

The Mission of Christ the King

To Shine the light of Jesus, Reflect his unconditional love, and Mirror his kindness to all people.



www.CtKTwinsburg.com

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

- Family Dinner & a Movie p. 4
- February Assisters p. 6
- Pastor's Page p. 3
- Saturday Helpers Sought p. 2
- Youth Happenings p. 4



JOIN LAFF TO SOCIALIZE IN FEBRUARY!

On Sunday, February 10th, from 5 to 7 PM, Life After Fifty Fellowship (& Friends!), also known as LAFF, will join with friends and family at the Blind Squirrel Winery in Bainbridge for camaraderie, snacks, and wine. Please invite your friends, and bring your favorite snacks to enjoy with wine purchased at the winery. A dessert will be provided by Joanne Ciarniello. We will be entertained by the songstress Nadia, accompanied by Ron Ciarniello (Joanne & Rich's son) on guitar. There is no fee, and carpools are not planned, but a sign-up sheet is on the LAFF kiosk for the convenience of the winery. For your GPS: Blind Squirrel Winery 7918 Pettibone Road, 44023. Questions go to Joanne Ciarniello.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION TO BE MARCH 17TH

Council has set the Annual Meeting of the congregation for Sunday, March 17th, at 10:45 AM. The meeting date is later in the year than usual so that the congregation will have a better picture of how 2019 is progressing. (The CtK Constitution does not require the meeting be held in a particular month.)



The 2018 Annual Report must be approved at this meeting. Annual Report booklets will be ready for review beginning the weekend of March 2nd & 3rd. 2018 Ministry Leaders, please see the article to the right for details.

COTTAGE MEETINGS SCHEDULED FOR ALL MEMBERS!

At their January 19th planning meeting, Council set a schedule of Cottage Meetings at CtK for all members. Council President Mike Coss suggested reviving Cottage Meetings in 2019 to encourage members to gather in small groups to share ideas and information. Each Council member has been assigned a group of member families to represent. All six council members' groups will meet in separate rooms at these times:



- ◆ 1:00 PM Monday, February 18th
 - ◆ 10:45 AM Sunday, February 24th
 - ◆ 7:00 PM Monday, February 25th
- See the kiosk for a complete list of Council members and their groups. Meetings will also be held in May and September. Watch the *Weekend Messenger* for details.

2018 ANNUAL REPORTS DUE FEBRUARY 17TH



2018 Ministry Leaders are reminded that the 2018 reports of their ministries are due to Wendy in the office in electronic format by Sunday, February 17th. (Copies of the 2017 Annual Report are on the rack near the mailbox hallway if you need guidance in writing your report.)



Christ the King is a Stephen Ministry Congregation. See CtKTwinsburg.com for more information.



CHECK YOUR CTK MAILBOX FOR YOUR MESSENGER!

After much deliberation, we have allowed the Ctk postal permit (We were #1!) to expire. With it we could mail newsletters

for less than 20 cents apiece, but it cost over \$200 annually for the privilege, and we had to mail at least 150 newsletters. You are reading the first issue of the monthly *Messenger* that we mailed only to members and regular worshipers for whom we do not have a valid email address. Extra copies are on the rack by the kiosk.

If you would like the link to the *Messenger* to be emailed to a different email address than Wendy sent yours to, or if you did not receive the link, please let her know. If you receive your *Messenger* by mail but would be content to receive it in your Ctk mailbox, please tell her that, too. Thank you for your patience in this time of change.

2019 TELEPHONE DIRECTORY IN PROGRESS

A new telephone directory of Ctk members and friends will be printed in March. Please look at the copy of the directory on the glass table in the narthex to review your entry. Add any telephone numbers and email addresses that you want to share, or mark "OK" by your entry if it is correct. *Please remember that this directory is for the convenience of Ctk members & friends ONLY and should not be shared with any business representatives.*



5:30 PM SATURDAY WORSHIP HELPERS SOUGHT

Because of health issues and personal schedule changes, additional helpers are needed for Saturday worship. Please talk to Pastor Matthew, Deacon Patti, or Wendy Gibbons if you are interested in helping as an usher, a worship leader, or a sound booth attendant. Training is given.



