



St Luke's Lutheran Church Newsletter

"Deeper Discipleship & Closer Community With Jesus"

January | February 2020

Pastor's Corner

*"...if anyone will not work, then he is not to eat."
(2 Thessalonians 3:10)*

It is clear that some folks in the early church of Thessalonica were being lazy. Paul says, "We hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies." Interesting enough, those who are lazy are often the "busiest" people. Their busyness is not productive contribution to the good of the community, it is instead self-indulgent and wasteful action that ends up causing more work for others. Paul's response is that the church needs to hold these lazy members accountable and not let them eat, i.e. not let them use the shared resources of the church community. In fact he says they must "eat their own bread," meaning they must stop sharing in the collective bread of the church.

Paul's words here may seem harsh. They also seem like they contradict Jesus's own words, "give to everyone who asks." What if a lazy person asks for bread, don't we have to give it to them? Paul's words are very important because they keep us from wrongly interpreting Jesus's teaching in a way that causes us to be enablers of self-destructive and community-destructive behaviors. Jesus does not say "give to everyone exactly what they ask for." Instead he says, "give to everyone who asks" and elaborates by asking us which father would give his child a hurtful scorpion or poisonous snake. Hence, we are called to give **good** things to others and to all those who ask. And, as Paul reveals, in some cases giving and sharing our bread with others is like giving them a poisonous snake. Remember, Peter and John did not give money to the beggar at the temple door, they gave him an invitation into the healing of the church community.



However, these words from Paul are not an excuse for us to be ungenerous. They are in fact the exact opposite. They challenge us to be truly generous because they require us to be in real relationships with others (like Peter and John with the beggar)—they require us to truly listen to what others need and to patiently learn what is truly good for them.

So let us walk the narrow way of Jesus. On one side, avoiding the pitfall of ungenerosity where we do not give to others because of fear, selfishness, or cynicism. On the other side, avoiding the pitfall of enabling where we give to others in destructive and hurtful ways because we are scared of a real relationship with accountability. This narrow way is difficult, but it is the only path that will lead to life for ourselves and our church. As Jesus says, if we do not cut off the sinful member, then it will lead the whole body into destruction.

Pastor Luke



Council Corner

On January 5 our congregation approved our 2020 budget after a previous meeting on December 15. Our giving was down in 2019 and so the Council was forced to ask some very hard and serious questions about what we spend money on and why. Though it was not fun, we trust that this process of trimming our budget will be good for our faithful stewardship of God's things and our faithful trust in God's provision. What it means for us to be "church" is so much more than buildings and money, it is about people and relationships and ultimately God's word and presence among us. We are thankful that no matter what happens, "God is with us" and his church will prevail against every force that tries to bring it down. We are very grateful for every penny that is contributed to our church life and pray that everyday the Lord continues to bring us closer together and use us for his purposes in Kansas City. As Jesus says, the world around us will know us by how we love each other. So let us grow in that everyday as we generously share our lives (resources and time) with each other. Remember, a little boy once shared his five loaves of bread with Jesus and, through that generosity, fed thousands.



Disciple Garden Corner

The Disciple Garden building is moving right along. After sealing and insulating the exterior concrete, the building was buried in 3-4 feet of dirt (check the pictures). We then laid down grass seed and straw. The basic electrical work has been inspected and we are connected to BPU. The basic plumbing (water and sewer) has also been inspected. The HVAC ductwork is in place. We had 40 tons of gravel spread and are ready for the interior concrete floor to be poured the second week in January. The remaining four windows (seven have already been installed) as well as the two exterior doors will be installed after the concrete floor is poured. From there the interior will be finished and we will add stucco to the exterior along with a series of retaining walls. The basic grading for the driveway and cul-de-sac has been done, but we have to wait for the asphalt plants to reopen in March to finish the drive. Our hope is that Pastor Luke's family will move out there this spring and that we might have our inaugural Easter sunrise service at the Disciple Garden on April 12—if the Lord wills it! We have hired our member Stan Loftiss to be our new Disciple Garden caretaker. Stan is an extremely hard and generous worker who has already given countless hours of his own time to this project. We are certain he will help make this ministry thrive. Talk to him if you are interested in exploring volunteer opportunities.



