



spirit

NEWSLETTER

The Monthly Newsletter Publication of Triune Lutheran Church *“Set Free to Serve One Another”* *September 2019*

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Office Hours:

Monday & Wednesday, 10AM-1PM

Worship Schedule:

Saturdays 5PM (contemporary)

Sundays 11AM (traditional)

Ministers.....All People

Pastor.....Brad Ross

Administrative Assistant.....Jan Piskac

Organist.....Edith Schatt

Council President.....Dale Kirk

Council Vice-President.....Bonnie Piskac

Council Secretary.....Bill Weidman

Council Treasurer.....Jack Schwab

Sisters & brothers in Christ,

You may not have realized it, but last month our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America held, what they call, their Churchwide Assembly. *Churchwide*, meaning, exactly that: the entire ELCA represented by congregation members, synods' staff, volunteers and more from Florida to Alaska, Maine to California...well, you get the picture. Several hundred Lutherans called Milwaukee, Wisconsin, home for a week to worship, pray, as well as discuss important issues affecting not just the church, but our nation and the world. You are encouraged to check out the ELCA (elca.org) and Living Lutheran (livinglutheran.org) websites for more information, but some of the highlights include the following:

- adopted the social statement “Faith, Sexism and Justice: A Call to Action” and its implementing resolutions
- April Larson, the first woman bishop in the ELCA, called the assembly’s attention to the fiftieth anniversary of the ordination of women, the fortieth anniversary of women of color and the tenth anniversary of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly’s vote to remove barriers to ordination for people in same-gender marriages.
- Elizabeth Eaton (northeastern Ohio native) was re-elected on the first ballot as presiding bishop
- A “Declaration to People of African Descent” was presented to representatives of the African Descent Lutheran Association. The declaration was offered by members of the working group established by the ELCA Church Council to develop a document that expresses a confession of this church’s bondage to the sins of slavery, racism, discrimination, white supremacy and quietism, and begins the work of repentance. Lamont Wells, president of the African Descent Lutheran Association said, “We...can receive this apology as a divine mark of repentance



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Triune Lutheran Church



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

that serves as a catalyst for change. We cannot receive this apology simply as a cheap indulgence to clear the conscience of our oppressors.” Voting members adopted resolutions to condemn white supremacy and to commemorate June 17 as a day of repentance in the ELCA for the martyrdom of the Emanuel 9—the nine people who were shot and killed June 17, 2015, during a Bible study at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C.

- Voted for the adoption of a memorial making the ELCA a sanctuary church body. The ELCA is the first North American denomination to declare itself a sanctuary church body.
- Around 750 Lutherans, including voting members and community members, walked to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement office to host a prayer vigil advocating for migrant families.

Suffice it to say, the last couple of points may raise some eye-brows. Again, you are encouraged to read, for yourself, more explanations from our Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, through the ELCA website, as well as our Northeastern Ohio Synod Bishop, Abraham Allende, through their website (neos-elca.org). Nevertheless, the actions taken by the Churchwide Assembly in making the ELCA a sanctuary church body does not mean each individual congregation becomes a “sanctuary church,” whereby we are required to open our doors to refugees, asylum-seekers, immigrants, or even “local” homeless, destitute, etc., in order to remain part of the ELCA.

This simply, yet powerfully, reinforces our commitment to being followers of the One who welcomed the stranger, lifted up Samaritans, was impressed by the faith of Canaanite women, and carried out a rather consistent Scriptural tradition of going out of one’s way to show hospitality to the “alien,” as they were called. It may bother some of us, but the Lutheran church has already been doing such work through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (lirs.org), for example, since World War II. Along the way, we recognized how we bring ministry to life in general is not limited to people of our respective congregations, but the “other”: the others in our local communities, nation, and the whole world; the whole world God died for and continues to live for and still considers the divine’s own.

Regardless, each congregation still gets to determine how best they can do ministry with the people and resources they have to share. Some congregations have already declared themselves sanctuary churches, even before the Churchwide vote. Some offer financial assistance, furniture, food to refugees. Some focus on helping those locally through homeless shelters. Some put together personal aid kits through Lutheran World Relief to be distributed who-knows-where around the world, as we are doing at Triune. Each congregation is blessed with something to offer, and we get to continually walk with God, following our still-Risen Lord, in discerning the path that is not only best for us, but for as many of God’s children as we can impact for the better.

