



St. Luke Lutheran Church

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Editor: Jo Klein

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Open doors, open hearts, open minds.

Parish Times

September 2017

Blessed to be a blessing.

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." Matthew 5:43-45

Have you ever thought about how our worship service ends each Sunday? Does it ever give you pause? Just before the final hymn we receive the benediction. The one I often use goes like this, "Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. Amen." "...bless you now and forever," it says. Have you ever wondered, "If the blessing is forever, why do we need to receive it over and over again each week?" Wouldn't once be enough? It is "forever" after all. Aren't we being a little redundant? We might think that way, but I believe it is a sign of the overwhelming extravagant grace of God. The Lord is full of blessings and doesn't hold any back for one second. In fact, the Lord blesses ALL people, evil and good alike, with the goodness of the sun, rain, good earth, etc. The Lord loves to shower us with blessings. As God's children, we are called to pass those blessings on. In the same way we so richly receive, we are called to give richly in the name of the Lord. There are times when we do that individually in our everyday lives. There are also times when we do it as a church. One of the reasons we can do this as a church is because of your giving of your various talents, time, and money. Think of that as you read some of the articles in this newsletter. Because of your giving, we will help seniors throughout the state of Minnesota with "Blizzard Bags." Because of your giving, we will help people around the world with micro-loans. Because of your giving, we will raise our voices to help those who battle depression and severe anxiety, who contemplate taking their own lives. Because of your giving, people will receive some bread and love through the bun run each week this month. Because of your giving, St. Mark and St. Luke team together to provide a monthly meal and loving fellowship for people through Loaves and Fishes. Because of your giving, we offer people good, fresh, locally grown food at our Farmers Market. We are indeed, blessed to be a blessing. Thank you for your partnership in ministry!

Pr. Dave



September Acolytes

- 3 Evan Nelson
- 17 Ava Herrmann

Heartfelt thanks to our September **Bun Run** volunteers: Larry Litzkow, Julie Ellingson, Mike Hegdahl, Sandy and Dave Grzywinski, Ken McGrew.



Usher Notes

Many thanks to our ushers for September: Jill Burchill, Doug Nelson, David Nedrelov, Larry and Carol Vigdal, Pam Ballis, Katy Eggert.



St. Luke's Farmers' Market

This is the third year of our farmer's market. We wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to Coordinators Wendy Bjorklund and Nancy Hegdahl for the many hours of service they have dedicated to get the project off the ground. Thank you, Wendy and Nancy!

Come to the market! Invite your family and friends. Support our local farmers as you peruse the luscious variety of fresh produce in the glorious morning sunshine. Every Saturday, 8am to noon, through Oct. 7. See you there!



Fall Bazaar: Crafters or Vendors

Do you know any crafters or vendors who would be interested in renting out a table at our Fall Bazaar this year? The date is Saturday, October 28th from 9:00 to 3:00 and the fee for an 8-foot table is \$35.

If so, please have them contact either Judy Salaba 651-698-8572 or Joyce Bluel 651-690-4614 for a vendor registration form. Space will be considered reserved at the time of submission of registration form and payment.



Ladies Night Out

Due to scheduling conflicts, Ladies Night Out in September will not take place. We will resume with our normal schedule in October. Watch the October newsletter and church bulletin for details.

Micro-Lending

On Tuesday, September 12 at 6:00 p.m., we will meet at church for a delicious dinner (\$5.00) and fantastic fellowship. We will then fire up the computer and make life-giving micro-loans all around the world. As of this writing, we have over \$900.00 to loan out! And to make this an extra-special event, St. Mark members will be joining us. So come, join with St. Mark members to make life-saving loans all across the world. You can help make a difference for a family or even a whole village by joining in to make these loans. Please sign up on the kiosk so we know how much food to buy for our mouth-watering meal.



101 very hungry men, women and children enjoyed a delicious meal at Loaves and Fishes on Monday July 24th at St. Matthew's Catholic Church. Workers from St. Luke were Bev Eckstrom, Larry Litzkow, Joyce Bluel and Roger and Dianne Diestler.

September WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Readers:

- 3 Joyce Bluel
- 10 Beth Peterson
- 17 Cindy Schroer
- 24 Joe Ward

Communion:

- 3 Joan Wilson
- 17 Christine Olson



September Birthdays

- 3 Victor Landenberger
- 4 Kelly Johnson
- 6 Audrey Rongstad
- 9 Ken McGrew
- 10 Aiden Johnson, Michaela McGough
- 11 Jane McGrew, Gene Spray
- 12 Mike Walter
- 15 Sandy Grzywinski
- 17 Connor Burchill Riley, Corinn Burchill Riley
- 20 Taryn Eidem
- 22 Carol Vigdal
- 25 Nahoko Person, Ashley Peterson
- 26 Samantha Brummund
- 27 Gwen Brummund
- 29 Jordan Brandt, Eric Ellingson



September Anniversaries

- 1 - Jon and Debbie Klein: 1984

Rally Sunday Event to Make Blizzard Bags!