0 OR 103 Years Old?

Join us at 10:45 AM Sundays!

Staffed nursery is available for those under three.

***3-Kindergarten** - Room 102 - Amy Williams

***1, 2, 3 Grades** - Room 105 - Denise Hall

***4, 5, 6 Grades** - Room 101 - Katie Bach

***7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 Grades** - Youth Room

David Schiopota

ADULT OPPORTUNITIES:

Understanding the Bible - Study of *Applause of Heaven* by Max Lucado - Room 103 - Karen Reid

Adult Forum of Current Topics

Fellowship Hall - John Humrichouser

Min. of Discipleship & Youth

Baptism

WELCOME TO CTK'S NEWEST MEMBER!

Daphne Josephine Jablonski was baptized Sunday, December 30th at 9:30 AM worship. The first child of Cara & David Jablonski and the granddaughter of Vickie Mazur, Daphne celebrated her first birthday in mid-January. Her sponsors were Scott Jablonski and Jaime Valore. Daphne was also present for Ctk's annual Faith Stepping Stone for Baptism on January 13th, The Baptism of Our Lord Sunday. Welcome, Daphne!

A NEW BABY IN OUR CHURCH FAMILY!

Welcome to Ariella Rose Eveanna, Alexa and Kyle Smiddle's new baby, who was born December 21st. Ariella joins big sister Angelina and is the second grandchild of Denise and Mark Tiearney. Congratulations to the growing family!



DIRECTORY

Christ the King Lutheran Church

10285 Ravenna Road

Twinsburg, OH 44087

Phone: 330-425-7377

www.CtKTwinsburg.com



Living in God's amazing grace

Reverend Matthew Groenke, Senior Pastor
pmatthew@CtKTwinsburg.com x109

Deacon Patricia Jabre, Minister of Discipleship & Youth

pjabre@CtKTwinsburg.com x106

Kevin Basom, Director of Music

Linda Mondry, Saturday Worship Musician

Wendy Gibbons, Office Administrator

wgibbons@CtKTwinsburg.com x102

FROM THE SENIOR PASTOR

FEBRUARY 2019

The logo features a blue square with a white, wavy path that curves upwards and to the right, resembling a road or a stream. Below the square, the word "prayer" is written in a large, blue, cursive font, and the word "WALK" is written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font to its right.

prayer WALK

One of the ways that we can grow closer to God is through prayer. An opportunity to do this can come whenever we embark on what is called a prayer walk. By doing this activity we can combine a time of physical activity with the added bonus of talking with God. In the observation of our surroundings, whether indoors or outdoors, an individual can more fully engage themselves in their surroundings and see how God is at work and present in their communities. Connecting ourselves to the actual physical spaces where we live and work can aid in the connections of faith to everyday life. In the listening and intentional focusing of a prayer walk, we can more clearly see how God is at work around us.

During the month of February, the task of taking a prayer walk can help you grow in your relationship with God. If inclement weather is a concern, taking an indoor walk at a rec center or mall can also work. As you walk, think of a short Bible verse, a favorite saying, or a verse of a favorite song to center your walk. Here are some suggestions as you walk:

- Pray with an open heart
- Pray with Scripture
- Talk to God about what you see around you
- Be silent, and listen for the still small voice of the Holy Spirit



Happy Walking!

Living in God's amazing grace,

Pastor Matthew Groenke

Shining the Light of Jesus...

7th - 12th Graders Tentative
Event Schedule:

February 17, Sunday, Tobogganing

Youth & families

March 24, Sunday, Whirlyball

Youth & families

April 27-28 - Lock-in

Min. of Discipleship & Youth

YOUTH

CONFIRMATION CORNER

(All classes are at CTK at 5 PM unless noted otherwise.)

