perfect. So in the meantime we continue to nurture and shape God's land at the Disciple Garden. We are especially looking forward to a large youth group of volunteers that will be helping us this month.



Community Ministry Corner

There are so many tricks of the trade for the reading teacher, and likewise faithful Bible reading and living. Reading between the lines (and lives of people) takes much humility and practice.

Of first importance is always being present, in the present, allowing God to speak to you. He invites you to read about His Son's life in human flesh first through the literal walk and words of Jesus. But he also invites you to see this truth of Jesus in bodily flesh and blood in the entirety of the Bible's texts--Jesus's truth is passed on, in and through those willing to read and live between the lines. God gives peace, HIS Peace. This is NOT as the world/man gives us, for the ways of the world/man literally and spiritually limit the living Word of God (though unsuccessfully).

When we learn to read a language it requires baby steps. "Reading" is learning our letters, our sounds and consonant blends, our sight words, and using the pictures within stories as clues as to this foreign language (even though it is our native tongue!). Once we have enough practice and mastery at these stumbling steps, then we can turn our focus into fluent reading (orally and silently) and the complex multi-tasking (which is an impossibility for humanity) of comprehending as we read. This process (and all practice into productive peace-filled understanding, performance, imagination, and creativity) has a deeper level yet: INFERENCE, analysis, synthesis. Can you read between the words and between the lines for deeper comprehension and connection and contemplation? This inference is a deeper transcendence in understanding of how to communicate human ideas through our language. Inference can emerge through modeling, practice, and support. The same, and even much deeper truths, also lie within the Father's Bible words, meanings, and metaphors. In comprehension, extension, and inference we find the mystery and truth of God's will and light. Jesus reveals his narrow way in the flesh, in riddles, and as he is ridiculously patient in explanation. We find his grace and mercy when we settle in rightly--completely humble, broken, vulnerable, desperate, and eager--at His feet.

There at Jesus's feet is where mustard seed faith can start for us. There as we seek, find, and share His peace that man cannot give, nor understand. We come to understand His peace only through the compassion and commitment HE offers in relationship. We must recognize our need and the only certainty--there is no other way under heaven by which a man can, or would want to, be saved. So that's where we start. We start again with a basic foundation of prioritizing our individual and collective relationship with God the Father as the head, His Son in resurrected faithful flesh, and His Spirit waiting in the wind for us to become more than a babbling, temperamental infant of the faith.

So I invite you to consider joining Marie, Sonia, and me in being church readers of our weekly Old Testament and Epistle readings. This practice and discipline has completely changed me and is starting to reveal His and my deeper inner truths. Biblehub.com is also a tremendous resource to delve into confusing wordings and possible meanings from Matthew Henry and assorted others commentaries. And with this as a base of learning the basics, we can begin again to delve into the tricky and sticky communication and life of living with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. God help(s) us.

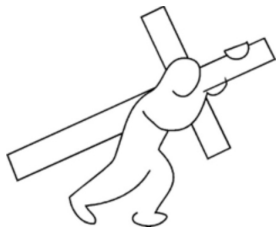
Kevin Dierks

Resurrection Bible Study

Join us on Tuesdays at 6:00 pm during the Easter season (Apr 23, 30, May 7, 14, & 21) as we study what the Bible teaches us about the mysterious hope of bodily resurrection. We will use 1 Corinthians 15 as the backbone of our study, but we will incorporate everything the Scriptures teach us about our hope.

19th Annual Charity Golf Tournament!

Join us on Friday, May 3, at Painted Hills Golf Course (8:00 am tee time) for another fun and relaxing day of golf. All the money raised will go to continuing and supporting the various ministries of St Luke's and her partners! Look on the church website, www.stlukeskck.org, for the sign up forms.



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



DO YOU READ THIS NEWSLETTER?

THEN GET BACK TO US!

Changes are coming! St Luke's Council has decided that we will be significantly trimming our mailing of the newsletter as times and needs continue to change. You will have four options moving forward of how to receive the St Luke's newsletter.

1. Pick up a printed copy at the back of church.
2. Read the newsletter online at www.stlukeskck.org
3. Receive the newsletter via email. If you want to be on the email list then email stlukeskck@gmail.com with the request.
4. Receive the newsletter via traditional mail. If you want to still receive a physical copy mailed to your home then call us (913) 303-0977 and let us know.

Changes will begin for our July/August newsletter. So get back to us as soon as you can!

Upcoming Dates

- "40 Days of Self-Denial" - Wed, Mar 6, 13, 20, 27, Apr 3, & 10, 6:30 pm (5:30 potluck on Mar 6 & 27)
- Maundy Thursday - Apr 18, 6:00 pm (potluck)
- Good Friday - Apr 19, 7:00 pm
- Holy Saturday - Apr 20, 7:00 pm
- Easter Worship - Apr 21, 7:00 am & 9:30 am
- Easter Breakfast - Apr 21, 8:00-11:30 am
- Easter Egghunt - Apr 21, 11:00 am
- Resurrection Study - Tues, Apr 23, 30, May 7, 14, & 21, 6:00 pm
- Golf Tournament - Fri, May 3, 8:00 am

Metro Lutheran Ministry **Jan/Feb Emergency Assistance**

- IDs: 28 individuals
- Food: 937 individuals
- Utilities: 31 individuals
- Housing: 13 individuals

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

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