

DiscipleShip

Pastor Ben's Ponderings

Volume 32, No.6
Winter 2019

Can you believe it's over? The mad dash to December 25th that began with the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, Black Friday, and decorations in stores all the way back to October is gone. As you go about your shopping and errands in these days, and see TV advertisements, corporate America will already be directing your attention to the next big thing – Valentine's Day! Gone are the chocolate Santa's, and in are the heart shaped candy boxes!

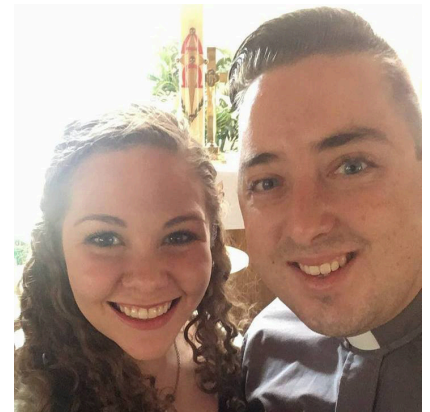
Do you ever grow tired of the constant hurry and pace of life? As I write this article some 3+ weeks before Christmas it feels as if the holiday hurry is already at breakneck speed. Tomorrow might not be Christmas, but it certainly feels like it could be! So what are Christians to do at this time of year? What does it look like to be "salt and light" in a culture fixated and addicted to stress, busyness, and the never-ending calendar?

It's times like these that falling back on the calendar of the church year is helpful. In our rush and hurry to make sure we have the most perfect, best Christmas celebration possible we often forget to slow down enough to consider just how magnificent and wonderful the coming of Jesus at Christmas is. Even though we're beyond Christmas Day at this point, the season of Epiphany helps us transition into what's next. It helps us not move on from Christmas too quickly, but reminds us of the star that revealed Jesus to the Wise Men. The readings in the Lectionary (the appointed readings in worship) allow us to linger a little longer with the Christmas story as the Wise Men are directed to and worship Jesus as the newborn king.

Like the wise men, who might not have even made their way to Jesus until he was a toddler, we don't always fully get to focus on Jesus as much as we might like during Christmas. The Wise Men and the season of Epiphany – which means "manifestation" or "appearing" are great reminders that even if we feel we've missed the boat on the "most wonderful time of the year," God is still active and present in our lives! Just as he led the Wise Men using a star even years after His birth, it's never too late for us to worship and praise God for His birth at Christmas! As we head into the new year together as a congregation, let's resolve that no matter what the calendar or our busy schedules say, we'll focus on the joy and eternal blessings that the Christmas Child brings.

Epiphany blessings to you and yours,

Pastor Ben



"... magi from the East arrived in Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.'" (Matthew 2:1-2)

Epiphany

Epiphany is celebrated on January 6th or the first Sunday following the 6th. The meaning of Epiphany in Greek is "to appear." On Epiphany we celebrate that the star appeared and led the Magi to the baby Jesus, and we praise God for becoming a human and revealing His plan for salvation to the world.

Luther's Morning Prayer



"I thank you, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen."

Easter and Lenten Services



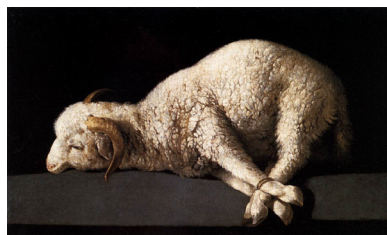
March 6	Ash Wednesday Chapel	9:00 am
	Ash Wednesday Service	7:00 pm
March 13	Lenten Worship	7:00 pm
March 20	Lenten Worship	7:00 pm
March 27	Lenten Worship	7:00 pm
April 3	Lenten Worship	7:00 pm
April 10	Lenten Worship	7:00 pm
April 14	Palm Sunday	8:00, 10:30, 10:45 am
April 18	Maundy Thursday	7:00 pm
April 19	Good Friday Worship	7:30 pm
April 20	Holy Saturday	6:00 pm
April 21	Easter Sunday Sunrise Service	6:00 am
	Easter Sunday Breakfast	7:00 am
	Easter Service in the Sanctuary	8:00, 10:30, 10:45 am

The Luther Rose was designed by Martin Luther. The black cross within a red heart represents the pain of knowing that Jesus Christ had to be crucified and the cross which gives life for Christians. Luther believed that white was the color of angels and stood for joy, comfort, and peace. The blue field and gold ring symbolize eternal blessings in heaven. This symbol is on the bell tower of the church.



