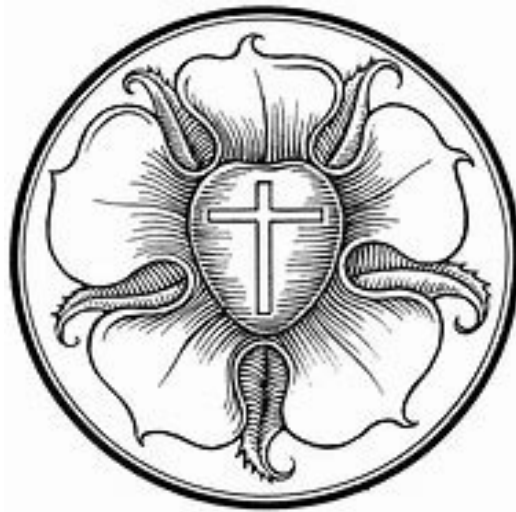


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CLC NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2022



Pastor Kenneth Lentz - 928-970-1313

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“Luther and the Jews”

I attended the international assembly of the American Academy of Religion a few years ago in San Diego. One of the presenters delivered a 20-minute paper on Martin Luther’s view of the Jews. He blasted Luther up one side and down the other because of Luther’s very public sermons and writings attacking the Jews. As a Lutheran, I felt the need to say something. The chairperson acknowledged me and I made the only points I could muster at such short notice. I noted that Luther in his advanced years was frustrated and uncompromising due to grief because of the death of Magdalena, his daughter, and due to his constant physical suffering with bladder stones, hemorrhoids, and chronic constipation. The speaker, of course, shouted me down and that was the end of that.

In recent years, we Americans have become increasingly alarmed by acts of antisemitism. Our synagogues are installing security systems, hiring professional security personnel, and even practicing steps to take if an intruder should threaten members at worship. Some of the perpetrators of hate crimes against our Jewish brothers and sisters are Muslims but most of them are people crazed by extreme hatred of the Jews.

Much of the blame, unfortunately, can be laid at the feet of Martin Luther. In his younger years, he defended the Jews. In his tract entitled “That Jesus Was Born a Jew,” (1523) Luther condemned the inhuman treatment of the Jews and urged his fellow Christians to treat them kindly. Luther pointed out that “...they are the lineage of Christ, blood relatives, cousins, and brothers of Lord. We must receive them cordially and permit them to trade and work with us, which they learn about the Christian faith.”

It is clear that Luther viewed the Jews as excellent prospects for conversion. If the church would only proclaim the gospel in a right way (his way), certainly they would be quickly won over to faith in Christ. But Luther was naive. It didn’t happen. Then he unleashed his strong language against the Catholics also against the Jews. In 1543, in his tract, “On Jews and Their Lies,” he called them “base, whoring people, no people of God; their boast of lineage, circumcision, and law must be accounted as filth.” He urged Christians to set their synagogues and schools on fire, destroy their prayer books, forbid their rabbis to preach, and confiscate their property and money. The English historian and Luther biographer, Roland Bainton, remarked in his biography of Luther, “One could wish that Luther had died before ever this tract was written. (But) his position was entirely religious and in no respect racial.” (HERE I STAND, p. 297)

In the summer of 2017 while leading a group of Lutherans visiting the Luther sites in Saxony, I asked a friend to take a snapshot of me standing in the very pulpit of the church in Eisleben, where Luther preached four sermons shortly before his death. Later I found out that Luther had

warned the good people of Eisleben about the Jews who, "... blaspheme our Lord Jesus. If they could kill us all, they would do it."

Some historians rightly point out that Luther, who was regarded as an authority close to Jesus by northern European Protestants, practiced discrimination against Jews. Therefore, very few Lutherans objected when Adolph Hitler freely quoted Luther over and over again. On the same trip in 2017, I found my way through the Luther Haus in Wittenberg, the Black Monastery where Luther's family lived. The last room housed an exhibit revealing the exploitation of Luther's works by the Nazis. Unfortunately, many Protestants in Germany agreed with Hitler when he referred to Martin Luther as a great warrior alongside Richard Wagner and Frederick the Great in his MEIN KAMPF.

Contemporary Lutherans cannot justify any attempts to apologize for Luther. Luther may have gotten old and cranky and he could have been profoundly disappointed that the Jews did not jump with joy when they heard his enlightened rendering of the gospel. But there can be no excuse for antisemitism. Jesus taught that the poor, the persecuted, and the hungry are loved by God. And so are minorities.

