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Lutheran Church of Our Savior

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FROM THE PASTOR...

Well, here we are about a month into this New Year. How many New Year's resolutions have you broken already? Or maybe you're like me and you don't make any. What's the point? I almost never keep them. Oh, I do OK for a while, then I break them and everything is back to the same old, same old. I woke up last Sunday and felt much the same as I did when I woke up last Sat. Got up this morning and felt pretty much like I did last Sunday morning. Yet time keeps on spinning, spinning into the future.

New Year: Who cares? Parties; drinks, food, friends, noise makers, watching the crystal ball in Times Square... 10,9,8,7... firecrackers and confetti. I think people party on New Year's, so they won't have to think about how depressing the holiday is. New Year's is one of the more meaningless and depressing holidays of the year. An old year passes and a new year arrives; big deal. All that means is you are one year older, the earth is one year older, and time... like an ever-rolling stream, soon bears us all away. We fly forgotten as a dream dies at the opening day.

OK, I'm sorry if I've depressed you, but nothing is better at that than Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes has some beautiful poetry: there is a time for this and a time for that.



**FOR EVERYTHING THERE
IS A SEASON, A TIME
FOR EVERY ACTIVITY
UNDER HEAVEN.**

ECCLESIASTES 3:1, NLT

But it's all kind of meaningless because life itself can be sort of meaningless. There is a time for this, and a time for that. But what does it all add up to? Chasing after the wind: You get up in the morning and go to work; you come home in the afternoon. So what? Why bother? And where is God in this? God doesn't play much of a role in the book of Ecclesiastes. God gets credit for giving us our days, and Ecclesiastes says God has been busy from the beginning of time, but we can't always figure out what God is busy doing. God is the one who "put past and future" into our minds. God created us as people who know the passage of time, and yet God also created us as people with limits: "They cannot know what God has done from the beginning to the end." God exists, and God is busy, but who knows what God is doing? It can be depressing.

At least give Ecclesiastes credit: it's not only depressing; it's also honest. Sometimes we feel like the writer of Ecclesiastes. We get up. We go to work. We work. We come home. We sleep. We get up the next morning and put on our clothes, go to work, second verse same as the first. We gather stones together, and we toss

stones away. We make peace and then we make war. On and on, and it seems to add up to nothing. It's hard to escape the idea time keeps going in an unending circle. Sometimes, it feels like we're caught in that old song: and the seasons they go round and round, the painted ponies go up and down. We're captive on a carousel of time. Past, present, future; future becomes present, present becomes past; repeat the cycle. We can't return; we can only look back from where we came and go round and round in the circle game. While we're stuck in the rut, God seems to stand above time and watch. But not so!

Christians believe God doesn't withdraw from our time but enters our time. The great message of Christmas is God did not leave us to our own time. Jesus comes into our time and becomes Emmanuel, God with us: in our times, throughout our time. The great message of Epiphany is God does not leave us on a merry-go-round; an endless cycle of just one thing after another. God entered our time. God stands with us. On Christmas we said in Christ, God comes down to earth. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king.

Human history was plodding along in its ruts; that unending cycle of one thing after another, same old, same old, day after day; but on a night at Bethlehem angels spoke to shepherds telling them God is doing a truly new thing; God is coming from heaven to earth and dwelling among us. That was the name we were told to call Jesus: Emmanuel, God with us. Jesus came down to our world to live among us. God came down to our time to live with us! Look at the cross. What could be more opposed to the same old, same old than the cross and empty Easter tomb? Our time keeps on spinning, spinning, spinning into the future and our future is the grave. That's the unchanging nature of things; the same old, same old. But in the cross and empty Easter tomb God says, "Look, I show you a new thing! You are destined for an eternity of joy with me." Then God tells us where time ends up: a New Heaven and a New Earth... a New Jerusalem... when God is fully living with us.

"Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and ... I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

The great message of Epiphany is: God came down! In Jesus God reveals himself as the light of the

world: God's new thing breaking into our time. God's new light shining into the dark corners of our lives. That means by the grace of God, there can be true newness in your life. Since Jesus is Emmanuel... God is with us...don't be surprised if God breaks into the same old, same old of your time. Since Jesus is the Epiphany light of the world... walking with you each day... don't be surprised to find him shining down to give you strength when all you have is weakness; hope when all you know is discouragement; peace when all you feel is war... God likes to do that: break into our world with a new thing. Some of you already know this. Maybe I'm preaching to the choir. There were times in your life when you stood in front of a closed door, a dead end, and then --surprise, God entered. God knocked on the door (or knocked down the door) and you had a future open up to you that you could not have made possible on your own. There were times in your life when you sat alone in the darkness, the blackness of fear or discouragement or grief swirling around you until you thought you had no hope. Then -- surprise, Epiphany light came shining through the blackness. God came down with a Word of Scripture or in the hug of a friend or in the smile of a child and you had hope again, you had joy again...

