



Saint Luke Lutheran Church

1807 Field Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55116 | 651-698-9443 | saintlukechurch.org

September 2023 Newsletter



The Pastor's Perspective

Discovering and Developing Your Spiritual Gifts

On Sunday, August 27, our second scripture reading came from the book of Romans. Here's a portion of that reading:

I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. (Romans 12:3-8)

Paul wanted every member of the church to understand that they had been uniquely gifted by God to contribute to the whole community of faith. Some people are especially gifted for teaching, Paul wrote, some for ministering, some for encouraging, some for giving, and so on. These gifts are a sign of grace, the blessings of a generous God.

Paul was clear that all gifts are valuable for the good of the whole: none is better than another. It can be easy for us to look at people gifted in ways that we are not and think they offer more to the body of Christ than we do, but scripture tells us otherwise. Our

September Worship Volunteers

**We are grateful for
your participation!**

IN PERSON USHERS

First and Second Sundays:

Laurie and Ava Herrmann

Third and Fourth Sundays:

Carol Vigdal

Mary Jo Brandt

ONLINE USHERS

1st Sunday: David Tews

2nd Sunday: Sue McNeill

3rd Sunday: Raulie Ruiz

4th Sunday: David Nedrelov

OFFERING COUNTERS

3 Katy Eggert

10 Wendy Bjorklund

17 Julie Gaarder

24 Wendy Bjorklund

SCRIPTURE READERS

3 Kay Reich

10 Casey Ulrich

17 Emily Elfritz

24 Jo Klein

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

3 Kay Reich

17 Wendy Bjorklund

ALTAR GUILD

Kay Reich

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gifts work together, like different parts of a body, to keep our community healthy and whole.

So what spiritual gifts do *you* bring to the body? Perhaps that question fills you with a sense of worry, that you don't actually have any gifts worth offering. Perhaps it fills you with energy, excitement that your skills are important. Perhaps it fills you with curiosity, wondering what your gifts might be and how you might use them. However you feel about the question of what your gifts are, it's still worth asking. And it's not something you have to navigate alone.

At our October 21 congregational retreat, we'll have a whole morning workshop dedicated to the topic of spiritual gifts. We'll explore the scriptural basis for the idea of giftedness, and each person will take an inventory to help identify their unique spiritual strengths. We'll also have time to consider how the gifts across our community might work together to better serve God and neighbor. We are a constellation of gifts, made up of the many sparkling stars of each person in our congregation!

I took a spiritual gifts inventory over the summer, alongside the synod interns, and I want to share with you some of what I learned. Here are gifts for which I had a high "score," in other words, gifts that I am especially well equipped to offer to the community.

Teaching the faith: this gift reflects an ability to explain the Christian faith and scriptures and help others apply them to the daily lives. A good gift for me to use for preaching, leading Bible study, and teaching Sunday School.

Encouragement: the ability to comfort, motivate, strengthen, affirm, and be present with one another; building others up and instilling in them an awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence. I hope this gift is demonstrated in my pastoral care.

Shepherding: shepherds are those who gather people together, protect them from harm, and draw them close to Jesus. Shepherds are especially equipped for guiding and nurturing people under their care. This is a good gift for pastoring in a congregational context as a leader of a faith community.

Those were my top three gifts. They might seem obvious to you, since I'm a pastor, but I still felt somewhat surprised to see them as my greatest strengths. It did feel affirming to see that those are gifts I use every day in my ministry. But no one is gifted at everything, so I also want to share with you some of the gifts in which I had *lower* "scores."

Discernment: distinguishing false teachings from true teachings. People with this gift can help determine who in the fellowship might be abusing their spiritual gifts. Discernment is a check on others, a radar for integrity and honesty. Although I didn't score highly in this gift, I was glad that two young adults from our congregation did. I told them I was glad they were listening closely to my teaching and watching my leadership: they can help keep me accountable! That's how the gifts work together within community.

Helping: helpers have a strong sense of compassion and are ready to offer tangible support to others, especially in times of



Loaves and Fishes

Our heartfelt thanks to our August volunteers: Mike Hegdahl, Larry Litzkow and David Tews



Bun Run

Many thanks to our Bun Run volunteers for September: Larry and Junella Litzkow, Julie Ellingson, Mike and Nancy Hegdahl, Volker Landenberger and Ken McGrew.