I wish, on that day in San Diego, that I could have articulated the fact that the Lutheran World Federation (1982), the Missouri Synod (1983), the ELCA (1994), and the Lutherans in Europe (2003) have soundly denounced the views of Luther on the Jews. Like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Niemoeller, there were companions of Luther himself in the 16th century who rejected his views on the Jews.

But Luther also possessed a deeply humane sensitivity. He asked the German princes to stop cheating and robbing the peasants. He once shouted from the pulpit in Wittenberg that his congregation should do more to help the poor. He called them "ungrateful beasts not worthy of the treasure of the gospel." He insisted that the cities of Germany establish permanent tax revenue for the care of the indigenous poor, the unemployed and the sick, the widowed and the orphaned. In light of his advocacy in behalf of the disadvantaged, it is all the more difficult to understand his ranting against the Jews. Some have argued that Luther was not a racist; he was only impatient with the Jews because they would not accept his new take on the gospel. He used the same vitriolic language against the Catholics who did not agree with him.

In today's context, we as Lutherans and as Christians affirm that "we who bear his name and heritage must acknowledge with pain the anti-Judaic diatribes contained in Luther's later writings." (Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community, Apr. 4, 1994) Numerically small, there were nevertheless many Lutheran Christians in the years of the Third Reich who endangered their lives in order to come to the aid of the persecuted Jews. In like manner, we too will not be silent when racial slurs and violence are hurled at our fellow human beings.

But there is still one more thing that needs to be said. There are some Christians who support the nation of Israel at the expense of the Palestinians. I support the right of the Jews to occupy and maintain national autonomy in Israel but I do not support racial language nor violence against the Palestinian people. They, too, have a right to peace, security, space, and governance of themselves. There are good people on both sides of the wall. I support a two-nation solution. I do not support violence coming from either side, of course. A writer for the Boston Globe went to Palestine and reported that peace between Jews and Muslim Palestinians could only be achieved by invoking the Christian principles of forgiveness and reconciliation. Unfortunately, many Christian Palestinians have moved to the U.S. or to Canada but there are presently 2,500 members of the Evangelical Luther Church of Trans-Jordan in 6 congregations providing education in four primary schools as well as medical services. Currently the bishop is Sanir Ibrahim Azar. One of our Florida-Bahama pastors, Khader El-Yateem, comes from Bethlehem.

On May 15 this year, I and 49 other travelers in my group will attend the Passion Play at Oberammergau in an open-air stadium at the foot of the Bavarian Alps. It will be interesting to see the scene depicting the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate. Beginning with the presentation of the play in 1960, the script has continually been revised to downplay the shouts of the “Jews” who cry out, “Crucify him!” With each passing presentation, the number of Jews who shout for Jesus’ blood in the crowd dwindles. That is only one way by which the Germans renounce the slaughter of the Jews in the Third Reich. Our own holy week is coming soon. It will be a good opportunity to remember that the “Jews” did not kill Jesus; it is because of our sin that he died on the cross. And he died for all. He died for all children of God. He died for Palestinians, for Jews, even for uninformed and narrow-minded white “Christians” who don’t really understand that Jesus loves everyone. How do we know? The Bible tells us so. Luther pored over the Scriptures. I guess even he had his senior moments.

Your fellow sinner, saved by Christ,
Pastor Ken



IN MEMORIAM . . . DICK KRUEGER

Many members of Christ Lutheran were saddened to hear about the passing of Dick Krueger, who died on January 31, 2021. Dick was respected by his peers with whom he worked for 36 years at Wisconsin Public Service. But he will long be remembered by his Lutheran friends at the church in Englewood. They would agree with the observations made in his obituary that, “He valued organization, was up for a challenge, and always had a plan.” His professional dedication was matched by his labors at “gardening, golfing, fishing, hunting, making jam, playing cards, cutting wood, working in leadership positions at church.”



I first met Dick when I interviewed with the church council and other leaders of the church on a Tuesday evening in late February, 2020. I returned a week later to meet some more members. Dick took me aside and gave me his personal opinion about the situation at Christ Lutheran. Several months later I visited Dick and Barbara at their home in Rotonda and listened to many constructive ideas about the direction and future of the congregation.