After worship on Rally Sunday, September 10, we will be putting together "Blizzard Bags" for Lutheran Social Services (LSS). LSS Senior Nutrition delivers an average of 2,148 meals every day to seniors. However, sometimes deliveries cannot be made, due to inclement weather. That is where "Blizzard Bags" come in. Seniors can keep these shelf stable foods on hand for such a blizzard day when meal deliveries cannot be made. LSS asks that each bag have a can of chicken or tuna, a can of fruit, plain crackers or cheese/peanut butter crackers, hot cocoa packets (provided in lieu of milk), granola bars, pudding cups or small packets of cookies. We have an abundance of canned goods we can use for this purpose, thanks to Warren Salaba's donation. We applied for and received a \$250.00 grant from Thrivent to purchase the other ingredients. We will have all of them available on Sunday, September 10, so that after worship we can all work together to assemble Blizzard Bags for Minnesota seniors. Come help and then stick around for our delicious Rally Sunday pot luck lunch! See you there!!



Our heartfelt thanks to the Farmers' Market volunteers for September:

- 2 Dianne and Roger Diestler
- 9 Jo and Doug Klein
- 16 Larry Litzkow, Laurie Smith
- 23 Beth Peterson, Jillian Alcenot
- 30 Beth Peterson, Jillian Alcenot



Out of Darkness Walk for Suicide Prevention and Awareness

On Sunday, September 17 a group from St. Luke will join hundreds of other people in walking for suicide prevention and awareness. Thanks to your generosity, we raised \$711.45 through the Easter Breakfast for this cause. If you wish to donate further, or did not get a chance to make a donation this last Easter, you can either talk with me, Pr. Dave, or give a check to St. Luke with "Out of Darkness" written on the memo line. Thanks so much for your help!

Thought For The Day:

I have no use for cranks who despise music, because it is a gift of God.

Music drives away the Devil and makes people joyful; they forget thereby all wrath, unchastity, arrogance, and the like.

Next after theology, I give to music the highest place and the greatest honor.

- Martin Luther

Blessed to be a Blessing

-Abby Winecke

How am I blessed? I'm going to be honest, this is something that I don't often think about. As I try and navigate work, friends, family, and my own personal care, I find myself wrapped in the shuffle of simply *doing*. Similar to others in my life, I find it hard to take a step back from the momentary stress, to think about the more permanent blessings. The one time in my short life that I have had the opportunity to really recognize my blessings, and how I can bless others, is through workcamp. While many of you probably know the story of workcamp and what it has meant for so many members of this congregation, I hope to put this story into a bit of a different perspective. I will tell the story of not only how workcamp has blessed me and so many of my friends, but how it has allowed us each individually to be blessings to others.

As workcamp has become something that we *did* and not something we are still *doing*, what workcamp means to my friends and me has changed. I don't like to put words in people's mouths, so here are what some of the workcampers themselves have to say about how they have been blessed by workcamp, and how workcamp has helped them bless others:

- "Workcamp has blessed me by teaching me to stop worry about things in life that I can't control, and focus on being the best I can be every day. Additionally, I now can see that everyone could use some help, even if they don't show it." - Jake Arndt
- "Workcamp has blessed me with a second family. Those weeks together created a bond that we will all carry our whole lives." - Peter Klein and Olivia Peterson
- "Workcamp blessed me by helping me feel less alone with whatever it is I am going through. This was a type of love that I hadn't felt for a long time before workcamp." - Kirby Peterson
- "Workcamp allowed me to help bless others with a second chance. I saw the refresh our presence gave to families, and I came to see it as almost a restart." -Olivia Peterson
- "Workcamp helped me bless those less fortunate than me, and in turn see how fortunate I am. It showed me I have a responsibility to put those who need the help above myself." -Peter Klein

My own sentiments echo those of my friends. Workcamp has blessed me with: a second family, the ability to empathize, the opportunity to feel a part of something bigger than myself, and a greater appreciation for what I have. While I am eternally grateful for how workcamp has blessed me, even more powerful is how it allowed me to be a blessing to other. As Olivia and Peter shared, workcamp gave us the opportunity to be a life-changing force for people who thought they would never get the help they needed. Over a week's time, I watched individual's faith be renewed not only in God, but in themselves. To be the catalyst for that, is the biggest blessing I have ever been able to give.

