

# STEEPLE TO PEOPLE

Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church ~ Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota

***“This life, therefore, is not righteousness but growth in righteousness, not health but healing, not being but becoming...” ~ Martin Luther***

The “What do you want to be?” question starts at a young age. It’s a question posed to preschool-age children to ignite a sense of wonder and imagination. Firefighters, princes and princesses, superheroes, and astronauts top the list of the usual answers. We get a little older and the question is asked again, “What do you want to be?” According to a 2021 survey by YouGov, the top answers for teenagers today include becoming a professional athlete, musician, doctor/nurse, or online content influencer. You finish high school, it’s no longer simply about igniting your imagination. “Seriously, what do you want to be?” Your answers now carry more weight. Societal expectations assume that by your early twenties you will have a definitive answer. And then suddenly, at some point, the question stops being asked. And as the years go by, we slowly lose any sense of Becoming.

***“... not rest but exercise; we are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it.” ~ Martin Luther***

At the beginning of any new year there is an impulse to change. It might be a fleeting impulse, but almost everyone has a prayer, a hope, a wish, a resolution for what the new year might bring. And yet in just a few weeks most of us retreat to a ‘what is’ and ‘what always has been’ view of life. We realize change is hard. Change is tiring, and if we are honest most of us are already exhausted. In the Gospel stories, there is a scene where Jesus comes across some brothers, James and John, who are finishing up their day of work. They fished for a living. So here they were tired from a day (or a night) of baiting the nets, yanking them back into the boat, pulling off the fish, and repeating. Day after day same thing. Some days with great success. Some days coming ashore wondering if this is all that life is. While your experience might not be fishing, there’s a good chance you can relate to the exhaustion, to the being stuck in a rut of doing the same thing over and over again. Jesus appears and makes an offer for them to see life from a perspective of Becoming. While he doesn’t say these exact words, Jesus comes, looks at James and John and simply says, “What do you want to be?...”



***“... the process is not yet finished, but it is going on; this is not the end, but it is the road; all does not yet gleam with glory, but all is being purified.” ~ Martin Luther***

Becoming isn’t something new. It isn’t ‘one more thing’ you have to add to what you are already doing. We are always Becoming. We are becoming older or wiser. We are becoming sick. We are becoming more knowledgeable. We are becoming tired and worn thin. We are becoming more enthused and excited. We are becoming healthy and well. “Becoming” is our Lenten theme this year. Lent (the season of the church year that starts on Ash Wednesday and concludes during Holy Week leading to Easter) is a Latin word that means ‘Spring.’ And by definition, Spring is a time of change, of growth. It is a time of Becoming. Becoming is living with a belief that God is alive and at work in the world, and, more importantly, God is alive and at work in your life. Becoming is living life believing that Jesus Christ is Emmanuel ‘God with Us.’ And this is not simply a nice sentiment we share during Christmas, but a way of living and breathing and a lens to how we see ourselves and each other. Through worship on Wednesdays and Sundays, through the Lenten devotional, weekly Bible study, and more ways to come, we invite you to join us this February and March on a Lenten road of Becoming.

The season of Lent begins Ash Wednesday, February 14 (Into the Deep worship will include the Imposition of Ashes) and ends on Easter Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Writers are needed for our annual Lenten devotional. 46 writers are needed to continue this beloved tradition. Devotions are encouraged to be no more than 250–300 words. You can sign up by going to [clcmarine.org/devotions](http://clcmarine.org/devotions). When you choose a date, please make note of your assigned Bible verse. Devotions due back by Feb. 7. Questions can be directed to Laura Langreck, Pastor Joel, or Pastor Hannah.

# WORDS FROM PASTOR JOEL

## Christ Lutheran Church

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**Kris Simonson, Pianist/Organist**  
**Nancy Viebrock, Pianist/Organist**

## Church Council

**Jody Nyenhuis** - President  
**Leigh Delisi** - Vice President  
**Christine Dettmann** - Secretary  
**Lester Rydeen**  
**Steve Plummer**  
**Teri Fick**  
**Emily Schaefer**  
**Andrew Schmidt**  
**Terry Gorham**  
**Ann Skoglund**  
**Matt Smith**

## Red Bridge Preschool

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Every four years we are given a gift. Like most gifts we usually fail to recognize, much less take the time to truly appreciate, this gift. So, the gift comes and goes. Life goes on. And we don't even notice. I am of course referring to the extra day we each get in 2024. That's right, this year is a "Leap Year." Which means each of us gets an extra day - Thursday, February 29th to be exact. As you probably know, for three out of every four years, February has 28 days. But, because the spinning of the earth and its rotation around the sun isn't exactly accomplished every 24 hours or every 365 days, every four years an extra day is added to the calendar to make up for those slight variables.