Community Ministry Corner

Dave responded to one of my sermons, saying, “So basically, we should READ.” Yes, but he forgot two letters. I said my biggest mistake was not practicing and preaching the value of **RE**-reading.

Another author I have read in recent months counters this claim mildly, without totally discounting the value in time spent reading deep and wide.

The author of *The Girl Who Sat in the Dark* says, it's not how much you read, but that you **EXPERIENCE** what you read.

I'm not a big fan of repetition—it can bore me and have me disconnect. Yet giving time and energy to re-listening to books, re-reading books, re-viewing the books of the Bible (even as their very modes of speaking have a tendency and technique of redundancy) is a powerful, challenging, ever-deepening, and EYE-opening process of experiencing the living Word in all of creation and time.

Another teacher tip of editing your own **writing** is to read it backwards sentence by sentence or chunk by chunk. So as we had our first experience reading an entire Gospel together to conclude our church year, consider adding this technique of reading in reverse. It is another way of waking your spirit to the deep truths, revelations, and secrets of His truth that is embedded in Holy Scripture for all

who ask, seek, and knock with all of their heart, life and strength. It will help you see past and through the arrogant human claims of having mastered God's text—whether in your own mind or in the mind of any of humanity's institutions.

One preacher in England who partnered with the discovery and mapping of cholera in the 1850's felt he learned the most by sitting and listening to the people of his day in the pub (*Ghost Map 2019*)....or was it a fictional preacher's opinion in a Tolstoy excerpt? I'll counter this important preacher's real (or fictional) life of experience and insight that saved a multitude of physical lives. As you've heard me state in a few ways, I find much more value listening to those who have taken the time to craft a thought or book in print than those spewing whatever is on the tip of their tongues or the ideas of humanity's mass consciousness (haha), much less those under the influence of alcohol in the local pub. And while I have done a fair share of that in my life and continue to do so on post-softball evenings, the majority of my time and energy is spent reading and listening to intermediaries explaining their interpretations of the greater minds and texts out there. Then I dive into the straight text with the entirety of my time, energy, mind, creativity, and soul that is being ever refined, purified, and made holy, new, and right.

Kevin Dierks

Scripture Study: 1 John & Romans

Join us from 6:00-7:30 pm 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. Then on Mondays at 6:00 pm in February, March, April, and May we will go through Paul's most epic letter, Romans. We will explore Paul's theology in depth and his understanding of God's justice.

Lent: "40 Days of Walking the Way"

Starting on Feb 26 (Ash Wed) join us at 6:30 pm on Wednesdays for our six-week Lenten journey. On Feb 26 & Mar 18 we will begin with a potluck at 5:30 pm. Our theme for the six weeks will be "40 Days of Walking the Way." During this time we will focus on our sacramental life of Baptism, Repentance, and Communion and see how God faithfully walks with us and how we in turn walk with him and each other.

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 Book Club: "Children of God" — Jan 6, 13, 20, 27
- Scripture Study: Romans — Feb 3, 10, 17, 24, Mar 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Tuesday

- 5:30 pm St Luke's Council — Jan 7, Feb 4, Mar 3

Wednesday

- 4:15 pm Jesus Time
- 5:30 pm Hand Bells
- 6:15 pm Choir
- 6:30 pm Ash Wednesday — Feb 26 (potluck @ 5:30)

Thursday

- 6:00 pm Scripture Study: 1 John — Jan 9, 16, 23, 30
- Table Talk — Feb 6, 13, 20

🎂 Birthdays 🎂

Christina Bridge — 3 Jan
Marsha Oyer — 7 Jan
Julie Kammrath — 14 Jan
Kathy Tharp — 19 Jan
Stephen May — 25 Jan
Jennifer Wagner — 3 Feb

♥ Marriages ♥

Michael & Judy May
3 Jan 1971 — 49 yrs
David & Marie Sasnett
27 Jan 2007 — 13 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