So, here we are barely in this new year of 2020, joining with the magi as we look at God's Epiphany light to the world. It's not our job to make 2020 turn out right, to fix everything that's wrong with the world or our lives in this new year. The message of Epiphany changes everything. Jesus comes to be the light of our lives. He comes to guide us and walk through the year with us. He comes to be Emmanuel for us, now in this time and right up until the end of time. In the end, when time as we know it is at an end, that ending is in the hands of God. God will bring the earth to its grand finale; God will finish the work He started in Genesis. As we wait, we walk through 2020. We begin this year 2020 with the faith God does not leave us in our time, but God makes time for us, takes time for us, and our days become God's days. ✨



...Pastor Steve Eckert

FEBRUARY SUNDAYS

- Feb 02 - Christian Education Board
- Feb 09 - Linda Bornhoff/Vicki Amaral
- Feb 16 - Doreen Fasig/Art Atrops
- Feb 23 - Crystal Shaffer



MOWING IN FEBRUARY

Feb. 08 - Corey Maddison,
Harold Oliver

Feb. 22 - Bill Williamson, Arlin Weiting



FEBRUARY 2020

- Feb 02 8:15 am Comm. Svc.
- Feb 02 9:30 am SS/Bible Study/Confirmation
- Feb 02 10:45 am Comm. Svc.
- Feb 06 7:00 pm Elders' Mtg.
- Feb 09 8:15 am Worship Svc.
- Feb 09 9:30 am SS/Bible Study/Confirmation
- Feb 09 10:45 am Worship Svc.
- Feb 09 5:00 pm Valentine's Dinner Dance
- Feb 10 6:00 - 8:00 PM - Men's Club
- Feb 15 March Ministry Schedule Due**
- Feb 16 8:15 am Praise/Comm. Svc.
- Feb 16 9:30 am SS/Bible Study/Confirmation
- Feb 16 10:45 am Praise/Comm. Svc.
- Feb 17 Presidents' Day - Office Closed**
- Feb 18 9:30 am Tabitha Quilting Group
- Feb 20 Council Mtg.
- Feb 20 March Newsletter Deadline**
- Feb 23 8:15 am Worship Svc.
- Feb 23 9:30 am SS/Bible Study/Confirmation
- Feb 23 10:45 am Worship Svc.
- Feb 26 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Svc./Comm. (No Soup Supper)**

FEBRUARY Birthdays

- Feb 01 Gary Lange
- Feb 07 Christopher Summers
- Feb 09 William Moffatt
- Feb 11 Kathryn Pierce
- Feb 13 Piper Chaney, Marjorie Hord
- Feb 14 Pamela Schofield, Kobe Tate
- Feb 15 Robert Barraza
- Feb 17 Burnie Slot
- Feb 19 Nona Corvi
- Feb 21 Colin Barraza
- Feb 22 Valeria Keinert
- Feb 24 Jedidiah Allred
- Feb 28 Michael Foley, Keith Struve

FEBRUARY Anniversaries

- Feb 05 Chris & Sarah Allen
- Feb 14 Don & Marilyn Benson

ELDER'S CORNER

The Other Little Toe

Almost eight years ago I had a bout with cancer and went through chemotherapy prior to having surgery, all of which left me in a weakened state. During that challenging time, I experienced the wonderful blessings of being a member of Lutheran Church of Our Savior, of being a part of the body of Christ.

The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12 that as a gathering of believers we have members with diverse spiritual gifts, but yet we are united by the fact that we are all baptized by one Spirit. We are as our own physical body, not made up of one part but made up of many diverse parts, but still serving to function as one body. Later on in 1 Corinthians 12 Paul also asks us as the body of Christ to care for all its members who are hurting. On this subject Luther writes, *"This is obvious: if anyone's foot hurts him, yes, even the little toe, the eyes at once look at it, the fingers grasp it, the face puckers, the whole body bends over to it, and all are concerned with this small member; again, once it is cared for, all the other members are benefited."*