September Birthdays

- 3 Victor Landenberger
- 6 Audrey Rongstad
- 9 Ken McGrew
- 10 Aiden Johnson
- 11 Jane McGrew
- 12 Mike Walter
- 17 Connor Burchill Riley
Corinn Burchill Riley
- 22 Carol Vigdal
- 25 Nahoko Person
- 26 Verdel Humburg
- 29 Jordan Brandt
Eric Ellingson

September Anniversaries

- 19 Amy Drier & Gary Nelson, 2015



All are invited to Game Day at St. Luke, the first and third Fridays of the month, September 1 and 15, at 12:30pm. Bring a snack to share and your favorite game and settle down to an afternoon of fun...join us!

crisis. These are the ones who are first to offer relief or aid. I didn't score highly in this gift either, which reminds me that I should be especially grateful for those in our community who do have this gift and can be leaders in meeting other's physical needs. I might be good at showing up with an encouraging presence, but I'm not as good at showing up with tangible resources.

Generosity: sharing joyfully and passionately what you have and who you are with others; a willingness to give of your time, money, abilities, with open hands and open heart. This doesn't mean I don't have the ability to be generous, but it might mean I need to work at it when it doesn't come naturally for me. Some people are true leaders and example-setters when it comes to generosity: I am confident we have parishioners who will score highly in this gift!

Seeing that these are gifts in which I didn't score very highly is a great reminder for me that I can always be learning from others in these areas, just as they might be learning from me in my strengths. I can look to others who are more gifted in these areas to show me the way.

Discovering your spiritual gifts is only the first step. It opens up a world of learning as you begin to develop and strengthen the gifts you naturally have and consider how you might apply them. For instance, if you score high in discernment, you might consider becoming a member of the church council. If you score high in generosity, you might consider stepping up to design a stewardship campaign. If you score high in helping, you might consider signing up to volunteer with Loaves and Fishes.

I hope you can be with us at the Congregational Retreat on October 21. I look forward to learning about the gifts each of you bring to our community and how we can better support you to utilize them for the sake of the Gospel!

Pr. Bristol

Coming up this fall at St. Luke

Mark your calendar for these dates...

Sunday, 9/10: Rally Sunday: Time and Talent Fair and Potluck

Sunday, 9/24: Blessing of the Animals

Saturday, 10/14: Fall Bazaar

Saturday, 10/21: Retreat at Mount Olivet Retreat Center

Sunday, 10/29: Reformation Day

Shared worship with St. Mark at St. Luke, and Potluck

Saturday, 11/4: St. Luke Spaghetti Dinner

Sunday, 11/5: All Saints' Day and Annual Meeting

Wednesday, 11/22: Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service

Rally Sunday: September 10

This is the day our fall programming starts up, and we celebrate the return of many faces who have been away for the summer. Stay for a special coffee hour time after worship, and please bring a

Supper with Saints



The location for our next Supper with Saints with St. Mark, will take place at Yankee Tavern, 1755 Yankee Doodle Road, Eagan on September 28th at 5:00 pm. If you plan on attending, please let Joyce Bluel know by September 24th so we have a number for the reservation.



Notes from the Music Director

September is a busy month at the church! Vocal and bell choirs will start rehearsing on Sunday, September 17th: Bells will meet at 8:30 am and Vocal will rehearse after worship. Everyone is welcome, no matter your skill level!

Have you voted for your favorite hymn? You still have a chance through Rally Day! Then I'll tally up the votes to find out which hymns are St. Luke's favorites. Next month I'll reveal what preferences have changed over the years, what new hymns were added, and if any have left the list...we will see!

-Becca Ruiz

Join us for St. Luke Book Club, Sunday Sept. 10, 6:30pm

to discuss "A Spool of Blue Thread" by Anne Tyler. "From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Clock Dance* comes the story

potluck dish to share! We'll have tables set up for our different ministry programs, so you can learn more and sign up to get involved this fall.

Blessing of the Animals

After worship on September 24, head home to get your furry (or scaly, or feathered, etc.) friends and bring them back to church for a blessing. This brief prayer service honors St. Francis of Assisi, whose feast day is in the fall. St. Francis inspired Christians through his universal love for all of God's creatures. We give thanks to God for the animals with whom we share our world and our homes! Sunday, September 24, 12:00 pm, in the side yard at St. Luke.

St. Luke Welcomes Children

Faith Formation (our name for "Sunday School") happens before worship every Sunday, 8:45-9:15 am in the small classroom, starting September 10. Babies, toddlers, and elementary age kids are all welcome – and parents can stay, too! This fall we will be using Frolic, a hands-on play-based curriculum designed by the ELCA, to explore New Testament stories about Jesus' ministry. Pr. Bristol will lead Faith Formation most weeks.

We've also set up a new toddler-friendly space in the back of the sanctuary, behind the choir section. It is an enclosed, carpeted area stocked with age-appropriate books and toys, so there's room for little ones to play on the floor. We'll offer a blessing for this new space during worship on Rally Day, September 10. We also have little activity bags available to take to the pews with you no matter where in the sanctuary you sit: all ages are welcome in worship on Sunday mornings!



