



St Luke's Lutheran Church Newsletter

"Deeper Discipleship & Closer Community With Jesus"

November | December 2019

Pastor's Corner

"...with their backs to the Lord's Temple and their faces to the east." (Ezekiel 8:16)

The book of the prophet Ezekiel is full of powerful images, mostly of God's judgment. Ezekiel was writing while in captivity in the Empire of Babylon. He was hauled off from Israel to Babylon around 597 BC as one of the first taken into exile. About 10 years later, in 586 BC, Jerusalem and its Temple were destroyed by the Babylonians.

Ezekiel speaks about the injustice and "detestable practices" of the people of Israel that have brought judgment and destruction upon them. In the eighth chapter, the example of these "detestable practices" is the image of men with their backs to the Lord's Temple and their faces to the east. The imagery is extremely powerful. The most "detestable practice" of the people was how they had turned their backs on God (represented by the Lord's Temple) and were looking for help from Babylon and its way of life (represented by facing east, the direction of Babylon from Jerusalem). The people admired and were jealous of the sophisticated and advanced Babylonian Empire and its wealth, power, and prestige. The people wanted to be like Babylon. The people thought Babylon's way of life could give them prosperity, safety, and security.

But looking to Babylon was actually the source of their destruction. It is no accident that the very empire and way of life they looked to and trusted in, was the very cause of their destruction. It is similar to the imagery in the Book of Jubilees, when Cain (Adam and Eve's son who killed Abel) was killed when his house collapsed on him. The very walls Cain trusted to protect and shelter him were the cause of his death. The very way of life the people of Israel imitated to find prosperity, protection, and security was the cause of their destruction.



So what about us today? Is it possible we are like Israel, thinking we are God's people while actually seeking something else? Have we turned our backs on the Lord and faced something else? What have we turned our faces toward? Have we turned our faces to the American Dream? Have we allowed our minds and hearts to be hijacked by the American way of life and all of its many promises for safety, security, and prosperity? Have we turned to face ourselves and our own egos, plans, and dreams?

If we look to anything that is not the Lord Jesus and his Way, no matter how good it is, then we will end up being destroyed by it. The things that we consider to be the most noble and good are in fact the most "detestable" because of how they pull our attention away from the Lord. As Jesus said, "The things that are most highly esteemed by humans, are detestable in God's eyes." So let us turn away from everything else, no matter how good, and set our eyes on Jesus alone.

Pastor Luke



Council Corner

Believe it or not, the end of the church year is upon us and a new church year, with Advent and Christmas, is right around the corner. We have two special services that will mark the end of our church year. The first is on “Christ the King” Sunday (Nov 24 @ 9:30 am) where we will close our Sunday worship for the church year with a special two hour service. Instead of a sermon we will be reading through the entire Gospel of Mark (broken up with singing and liturgy). If you have never heard the whole Gospel in one sitting, it is an amazing experience. Please make every effort to join us! Then on the Wednesday evening that follows (Nov 27) we will be gathering at 5:30 pm for a Thanksgiving potluck and then worship service at 7:00 pm. Join us so that we can bridge the past church year and the coming church year with gratitude and thanksgiving for all that our God provides. Also put our Christmas Eve worship (Tues, Dec 24 @ 7:00 pm) on your calendar!



Disciple Garden Corner

We are excited to report that Terra Dome Corporation has completed pouring the concrete shell of the common house at the Disciple Garden! It is quite an impressive structure. The next step in construction is to hire a certified electrician and plumber to install our water, sewage and electricity in the common house. Once the electricity, plumbing, and HVAC are installed, we will hire contractors to pour the concrete floor and finish the interior of the building. On a smaller scale, we are planning for the construction of a second cabin. Once completed, we will have a fully furnished retreat cabin to host members of the congregation who would like to sabbath at the Disciple Garden. The food forest is ready for planting, the chicken coop is ready for chickens and the goat barn is ready for goats. Garlic will be the first vegetable to be planted in the food forest this Fall and the baby apple and pear trees that have grown up in our on-site nursery will be planted out in their final locations. In the Spring, we plan to purchase baby chicks and begin the search for milking goats. The meadows and hiking trails are maturing into an accessible space for an evening walk, a weekend hike, and an afternoon picnic. We have placed benches in the meadows, trails, and overlooks to create spaces for rest and reflection. As we continue to develop the Disciple Garden, please feel free to visit any time that you would like to see the progress of construction, take a walk in the woods, or to simply sit on a bench and rest amidst God’s Creation. If you have any questions about the Disciple Garden or would like a tour, please feel free to contact Rion (rion.stlukes@gmail.com).