Shortly after surgery, I wrote an Elder article in the newsletter thanking all of you for caring for Susan and me in so many ways; and, that as the body of Christ, you had tended to me, the hurting little toe. So now, I would like to thank all of you once again for now caring for the other "little toe," my wife Susan, who was recently hospitalized after a bad fall. On the day of her accident, many of you stood by in the rain to offer shelter and support. Since that day, Susan and I have received lots of encouragement and loving care in the form of calls and cards, flowers and food, prayers, and offers of help. So now the other hurting "little toe" would like to say to you, the rest of the body of Christ who bent down to tend to us, God's blessings to you for your love and care done in the name of Christ! ✨

...Art Atrops

LOVE-LY SUPERLATIVES

To fall in love with God is the greatest of romances, to seek him the greatest adventure, to find him the greatest human achievement. ✨

—St. Augustine

SHELTER ME, O LORD

There are a large number of children in California that, due to abuse and neglect, need to be placed in loving, stable foster homes. Currently there are more than 62,000 children placed in foster care in California and within that number are 62,000 stories of loss, hurt, abandonment, grief, and sorrow. Who will step into these young lives and change these tragic stories into stories of redeemed hope - one child, one story at a time?



Pathway Family Services, Inc., operates a Shelter Bed Program for the Department of Social Services in Santa Barbara County. Normally, Pathway provides 10 to 12 beds in Pathway certified foster homes for the purpose of accepting youth being detained by Social Services on an emergency basis. This program provides a 30-days-or-less placement service for children who are in the process of being returned home, or sent to live with relatives or other temporary or permanent living arrangements. Pathway's identified Resource Families are on call 24/7 to receive emergency placements into their homes. During the short time the children are in the home, these families provide stable, nurturing, safe, and caring environments until long-term resource homes or birth family are identified.

The basic qualifications for interested parties are:

- the ability to have one parent at home or at least available all the time
- no Criminal Record
- an available bedroom
- an understanding that you are serving and loving traumatized children on a short-term basis (3 months or less)

The preparation process usually takes at least 3 months and include an interview, paperwork, training, background checks, home inspections, etc.

The benefits are serving God by giving unconditional love to children; financial support to allow you the ability to do this; ongoing emotional, practical, and spiritual support, and ongoing training by Pathway.

If this outreach is something you would like to consider or learn more about, please contact **David Nye, Pathway Family Services, Inc., (805) 239-1111 or E-mail him at dnye@pfsffa.org.** ✨

DINE AND DANCE HEART TO HEART

Save the Date for the Annual Valentine's Dinner Dance, February 9 – 5:00 PM—

Join us for a magical evening of food, fellowship, dancing, and fun! Our Junior Youth Group will host the dinner-dance, serving pasta and meatballs with salad, garlic bread, and dessert. There will be music and dancing for people of all ages at personally decorated tables for your dining enjoyment. Sign up to attend, adopt a table, bring desserts, or help in a variety of other ways. There will be a sign-up sheet in the courtyard after services on Sundays, or you can contact Deborah Maddison 937-1116. ✨



STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Stewardship is the expression of our desire as Christians to contribute to the mission and ministry of the church. As we grow spiritually, we understand that serving and giving are important parts of our Christian life. God calls us to give of ourselves through our time, talents, and treasures. Through the sharing of our resources with the needy, we are showing our support and love for them and giving glory to God. *“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers”* (Galatians 6:10). ✨



Ash Wednesday

February 26 – 7:00 p.m.

Worship Svc./Comm.

No Soup Supper

Lent Worship – 7:00 p.m.

(Soup Suppers precede worship at 6:00 p.m.)

Mar 4 Mar 11
Mar 18 Mar 25 Apr 1

Maundy Thursday - April 9 - 7:00 p.m.
Good Friday - April 10 - 7:00 p.m.

Puzzle!

First, write the opposite of each listed word. Then transfer letters to the correct numbered blanks to discover Jesus' messages about love.

cool	1 2 3 4	soft	20 21 22 23
under	5 6 7 8	old	24 25 26 27 28
out	9 10	after	29 30 31 32 33 34
large	11 12 13 14 15	false	35 36 37 38
quiet	16 17 18 19		