Why does this matter? My guess is that if you are anything like me, at least once over the past three years you have thought, if not actually uttered out loud, prayerful words to the effect of, "If I only had more time...if I only had one more day, I would be able to..." This year your prayers have been answered. You have one more day. So, what are you going to do with it?

An extra day! What to do...what to do? Maybe you will spend the whole day with some of the people you love dearly but never seem to have the time to be with. Perhaps, when you do get together with them, it's always rushed - a coffee now and then, or a quick walk around a short trail. But this year, with this extra day, you can make it work. You can slow down and be fully present with each other. You wouldn't even need to look at your watch. After all, it's an extra day, you have nowhere else you need to be. So just be there. Perhaps you would focus on that lingering project sitting in your basement, garage, or bedroom closet. The one you notice every so often as you mumble, "Someday I will get to it." Maybe this year - with this gift of an extra day could be your "someday."

Wouldn't it feel great to finally scratch that project off the list of things you want to get done? Maybe you could put on some comfy clothes, sit in your favorite chair, and read all day, or watch the entire new season of the Great British Baking Show. You could spend the day volunteering for the organization that is currently speaking to your heart. The one you tell yourself that once you have more time you will gladly volunteer for. This year you have the time. It's an extra day. Wouldn't it be great if we all just gathered for a giant community hike (or ski if it ever decides to snow)? It would give you a chance to finally meet those new neighbors down the block. You know, the ones you only wave at when you see each other coming or going. You have a few weeks; you should start planning now.

To be honest I already know what I am doing with my extra day. I am working. After all, it's a Thursday. It's not a holiday. I have already determined it's not worth taking a vacation day for. February 29th will come and go, and I probably won't even notice the gift of the extra day. It will simply blend in with every other day. Mary Oliver, one of my favorite poets, would be greatly disappointed. In her poem, "The Summer Day", she writes, "*I don't know exactly what a prayer is. I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down into*

the grass, how to kneel down in the grass, how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields, which is what I have been doing all day. Tell me, what else should I have done? Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon? Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" Or, in terms of current context, it's not too far of a stretch to imagine the poem asking, "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious extra day?"

How are you spending your days? Are you going through life with the urgency of never having enough time to do the things you really want to be doing, of never having enough time to see and be with the people you really want to see and be with? "Time, like an ever-rolling stream, soon bears us all away; we fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day." are words in the song, "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past." Talk to anyone who has had someone they couldn't live without die, and they will tell you how true these words are. They know too well the precious gift of one day. They know tomorrow is not promised to anyone. They know there is no going back.

As February 29th, "Leap Day", approaches, maybe the question we should be asking is not, "What would you and I do with this extra day?" Maybe the question should be, "What am I going to do with this day?" This current day, whatever day it happens to be. This once in a lifetime, never to be experienced ever again, gift of today. We might have to work. We might go to school. We might spend the day trying to catch up doing the things we need to get done. We might be spending it taking care of loved ones. We might spend it all alone. But maybe, just maybe, we might, in the middle of it all, look around and give thanks to the Giver of this gift we call Today.

Pastor Joe

## FAQs about Online Worship

*Do people still watch worship online?*

Yes!

*Who?*

You! And many like you! We get asked frequently how many people worship online. Though it varies by week, here are some numbers to share:

- 10-20 watch LIVE on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m.
- 50-75 watch on-demand in the week that follows
- 40-50 watch Into the Deep via Vimeo
- 80-110 watch Into the Deep via Facebook

*Where are these people located?*

From as many as 28 different states and a handful of other countries.

*What does this mean?*

We are both an in-person and online community, and even as the pandemic wanes, this will remain true. Our staff and leaders are dedicated to find ways to reach and nourish people who gather with us in our building on 5<sup>th</sup> street and beyond.



## Sunday, February 4

Join us in-person for the Annual Congregational Meeting of Christ Lutheran Church on Sunday, February 4 after 9:30 a.m. worship.

We will elect new members to the church council, receive a financial report for 2023 and approve a budget for 2024. There will be plenty of time for questions and conversations.

The annual report will be available online and as a hard copy the week of Jan. 21.

Please contact the church office or a current member of the church council if you have any concerns or questions.