Community Ministry Corner

I will continue my tribute to my boy Micah with some more crossword tidbits. Here are some additional insider info tips/facts that David Kwong reveals that I found of interest:

- Crossword Puzzles were invented in 1903.
- There is a rotational symmetry to the board.
- Mondays are easiest, Saturdays are hardest.
- The tougher clues from one direction (ie. vertical) can often be attacked by tackling the clues from the other direction's (ie. horizontal) answers since they share letters with the clues of the most unknown, unnerving, and challenging clues.
- Black spaces are used sparingly, and in order to ease the pain of words with the challenging letters like the z's and q's present. The five space black blotch is called the "Utah" in the business.
- Names of people with mostly vowels are "crossword gold" and seen on the regular. Esai (3 vowels) Morales is a cast member of NYPD Blue and 'Maeneds' (3 vowels) are devotees of Dionysus...?!!!
- Crosswords are a combination of looking things up AND recognizing patterns.
- Sometimes an answer will need to be changed to fit with the letter patterns of answers as they all are struggling to fit together.

Now, here are some thoughts that are applicable on a Christian level of how we read and experience the Bible and relationships in and with ourselves:

Crossword makers are called Cruciverbalists, which sounds religious. "Take up your cross (like the Word made flesh), of facing the joys and sorrows of each day." - von Balthasar

I don't like the dead ends or the exposure of my lack of knowledge and understanding. I have never completed a crossword puzzle in my lifetime. When the going gets tough, I move on to something else. But the land of my nemesis, the Crossword Puzzle, is much more in depth and requires having and taking on broad and deep swaths of general and detailed knowledge. It requires the rigor, persistence, patience, and desire to look up and research, to eliminate close calls, willing to give think-time, to have stick-to-it-ivness, and even to ask for help. Just like the Christian journey of following Jesus.

And now I have watched this video of David Kwong explaining the art, creativity, and methodical and devious plotting of not only words from clues, but also the deeper themes and word play. As the fuzziness starts to uncloud for me (just like the Christian journey), it keeps you tuned in, it keeps you coming back, it keeps you digging deeper, it keeps you constantly thinking about it, and wondering if there is more and how to apply it to our generations here and now.

Now a few notes about some ministry efforts: We are very thankful to all those who showed up and pitched in for the Fall Festival. We had almost 100 children and adults that showed up for the night of food and fun. We look forward to having even more next year! We're also collecting donations for \$10 gift cards for our 40 kids again this year for Christmas. We will also use some of the funds to work with Samaritan's Purse, creating shoeboxes for our kids to assemble to give to others in need. Thanks for your donations to both give to the kids and teach them the gift of giving to others.

Kevin Dierks

Scripture Study: Thessalonians & 1 John

Join us from 6:00-7:30 pm on Thursdays in November and December (Nov 7, 14, 21, Dec 5, 12, & 19) as we study Paul's two letters to the church in Thessalonica. We will wrestle with Paul's pastoral advice and his expectation of God's judgment upon the whole world. Then join us on Thursdays in January (9, 16, 23, & 30) as we will go through 1 John. This short but dense letter will explore light/darkness, love/hate, and what we are called to be as the children of God.

Book Club: Sent to Forgive & Children of God

Join us from 6:00-7:30 pm on Mondays for our book club. On Nov 11 & 18 we will go through "Sent to Forgive." It is a short and powerful book about a mother's real journey after her son is murdered. Then on Nov 25, Dec 2, 9, 16, Jan 6, 13, 20, & 27 we will go through "Children of God." This is the sequel to "The Sparrow" novel that we just completed. Please talk to Pastor Luke so he can get you a book. If you want to be the lead on a book in the future, let Pastor Luke know.

St Luke's 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 Table Talk — Nov 4
Book Club: "Sent to Forgive" — Nov 11, 18
Book Club: "Children of God" — Nov 25, Dec 2, 9,
16, Jan 6, 13, 20, 27

Tuesday

5:30 pm St Luke's Council — Nov 5, Dec 3, Jan 7
7:00 pm Christmas Eve Festival — Dec 24

Wednesday

4:15 pm Jesus Time
5:30 pm Hand Bells
6:15 pm Choir
7:00 pm Thanksgiving Worship — Nov 27 (potluck @ 5:30)

Thursday

6:00 pm Scripture Study: 1 & 2 Thessalonians — Nov 7, 14,
21, Dec 5, 12, 19
Scripture Study: 1 John — Jan 9, 16, 23, 30

🎂 Birthdays 🎂

John Wagner — 12 Nov
Charles Payne — 20 Nov
Sonia Gardner — 22 Nov
Carolyn Davis — 26 Nov
Cindy Howard — 21 Dec
Jack Wagner — 28 Dec

♥ Marriages ♥

Bill & Lucy Mellott
22 Dec 1964 — 55 yrs



Check out our website and find access to great resources like the church calendar, sermons, newsletters, online-giving, updates on the Disciple Garden, and more!

www.stlukeskck.org