I hope this opens your eyes to how powerful mission trips can be. I speak for myself, and all my workcamp friends, when I say thank you for giving us this opportunity. Without this congregation, none of us could have been blessed, or been a blessing, in quite the same way. I encourage you all to find your own version of workcamp so you too can experience the feeling of being blessed for being a blessing.

Thank you.



Fall Bazaar Update – Joyce Bluel & Judy Salaba, Committee Co-Chairs

Just a reminder, the Fall Bazaar is just about two months away; mark your calendars for Saturday, October 28th. **Note change in date of event.**

Bring all of those gently used or unneeded items you cleaned out this summer to the Rummage Sale. We will **NOT** be accepting clothing, furniture, exercise equipment, appliances or electronics. You may bring your items to church; starting on September 1st and place in Sunday school room nearest the offices.

Anyone willing to bake pies or other baked goods for the Bazaar please contact Joan Wilson (651) 253-6111 or Deb Vigdal (651) 681-0865. It's a *delicious* way to support our bazaar!

Another change being made this year is that we will be renting out tables to local crafters and vendors. If you know of a vendor that would be interested in renting out a table for \$35, please contact us for agreement forms. St Luke will also have a table available for those wishing to make and donate crafts. If you are planning on making crafts for the Bazaar, **we would like to know in advance**, please contact Judy Salaba (651) 698-8572 or Joyce Bluel at (651) 690-4614.

The raffle tickets will be ready for distribution soon. We will not be soliciting local business for raffle items this year. We will have the top three prizes, along with items donated by congregational members. If you would like to donate an item to the Raffle, please contact either of the co-chairs. The Raffle Committee could use help with selling raffle tickets and working the raffle table the day of the event. If you can help in any way, please contact Joyce Bluel (651) 690-4614 or Judy Salaba (651) 698-8572.

The proceeds from this event have been used to make some substantial changes both to our church building and to people's lives through donations to charities. This is also a way for us to reach out and give our neighbors a chance to get to know us better. There is something for everyone to get involved with, just contact one of the following chairs:

Rummage Sale Chair:	Jo Klein
Bake Sale Co-chairs:	Joan Wilson & Deb Vigdal
Kitchen Chair:	Beth Peterson
Publicity Chair:	Pam Ballis
Raffle Chair:	Joyce Bluel & Judy Salaba
Crafts Co-chairs:	Judy Salaba and Joyce Bluel

Commentaries for the September Gospel Readings

Below please find the commentaries for the September gospel readings. For resources I used "Preaching Matthew's Gospel" by Richard Jensen, Working Preacher and my own notes. Please read the gospel as well as the notes found below, and then take time for prayer as you prepare for worship each Sunday. If you have any questions or comments about the gospel reading, I would LOVE to hear them. Let's grow in and through God's Word!

September 3, Matthew 16:21-28

With our reading for today, Matthew begins a new section of his gospel. We see it in the words, "From that time on..." (we also find these words in 4:17). From this time on, Matthew is not concentrating on the teachings or healings of Jesus (as before); from this time on, his emphasis is on Jesus' journey to the cross, and we see that Jesus calls us to follow! This is the first of three times that Jesus tells his disciples of his suffering, death and resurrection (the other two are found in Matthew 17:22-23; Matthew 20:17-19). The disciples only seem to hear the suffering and death portion, not the resurrection news. Upon hearing this, Peter rebukes Jesus (The word "rebuke" is often used by Jesus when he casts out unclean spirits). In so doing is Peter putting himself above Jesus? Does Peter want to be the leader, the teacher, and not the follower? Or are good intentions just leading him down the wrong road as he tries to protect Jesus? How often are we like Peter? Are we faster to voice our thoughts/opinions than to listen (James 1:19)? Jesus rebukes Peter. Why does Jesus call Peter Satan? Jesus says Peter has his mind set on human things rather than the way of God. Is it possible for Peter (us) to change? How does that happen? What does it mean to be a follower of Christ? Jesus says we must deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Jesus. How do you do that? Jesus then tells us about saving our life. What is Jesus saying to us? Take time to meditate on this or other thoughts that come to you as you read this passage.