Recently, some members have told me about his “Mr. Fix-It” approach to problems and his determination to involve members in his many projects. I learned soon after about his absolute dedication to the sanctuary new roof project. He got things done but always with a kind and gentle touch. Folks at Christ Lutheran will not forget his “egg bake” at ROMEO breakfasts and his tireless efforts to schedule Friendship Sundays. He had a “fire in the belly” obsession with getting things done. He motivated all those around him and inspired many to take on projects and complete the missions.

I am lucky to have known him and am grateful that I and all of us commend Dick not into an unknown destiny but into the loving arms of a merciful Savior. As one TV commentator puts it, “may his memory be a blessing.”

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Ken



CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRY TEAM UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2022

As Pastor Lentz continues to serve communion to those unable to attend church, the Ministry continues to send cards, make calls and deliver altar flowers when available to those who need caring and support. Serious illness among our congregants continues to be a major concern for the ministry. God is good! We encourage all who hear these words to find a new perspective on what is happening in their lives just now. All can find strength in knowing that God is in control. May all find encouragement in knowing that the CCM of Christ Lutheran Church CARES.

In His care and infinite wisdom,
Charlene Seltz, CCM Team Leader

Luau
Hawaiian Entertainment
Hula & Fire Dancers
Live Band featuring Kauai Kanakas
Authentic Hawaiian Buffet Menu & atmosphere

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Englewood, Florida
941-474-1989

Call Fran Kulak for Tickets
978-500-8187
Adult \$20.00
Children 10 and under \$10.00

FEBRUARY 2022 COUNCIL MEETING KEY POINTS



1. The 2022-2024 Congregation Council met on February 9, 2022 and elected the following **Executive Board**:
President-Dotty Berner
Vice-President-Robert (Bob) Cosler
Recording Secretary-Fran Kulak
Treasurer-Barbara McAlister
2022-2024 Council Members include: James (Jim) Jung, Lois Greene, and Joyce Hanisits.
Your commitment to Christ Lutheran Church is greatly appreciated.
2. On Monday, March 14th, a new Bible Study on “*Lutheran Heritage*” will begin. The class is open to all who would like to learn more about our faith.
3. Research continues on the choice of a new organ for Christ Lutheran Church. Altar wall space is a major consideration. A hybrid organ is being considered.
4. The Council has chosen Sat. February 26, 2022 as the date to clean up the Tool/Storage Room at the back of the Fellowship Hall. Lots of volunteers are needed. Work begins at 9 AM. Come dressed to work.

Submitted by:
Charlene Seltz, Outgoing Recording Secretary



Music and Worship

Ash Wednesday services will take place at 5:00 on March 2. Distribution of ashes will be done by cotton swabs, as was utilized last year.

During Lent, the “Hymn of Praise” will be changed to the familiar “Return to the Lord our God, for he is gracious....”.

Masks for Worship Assistants and Pastor will continue to be worn during the consecration and distribution until further notice.

Palms will be distributed at the 9:30 service on April 10th.

Maundy Thursday (April 14th) services will be held at 5:00

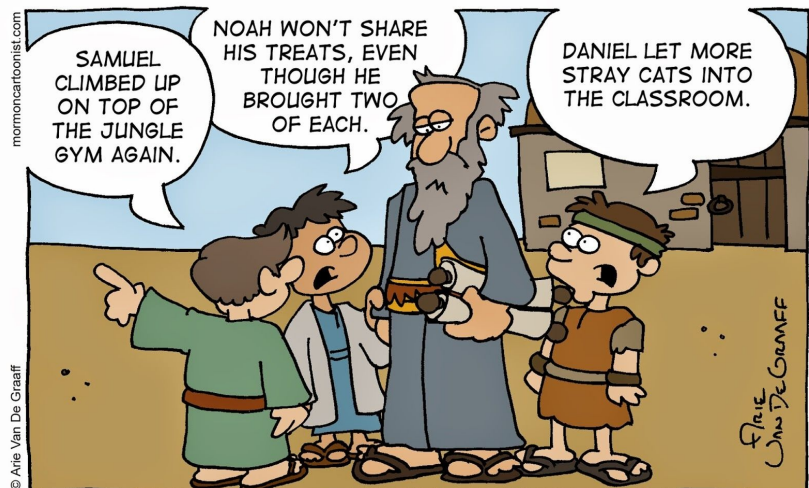
There will be a special, very moving, Tenebrae service at 5:00 on Good Friday, April 15th. You won't want to miss this.