February 10, 5 PM - Class: Baptism

March 17, 5 PM - Class: Sacrament of the Altar (Holy Communion)

April 14, 5 PM - Class: Confession & Faith Statements

May 19, 9:30 AM Worship - Rite of Confirmation All Confirmands are requested to attend and serve.

Min. of Discipleship & Youth



CTK FAMILY DINNER & MOVIE NIGHT

Saturday, March 2, 2019 6:30 PM

Bring your family and friends to enjoy a dinner of Chicken

Nuggets, Mac and Cheese, Baby Carrots, Cookies, and of course Popcorn! (Adults, you may sign

up to bring an "adult" entrée to share.)



We will have several movies to choose from so all ages are welcome!

Wear your comfy clothes and bring blankets/pillows/sleeping bags to use while you enjoy the movie!

Sign up on the bulletin board or text/call Katie Bach at 330-631-5926 or email kbach217@gmail.com by Saturday, February 23rd.



YOUTH-LED WORSHIP SERVICE POSTPONED

Due to illness, the annual Youth-led worship service originally set for February 3rd will be rescheduled. Watch the *Weekend Messenger* for information. All 7th through 12th graders are encouraged to participate.

DECEMBER 2018 SUNDAY SCHOOL PERFECT ATTENDANCE

1st - 3rd Grades - Benjamin Stayanchi

4th - 6th Grades - Jeremiah Groenke, Jillian Harnak, Nathan Stayanchi

7th - 12th Grades - Adam Groenke, Elijah Groenke

Adults - Katie Bach, Shirley Duffy, Julie Groenke, Pastor Matthew Groenke, John Humrichouser, Tom Pituch, Karen Reid, Dale Schlosnagle, Mary Schlosnagle, Sue Simmons, Jane Zaremba

...December 19th Blue Christmas Reception helpers - Lynne Bailey, Paul Bucholtz, Glenn & Nancy Fasnacht, MJ Neel, Mary Ellen Robinette, Karen Scarpelli, Louise Susnik, D. Urban

...Christmas Eve musicians - Ichthus, Sally Morris, Men's Quartet Plus (Kevin Basom, Pastor Matthew Groenke, John Humrichouser, Tom Pituch, David Schiopota, Mark Tearney)

...Christmas poinsettia donors - Lynne Bailey, Kerry Dominick, the Doty family, Shirley Duffy, Nancy & Glenn Fasnacht, John & Wendy Gibbons, Lori Harrison, Linda Mondry, Sally Morris, MJ Neel, Mary Ellen Robinette, the Thompson family, D. Urban, Jane Zaremba

...December 29th Haven of Rest supper helpers - Kerry Dominick, Sue Simmons, Lisa & Cael Wells. The next scheduled date to help is Saturday, March 30th.

...January 8th blood driver helpers - Marge Bowman, Chris Driver, Shirley Duffy, Wendy Gibbons, MJ Neel, Ginger Pituch, D. Urban. Sixteen donors came in, and 13 pints were collected. One donor was a first-time donor. The next blood drive at CtK will be Tuesday, March 5, 2019; watch for the registration desk & canteen sign-up sheet.

...January 9th Undeck the Halls Helpers - Pastor Matthew Groenke, Josh Herberth, Cindy & Joe Meyer, Sandy Molnar, Linda Mondry, Marty Mondry, Sally Morris, Mike Pereksta, Karen Reid, Karen Scarpelli, David Schiopota, Sharon Straka

...January 10th Cleveland East Cluster of Northeastern Ohio Synod brunch - Louise Susnik, Leatrice Alexander, Joanne Ciarniello, Wendy Gibbons, Pastor Matthew Groenke, MJ Neel, Ginger Pituch

...Tom Pituch & Paul Bucholtz for replacing many fluorescent tubes with more efficient LED tubes, including in the offices, the original men's restroom, the fellowship hall, and both hallways

...Glenn Fasnacht for removing and replacing damaged floor tiles in the original men's restroom



STEWARDSHIP IS LOVE IN ACTION

God's love is in action every day.