Luther's Evening Prayer

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray You to forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.



2019 Calendar

January

January 6
Epiphany

Lutheran Schools Week
January 27 - February 2

February

Lutheran Schools Week
February 1
11 am & 7 pm Talent Show

February 5, 12, 19, 26
Open House - Registration

March

March 6
Ash Wednesday Chapel
March 13
Chili Cook Off - 6:00 pm
March 15
Art and Science Fair - 7:00 pm
March 26
1st - 6th grade Spring Program

School News

Pre-School News

This year we have a "Time for Two" class, two three-year-old classes, and two four-year-old classes, totalling over 60 children coming into our building each week. We have 4 teachers and 3 aides to teach all of these little minds. We have had many adventures in our classes, such as Family Night, a visit from firemen, and a pumpkin patch field trip.

The four-year-old classes had a Christmas program on December 19th and the three-year-old class had a "Happy Birthday Jesus" party.

The New Year brings many changes as we discuss the children's progress with their parents in preparation for fall kindergarten. Applications for the 2019 - 2020 school year will be accepted in February.



Christmas Programs



3rd - 5th grade



Kindergarten - 2nd grade



Pre-Kindergarten

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Luke 2:14 | *ESV*

6th - 8th grade



St. Luke Members Volunteer



**St. Luke Volunteers on a
Louisiana Mission Trip**



**Doug Miller and homeowners
at Dedication Ceremony**



**The Great Louisiana Flood
of 2016**

"Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love." Ephesians 1:3-6

Members from St. Luke have quietly volunteered their time and talents with Fuller Center Disaster Rebuilders for several years. The organization was founded in 2008 by Millard Fuller. Fuller's Vision Statement is: *"In the chaos and vast destruction of a major disaster area, to be a Christian beacon of light and hope for families and communities for those that need us the most."* FCDR works to restore families to their original homes. They work with homeowners who don't have the financial or physical capacity to do it themselves. Most of the population they serve are senior citizens, disabled, or single-parent families. They work with volunteers from across the United States. St. Luke has answered the call and participated in mission trips after Hurricane Katrina in 2015 (still re-building after the 2005 hurricane), The Great Flood of Louisiana in 2016, Hurricane Sandy in 2013, and Hurricane Harvey in 2017. Another mission trip is being planned for the North Carolina victims of 2018 Hurricane Florence.

Members of God's army from St. Luke have included: Lynn & Leda Thompson, Doug & Cathy Miller, Barb & Kevin Tasker, Paul & Darlene Garcia, Eileen Geary, Linda Bogan, Nancy McWilliams, Mark Fanton, Glenn Lang, Rachel & Ken Meissner, Pastor Barry, Sandi Pflueger, Mike Bartos, Yvonne Kaczmarczyk, Doris Seth, Len Bloom & Megan Giammarco, Brenda Fett, Terry Vossler, Cheryl Grossi, Jim Sleigh, Mary Jean Montag, Cindy Alviani.

St. Luke and Concordia have leant their support to this mission field. Volunteers pay for their own transportation to and from the work site. They give up vacation days and potential earned income for many who are self-employed or hourly wage earners. The homes are restored in waves of such volunteers, who usually come for a week at a time. The initial clean out after a flood, usually referred to as "mucking out," and spraying for mold is done before our crew gets there. They find themselves doing plumbing, wiring, insulation, re-framing new walls, painting, installing trim and dry-wall, tiling, roofing, outside

property ready to move in. The whole process usually takes several months. Once the house is finished and equipped with a washer, dryer, stove, and refrigerator, there is a Dedication Ceremony where the home owners are presented with a bible and a hand-made quilt or afghan.

Leda Thompson is the Secretary of FCDR. When asked what keeps calling her back to these mission trips, Leda replied, "First the Holy Spirit; then the great need; then the homeowners and their shattered lives; the wonderful volunteers; an invitation to serve on the Board of Directors; the sense of meaningful work to do; having a purpose much bigger than myself; and finally, the sense that God's called me to this work and given me all I need to do it."

We are so happy to see our members demonstrating Christ in action to others. Volunteering can be: being in prayer for the Mission Team, providing funds, providing snacks for the team, making afghans or quilts, donating a bible, publicizing the trip, or going on a mission trip. Some people have been on one mission trip, while others have been on many. We are thankful for the members of our congregation who participate in this mission field as well as the many other mission opportunities that often go unnoticed. We are all part of the body of Christ and are reminded in James 2: 14 - 17 that:

"What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

You can learn more about the FCDR volunteering opportunities by visiting <https://fullercenter.org/disaster-rebuilders>, their facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/256165872610/>, or talking with one of the people who have been on a mission trip.

