

Alamance Lutheran Church

August 2024 News Notes



Our Mission: "Alamance Evangelical Lutheran Church empowered by the Holy Spirit, worships and praises our Lord, loves and serves others, as Jesus Christ taught, and shares the Good News of God's gift of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Adopted 11-23-1997

"He prayeth best , who loveth best / All things both great and small; / For the dear God who loveth us, / He made and loveth all." **Samuel Taylor Coleridge**, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (1798) 7.23.

Words from Pastor Rooney: **THE SIGN OF THE CROSS**

"May I never boast of anything except the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world...From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body." Galatians 6:14,17

"This sign is a powerful protection. It is gratuitous, because of the poor. Easy because of the weak. A benefit from God, the standard of the faithful, the terror of demons." St. Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 317-86)

"Adorn and protect each of your members with this victorious sign and nothing can injure you." St. Ephraem of Syria (ca. 306-72)

I am sure that many of you will have seen me make the sign of the cross throughout our services and I have seen some of you do that same. Now you might think that I use this gesture because of my Catholic background but that is not true. Rather, it is also a Lutheran practice and perhaps more inclusively, a Christian practice. So, I thought that a little reflection on the Sign of the Cross might be helpful and hence these few words.

Let me start with Martin Luther himself, who commends the practice to us with these words from the Small Catechism, *"As soon as you get out of bed in the morning, you should bless yourself with the sign of the Holy Cross and say, May the will of God the*

Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be done. Amen." In spite of this teaching, some Protestants during the Reformation repudiated the sign of the cross because they judged it superstitious, with perhaps good reason given the misuse of the sign in some parts of the Church at the time. But no superstition or magic marked the practice in its origin, for it seems clear the practice dates to early apostolic times. St. Basil (ca. 329-79) notes that the Apostles *"taught us to mark with the sign of the cross those who put their hope in the Lord"* - that is those who presented themselves for baptism. Tracing the cross upon ourselves, others and things therefore has been a common Christian custom since at least the 2nd century, often referred to as *"the sign of the Lord"* because it was conferred during baptism and then repeated daily by all the faithful in recognition of their unique identity and mission.

For the first several centuries, the sign of the cross was simply traced upon the forehead, using the thumb or index finger. In time the practice of tracing the cross from the forehead to breast, then from shoulder to shoulder developed. In the Western Church it is the practice to go from head to chest, then to the left shoulder first and finally the right, before returning to the center of the breast. This explanation is often given for our practice which is different from those in the Eastern Church where they bless themselves using the opposite shoulder first - *"And then you bless yourself with the sign of the holy cross...And in this blessing you begin with your hand from the head downward and then to the left shoulder and after to the right side, in token and belief that Our Lord Jesus Christ came down from the head, that is from the Father into the earth by His holy incarnation, and from the earth into the left side, that is hell, by His bitter Passion, and from then unto His Father's right side by His glorious Ascension."* *Mirror of Our Lady (15th Century.)* Regardless of whether it is the Western form (left to right) or the Eastern form (right to left) it is the practice of making the Sign of the Cross, regardless of form, which is more central to our lives of faith.

It is during the baptismal rite that the sign of the cross is first traced upon the newly baptized person as an indelible mark of unity with the crucified Christ and of our membership in the family of God. That is why it is appropriate for all Christians to trace the sign of the Cross upon themselves regularly in order to recall their baptism, proclaim their faith and bear witness to Christ's suffering for us.

Some of the best times to do that are during worship. Here there are numerous opportunities to make the sign of the cross including: as the name of the Trinity is invoked at the beginning of the Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness; when the name of the Triune God is repeated in the absolution; at the announcement of the

Gospel when a small cross may be made on the forehead, lips and heart to signify that the Word of God may be on my mind, on my lips and in my heart; at the Creed when reference is made to the resurrection of the dead; during the Sanctus as “Blessed is He” is sung; before and after receiving Holy Communion; and as the Presiding Minister concludes the Benediction. All of these opportunities, however, should not preclude us following Luther’s admonition to make the sign of the cross each morning when we rise to begin our devotions and again before going to bed at our final prayers of the day. And there are many other times during the day when it is also appropriate to make the sign of the cross, including grace before and after meals and during private times of prayer.

So take time to reflect again upon the Sign of the Cross and how you might make this symbolic action a part of your life of faith and how we might teach this important symbol of our faith throughout our congregation so that the practice may grow within our community of faith, thereby not only enriching the lives of faith for God’s people but also joining us more closely with all those in the wider Church of Christ who also share this same holy sign.