The sun rises and sets every day. God loves us so much that he provides us with every day and a time for rest. He gave us so much more with the gift of His son – Jesus!



How are we sharing love in action? By opening our doors to the community for a safe place to worship, to gather in meeting rooms, and to encourage youth activities within our walls.

This is also a time for us to reflect if we are giving our love whole heartedly to the ministries at Christ the King.

We need to come together in love and unity to support the whole church with our time, talents, and treasures.

Sandy Molnar, Financial Secretary

SPRING ENDOWMENT GRANT REQUESTS DUE MARCH 24TH

Spring endowment grant requests are due in the submission envelope in the Endowment mailbox by Sunday, March 24th. Endowment request forms can be found in the Endowment mailbox. Areas for which requests may be submitted are Seeding, Evangelism, Matching, Outreach, and Emergency. Remember to fully complete both sides of the form to be considered for funds from the Lester Endowment Fund. Please direct questions to a member of the Endowment Committee: chair Mike Pereksta, Kristin Bedford, Rich Ciarniello, Mike Procop, or the 2019 Council representative (to be named).



DECEMBER 2018 FINANCE REPORT	
<i>Complete financial information is posted on the kiosk outside the office.</i>	
Operating Income	\$22,666
Other designated income	\$720
Total Income	\$23,386
Operating Expenses	\$19,549
Other payments	\$2,200
Total Expenses	\$21,749
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	\$1,637
Monthly Budget	\$24,215



2018 YEAR-END GIVING STATEMENTS COMPLETE

Financial Secretary Sandy Molnar has printed 2018 Giving Statements and placed them in Ctk mailboxes. Please contact Sandy directly if you have any questions about your

statement. Also, please take a moment to thank Sandy and our weekly offering counters, Linda Mondry & Karen Reid, for the hours they commit to these jobs.

DIRECTED THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS



THRIVENT FINANCIAL®

Connecting faith & finances for good.™

Christ the King received a gift in the amount of **\$191** in Thrivent Choice Dollars during January from Thrivent. The following members of Thrivent requested we receive this gift. Thank you for your support!

Rob & Lisa Doty

Sandy Molnar



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES INCLUDE NEW BOOK STUDY

The adult Sunday school class that is led by Karen Reid in room 103 has begun to study the Max Lucado book *Applause of Heaven*. If you would like to join in the discussion, simply drop by room 103.

As an alternative, John Humrichouser leads an adult forum of current topics each Sunday in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is welcome at either class on Sundays at 10:45 AM. See Karen or John with questions about the classes.



COLLECTIONS AT CTK

Paper recycled in November 2018 - \$12.52

Salvation Army Bed & Bread for December 2018 - \$55

15 pounds aluminum cans in January- \$5; to date - \$76 (We are paid more for flattened cans than for unflattened ones. NO FOIL, please.)

St Pauly Clothing Shed for December 2018 - \$122.48; Year-to-Date - \$1474; Since inception - \$5686

FEBRUARY COTTAGE MEETINGS SCHEDULED!

Council set dates for February Cottage Meetings at Ctk for all members. Each Council member has been assigned a group of members to represent. All six council members' groups will meet in separate rooms at these times:

- ◆ 1:00 PM Monday, February 18th
- ◆ 10:45 AM Sunday, February 24th
- ◆ 7:00 PM Monday, February 25th



Go to cktwinsburg.com, About Us, Newsletters to see current *Weekend Messenger* with assistants.
Please contact Wendy in the office to volunteer for any openings shown below.

