

The logo for the newsletter, featuring the word "spirit" in a large, white, lowercase, cursive font, with "NEWSLETTER" in a smaller, white, uppercase, sans-serif font below it. The background is a dark blue gradient with a faint, light blue starburst pattern.

The Monthly Newsletter Publication of Triune Lutheran Church
“Set Free to Serve One Another”
April 2024

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Worship Schedule:
Saturdays 5PM (contemporary)
Sundays 11AM (traditional)

Ministers.....All People
Pastor.....
Administrative Assistant.....Jan Piskac
Organist.....Edith Schatt
Council President.....Tim Mize
Council Vice-President...Bonnie Piskac
Council Secretary.....
Council Treasurer.....Jack Schwab



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Triune Lutheran Church



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

Siblings in Christ of Triune,
People who invite someone to church can be annoying. They are typically outgoing, overflowing with confidence and dripping with positivity. In the church we often call these people “evangelists,” which means they have a gift for sharing the good news—but I can’t shake my suspicion that others consider such encounters more off-putting than attractive.

Picturing myself as an [evangelist](#) gives me a case of mild to moderate indigestion. Unfortunately, my discomfort is magnified by the sense that this response is a sign of some personal shortcoming or undiagnosed malady. I didn’t grow up Lutheran; I was invited into the church as an adult. So why should I feel such unease at doing for others what was done for me? The ELCA has nurtured and supported me for decades, personally and professionally, so my reaction reeks of hypocrisy.

The problem might be that I don’t have the personality traits mentioned above. I’m not harboring some deep reservoir of extroversion and excitement. But perhaps I’m comparing myself to a caricature, an exaggerated image that overlooks the diverse ways people live out the evangelist role. If this is the problem, then the solution might be to reframe my perspective. If I expand my horizons and sharpen my gaze, I can see the nuanced, distinctive and powerful ways that people share the gospel and welcome others into Christian communities.

Evangelists are in the business of good news, yet many of us are often in profound and severe disagreement about what makes this news good.

This suggestion to expand and reframe my vision of evangelism seems good and right. Who among us hasn’t needed to experience different types of people and styles represented to break open new ways of seeing themselves and their relationships? At the same time I worry that this solution is too quick and easy and that my worries are well founded.

Evangelists are in the business of good news, yet many of us are often in profound and severe disagreement about what makes this news good. For *all* people *some* of the time and for *some* people *most* of the time, an invitation into Christian spaces feels like a threat.

Billboards along highways and the wreckage of past encounters have left many feeling as if the church relies on terrifying threats and vicious tactics to coerce people into pews. (“Better is one day in your balmiest sanctuary than a thousand roasting in hell!”) This has not been my regular experience of Christianity, nor do I believe it is the most common one in ELCA congregations. Still, it would be dangerous to gloss over this reality of evangelism past and present, and callous to ignore that this has been the experience of many.

The practice of theology

Because I find myself amid such spiritual struggles, I find Lutheran theology therapeutic, a much-needed discipline and balm for my soul. This does not mean that theology is merely a comfort for my anxieties, as any good therapy would provide. Nor is theology somehow replacing my relationship with God, putting human thoughts before divine inspiration and revelation, as some suggest when they say theologians are full of fancy words and low on simple faith. No, theology is how I was welcomed into God’s church.

Theology, for me, marks those riverbanks where I wrestle with God and God with me. Theology, for us, can mark out those hard and dusty places where my neighbor and I struggle to sort out what it might mean to love ourselves and one another.

I fear an evangelism that turns welcome into warning. But I also fear that a boring church is only slightly better than a terrifying one. If we strip away the condemnation but put nothing of theological substance in its place, we invite people to a stale and empty tomb with only the faintest echoes of life still reverberating off the walls. Instead I yearn for those spaces where the real sounds of laughter and grief can be felt, where people share what has brought them joy alongside what has brought them low as they do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.

This is not a theology reserved for professionals or limited to theoretical, traditional debates. Instead it is a call-and-response of one Christian to another, a vocation for all believers born out of and received back into our lives together.

The practice of theology is, ultimately, what drew me to the church and feeds me here.

The practice of theology is, ultimately, what drew me to the church and feeds me here. Theology was alive in my [campus ministry](#) experience, filled with awkward invitations to pizza and fumbling attempts to feed others in body and spirit with the things I had been given. Theology showed up in late-night conversations on dingy dorm couches and the dawning awareness that acquaintances I had kept at a distance were eager to draw near in times of excitement or fear.

Theology helps to sustain spaces that are incomplete. Curiosity can lead us to knowledge and confusion. Doubt can invite humility or indecision. Passion for justice can drive us to build others up and tear them down. This has been good news for me as I approach the Christian life with fear and trembling, striving for honesty, courage and gratitude.

For my own persnickety reasons I’d rather not call this evangelism. Still, I’m happy to share it with others, particularly as they put up with my persnickety self. I have been comforted and afflicted, and I hope that my sharing brings others the right measure of comfort and affliction. Because theology is about the God who matters, sharing with others what matters is a gift, bestowed as we all seek to live out our relationships in faith and love.



[Anthony Bateza](#)

Anthony Bateza is an associate professor of religion at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn., and an ELCA pastor.

We ask you to keep the following siblings in Christ in your prayers:

**Niki Grigsby
John Kurtz
Phil Pesko
Bonnie Piskac
Kyle Schwab**

**Annie Slaughter
Carol Szendel
Mardell Weiss
Clara Wilcox**



If you wish to send any cards, please send them, or drop them off, to the church office, and we will be sure to deliver them.



2nd Dave Schatt
8th Tina Schwab
10th Bonnie Piskac
15th Kyle Schwab

The Monday Discussion Group

Our next round of discussions, beginning Monday, March 25, at 1 PM, will focus on the second part of the book of Daniel, DANIEL'S PROPHETIC VISIONS.

New participants are always welcome!



Solar Eclipse on April 8, 2024

Earth Day on April 22, 2024



APRIL 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 WORSHIP <u>@11 AM</u> SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER	8 Bible Study @ 1pm	9 AA @ 7pm	10	11 AA @ 8 pm	12	13
14 WORSHIP <u>@11 AM</u> THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER	15 Bible Study @ 1pm	16 AA @ 7pm	17	18 AA @ 8 pm	19	20
21 WORSHIP <u>@11 AM</u> FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER	22 Bible Study @ 1pm	23 AA @ 7pm	24	25 AA @ 8 pm	26	27
28 WORSHIP <u>@11 AM</u> FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER	29 Bible Study @ 1pm	30 AA @ 7pm				