

Covenant News



February 2022

Pastor's Spin



Siblings in Christ of Covenant,

On February 18, we Lutherans especially commemorate the beloved (although stubborn and arrogant at times, to be sure) Martin Luther. For it is on that day in 1546 that the reformer died. Many of us Confirmation students were required to not only read his Small Catechism, but memorize it, and be ready to recite it on-the-spot in front of the entire congregation, as if that could determine our spiritual maturity or something (thankfully those “good ‘ole days” were gone by the time I came around). Regardless, Luther was rather brilliant as a writer not only with the Small, but

also Large Catechism (have fun with that one, if you want to read it online), as well as commentaries on books of the Bible, not to mention his work in translating the Bible to German. Nevertheless, there’s also another book not written by the pastor/priest/professor/monk/sinner-and-saint, but certainly inspired by him: *Table Talk*.

Evidently, Luther developed a reputation for leisurely conversations with his students, even inside his own home. The topics ranged from intense theology to jokes and then-current events, many of which were recorded and eventually put together in a compiled *Table Talk*. Granted, the content may not always be the most interesting for us 21st century Lutherans (or children of God, in general), even if Luther may have had a few drinks in him during those instances; but it does reveal that the church is meant to carry over into our overall day-to-day life. As yet another reminder that we do not *go* to church, we *are* the church, including around the dinner table, or out in public on the weekdays, or...anywhere.

Perhaps Luther’s take on the Lord’s Prayer serves as such a reminder of our interconnectedness, even beyond sanctuary walls: “The Lord’s prayer binds the people together, knitting them one to another, so that one prays for another, and then together one with another. It is so strong and powerful that it even drives away the fear of death.” Now, perhaps for some, the words are only prayed on a Sunday morning or Saturday evening. For others, it is done so in the morning or before going to bed or at a graveside or when facing any obstacle in life or...when

we're not so sure what to pray at all. But is it possible that the Lord's prayer isn't just about the individual and God, but binding us all together: everyone who utters the words wherever they are in this world? And is it possible that those words, that hope, that holy interconnectedness between all of us and God can be so powerful that not even death stands a chance against it?

Sometimes such a holy realization can happen from a pulpit or inside a Sunday school room or in another place for Bible study. Sometimes it happens around a dinner table amongst a group of friends or colleagues, as if the church, the body of Christ, can be active all over the world, all throughout our life. Sometimes those "table talks" have rather significant impacts on us. After all, in the beautiful simplicity of bread and wine set on a table, God ushers in a miracle of grace and mercy and love beyond explanation. And from that altar table, we are empowered to usher in grace and mercy and love at other tables and beyond, as if that just might very well be a precious fulfillment of God's will on earth as it is in heaven itself. Amen (so let it be)!

In Christ,
Pastor Brad

Image: Martin Luther and his family (Painting, 1866, by Gustav Adolph Spangenberg [1828-1891])



We will worship at Covenant on Ash Wednesday with our siblings in Christ of Church of the Master at **7pm**. The worship will include a time for confession, hearing stories of new life from Scripture, providing time for prayer, as well as celebrating Communion and receiving the imposition of ashes. We invite you to join us as we start this renewing journey of Lent together!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

2/2 Aubree McPherson

2/4 Nel Lanese

2/8 Katlyn Knerem

2/23 Jody Bernardo

2/23 Michelle Garnett

2/23 Harrison Werner

2/25 Bryan Gaglione

2/27 Jen Garberich

2/28 Deborah Dickey



2/14 Jacquelyn & William Blogna
Happy 45th Anniversary



Don't forget the time
change on Sunday, March
13th.

Spring ahead one hour!

Building Our Capacity to Love



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Focal verse

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:34-35).

Reflection

At age 3, my daughter started speech therapy. She is 6 now and continues to work on her speech and language with a therapist. Her therapy sessions include practicing words, repeating phrases, and strengthening her mouth and tongue muscles.

In the beginning I didn't understand the word "muscle" in relation to how we speak. Yet over the years, watching my daughter bring her voice into the world has taught me that it takes time, work, dedication and strength for her to communicate. I've watched my

daughter's therapist use multiple props and techniques to apply pressure to her tongue. Over and over again, the goal is to strengthen her muscles for clearer communication.