SHINING THE LIGHT OF JESUS AT WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY 2019

	Worship time	February 2 nd & 3 rd Kneeling Communion	February 9 th & 10 th	February 16 th & 17 th	February 23 rd & 24 th
Acolytes	5:30 PM	Lydia Schiopota	Spencer Bach	Lauren Williams	To be assigned
	9:30 AM	Evan Harnak	Grace Lue	Nathan Stayanchi	Gabrielle Doty
Worship Assistants, Lectors (L), Communion Assistants (C)	5:30 PM	Katie Bach	None available	None available	Katie Bach
	9:30 AM	Denise Tiearney (L, C)	Mike Pereksta (L), Kristin Wedemeyer Goss (C)	Sue Simmons (L), Karen Reid (C)	Mike Coss (L, C)
Lay Prayer Leaders	9:30 AM	To be assigned	Kristin Wedemeyer Goss	Jenn Lue	Karen Reid
Ushers	5:30 PM	Volunteer needed	MJ Neel	Sharon Straka	Sharon Straka
	9:30 AM	Chris Driver, Ginger Pituch	Kate Hartland, Chris Spitz	Linda Bender, Chuck Goodnight	Jean & Mike Coss
Greeters	9:30 AM	Chanon Bortak	Sue Brunst	D. Urban	Chris Spitz
Sound Booth	5:30 PM	Claire Schiopota	None available	Claire Schiopota	None available
Altar Care	9:30 AM	Sue Simmons	Jenn Lue	Amy Bates, Marge Bowman	Jane Zaremba
Punch Maker	9:15 AM	Kate Hartland	Bedford Family	Mary Ellen Robinette	Wendy Gibbons
Coffee Clean-up	12 PM	Office Staff	Ginger & Tom Pituch	Sandy Molnar	Office Staff
March Messenger Assembly – Shirley Duffy & Sandy Molnar - 1:00 PM, Tuesday, February 19, 2019 in Room 103		March Messenger Deadline to office@ctktwinsburg.com by Thursday, February 14, 2019			
Thanks to Mary Ellen Robinette and D. Urban for assembling the February Messenger!					



February 2019

For the most up-to-date event schedule for Christ the King, go to www.dktwinsburg.com/?page_id=72

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																											
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Perspective: Smartphones and a New Year's resolution

By Martin Zimmann

A Nov. 23 article from *Reuters* tells of a special vacation in Hungcheon, South Korea, where, for \$90 per night, one can be locked in a prison cell, away from the presence of all digital media. Business is booming. Co-founder Noh Ji-Hyang said the new venture was inspired by her husband, a prosecutor who often put in 100-hour workweeks. "After a stay in the prison, people say, 'This is not a prison, the real prison is where we return to,'" she said.

It got me thinking: none of us ever set out to become technology addicts. "Likes" on Facebook are gratifying to the mind, but over time we often need more and more of them to generate a hit of dopamine. The average American looks at his or her cellphone 47 times per day. For those ages 18 to 24, that number is nearly doubled.

As baptized and redeemed folk of God's ever-emerging reign, we are supposed to put God first above all things. Matthew 6:33 puts it more poetically: "But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." But sanctification is a lifelong project, and the results of it are not always easy to see or feel. Meanwhile there are myriad worldly options for instant gratification, perhaps none more immediate than a notification from a so-called smartphone. Eternal life or a critical mass of likes on a Facebook post—which is more important?

So often we act as if it's the latter. Digital media, coupled with the ubiquity of the cellphone, has attempted to replace Jesus.

In 2019, we need more God and less Snapchat. We need to communicate with God as often as we update our Instagram stories. We need to be more present IRL (in real life) and less in the mindless scrolling of our Twitter feeds. We need a little more Jesus and a lot less YouTube. Only Jesus can help us in the midst of our weakness, and the Spirit will pray on our behalf with "sighs too deep for words" (talk about unlimited data!). In short, it's time to put the phone and God in their proper contexts.

In his explanation of the First Commandment in the Large Catechism, Martin Luther wrote: "I have often said, it is the trust and faith of the heart alone that make both God and an idol. If your faith and trust are right, then your God is the true one. Conversely, where your trust is false and wrong, there you do not have the true God. For these two belong together, faith and God. Anything on which your heart relies and depends, I say, that is really your God."