## **Camp Wapo Registration Opens Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>**

One of our favorite summer traditions is for youth to attend Bible camp at Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp in Amery, Wisconsin. Christ Lutheran is a partnering congregation with Camp Wapo. It is a great place where the days are filled with fun, fellowship, and faith learning. **If you or one of your youth is interested in going, talk with Pastor Hannah. There are camps for those completed 1<sup>st</sup> grade through high school.**

SEEDS Weekend: 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grades, June 14-16

Wapo: 4<sup>th</sup> grade+, June 16-21

Scholarships are available. Contact Pastor Hannah for more information.

## **Save the Dates: CLC Day Camp 2024**

Our children and youth had a great at our 2023 Day Camp, led by camp counselors from Luther Crest Bible Camp. Save the dates for this summer's camp:

### **Monday, June 23-Thursday, June 27.**

For K-6<sup>th</sup> graders: Monday – Wednesday 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Thursday 9 a.m. – noon

For 3 year old – Pre-K students: Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. - noon

Cost: \$50 (full and partial scholarships available)

## **First Communion Class – Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup>**

The sacrament of Holy Communion is one of the great gifts we share. A class led by Pastor Hannah will take place on Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup> after worship for all children and youth interested in learning about this sacrament and sharing their first communion faith step. More information to follow.

## **Adult Bible Study**

Is the end near?

Our newest BYOB (Bring Your Own Brain) Bible Study is exploring “the apocalypse” through a study of the last book of the Bible, Revelation. All are welcome to come and learn, listen and share your insight. Thursdays, 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room.

*\*There is no Bible Study Jan. 18.*



In the event of a large snowfall or other weather related cancellation or closure, we will send an email to the congregation and also post the information on our social media sites. (Facebook/Instagram) Safety of our members, preschool families, volunteers and staff is our main priority. *If you would like to receive our emails, and are not currently on the list, please email Laura Langreck, Office Manager, at [laura@clcmarine.org](mailto:laura@clcmarine.org).*

# Into the Deep

A sneak peek at our next Into the Deep series:

Prayer is an important part of our faith lives, but we don't always know how to pray... or what to pray for. Join us for Into the Deep as we use writer and theologian Anne Lamott's three essential prayers "Help, thanks, wow!" to guide our worship.

What is Into the Deep?

Our midweek gathering on Wednesdays.

5:30 – 6:15 p.m. Free Community Meal

5:55 – 6:25 p.m. The Deep End Kids' Ministry with Pastor Hannah

6:30 p.m. Worship

7 p.m. Confirmation



*\*There will not be Into the Deep (meal, worship, or activities) on Wednesday, January 17th as we prepare for the Swedish Dinner.*

## THINGS TO DO



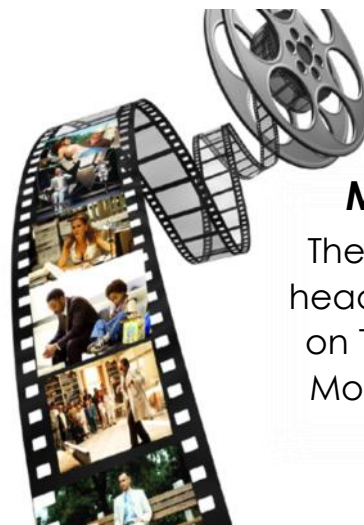
Winter gets long. It can sometimes be a lonely season. You are invited to be a part of our new monthly ministry, "Connections". We will gather for a casual time of conversation, games, and being with one another. We will provide the coffee. Bring yourself, and if you'd like, a favorite game to play. Our first gathering is Tuesday, January 23 from 10-11:30 a.m. There's no need to sign up, just come and connect!

### Intergenerational Mystery Trip

**Monday, February 19<sup>th</sup>**

Let's go on an adventure together! Where? It's a mystery! Join a group of kids, families, and adults as we board the church minibus for fun and fellowship. We will leave CLC at 9 a.m. and return by 3 p.m.

Cost is \$15 and due at sign up.



### Movie Outing

The Adventurers are headed to the movies on Tuesday, Feb. 13. More information to come.

# What does a CLC Council Member Do?

About this time every year, the Nomination Committee discerns, prays, and shares names of people to ask to serve on the church council. When approached, members of the congregation often ask *“What are the responsibilities of a council member?”*

So, here is a brief answer to that question.

In brief, the Church Council reacts to the needs of the church and is responsible for the month to month overseeing of the health and well-being of the ministry of Christ Lutheran and Red Bridge Preschool. More than that, the council is charged with working with the pastors, staff and congregation to discern where God is leading us as a church, our mission and vision, and how best to implement strategies and programs in accordance with said values, visions and goals.

A Council position is a 3 year term and a person is eligible to be re-elected to one additional term.

