

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!

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SEASON OF ADVENT BEGINS!

The season of Advent begins on Sunday, November 29th. This four-week -long season marks the beginning of a new church year, and is the season of hope and expectation leading up to the celebration of the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day, December 25th. In 2021 the weekly lectionary will include lessons from the Gospel of Mark.

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS AVAILABLE FOR ALL

Advent devotional materials for young kids, teens, adults, and families are on the display rack near the mailbox hallway if you want to add a daily Advent practice this year. Most devotionals begin with December 1st. There are also some Advent calendars that have a window to open each day from December 1st through Christmas Eve.



INDOOR WORSHIP POSTPONED BY PANDEMIC

Due to the worsening COVID-19 pandemic, the CtK Council has postponed indoor worship with Holy Communion indefinitely. Outdoor worship with Holy Communion will remain at 9:30 AM on Sundays, and a recorded worship service will be shared weekly on the CtK Twinsburg channel of YouTube.com: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0DyPtpgvHWrYdrFgWQso5A>



Those attending outdoor worship can listen to the service on CtK Radio at 90.1 FM on their car radio. (When the weather is cold and people remain in their cars during worship, they can park in adjacent spaces.)

ONLINE BLUE CHRISTMAS EVENING PRAYER

While Advent is a season of hope and Christmas is a season of joy, not everyone feels hopeful or like celebrating. Grief, illness, aging, depression, loneliness, unemployment, and loss are magnified. Even those who are not struggling with losses may feel the stress of preparations and expectations around Christmas time. A Blue Christmas service may provide a time and place of solace during the often frenetic days surrounding the celebration of Christmas. We come together seeking healing and room to share grief, sadness, loneliness, or confusion when these emotions often feel out of place during the holidays.



Because of the stress, uncertainty, fear, loneliness, and grief caused by the pandemic, this quiet healing service is needed more than ever. Due to the moratorium on in-person worship, CtK's fifth annual Blue Christmas service will be recorded and shared on the CtK Twinsburg channel of YouTube.com by Monday, December 21st, the shortest day of the year.

WORSHIP ON CHRISTMAS EVE & DAY

Because of the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, CtK plans to hold **outdoor** worship with Holy Communion at 7 PM and 9 PM on Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24th. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship will be **recorded** and shared on the CtK Twinsburg channel of YouTube.com at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0DyPtpgvHWrYdrFgWQso5A>

Worship on December 27th, the First Sunday of Christmas, will be held outdoors at 9:30 AM and will be a service of Lessons & Carols.



POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS

In-person worship may not happen for Christmas, but we can still have poinsettias to beautify the narthex for outdoor worship or the chancel for recorded worship. Please email wgibbons@ctktwinsburg.com or call the office by Tuesday, December 8th, to order poinsettias. Be sure to specify the number of red, white, pink, or marble poinsettias you'd like and if the flowers are in memory of or in honor of someone. The cost is \$11.00 per 10-inch pot of three plants. Include payment designated *Poinsettia* in your offering envelope.

You may pick up your flowers after the 9 PM Christmas Eve worship service. Your poinsettia will be labeled with your name. Pastor Matthew is not able to visit homebound members during the pandemic, so you must pick up your flower or it will be disposed of after Epiphany, January 6th.



CHURCH PHOTO DIRECTORY UPDATE

Universal Church Directories photographed CtK members in November for a new photo directory. Everyone who is included in the directory will get a free copy of the directory.

Several members were unavailable or were not comfortable with participating in a photo shoot during the pandemic but wish to be in the directory. Members and friends may submit their own photo for inclusion in the directory. At press time the specific procedure for submitting a photo was not known. Please contact Wendy in the office so she can tell you what to do. She will also publicize the process in the *Weekend Messenger*.

COMMUNITY MEAL AT CTK CANCELLED

CtK is scheduled to host a free community meal when a month has a fifth Sunday. Unfortunately, because of the surge in COVID-19 cases in our area, the meal set for November 29th has been cancelled. Dates for our 2021 meals will be January 31st, May 30th, August 29th, & October 31st. Watch for details as those dates approach.

DECEMBER 8 BLOOD DRIVE 12 PM—6 PM

On Tuesday, December 8th, the Red Cross will host a blood drive at CtK from 12:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Donors are asked to set up an appointment by going to redcrossblood.org to register.

On Tuesday, November 17th, 31 pints of blood were collected, exceeding their goal of 26 pints!

CtK Council has approved these first quarter 2021 blood drives:

January 5th, 12 - 6 PM
 January 19th, 10 AM - 4 PM
 February 2nd, 12 - 6 PM
 February 16th, 10 AM - 4 PM
 March 2nd, 12 - 6 PM
 March 16th, 10 AM - 4 PM



Every Sunday evening...

...a Twinsburg-area church serves a free Community Meal from 4 to 5:30 PM. (Meals are carry-out only during the pandemic unless noted below.)