How can we stop idolizing digital media and make God our God again? Here are a few suggestions, some of which you could consider as New Year's resolutions:

- Stop putting your phone on the table at meals.
- Leave your phone in the car unless there is a pending emergency.
- Don't delete all the apps on your smartphone. Instead, add one that tracks phone usage and/or an app that limits it.
- Instruct your phone to reply to texts with the message: "I check text messages once a day [around/at this specific time]. If this is an emergency, call me." Then only check and respond to messages daily at your dedicated time.

Ongoing Ctk Events

MEN'S MONTHLY BREAKFAST

All men 18 and older are invited to meet for food and fellowship at Fresh Start Diner at 9810 Ravenna Road on Twinsburg Square at 8 AM the first Saturday of the month, February 2nd - Groundhog Day! See Tom Pituch for details.

TUESDAY WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Ctk Tuesday Women's Bible Study meets weekly at 10 AM in Room 105. Wendy Gibbons leads the hour-long sessions, which include Bible study, fellowship, discussion, and prayer. **All women are invited** to attend weekly or to drop in when their schedules permit. The group collects an offering to support the Cleveland YWCA's Nurturing Independence and Aspiration initiative to assist youth aging out of foster care.

The study through April from *Gather* magazine, is *The Gospel of John: Meetings with Jesus* by the Rev. Julie A. Kanarr. February's topic is "By Night and Day: Coming to Faith in Jesus." Readers will meet Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, a royal official with a dying son, and a paralyzed man, all of whom have special meetings with Jesus.

Bibles and copies of the study are available at class. To subscribe to *Gather* call 844-409-0576; a year's subscription (10 issues) is \$20. See Wendy with questions.

FAITH WEDNESDAYS

Pastor Matthew leads a noon Wednesday study in the fellowship hall most weeks. The group is reading the letters of St. Paul in chronological order. See the *Weekend Messenger* calendar to know which letter will be read that week. There is time to eat your brown bag lunch in the class. Everyone is welcome to attend whenever it's convenient.

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- Start carrying a good book (dare I even suggest the Good Book!) to read something substantial in waiting rooms, airports and other idle moments.

Matthew 6 again reminds us that where our treasure is, there our hearts will also be (verse 21). I don't know about you, but I don't want to die only to discover that my only treasure has been a burst of pleasure resulting from cat videos. I'd rather lean into the everlasting arms of God and find peace, which surpasses all understanding.

As with many New Year's resolutions, the journey to disown the God of technology is two steps forward, three steps back. Perhaps it is best to see the grace that pervades our human folly and know the Spirit is able to raise up from stones the new children of Abraham, even if it doesn't make it to Facebook.

New Year's blessings to you, and good luck to all my siblings in Christ who are seeking to grow closer to God's intended purpose for creation in 2019.



The Rev. Dr. Martin Otto Zimmann is an adjunct professor of church and society at United Lutheran Seminary, Gettysburg campus. He holds a Ph.D. in American culture studies.

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ORDER FROM AMAZON, HELP CTK WITH AMAZON SMILE PROGRAM

If you order from Amazon, you can simultaneously help CtK financially. Go to smile.amazon.com and select Christ the King Lutheran Church, Twinsburg Ohio as your charity of choice, and most purchases from Amazon **made by shopping via smile.amazon.com** will result in a donation by Amazon to Christ the King. (There are MANY Christ the King Lutheran Churches, so please be sure to select the correct congregation!) To date, CtK has received \$56 through this program.



Nathan Stayanchi	2/3
Carol Sykora	2/10
Maxine Farleman	2/12
Chris Smith	2/12
Heather Spaeth	2/13
Patti Jabre	2/14
Barbara Keyser	2/14
Bill Zaremba	2/14
Katie Bach	2/17
Olivia Doty	2/18
Diana Cerny	2/20
Mike Nezbeda	2/20
Charlie Stayanchi	2/20
Rae Kendrick	2/21
Rachael Stahlman	2/22
Mitch Harrison	2/23
Danielle Smith	2/29



Rich & Joanne Ciarniello	2/1
Ray & Rae Kendrick	2/3
Carla & Gary Erbe	2/9
Larry & Lynn Jaskiel	2/25



LENT BEGINS ON ASH WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6TH

The liturgical season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on March 6th, 2019. Pastor Matthew will give ashes to people to drop by the church between 10:00 AM and noon and from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Midweek Lenten Soup & Sandwich Suppers commence at 6:00 PM that day. Ash Wednesday worship is at 7:00 PM and includes the Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion.