September 10, Matthew 18:15-20

It is important to note that today's gospel comes right after the parable of the lost (strayed) sheep (Matthew 18:10-14). We move from the story of one lost sheep to the story of one lost (strayed) brother/sister in Christ. The purpose in both cases is to find the lost one and return them to the flock. In fact, in 18:13-14 Jesus speaks about the lost sheep being found, stating, "And if he (shepherd) finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost." That is the introduction to our gospel reading for today in which Jesus talks about the way to regain someone in the church who sins, goes astray. Regaining that person is central to this story. First you speak to the person one on one. If that doesn't work, you gather two or three witnesses and talk with that person again. Why the witnesses? One reason is that you may be wrong in your assessment of that person. The witnesses may recognize that and correct YOUR misunderstanding. On the other hand, if that person has indeed sinned and gone astray, the witnesses may help lead that person back. Underlining all of this is what Jesus stated at the end of this passage, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." We gather in Jesus' name, with the realization that Jesus is there guiding us. Remember that in Matthew 1:23 Jesus is called "Immanuel," or "God with us." God is with us in community, where two or three are gathered in his name, guiding us. We trust in that word. If that person still doesn't listen, we take them to the whole congregation. If they still refuse to listen, we are to treat them as a Gentile and tax collector. The question is; what did Jesus do with Gentiles and tax collectors? He sought them out. He ate with them. He had fellowship with them. In fact, that kind of behavior got Jesus in trouble with the religious authorities. Even still, he sought them out bringing them forgiveness and the gospel. In fact, one of Jesus' own disciples, Matthew, was a tax collector. In treating these people as a tax collector or Gentile, we seek them out with the gospel of forgiveness and grace. The purpose is to win them back; to return the lost sheep to the fold. Again, what did Jesus say at the very end of this reading? "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among you." Jesus, Immanuel, is God's presence among us. The heart of

the community is the presence of love and forgiveness found in Jesus. These should be the marks of our community.

September 17, Matthew 18:21-35

Our reading for today is a continuation from last week. Please read the gospel reading and commentary again for context, but remember, it is all about restoring a lost one to church fellowship. Peter, rightly understanding that forgiveness is key, asks Jesus if it is enough to forgive seven times. This was quite generous since the Rabbis of the time taught that forgiving four times was enough. Peter thought he might have the math right. But Jesus shocks Peter by saying, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times." Forgiveness is not a matter of math; it is incalculable. It is a matter of the heart. In fact, in Matthew 7:1-2 Jesus says, "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get." Our judgment and lack of forgiveness boomerangs right back at us. Be careful. Jesus says this through the parable of the unforgiving servant. The servant owed the king 10,000 talents, which was the biggest stack of money imaginable in that day. It was an impossibly large amount. It is like you or me owing someone a trillion dollars. There is absolutely no way *anyone* could ever pay back such a large amount. It was unthinkable. Yet, when the servant pleaded with the king, the king had mercy on the servant and forgave him of the whole debt. Everything. Unbelievable. That is incalculable forgiveness. And yet, this same slave who had just been forgiven this unimaginably large sum of money, did not forgive another person who owed him a small sum of money. The king hears of this, summoned the servant and said, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?" Then the king handed him over to be tortured until he paid off his entire debt. We are called to forgive! As Rev. Richard Jensen wrote, "Peter now has the answer to his question. Forgiveness on the part of God and on the part of humans is beyond calculation....This is how life in the church is to be." This is how each of us, who have been forgiven so gracefully by God, are to live and act....with forgiveness.

September 24, Matthew 20:1-16

This is a famous parable by Jesus that turns our world, our economics, as well as what we think is fair, on its head. This parable is about God's amazing grace. It is about the kingdom of heaven. In fact, that is how Jesus introduces this parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner..." In this parable, the landowner represents God and the workers are you and me. The landowner goes out and hires workers at different times of the day. He begins early in the morning by offering workers the usual daily wage. They agree and begin their work in his vineyard. At 9:00 a.m. he finds more workers and tells them he will pay them whatever is right. They agree and begin working. He went out to find workers again at noon, three o'clock and five o'clock. Then, at the end of the workday he called in the laborers to give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first. The last received the usual daily wage! The ones he hired first must have thought they would receive more. That would be fair according to our calculations.... But instead they received the same wage! They were upset by this and complained saying they had worked much harder and longer than the others, so they should receive more. But the landowner said, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?" In our capitalist system, we would label this as unfair, even if it is about the grace of God. We think we should receive what we EARN! But we cannot EARN the grace of God; it is a gift. We all love to receive the grace, love and mercy of God. But if someone else receives it, whom WE deem undeserving, it can seem unfair. Yet, shouldn't we rejoice when God showers his grace upon all of us? God's ways are different from our ways. It is as it says in Isaiah 55:8-9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Thank the Lord!

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. ~Numbers 6:24