What Do We Do? And Why Do We Do It?

For the past few weeks, Pastor Rooney has been leading a Sunday school class on “What Must I Believe.” This has been a look at some of the fundamental aspects of our faith. Now we are coming to the end of that course and the agreement of those attending was that we next study something about the liturgy. Hence, we are going to undertake a study entitled “**What Do We Do? And Why Do We Do It?** “ In this study, we will break down our worship service, discuss the history and reason behind some parts of it but, above all, why each part is important. This will not be a long class, probably no more than 4-5 weeks so, if you would like to join us, we meet in the Parlor behind the Chapel each Sunday at 9 am. And exact date for starting will depend on when we finish our current study so watch the notices in the bulletins and it will be announced.

Call Process

We were very thankful that all the potential Ministry Site Profile (MSP)/Call Committee members selected by the Council were willing to serve. There was strong agreement in the Council meeting on July 7th about who should be the Council representative on the committee, Marty Adams, and strong support for the remaining 5 members of the committee: Derrick Dill, Donna Eash, Sandy Kirkpatrick, Tony Lewis, and Joel Maness.

Under Marty Adam's guidance, the MSP/Call Committee has begun meeting every Monday evening. Their initial efforts are focused on completing a Ministry Site Profile document that will be used to tell the Synod who Alamance Lutheran Church (ALC) is and what we will be looking for in a new Pastor. The Synod will then provide names of possible candidates to the Call Committee so they can evaluate those candidates. It will also provide potential candidates with a copy of our MSP so they can discern whether or not they could be a good fit for ALC. ALC will be competing with other congregations for strong candidates.

As Marty shared with the Congregation, the initial process of completing the MSP is an open process, and the committee will be looking for input from the Congregation. The Council and the MSP/Call Committee will be meeting on August 9th at 6:30 and on August 18th at 1:30 to gain understanding and agreement on what the **Joint Values, Mission, and Vision** of ALC are. **All interested parties are welcome to attend.** Gaining shared understanding of clear definitions is an important process for us to define who we are as a faith community and why we exist in the service of God. It will also be a good way to communicate with prospective candidates what is important to us. Kirk and Marty will facilitate these sessions.

Following completion of the MSP and after approval by Council and submission to the Synod, the Call Committee will receive training, including mock interviews, facilitated by the Synod Staff. Following that, the Call Committee will begin to receive names of potential candidates. **STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY MUST BE MAINTAINED TROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS** until the Call Committee submits the name of a primary candidate to the Council for their approval. After Council approval, the primary candidate will meet with the Congregation for their approval and approval of a mutually agreed upon financial package.

Creating the MSP and the call process is something we all need to pray about and let the Holy Spirit guide us. There is no set timeframe but be assured that your committee is working diligently to find our next shepherd.

From the Council

The Council met on July 7th and July 21st. As mentioned above, the July 7th meeting was focused on selecting individuals to serve on the Ministry Site Profile/Call Committee. The July 21st meeting covered normal business items. A lot is going on! Several active committees are at work.

We were disappointed to hear that Stephanie Braxton will be leaving her position as Parish Administrator in early September. It was nothing we did. She has decided to go back into business for herself. Pastor Rooney had just completed her 90-day review when she let him know she planned to leave. She has been a quick learner and has done excellent work for us. With that in mind, we have started the process to find a new Parish Administrator/Bookkeeper. We have updated the job description to put more emphasis on the financial management aspects of the role. We will be working with Prime Personnel Resources, located in Burlington, to help find our new Administrator.

Kirk and Roy met with Kay to let her know we will be looking for an Administrator that can also serve us as a Bookkeeper. Kay and the new Administrator will work together through the end of 2024 at a minimum. In the meantime, we are thankful for Stephanie's efforts these last few months.

We will be changing the combination on the door in the fellowship hall to improve building security. We have lost track of who has current combinations.

As our facilities are used by a number of different parties, we need to ensure our scheduling is robust. We have recently had situations where groups were using our facilities that were not on the schedule. In some cases, things that had been scheduled dropped off the schedule. Marty has changed the password for our schedule so only Marty, Stephanie, and Matt can access it to make changes. If you are planning to use space in the building, please be sure to let one of them know so that it can be put on the church calendar.

Next Council meeting is August 25th at 1:30.

Finance Team

Mid-year financial statements have been provided. We reconfirmed a previous policy that if a Ministry Team plans to spend more than \$500 on a single item or is going to exceed budgeted approval levels, they must seek Council approval.