Lenten Soup & Sandwich suppers will be at 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall followed by worship at 7:00 PM every Wednesday from March 6th through April 10th. Beginning March 13th, the Midweek Lenten Worship services will include Marty Haugen's *Holden Evening Prayer* liturgy.

Music Director Kevin Basom is choosing an Easter cantata to be presented at worship after Easter. Rehearsals for all interested singers will be after the Midweek Lenten Worship services beginning Ash Wednesday.

Palm/Passion Sunday Weekend is April 13th & 14th, Maundy Thursday is April 18th, Good Friday is April 19th, and Easter Weekend is April 20th & 21st.

Watch the *Weekend Messenger* and the monthly *Messenger* for more information about Lent and Holy Week events and services.

Meeting grace again for the first time

What is grace?

By Meghan Johnston Aelabouni

Living Lutheran Editor's note: *As Lutherans, grace is at the heart of our faith understanding. But what does it look like to actually live out grace? In this series, we will explore what grace means and what it looks like to tangibly experience grace in action.*

What do 355 ELCA congregations in 41 states have in common? They are all named Grace Lutheran Church—or Amazing Grace, Living Grace or another variation. The Word and Sacraments of worship are themselves “means of grace.” But what *is* grace, exactly? When we talk about grace, what do we mean? How do we recognize grace in our lives and in the world?

We asked Lutherans in three ELCA social media groups to share their definitions of grace. Many recalled helpful acronyms they had learned or taught in Sunday School or Confirmation—like “God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense,” shared by Michael Stadie, director of Lutheran Disaster Response. In that spirit, here we consider five primary aspects of grace.

1. Grace as a gift of God

Martin Luther’s emphasis on grace as a free gift is rooted in scripture: “for by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). But what *kind* of a gift is grace?

Some Lutherans equate grace to God’s love, forgiveness or acceptance. Others focus on grace not as a single gift but as “the sheer givenness of all things,” as Bill Uetricht (pastor of First Evangelical, Muskegon, Mich.) wrote. Grace is also a relationship—as Paul Christ (a pastor of Messiah, Hickory, N.C.) pointed out by quoting his granddaughter’s Confirmation essay: “Our dog became a part of our family. She did nothing to earn it; we chose her—just like we can’t do anything to earn God’s love.”

2. Grace as a renewable resource

Debbie Johnson (pastor of St. Timothy, Geneseo, N.Y.) wrote, “God’s hands are always open to us.” Although Christian baptism is once and for all, Luther spoke of the baptized life in Christ as a daily dying and rising, recognizing grace as something we need and receive from God both now and always, over and over. As Anne Tracy Carlson (San Jose, Calif.) wrote, “Grace is that amazing moment when I see that God is always here.”

3. Grace as an approach to life

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German Lutheran pastor who lost his life for his resistance to the Nazi regime, watched fellow Christians praise God’s grace while absolving themselves from any responsibility to stand against Hitler’s evil. In *The Cost of Discipleship*, Bonhoeffer calls this “cheap grace” and pleads for Christians to embrace the “costly grace” that leads to discipleship: “Such grace is *costly* because it calls us to follow, and it is *grace* because it calls us to follow *Jesus Christ*.” It is not only what grace *is* that matters but also what grace *does*—how grace transforms our approach to life.

Matthew Blancett (Chicago, Ill.) wrote that grace is having “the wisdom of a child: living so present in this moment that one forgets to fear the self, others, or the world ... [it is] living liberation from fear and lack.” Likewise, for Robert Saler (Cross of Grace, New Palestine, Ind.), grace is “to know that you will go to the foot of the cross carrying nothing but the need for forgiveness, and to live backwards from that moment.”