Wish List for Children's Ministry

We're looking for the following items to help stock our children's ministry spaces. Donations of new or gently used items are welcome!

- Soft building blocks (ie made of cardboard or foam)
- Playdough
- Sensory table
- Baby dolls
- Puppets (especially biblical animals like birds, sheep, lions, camels, fish)

of four generations unfolding in and around the lovingly worn house that has always been the Whitshank family's anchor. Man Booker Prize Nominee. 'Absorbing and deeply satisfying.' —*Entertainment Weekly*" Location to be announced. All are welcome!

Farmers Market

WE NEED YOU to volunteer at our popular Farmers Market! We honestly cannot do this without your generous help! Please, please consider signing up for a Saturday or a few Saturdays. The schedule is emailed to you weekly. There are **openings in September and on October 7.** Please let Wendy Bjorklund know your availability ASAP at wlbjorklund@stcloudstate.edu or 651-357-5742. THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your participation!

Ladies, are you looking for a quiet weekend away?

Announcing a Quilt Auction/Silent Auction Weekend at Camp Onomia, September 15th (Friday night thru Sunday morning), 14202 Shakopee Lake Road, Onamia. Two nights, 4 meals adult rate is \$112 per person. There is also a one-night Auction Weekend special rate of \$40 for one night and 2 meals. Call 320-532-3767 to reserve your room space for the Auction Weekend; they fill up fast. Relax with long walks on the beautiful trails, reading, crafts that have been waiting to be finished, sitting in the sun in their gazebo or deck, playing games, shopping, much laughter, and lots of napping if that is what you desire! Join us!



Pastor's Study: "Civic Life and Faith"

September 7 to October 12,
Thursdays at 7:00 pm
via [this Zoom link](#).

Pr. Bristol will lead a study on the topic of Civic Life and Faith this fall. You can join as many sessions as you're able. Each week will include time for group discussion, so your perspective will be a valued contribution. We will be following a curriculum designed by the ELCA as part of its development of a new social statement. Click [here](#) to learn more and see the curriculum.

Session 1 (Sept 7):

"How Is God's Invitation to Discipleship Lived Out in a Democracy?"

Session 2 (Sept 14):

"How Do Christians Address Controversial Civic Issues?"

Session 3 (Sept 21):

"What Are Lutheran Views on Civic Life?"

Session 4 (Sept 28):

"What Are the Objectives of Democracy in the United States?"

Session 5 (Oct 5):

"What's Faith-based Living Got to Do With Civic Life?"

Session 6 (Oct 12):

"How Do We Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord in Civic Life?"

In September, we transition from summer to fall. Labor Day always feels like the conclusion to summer as the State Fair ends, and students embrace a new school year. Most people welcome the cooler temperatures, but let's savor the just-right fall weather and enjoy our apple orchards and football games.

At St. Luke, September brings **Rally Day** on Sunday, Sept. 10, which this year will include a Time and Talent Fair after service. You'll be able to learn about the many volunteer opportunities available, including ways to support worship, help with church activities, and serve our community.

National Night Out on August 1 was a huge success. Dozens of people from our neighborhood enjoyed the delicious food, beautiful music, and lively conversation. Special thanks to Joyce for organizing the event and getting donations from Thrivent and Odd Couple Realty, Casey and Charlotte for distributing flyers in the neighborhood, Volker for manning the grill, and the singers and musicians who entertained us including Becca, Jo, Charlotte, and Casey. My apologies to those I've left out! It was great visiting reps from St. Paul Police and St. Paul Fire, and kids large and small had fun getting a closer look at the fire trucks.

We had 11 people attend the **Twins game** on August 15. We had perfect weather, good seats, good company, and an exciting game to watch. Detroit's Miguel Cabrera hit a two-run homer in the second inning, but Matt Wallner, the pride of Forest Lake, hit a grand slam in the sixth to put the Twins ahead for good. Final score: Twins 5, Tigers 3.

Everyone is invited to a **fall retreat** to be held Saturday, Oct. 21 at Mount Olivet Conference and Retreat Center, about a half hour south of St. Paul in rural Farmington. This retreat offers an opportunity for us to enrich our faith, recharge in a beautiful natural setting, and enjoy the company of other St. Luke members.

You should have received a flyer about the retreat by email, and printed flyers are also available on the back table at church on Sundays. The cost of the retreat is \$45 for adults (age 14 and up), \$25 for youth (age 4 to 13), and free for kids under 4.

To sign up, complete a registration form, attach your payment, and either mail it to church or drop it in the registration box at church. The deadline for registration is Sunday, Sept. 24. I hope to see you there!

Yours in Christ,
David Tews

*Connect, Grow and
Serve.*