Ministry Updates From Pastor Gandy

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." 1 Peter 2:9

Examining the 1 Peter 2:9 text, the Commission on Theology and Church Relation recently published a report titled, "The Royal Priesthood: Identity and Mission." The report "stresses that the setting for the exercise of the functions of the royal priesthood (that is, the laity) is in the daily vocations of believers—at home, at work, in society." One of the misconceptions about church work, particularly Mission and Outreach — that is, sharing the faith with the lost and unchurched—is that this work is heavily done by those employed by, or have particular vocations within, the church. This could not be more incorrect. As Peter writes in his letter, and as the CTCR report concludes, the work of the priesthood of all believers belongs to all baptized Christians. I highly encourage you all to read the document, which can be accessed and printed from this link: <https://files.lcms.org/wl/?id=sKchZQlIvrVVAJ6JqTkyqmW2FUx9NQZo> I appreciate much of what the report shares, but in particular (and I hope you appreciate this as well) I gravitated toward the CTCR report's title:

Identity and Mission. The word choice and language are poignant and they should be familiar to us. Both of these things are topics that we, in our Congregational Journeys, have recently discussed: Identity and Mission (or Purpose). Our very identities are rooted in Christ, just as our mission and purpose (cf. Matthew 28:19-20) are also. The latter half of Peter's text, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, echos the Evangelist Matthew's words and confesses the same. Each Christian, by nature of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within (Baptism), can't help but proclaim the excellencies of Him who called him out of darkness into his marvelous light (note the language of the Evangelist John from his Gospel; c.f. John 1:1-18). This proclamation is a response of faith, which manifests in all places and times of the Christian's life (on Sunday, yes, but so also at home, work, and society). The Christian cannot keep this faith under a basket, nor can the Christian be a light unto him/herself (c.f. Matthew 5:13-16).

A great fear, one with which I wrestled for quite a while (and perhaps you do too), is the fear of public confession — that is, talking about the faith outside my usual comfort zone of me, myself,

and I (remember, you cannot be a light unto yourself!). **My encouragement to you is that you never shy down from the opportunity to speak Jesus into someone's life.** Perhaps you might not have the eloquence of someone more steeped in theological language, but don't let that stop you from simply saying, "I believe. I want you to, also." Start small, literally. I learned to share the faith, first with little children! I taught the children's message and Sunday school. I promise, if you can share the Gospel with a child (children ask the greatest and toughest questions, by the way!), you can share the Gospel with your neighbor. Parents, teach your children the faith at home! That is one of the best places to form your apologetic (from Greek apologia, which means "speaking in defense"). Speak up in Bible Class; don't be shy! Challenge yourself and your Pastor. Pray. Pray out loud. Hear your own words. Let your children hear your words. Let your family hear your words. And, finally, know that it is God who grows His church. You may be the instrument—that is, the one who proclaims and shares the faith—but, it is God who does the growing.

God bless you and the ministries of Faith and St. Luke that proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.



VOICE OF VICTORY MINISTRIES

St. Luke partners with Bishop Unity Rabiamen Msami to reach and impact many people in Tanzania. There is a church, school, clinic, camps for 300 - 500 young men studying Christian ethics and educational courses, and gospel outreaches to widows and orphans. They supply food, clothes, and other needs to the poorest of children and those in difficult circumstances. They strive to bring the love of Christ to them, through works and testimony.



Vicar Brian

"A day in the life of a SMP Vicar"

Many people out of love and care or mere curiosity have posed several questions recently that perhaps others are still wondering themselves. Some of those questions echo these sentiments: How is school? What does SMP stand for? What do you do all day if church is only on Sundays? (Kids are great for this one) How far along are you in school? How are you liking it? After you are ordained will you have to go somewhere else?

First of all, what does SMP stand for? The Specific-Ministry-Pastor program was designed with people in mind who are actively serving in full-time ministry where they are and for whose situations in life make it difficult or nearly impossible to uproot and relocate to the seminary for four years (putting everything else on hold to be a traditional student again) and who have a active congregation supporting them. In this program, students receive academic training in the setting where they will continue to serve following ordination. While taking classes through Concordia Seminary via distance education online, they work with local pastor-mentors who support them in the program with day-to-day guidance and on-the-job training. One-on-one mentoring supplements some of the instructional time while real-world ministry is still taking place. The SMP student actively participates in a vicarage assignment



at the church they are serving and then is ordained at the 2 year mark (half-way through) as opposed to completing a vicarage at another church in their third year like traditional students who are called elsewhere. The student then completes the final two years of study while being an ordained Pastor called to the church they currently serve.