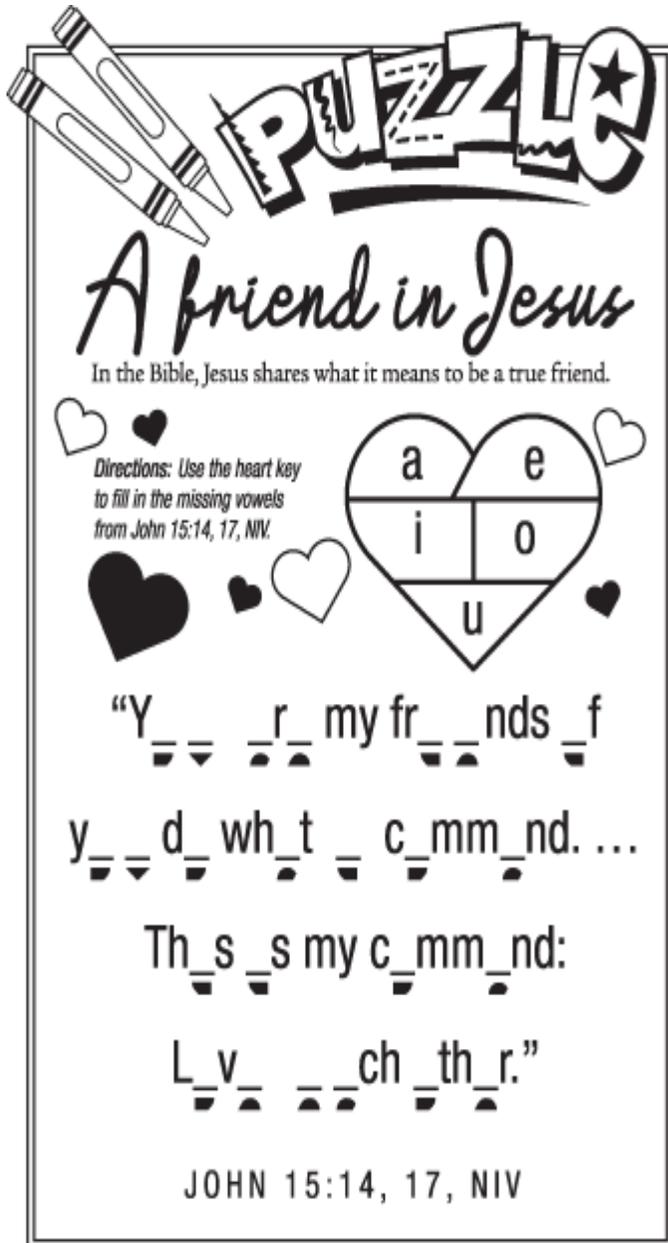
“

14	5	6	7	35	20	7	15	17	36	23	24	5	18	8	28	17	23	
1	9	35	20	2	16	14	24	5	18	3	20	7	13	8	35	2	10	23
1	9	35	20	13	14	16	24	17	37	36	11	5	18	14	2	27	19	
1	9	35	20	21	15	16	24	17	18	36	11	35	3	30	10	28	35	20
2	10	23	1	9	35	20	21	14	16	24	5	37	8	4	9	10	23	
21	27	23	16	32	6	7	24	5	18	22	10	34	9	28	20	29	17	33
13	11	24	25	26	22	11	7	14	31									

”

Answer: warm, over, in, small, loud, hard, young, before, true; “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind” and “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27, NIV

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES



PUZZLE

A friend in Jesus

In the Bible, Jesus shares what it means to be a true friend.

Directions: Use the heart key to fill in the missing vowels from John 15:14, 17, NIV.

“Y _ _ r _ my fr _ _ nds _ f
y _ _ d _ wh _ t _ c _ mm _ nd. ...
Th _ s _ s my c _ mm _ nd:
L _ v _ _ _ ch _ th _ r.”

JOHN 15:14, 17, NIV

Answer: “You are my friends if you do what I command. ... This is my command: Love each other.” John 15:14, 17, NIV

Friendship Squares

This tasty treat doubles as a game to play with a buddy.



What you need:

- Graham crackers
- Chocolate chips
- Microwave-safe bowl
- Zippered baggie
- Scissors
- Raspberries
- Blueberries

What you do:

1. Gently break cracker sheets in half to form squares.
2. Heat chocolate chips in microwave for 30 seconds. Stir, then continue heating for 30 seconds at a time until melted.
3. Spoon melted chocolate into baggie and snip a small triangle from one bottom corner.
4. On each cracker, squeeze chocolate lines to form a Tic-Tac-Toe board. Let cool.
5. Using the fruit as X's and O's, play Tic-Tac-Toe with a friend. The winner gets to eat the treat!

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4725 South Bradley Road
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Our Mission

“Responding to God’s love, Lutheran Church of Our Savior desires to reach more people for Christ by proclaiming Him, by growing in faith, and by caring for all people.”



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday Worship – 8:15 AM & 10:45 AM
Sunday School and Bible Class - 9:30 AM

*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and
only Son, that
whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal
life.
John 3:16*