I want to leave you with some comments (on the page below) that were posted on the ELCA Facebook page after the Churchwide Assembly’s decision to adopt the memorial to make the ELCA a sanctuary church body was made public. Who knows what this may do for people’s trust and respect for the church? We may not agree on all such issues that were discussed in Milwaukee, but it looks like we’re part of a church that doesn’t stay on sideline, around tables in meeting rooms. We believe it is “God’s Work,” still to be done with Holy Spirit-empowered “Our Hands.”

In Christ,
Pastor Brad



Please mark your calendars ahead of time for our next congregational meeting, which will be Sunday, November 10. We hope to do this, as we have done recently, with a potluck dinner around 5pm with the meeting starting thereafter. More information will be provided in our October newsletter. We hope you can make it!



Lisa LiVolsi I was giving up hope that there were any True Christians out there. Well done!

Like · Reply · 3d



76

↳ 6 Replies



Danny Gallegos As an atheist I commend you Lutherans - you've restored some of my faith in religion

Like · Reply · 3d



420

↳ 38 Replies



Mike Gaughan Well I had given up on churches in America but if this is real, maybe the compassion of Christ survives in American Christianity somewhere. I might even look for one of these churches in N.J. I am skeptical but super interested.

Like · Reply · 3d



15



Shannon Medrano

Oh you mean a church actually doing what it s suppose to be doing following the Bible. Tht isn't radical... Tht is keeping it real!!!

2d Like Reply



11



Donna Mitchell

Finally, a church speaks! Perhaps Christianity really exists after all? Thank you Lutherans!

5h Like Reply



Morgan Mo Heldman

I need to look into what Lutherans believe because I might be one.

2d Like Reply



45



Stacey Gala

Finally! Seeing the church respond as Christ commanded. Hope more follow their brave and noble and Christ like lead.

1d Like Reply



Dianne Combs Daniels

A church acting with compassion & kindness? I didn't think it was possible. The Lutherans have my respect.

2d Like Reply



25



Heather Hoey Finn

Looks like somebody is finally reading their bible.

2d Like Reply



11



Jennifer Hemrich Bates

I think I just became a Lutheran.

2d Like Reply



Mary Davolt Simmons

Now that is what Christian is all about. Thank you.

1d Like Reply



Audrey Peters Gomez

Yes, because that IS what Jesus would do.

1d Like Reply



Amanda Bolles Hendren

Good on you! True humanitarians! True Christians!

2d Like Reply



Julia Davis As taught in Sunday school, Jesus loves the little children. All the children of the world.

Like · Reply · 3d



1



Lori Sanzari Titner Wow! looks like some evangelicals actually understand what Jesus was preaching about.

Like · Reply · 3d



4



Roana Oxana It makes me so happy to read through these comments who have nothing but positive thoughts, maybe there is hope for humanity.

Like · Reply · 3d · Edited



2



We ask you to keep the following sisters and brothers in Christ in your prayers:

Jenny Adams
Bev Deitrick
Cathy Gallagher
Richard Jakubcin
John Kurtz
Jean Kurtz
Joann Loede
Matt Loede

Mary Phillips
Hazel Schwab
George Tomaselli
Branko Tomic
Martha Wasson
Trudy Weidman
Clara Wilcox
Dave 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.

- 1st Becky Murphy
- 3rd Elaine Siggelkow
- 5th Irene Jakubcin
- 16th Edith Schatt
- 25th Tim Mize
- 27th Hazel Schwab



- 17 Aaron Bailey
- 19 Jack Bailey

DO YOU EVER WONDER...?

If God created everything, did He create evil?
Why doesn't God eliminate suffering and evil?
Why do good people suffer?



Monday discussion group will address some tough questions as we work our way through a book titled SUFFERING AND EVIL by Bruce Bickel and Stan Jantz.

Join us as we begin on Monday, Sept. 9, in the fellowship hall. (We will not meet on Labor Day.)