4. Grace as a Christian calling

Both Luther and Bonhoeffer saw grace as connected to daily life through the baptismal calling to contribute to the work of the body of Christ. Suzannah Porter (St. Luke’s Church on the Avenue, Baltimore, Md.) described how her congregation’s Reconciling in Christ committee considered their calling to embody the grace expressed through Christ’s “radical inclusivity at the table, the hospitality of holding space for us even when we don’t deserve it and walking alongside [others] instead of in front or behind them.”

5. Grace as evangelism

Grace is meant to be shared, not hoarded. Heather Apel (McCordsville, Ind.) wrote, “Grace is the undeserved, freely given, unable to be earned, abundant love of God—and it’s for *everyone!*” Evangelism is the sharing of good news, and God’s grace in Christ is good news for all: “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:17). As Paulette Alderfer (Woodstock, Ga.) put it, grace is “God’s object lesson that love wins.”

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Each of these aspects offers one way to think about grace, yet the fullness of grace always extends beyond what we know and understand. Theologian Frederick Buechner imagined grace as God saying to us, "Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you." Perhaps grace is as simple—and profound—as that.

Meghan Johnston Aelabouni is an ELCA pastor studying full-time for her doctorate. She and her family live in Fort Collins, Colo.



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Please Join Us for
**CTK Family Dinner and
 Movie Night**

When: Saturday March 2, 2019 6:30 PM
 Bring your family and invite friends with their families to come and enjoy a dinner of Chicken Nuggets, Mac and Cheese, Baby Carrots, Cookies **and of course Popcorn! (Adults, if you'd like to bring an "adult" dish to share, please note that on the sign-up sheet.)**



We will have several movies to choose from so all ages are welcome!

Wear your comfy clothes and bring blankets/pillows/sleeping bags to use while you enjoy the movie!

RSVP by 2/23/19

Sign-up sheet on the bulletin board or
 Text/call Katie Bach 330-631-5926 or email
kbach217@gmail.com

**CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S MINI-RETREAT
 SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2019**

Theme: *The 3 D's for a Successful Life* - based on Philippians 4:13 (NCV) –
 "I can do all things through Christ, because he gives me strength"

Location: Lord of Life Lutheran Church
 17989 Chillicothe Rd
 Chagrin Falls OH 44023

Schedule:

8:00 AM Continental Breakfast
 9:00 AM Chapel

A free will offering will be collected to defray expenses.

Bring your Bible, a coffee cup, and a friend(s) for the day!

Please bring enough of one of these foods to serve 6-8 people:

Hot Soup, Salads, Sandwiches, Fruit or Appetizers, Breakfast Items

We hope to be done by 5:00 PM but please join us for any or all of the day if you can! PLEASE contact Dana Flenner at 330-425-3219 (home), 330-606-0016 (cell) or at flenner@roadrunner.com to tell your food contribution.





FEBRUARY MESSENGER 2019

www.CtKTwinsburg.com



Join your Council representative at CtK for one of these Cottage Meetings:

1:00 PM Monday, February 18th

10:45 AM Sunday, February 24th

7:00 PM Monday, February 25th

See the kiosk to find out who your representative is.

There will be Cottage Meetings in May and September if no February dates will work for you.

**2018 Ministry Annual Reports
due to office February 17th**



*2018 Annual Meeting will be
Sunday, March 17th, at 10:45 AM*

**Christ the King welcomes you to our
worship, fellowship, and service!**

Saturday Come-As-You-Are Worship 5:30 PM

Sunday Worship and Schedule:

Worship 9:30 AM

Sunday School for All 10:45 AM

Holy Communion at both Saturday & Sunday services.

Staffed nursery on Sunday mornings.

Cover this box with the
mailing label!

Dated Material - FEBRUARY 2019
Please Rush!



Christ the King Lutheran Church
10285 Ravenna Road
Twinsburg, Ohio 44087