The Church Council meets once per month as a norm (currently on the last Monday of the month). However, there can be times when special meetings or extra meetings are called to react to the needs of the church.

## **Council Members' specific responsibilities are to:**

- 1) Stay informed about the activities of the congregation and Pastors by attending monthly council meetings
- 2) Provide oversight and take responsibility for the annual budget, addressing financial matters as needed
- 3) If need be, serve as a liaison between congregation members and the council and staff
- 4) Serve as needed overseeing special projects and working groups
- 5) Keep the ministry of CLC in your prayers

Want to learn more about serving on Council, or would like to nominate someone else? Contact Suzanne Pollack. You don't have to know everything to serve on the Council, just a desire to listen and follow where God is leading! New members of the church council will be elected during the Annual Meeting on February 4.

# Winter Walking

Research consistently shows **walking** as one of the best activities we can do to improve our overall health. Walking has been shown to be good not only for physical well-being, but also mental, social, and spiritual health, too.

During the winter months if you are looking for a safe place to get some walking in, we invite you to come and walk at the church. It's maybe not the most exciting, but it is safe and allows you space to even walk with a friend or family member. We have been told 30 laps (walking both

hallways - including going up and down the stairs at both ends) equals about one mile. You can extend it even longer if you add in the sanctuary (or if you want to avoid stairs.)

**Walkers are welcome Monday—Friday starting at noon.**



## Bake Sale Donations Needed

The Swedish Dinner is back and so is our bake sale. Consider baking some treats to support kids' summer programs like day camp and scholarships to Camp Wapo. Donations due to the church by Wednesday, January 18. Don't feel like baking? That's okay! Donate what you would have spent on supplies and know you are making a difference for youth in our community. Questions can be directed to Pastor Hannah or Sandy Mondor.



### NEW T-SHIRT DESIGN FOR OUR SWEDISH DINNER!

These fun, comfy, jersey t-shirts will be available for purchase the day of the dinner for \$20 each.

Limited quantity available.

*Proceeds will go to CLC youth programs & ministries.*



We've recently had a lot of requests for emails, phone numbers and addresses of our members. Did you know you can access our member directory online? If you would like to download your own copy, visit [clcmarine.org/directory](http://clcmarine.org/directory).

The password is Hereforgood!

TRADITIONAL

# Swedish Dinner

HAND ROLLED  
**Meatballs**  
AND BOUNTIFUL HELPINGS OF  
Lutefisk, White Sauce, Melted Butter  
Boiled Potatoes • Swedish Gravy  
Cranberry Sauce • Rice Pudding  
Coffee • Scandinavian Cookies

**Thursday, Jan 18**  
**11AM ~ 6PM / \$25 ADULTS**  
**16 YEARS AND UNDER EAT FREE**  
**TICKETS AT THE DOOR ~ CONTINUOUS SEATING**  
All proceeds directly support local, national  
and international mission projects  
[clcmarine.org](http://clcmarine.org) 651.433.3222

av alla jordiska drycker.

**Christ Lutheran Church**  
150 FIFTH STREET ~ MARINE ON ST CROIX



## POP-UP CLC CHOIR

You are invited to join the choir for their next gig in Sunday worship!

### REHEARSALS

January 28 at 8:30 a.m.

Feb. 4 at 8:30 a.m.

### SING IN WORSHIP

Feb. 4 at 9:30 a.m.

No prior experience needed! Talk to Laura Langreck, Director, if you have questions!

Christ Lutheran Church  
150 Fifth Street  
Marine on St. Croix, MN 55047

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## WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AT CHRIST LUTHERAN

### **Sunday Worship**

Join us for worship on Sunday mornings  
at 9:30 a.m.

(Livestreamed and available on-demand after)

### **Sunday Worship on TV**

Valley Access Channel 14 offers our Sunday  
service on Thursdays at 9 p.m. and Fridays at  
4 a.m., 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

### **Into the Deep**

A 30 minute, midweek worship experience on  
Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. and shared online  
after. (Free meal served at 5:30 p.m.)

*All current and previous worship services are  
available on Vimeo:*

**[vimeo.com/christlutheranchurch](https://vimeo.com/christlutheranchurch)**

RED BRIDGE PRESCHOOL'S

# Pizza Party for a Cause

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 21  
5:30 - 6:15 P.M.  
Christ Lutheran Church

FREE WILL DONATIONS  
ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE  
RED BRIDGE PRESCHOOL  
SCHOLARSHIP FUND

[www.clcmarine.org/redbridgepreschool](http://www.clcmarine.org/redbridgepreschool)