Current expenses exceed revenue by less than \$10K so far this year. This is a better financial situation than in previous years. We are spending more on our Administrator than in the past; pastoral expenses are lower with an interim Pastor. It is important for us to grow the revenue side of our balance sheet. We want to be in the position of being

able to call a full-time pastor and will face expenses with relocation and possible housing allowances. This is a challenge for all of us.

It's not too early to start preparing budget request for 2025. We hope to have all requests in by mid-September.

Hospitality Team

The Hospitality Team hosted a reception for the Baptisms and New Member event on July 14th. The next blood drive will be on August 9th. The team will also support the Social Ministry Lutheran World Relief sewing kit packing and Sloppy Joe supper on August 28th at 5:00pm.

Next Meeting – August 24 at 10:00.

From the Worship and Music Team

The Team will be meeting on August 8th at 2:00pm. There are some rumors about expanded music options in our services. The team is continuing to ensure we have sufficient communion and service supplies.

Raise Your Spirits

Planning continues for our “Raise Your Spirits” Fall Festival. Many items are being covered. We hope for it to be the best Fall Festival yet! The date for the event is October 26th. Cindy and Clare will be applying for Thrivent grants to help with event costs. The Girl Scout Troop will be handling crafts. Sharon is working with vendors. We have three music acts and are looking for at least one more. Thanks to Ted for leading this effort.

Next meeting - August 10 at 9:00 – Join us!

From Evangelism/Social Ministry:

Thanks to everyone who has been donating food for the **Blessing Box**. It is continuing to see good use. Pastor Bob Hawkins is keeping an eye on the box and making sure it is stocked.

We continue to donate food to the **Dream Center**. We will be collecting Beans in August. Pasta in September. Thanks to all of you who are donating food for both the Blessing Box and for the Dream Center.

We continue to help **Allied Churches** with food preparation on the first Wednesday of the month. Marty and Terry Adams in August. Kirk and Lynn Tucker in September. Craven and Sherry Ford in October. Lynn Tucker continues to look for volunteers and will maintain a schedule.

The **Lunch Bunch** will meet at Prego's Trattoria (422 Huffman Mill Road) on August 8th at 11:30. Please reach out to Katie Whitehead by August 5th to let her know you are coming.

We received over \$970 for the **Lutheran World Relief Sewing kits**. Lynn hopes to have enough supplies to make 40 to 45 kits that will make it possible to train and support at risk young women to develop their skills and have access to employment. We hope to complete and pack the kits on August 28th at 5:00pm with a Sloppy Joe dinner.

The new **church directory** is being completed. We still need some information and photographs from a few members. Team members are making calls to follow up for missing photos or information. **If you haven't provided your information or photo, please do so soon. We are close to being ready to print and want everyone included.**

Lynn is continuing to send letters from Alamance Lutheran Church to new residents of **Twin Lakes Community** inviting them to experience our community.

In the spirit of building community, Sherry will be placing a couple of picnic tables under the tree in the lot south of the Church inspired by her reading of **"The Turquoise Table."** Ask her about it and what she has in mind. She is waiting for cooler weather.

We are also thinking of ways to improve our connections to each other, showing that we care for each other, prayer partners and/or a shepherding program are possibilities.

Next meeting is August 8th at 4:30.

Stewardship Team

The **"Above and Beyond"** campaign is continuing. Thanks to those of you who have already donated toward the campaign. You may have noticed the new directional signs inside the building. Soon, there will be new signs outside the building. In addition, several

kitchen and office items have been bought. While it is important to support various project based fundraising efforts, and we appreciate all your generosity, we still need to support the on-going operations of the Church.

The Team is also looking at **ways we can get to know each other more**. This may be in the form of News-Notes blurbs. Finding out more about our spiritual gifts? What moves us? We are all members of a faith community. The more we get to know, respect, and even “like” each other, the better and more vibrant our faith community will be. We also need to continue to be a welcoming community.

Next Meeting – August 17 at 10:00

Yard Sale

Sherry Ford and Elizabeth Powell held a successful Church Yard Sale on July 27th with a follow-up day on the 29th. **WOW!!** Can't say enough about **Sherry's** dedication to this effort. Looks like we will have raised almost \$3,000 from the sale to be used to upgrade the kitchen electrical system in support of planned improvements. Per Sherry, fifteen members of our community and extended church family donated items to the sale. Twelve members and eight non-members contributed their time in moving furniture, preparing for, and working during the sale. A special **Shout Out** to **Sharon Ward** who designed and printed yard sale flyers and church flyers that were distributed at our sale. Thanks to everyone that donated and/or helped! Thanks to **Sherry** and **Elizabeth** for the inspiration for the sale and organizing the sale.