Lutheran World Relief

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

For the month of September, we ask you to take part in our next congregational service project dedicated to the world-wide ministry of Lutheran World Relief. Just so we remember:

Founded by Lutherans in the United States at the end of World War II, grounded in Lutheran theology and building on decades of experience, Lutheran World Relief tackles global poverty by helping people adapt to the challenges that threaten their livelihoods and well-being.

We work with people based on need, regardless of race, religion or nationality and we do not evangelize.

We provide aid in emergencies and help families restore their lives. We partner with communities to build and grow rural economies. We break the cycle of poverty, so families and communities can thrive.

Our goal is to help people build self-sufficiency and create new community-owned approaches to problem-solving that will last long after our projects end.

- lwr.org

We will be putting together personal care (health) kits, collecting towels, bars of soap, toothbrushes, combs and nail clippers. We are hoping to put together 50 of these kits, which will be shipped anywhere around the world for those in need. There are sign-up sheets in the narthex area, where you can sign-up for sets of ten of such items. We ask you have all such items in by **Sunday, September 29**, before they are shipped in early October. So be on the look-out for the following (the list below is what will comprise one kit):

- 1 light-weight bath-size towel (20" X 40" to 52" X 27")
- 2 or 3 bath size bars (4 to 5 oz.) of soap, any brand, in the original wrapping (total of 8 to 9 oz. of soap)
- 1 adult-size toothbrush in its original wrapping
- 1 sturdy comb (no picks or fine-toothed combs), removing packaging
- 1 metal nail clipper (attached file), removing packaging



Strength in Prayer

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church is located in the heart of Lebanon, Pa., a small postindustrial city whose major steel plant closed in the 1980s. Two years into her ministry there, Gretchen Ierien officiated at the funeral of a 49-year-old member who had died from a rare form of cancer. The next week, five people told her they were diagnosed with different forms of cancer.

“I realized right away that this was not normal,” said Ierien, now in her fifth year with the congregation. “In fact, members of Holy Trinity started sharing information with each other, and we realized that Lebanon was a ‘cancer cluster’ ” (a greater than expected number of cancer cases within a group of people in a geographic area over a period of time).

This led Holy Trinity to form the Healing Grace Ministry for people living with cancer and their loved ones. “It’s the one ministry of this congregation that I hope will not grow because it means that no more members are suffering,” Ierien said.

Time for silent [prayer](#) is central to the group’s gatherings. “Often we hold up the story of the transfiguration as a prayer visual,” she said. “We metaphorically join Christ on that mountaintop and bathe in the love and light of Christ. We visualize the brilliance of God entering into our bodies, down into the cancer cells and dissolving them from our bodies. As Christ descends from the mountaintop and onto the ultimate act of healing, we, too, are filled with courage for the healing regimens set before us.”

Monique Derfler has been active with Healing Grace Ministry since its inception, right after her diagnosis of stage-3 breast cancer. After radiation and surgery, the cancer is now in remission, and Derfler tries to never take a day for granted.

“I am so lucky to be alive,” she said. “The lady next to me at the oncology center at U Penn fought just as hard as I did, but she died. I am not sure why things happen the way they do, but I am trying to stay positive and think about what God needs me to do with the time I have been given.

“We lost our daughter, Danielle, to a drunk driver 20 years ago. Maybe God wants me here to help people in their grief. Maybe God wants me to walk with people who are struggling with cancer. To remember to eat, drink enough water, to pray, to get through each day.”

Derfler’s husband has cancer and is also part of Healing Grace Ministry. She said the congregation has been a network of support, and she credits Ierien for guiding the group in prayer.

“She helps us to be grateful in all things and how to visualize our connection to God in order to help heal the body,” Derfler said. “We become very connected to the other people in the group because we hear them sharing their stories. It’s a small group, but we talk honestly about our feelings with each other.”

Ierien said this prayer life helps bring clarity for the group’s members. “There is something quite powerful about sharing our burdens and challenges with each other and, with this act of anointing, [we] proclaim hope and love through this blessing,” she added.

Since the ministry started, about 20 people have participated, and the number changes every month depending on where people are in their health journey. Participants pray for healing and wholeness and don’t dwell on the negative aspects of their health challenges, Ierien said, adding that the attitudes of participants have influenced their prognoses.