The blessing of having a Lutheran day school to partner with is amazing. From devotions to chapel service, to school programs, to family nights, you name it, there is never a shortage of opportunities for ministry connections. Beyond the day school, continuing efforts with monthly middle school youth group and weekly high school bible study, as well as on-going activities, are part of the pie as well. I try and be fairly active in outreach to our young adults, emerging adults, and college students at various stages in varied efforts. No matter the age, there never seems like enough time in the day. When you tack on vicarage duties such as preparing sermons, hospital and shut-in visitations, teaching confirmation, connecting through Kid's Club or parent Bible studies, working with our existing boards and church body, the days can be quite full (fulfilling and overwhelming at the same time).



Being a husband and father of three with a wife who works full-time as well, we are tackling the above responsibilities with all of our might... some weeks more successfully than others. The kids have gotten used to having to be extra quiet on Monday nights when Daddy has class on the computer. Half of the SMP students gather on one night, the other half on a different night, and faces fill blocks on the computer screen like an intro to "The Brady Bunch." The year is divided up into quarters and I have completed the first quarter on the Pastoral Office. The next course starts in February and will focus on "Worship." Many weeks there are several papers and a book to read also, so burning the midnight oil has become the norm in our house.

I would be lying if I said it wasn't daunting at times, but I still have to pinch myself on a daily basis as I never thought this road would have been possible.

I had long since believed that I had "missed my window" for full-time ministry, but God continues to make a believer out of me and showers us with the most supportive congregation we could ever have. It is crazy, it is holy, it is daunting and demanding, but it is rewarding and I pray above all, God-pleasing and obedient to His calling. Thank you all for your continued prayers and support as we continue this journey together.

Vicar Brian Bocian & Family

October - December 2018 Official Acts

New Members

Nadine Keck
Mary Sue Relihan

Marriages

October 20, 2018	Rhea Cohen & Sawyer Stepp
October 27, 2018	Katie Amerson & Simon Neubert
December 15, 2018	Sherrie Cogley & Timothy Oravitz

Births

November 2018	Landon Shawn Speering	Born to Shawn and Tabitha Sperring
December 3, 2018	Jacob Robert Rummel	Born to Sarah and Bob Rummel

Baptisms

Adora Isabella Adams	November 4, 2018	Child of Stephen and Sheila Adams
Caroline Louise McMurtry	December 15, 2018	Child of Michael and Sarah Frick

FOOD PANTRY

Our food pantry ministry currently serves 25 household that represent 55 individuals, including 17 children or grandchildren. We give out a bag of non-perishable groceries twice a month to each recipient. This ministry is dependent on your donations of food as well as monetary gifts. Food pantry baskets are placed at the church transept and church entrances. There are shopping lists on the wall by the baskets for donation ideas. Thanks to the many volunteers who donate their time to support this critical ministry at St. Luke.

Dave Pasquini
Food Pantry Ministry Coordinator

Deaths

Della Sarver	February 14, 1928 - October 11, 2018
Arlene J. Beckman	January 3, 1933 - October 21, 2018
Martha O. Schiedel	September 21, 1916 - October 21, 2018
Donald Kitko	February 6, 1940 - October 22, 2018
Marvin C. Curfman	January 7, 1938 - October 30, 2018
Eugene L. Reddel	November 22, 1938 - November 15, 2018
John M. Beyer	November 4, 1949 - November 24, 2018
Alfred C. Maurhoff	May 18, 1918 - December 5, 2018

St. Luke Lutheran Church & School

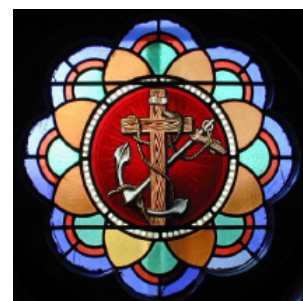
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*A community of believers
worshipping and proclaiming
the Good News of
salvation for over 170 years
1847 - 2018*

The symbol of the anchor is often seen with the Luther rose superimposed over it. The anchor symbolizes safety, and reminds us *"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."* Hebrews 6:19. It is also believed that the anchor is a symbol of the "Alpha and the Omega," which uses the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet to refer to Jesus as the first and the last.



"By the power of Christ, we carry the power of hope to the poor, the broken, and the outcast."