Just as my daughter has been bolstering her mouth muscles, I've been reflecting on how we can build our faith muscles, and specifically how we can increase our desire to love both ourselves and one another.

In our homes we are given many opportunities to build our faith and capacity to love. We build our muscles to share love with others by praying together out loud, lighting candles to remember loved ones, baking cookies for neighbors, reading Bible stories, offering a calm presence during meltdowns, forgiving and blessing one another and showing up to church—either virtually or in person in an adapted format—week after week.

What practices do you and your family already incorporate into your daily lives to show and share love? Do you routinely call and check on neighbors or bring food to a family in which someone is sick or has just returned home with a baby? Do you offer prayers together, seeking ways for God to show you how to love more deeply? Do you invite God to increase your resolve to reach out to neighbors? Do you listen to people who have different opinions?

Even as the pandemic continues to disrupt our lives and keep us from gathering as we would like, God continues to love us. First and foremost, before we offer love to our neighbors, we need to remember that we are loved. In our remembering and with small actions done in love, we can increase our capacity to care for others and respond as God's beloved children.

Practices

- Cut out hearts for each day of February and write a Bible verse on each one. Read one every day and remember God's love for you and your family.
- Take time this month to intentionally share with others what you love about them. Write notes to friends or call family members. Remind them that God created them in love.
- *Maybe I Can Love My Neighbor Too* (Beaming Books, 2019) explores how we can share love with our neighbors.

Prayers

We pray for those who face challenges to speech.

We pray for occupational and physical therapists.

We pray for families navigating hard conversations.

We pray for writers, poets and storytellers.

We give thanks for the gift of relationships in all their diversity and abundance.

We give thanks for cards and letters that connect us across the world.

We give thanks for church leaders and musicians sharing the story of God's love. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.

Service opportunity

Make a Valentine's Day basket of love for neighbors or nursing home residents. You could include letters of encouragement, baked goods, books and magazines, and any small items meant to share your love.

This article was originally published in Living Lutheran February 2, 2021. You are invited to check out their website for this and other resources for the journey of faith at LivingLutheran.org.



Kimberly Knowle-Zeller is an ordained ELCA pastor, mother of two and spouse of an ELCA pastor. She lives with her family in Cole Camp, Mo. Her website is kimberlyknowlezeller.com.

FREE community MEAL

Our next FREE community meal will be Thursday, February 24, from 4:30-6. Again, we continue this ministry in a drive-thru format from the back of the church. So, if you need a night off from cooking dinner or you know of someone else who needs it, help us spread the word. It is FREE for anyone and everyone!



The Lutheran Church of the Covenant

February 2022

Sunday Servers	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 1:30 pm Worship & Music meeting 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall	2	3	4 6:30-8:30 pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	5 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall 5:00 pm Saturday Service
AG: Sheila Werner, Annie Copeland, Paula Hohenstein	6 9:00 am Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	7 6:30-8:00 pm Girl Scout meeting in Nursery	8 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall 7:00 Council Meeting in Parlor	9	10	11 6:30-8:30 pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	12 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall No Saturday Service
AG: Joan Garvin, Marie Zahn, Jen Garberich	13 9:00 am Sixth Sunday after Epiphany	14	15 1:30 pm Worship & Music 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall	16	17	18 6:30-8:30 pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	19 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall 5:00 pm Saturday Service
AG: Joan Garvin, Marie Zahn, Jen Garberich	20 9:00 am Seventh Sunday after Epiphany	21 6:30-8:00 pm Girl Scout meeting in Nursery	22 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall	23	24 4:30-6:00 pm Community Meal Drive Thru in Parking Lot	25 6:30-8:30 pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	26 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall No Saturday Service
AG: Claudia Senderak, Jean Rusher, Gwen Susaneck	27 9:00 am Transfiguration of Our Lord	28					

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The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
19000 Libby Road, Maple Heights, Ohio 44137

Who remembers what and when this procession was for?