“Some are living much longer than their doctors anticipated, others have entered into remission when we all thought that was impossible, and others maintain well-being even while living with chronic conditions,” she said.

Holy Trinity member Julie Mentzer has stage-4 cancer. While there are other support groups in the Lebanon area, she has “leaned in” to the Healing Grace Ministry. “People come and share as much as they need to,” she added. “There’s no pressure to talk about anything beyond what we want to.”

Mentzer has found that the breathing techniques taught during meditation sessions help ease the anxiety she feels around needles, especially the port she has to have installed for treatment.

“I know that when I meet someone with cancer, I can invite them to the group. ‘Come as you are, I don’t care who you are—come check it out,’ ” she said. “I am living for what I have now. I focus on the bad sometimes and get upset, but then I take a few days to process it and then get back to living. Make sure my son is having the best life possible—I live for these things.”

The Rev. Dr. Martin Otto Zimmann is an adjunct professor of church and society at United Lutheran Seminary, Gettysburg campus. He holds a Ph.D. in American culture studies. [via LivingLutheran.org; August 22, 2019]

Minutes of Triune Lutheran Church Council Meeting of 11 August 2019

Meeting opened at 6:03 PM with a prayer by Pastor Brad.

Minutes of last meeting of 07 July 2019 were reviewed.

Jack reported approximately \$5700 checking balance and closing \$149,572 mutual fund balance. Jack, also, reported landscaping work accomplished including mulching, pruning and planting.

Jack reported need for branch-trimming of a large tree in the “playground” area, as branch-falling could damage the church roof. Consideration was, also, made of removing the fence at this area both for better appearance and easier grass-cutting. Also, that the automatic light at the northeast corner of the building is malfunctioning (turning on during the day) and needs replacing. Jack, also, reported receipt of new checks.

Dale explained the “Before You Leave” checklists, which have been posted to remind hall renters of the cleanup and checking they should do before departing.

Bonnie reported on present inquiries for hall rental.

Pastor questioned how we should handle our part in the Lutheran World Relief project for the collection and distribution of personal toilet item kits, both as to how many kits and when we should have them ready. After discussion, it was tentatively decided that we could set a 29 September goal for completion to send and provide as many units of ten as our collection allows.

Pastor discussed Facebook use results, both in responses and resulting visits to services. Although visitors to worship have not let to repeat visits, it was concluded to continue the effort and \$30/week expense on the basis of outreach and hope for better results.

Pastor suggested the approach of making our premises available to non-profit groups at nominal cost and emphasize our church inclusivity with posters within: this to better place us as a community asset and bring in many people, some of whom might consider worshipping in our congregation. The cost and possible abuse of the premises were discussed and concluded that, if done, it might be wise to get council approval for each group.

Pastor will not be here on Sunday 01 September (Labor Day weekend) with Tim taking Saturday service. Due to Pastor’s absence on 16/17 November, the Fall Congregational meeting will be on 10 November.

Meeting ended 6:59 PM. Next Meeting 6:00 PM Monday 09 September 2019

September 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 WORSHIP @11 AM	2	3 AA @ 7pm	4	5 AA @ 8 pm	6	7 WORSHIP @ 5 PM <u>TIM MIZE</u>
8 WORSHIP @11 AM	9 Bible Study @ 1 pm Oaks Service @ 3 Council Meeting @ 6	10 AA @ 7pm	11	12 AA @ 8 pm	13	14 WORSHIP @ 5 PM <u>PASTOR BRAD</u>
15 WORSHIP @11 AM	16 Bible Study @ 1 pm	17 AA @ 7pm	18	19 AA @ 8 pm	20	21 WORSHIP @ 5 PM <u>TIM MIZE</u>
22 WORSHIP @11 AM	23 Bible Study @ 1 pm	24 AA @ 7pm	25	26 AA @ 8 pm	27	28 WORSHIP @ 5 PM <u>PASTOR BRAD</u>
29 WORSHIP @11 AM	30 Bible Study @ 1 pm					



If you have something you would like to put in the newsletter, please let us know by email, written letter, phone call or stopping by the office.