Location Schedule

- 1st & 3rd Sundays** - Good Shepherd Christian Church, 9571 Shepard Road, Macedonia
- 2nd Sunday** - Faith United Methodist Church, 2560 Post Road, Twinsburg - limited indoor seating is available; **their clothing pantry is also open.**
- 4th Sunday** - First Congregational Church, UCC, 9050 Church Street, Twinsburg
- 5th Sunday (Four times a year)** - Christ the King Lutheran Church, 10285 Ravenna Road, Twinsburg **Due to the pandemic, CtK will not host a meal November 29th.**

All are welcome for a free meal! (Social distancing is observed.)

MITTEN TREE READY FOR DONATIONS!

The Outreach Ministry has set up a Christmas tree for mittens, hats, gloves, scarves, earmuffs, etc. in the narthex. Donations will go to northern Summit County residents served by The Emergency Assistance Center. (CtK is not adopting a family this Christmas.) Please bring your donations to CtK by Sunday, December 13th, to be delivered to TEAC in time for Christmas. Later donations will be taken to TEAC after the first of the year, when the weather will likely be colder anyway!



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

Kevin Basom, Director of Music

Linda Mondry, Saturday Worship Musician

Wendy Gibbons, Office Administrator
wgibbons@CtKTwinsburg.com x102

Email Wendy to receive this publication via email.

FROM THE SENIOR PASTOR

DECEMBER 2020

The month of December has come. Usually in the life of a community of faith this season of Advent is full of activities and excitement preparing for the annual celebration of the birth of Jesus. As we know this is 2020, the year which will be forever remembered as one rife with anxiety, suffering through a global pandemic, and constant change and uncertainty. After watching the retirement service for Bishop Abraham Allende, our synod's bishop, on the Synod YouTube channel, I was again struck by a sense of gratitude and joy at what has been in spite of everything else swirling around our lives. Bishop Allende included in his remarks his set of anchor verses in scripture which supported him during his term as Bishop. This piqued my interest to come up with my own set of anchor verses which have sustained me during this tumultuous and difficult year.

These are my anchor verses in no particular order:

1 John 4:19 – ***“We love because he first loved us.”***

Romans 12:12 – ***“Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.”***

John 15:16 – ***“You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.”***

Jeremiah 29:11 – ***“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”***

Isaiah 43:1-2 – ***“But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.”***

Psalms 46:1-2 – ***“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;”***

Hebrews 13:8 – ***“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”***

Philippians 4:4-9 – ***“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.”***

Colossians 3:12-17 – ***“As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”***

Living in God's amazing grace,

Pastor Matthew Groenke



THE GIFT

Stewardship is a gift.

Christmas is a time of reflecting on the special gifts we have received and putting our gifts into action.



- Who you are
- What you are good at
- Sharing your blessings

Celebrate these gifts as you shine the light of Christ in this Christmas season.

As a congregation you have embraced the attitudes of gratitude, responsibility, and generosity by your commitment promises to the Ministries at Christ the King.

Your gift of Stewardship is truly a blessing.

Sandy Molnar
Financial Secretary

DIRECTED THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS



THRIVENT FINANCIAL®

Christ the King received a gift of **\$163** in November

from Thrivent. The following members of Thrivent requested we receive this gift. Thank you for your support.

- Jim & Bev Baker
- Rob & Lisa Doty
- Mary Ellen Robinette & Paul Bucholtz
- David & Janet Schiopota

NEW SYNOD BISHOP WILL BEGIN TERM

Pastor Laura Barbins, who was elected to be the Northeastern Ohio Synod Bishop in October, will begin her term December 1st. Her installation has been delayed until next summer's Synod Assembly because of the pandemic.

SHOP FOR CHRISTMAS AT AMAZON, HELP CTK!

If you order Christmas gifts 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. (There are many Christ the King Lutheran Churches to choose from; be sure to select the one in Twinsburg!) After that, simply make all your Amazon purchases by shopping via smile.amazon.com, and Amazon will make a donation to Christ the King for most purchases.



Christ the King received \$107.57 from Amazon Smile for July 1 to September 30, 2020. (This amount likely includes January 1 – September 30, 2020 since Ctk's last donation from Amazon Smile was announced late in 2019.) Since October 2017, Ctk has received \$278.34 from the Amazon Smile program.

NEW CTKTWINSBURG.COM WILL BE HERE SOON!

The updated version of the Ctk website, www.ctktwinsburg.com, will soon be online. Watch for more news!



OCTOBER 2020 FINANCE REPORT	
<i>Complete financial information is posted on the kiosk outside the office.</i>	
Operating Income	\$14,260
Other designated income	\$425
Total Income	\$14,685
Operating Expenses	\$13,790
Other payments	\$1,429
Total Expenses	\$15,219
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	(\$534)
Monthly Budget	\$21,610

NEWS FROM ST. PAULY TEXTILE, INC

The St. Pauly clothing donation shed, which was temporarily closed due to global effects of the pandemic, will soon reopen to the public.



The clothing donation shed is designed to give community members a uniquely clean, convenient, and well-cared-for option to donate their used clothing to. St. Pauly Textile Inc. partners with a network of businesses and various organizations to distribute donated items both here in the U.S. and worldwide, where they're ultimately re-worn by people who need them. Christ the King receives funding for donated clothing, and additionally has the option to use donations to serve community needs. [Karen Reid sometimes finds clothes that the men's shelter in Cleveland can use.]