There will not be a Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday, however, Pastor Larry Froemming will hold a brief service at 9:00 before service, at the Gazebo for all who wish to remember loved ones who have passed or whose ashes are interred in the garden.

A new organ purchase is being discussed by a committee. The congregation will be updated on this endeavor as it progresses.

A volunteer is needed for replacement of Leader of Music and Worship. Please speak with Lois Greene for details. She will train a volunteer to take over a portion of this position, while she retains a portion of it.

*Lois Greene,
Chair Music and Worship*



JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE PRESCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS.



**ENGLEWOOD HELPING
HANDS**



THANK YOU for **ALL** of the “Little Red Wagon” donations each week! These donations help to feed and care for our neighbors who are struggling to make ends meet. **THANK YOU** also to Joyce Hanisits, Mary Anne and Tom DiGrazia, Rose Anne and Larry Froemming, and Brenda and Jim Sahlstrom for helping with special pantry tasks during February.

Our next time to assist in the Englewood Helping Hand pantry will be Wednesday, March 16th and Thursday, March 17th. Please call Carol Rice (941-475-1017) if you would like to volunteer. The pantry is open to clients every Wednesday and Thursday, from 8am-1pm.

QUILTING AND KNITTING

Christ Lutheran Church Comfort Quilters and Knitters gather in the Fellowship Hall the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays each month, from 9-Noon. We enjoy a time of Christian fellowship and service. All willing hands and hearts are welcome...no previous experience or skills are necessary. Please come and join us!



Looking ahead to March, a special extended day is planned for Wednesday, March 23rd, from 9am-3pm. Quilting guilds and community members are invited to help us cut squares from our “stash” of material. At noon, a local quilt historian, Patty Butzin, will provide a “Trunk Show”, sharing information about quilts of the past. Please share this information with friends who may be interested.

FAMILY PROMISE



It is hoped that Family Promise (FP) will begin housing homeless families in partnering churches in April. For the past two years, COVID has forced FP to use other creative strategies to help homeless families. During February, Christ Lutheran Church (CLC) provided a meal for a family staying at the center’s temporary overnight sight. CLC is a support church and partners with Englewood United Methodist Church to assist FP.

10 small homes in Venice were recently purchased by FP as transitional housing for their Bridging Program. These homes will be rented, at affordable rates, for one year to qualified FP families. Affordable housing continues to be a HUGE need in Florida, especially for service industry workers and young professionals as well.

KIDS' NEEDS of ENGLEWOOD



Christ Lutheran continues to be a collection spot for new and gently used clothing for kids of all sizes. Also needed are school supplies and personal care products. A large Kids' Needs collection box is in our narthex. Pastor Ken enjoys volunteering during family shopping nights from 5-7 on Thursdays.

THRIVENT

Are you a Thrivent member? Please direct your Choice Dollars each quarter. Christ Lutheran would feel blessed to receive these gifts. Also, consider applying for a Thrivent Action Grant (value of \$250) to support a special project for our church and/or the community.



*Our next Social Ministry Team meeting is on Thursday, March 10th at 11am. All are welcome on our team. Please share your ideas for reaching out into our community with Christ's love.

Peace and Joy!

Carol Rice for the Social Ministry Team



“Adult Sunday School education led by Pastor Ken takes place every Sunday at 11 a.m. after services in the office building.

We are beginning to study the New Testament using the textbook, “Path Through Scripture” by Mark Link available to purchase for \$20.00 at class time.

Please bring your bible and textbook which you may have purchased previously to each class.”



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Sal Basile	03-10
Fran Kulak	03-15
Ella Santos	03-17
Macie George	03-18
Angie Ziegler	03-20
Aidan Egeland	03-23

**If your birthday is not listed,
and you would like it to be,
please contact the office
(via e-mail at ... office@christlutheranfleng.org)
to share your special day.**



Treasurer Report



February 06	69	\$ 3,523.00
February 13	77	\$ 1,580.00
February 20	88	\$ 3,090.00
February 27	<u>75</u>	<u>\$ 2,965.00</u>
	309	\$11,158.00



LUAU

Christ Lutheran Church

Saturday, April 2nd

4:00 pm

Featuring live band:

KAUAI KANAKAS



For Tickets please call:

Fran Kulak 978-500-8187

\$20.00 adult

\$10.00 for age 10 and under

Hawaiian buffet included

**Tickets may also be purchased after church
or by calling the office on Tuesday and Thursday from 11^{am} - 4^{pm}.**