Property Team

Lots of improvements around the facilities thanks to many, and more are coming. The place is looking a lot better and shows we care about our facilities.

How to improve the **accessibility** of our facility continues to be a challenge. John has scheduled a meeting with interested Congregation members following the service on August 11th right after church to gain input and direction for short term and long-term solutions. This is an important topic – please join us!

We are also looking at improving access to **women's bathroom** with automatic door openers and remodeling the bathrooms to improve appearance.

There is a lot of energy about more improvements. We need to continue ensuring that we are spending money on the important and necessary things.

Next Meeting August 3rd at 10:00am.

Youth/Christian Education Team

The **Bingo** night was a great success! **Rebecca** was wonderful! Thanks to everyone who supported the event and participated. It was truly an intergenerational event.

We now have **clipboards** with items for youth to use while in services. We are seeing and experiencing children and youth in our services. We have recruited a couple of nursery attendants and need more.

Rebecca and Casey are planning on starting women's' **Bible studies** in September. More information to come.

With the new team members, many ideas are being explored. **Things are Happening!**

“Be the Light” Campaign

Please support this important ministry of Lutheran Services Carolina. If you have any questions about “Be the Light,” please reach out to Kirk Tucker.

Some Other Words from Kirk Tucker

I started the Council meeting on the 21st saying that a lot is going on. A lot different than a few months ago. In just a short time we have a number of active Ministry Teams. Lots of passion and enthusiasm. Change! Let us all remember to care for each other and look out for each other as we experience change. We might not all agree on everything. Not all of us accept change in the same way or at the same time. I ask all of you to continue to care about each other. We are all in the same boat! It is important for us to be positive, keep up the good work serving the community, being welcoming, and caring for each other. If you have questions, ask me or any of the Council members. We are trying our best to do our best for our special faith community at Alamance Lutheran Church.

PRAY! DO NOT BE AFRAID! GOD IS WITH US AND THE SPIRIT WILL GUIDE US.

Schedule for August

- August 3rd: Men's breakfast and Bible study - 8:30 am; Property Team - 10:00 am.
- August 5th: Let Katie Whitehead know if you plan to attend Lunch Bunch on the 8th.
- August 6th: National Night Out in Alamance. Alamance Battlefield State Historic Site - 6-8 pm.
- August 7th: Food Preparation at Allied Churches. Marty and Terry - 9 am; ALANON – 10 am.
- August 8th: Lunch Bunch at Prego's Trattoria (422 Huffman Mill Rd.) - 11:30 am; Worship and Music Team – 2 pm; Evangelism/Social Ministry - 4:30 pm.
- August 9th: Red Cross Blood Drive – 12:30-5:30 pm; Joint Values, Mission, and Vision meeting – 6:30 pm. All are welcome!
- August 10th: Fall Festival Planning Meeting – 10 am.
- August 11th: Accessibility Discussion – 11:15 am.
- August 14th: ALANON – 10 am.
- August 17th: Stewardship Team Meeting – 10 am.
- August 18th: Joint Values, Mission, and Vision meeting - 1:30 pm. All are welcome!
- August 21st: ALANON – 10 am.
- August 24th: Hospitality Team Meeting – 10 am.
- August 25th: Noisy Offering Sunday; Church Council - 1:30 pm.
- August 28th: ALANON – 10 am; Because of You Lutheran World Relief Sloppy Joe Supper and Sewing Kit Packing – 5 pm.

Serving in August:

	Altar Set-up	Communion Set-up	Worship Assistant/ Reader	Greeters	Ushers
August 4 Chapel	Rebecca Maness	Lynn Tucker	Kathy Ritchey	Kerry Sullivan	Pastor John Weinbach Roy Whitehead
August 11 Chapel	Rebecca Maness	Sandy Kirkpatrick	Marty and Terry Adams	Donna Eash	Hugh Smith Jerry Combs
August 18 Chapel	Rebecca Maness	Lynn Tucker	Pastor John Weinbach	Sharon Isley	Pastor Bob Hawkins Roy Whitehead
August 25 Chapel	Rebecca Maness	Lynn Tucker	Roy and Katie Whitehead	Sandy Kirkpatrick	Terry Adams Pastor Bob Hawkins

Please let Kirk Tucker know of any Church related events or announcements to be included in future news notes. News notes for each month will be sent to members and friends of Alamance Lutheran Church the last week of the preceding month.