With over 1,300 clothing drop-off sheds in place, St. Pauly Textile Inc. collects over 90,000 pounds of clothing every day and estimates that this clothing ends up in 44 different countries (including the U.S.) yearly. In 2019, the company was able to help keep over 20 million articles of clothing out of landfills, which clothed an estimated 2.5 million people worldwide. The company was founded in 1996 and is an A+ rated member of the Better Business Bureau.

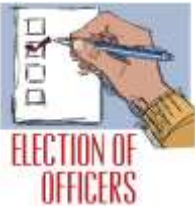
Accepted items: clothing, shoes, belts, purses, blankets, sheets, curtains, pillowcases, and stuffed animals.

Watch the *Weekend Messenger*, the Ctk Twinsburg Facebook page, and your email for updates about when the shed has reopened.

Ctk's St. Pauly shed was installed in March 2014, and Ctk earned over \$7,400 between then and July of this year when the shed closed.

NOVEMBER 22ND CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

On Sunday, November 22, 2020, CtK held its fall congregational meeting with elections in the church parking lot due to the pandemic. CtK President Mike Coss presided at the meeting. Members listened to the proceedings on CtK Radio, 90.1 FM, completed paper election ballots, put their arms out the windows to vote on the 2021 Continuation & Improvement Plan, and honked their horns to congratulate election winners. Mike invited questions and comments from those in attendance and also nominations from "the floor" though there were none.



Congratulations to these candidates:

- Council President – Mike Coss - re-elected to a second two-year term, ending December 31, 2022
- Council Vice President – Katie Bach - elected to a two-year term ending December 31, 2022.
- Council-at-Large – Glenn Fasnacht - elected to a two-year term ending December 31, 2022.
- Endowment Committee – Jay Hartland - elected to a four-year term ending December 31, 2024.
- Nomination Committee - Linda Bendler, Paul Bucholtz, Chris Driver, & David Schiopota - elected to a one-year term ending December 31, 2021.

The 2021 Council and officers will be installed at worship in early January 2021 for the new year.

The proposed 2021 Continuation & Improvement Plan (aka 2021 Budget) shown below was also approved by those present by a vote of 34 to 1.

	2020 Budget	2020 Est Actual	2021 Proposed
NE Ohio Synod Benevolence	2,238	2,135	6,434
Total Salaries & Benefits	193,802	169,361	175,426
Total Christian Education	960	614	960
Total Congregational Care	600	336	600
Total Evangelism	0	0	300
Total Outreach	0	0	0
Total Office	4,332	9,141	4,572
Total Property	19,770	17,206	27,720
Total Stewardship	480	390	360
Total Worship & Music	3,340	2,827	4,020
Total Youth	500	111	500
Total Operating Expenses	223,784	199,985	214,458
Total Operating plus Benevolence	226,022	202,120	220,892
Commitments incl passthru			203,394
Estimated carryover			10,000
Total			213,394
FaithFactor to 2021 proposed			7,498

WATCH FOR PANDEMIC-RELATED GUIDELINES

To prepare for CtK's eventual return to indoor worship, and to comply with COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings, the CtK Council is enacting some guidelines for people entering the building. Watch for a message from CtK Council President Mike Coss.

People will be asked to sign in when they enter the building during the week in case someone would test positive for COVID-19.

Some rooms will be marked as off-limits, and publicly accessible rooms will have limits for the number of people allowed.

EARLY JANUARY MESSENGER DEADLINE

News for the January 2021 *Messenger* is due to Wendy in the office by Tuesday, December 15th. Please note the earlier than usual deadline.

Shining the Light of Jesus...

...Kevin Basom, Ginger & Tom Pituch, Karen Reid, and anyone else who shared nitrile gloves for use at CtK. (Remember to tell Financial Secretary Sandy Molnar of any gifts-in-kind that you give to CtK.)

...Mike Pereksta for donating shipping pallets and Tom Pituch for dismantling them to make kindling for the new CtK Firewood Box near the fire pit.

...Mike Coss for filling more holes in the parking lot with cement

...Karen Reid for planting trees and shrubs and those who donated funds to purchase these plants.

...Pastor Matthew & Karen Reid for helping keep worship attendance records accurate when there are no longer pew pads

...Rich & Joanne Ciarniello for setting up the Mitten Tree

...Kevin Basom, Kristin Bedford, Joanne Ciarniello, Bob Coleman, Mike Coss, John Gibbons, Julie & Pastor Matthew Groenke, Linda Mondry, Karen Reid, David Schiopota, & Jane Zarembo for making worship services possible

WITH THANKS TO OUTGOING OFFICE HOLDERS

Thanks to outgoing CtK Vice President David Schiopota for serving since January 2015 and to outgoing Council-at-Large member Paul Bucholtz for serving since January 2019.

Thanks to outgoing Endowment Committee member & chair Mike Pereksta, who served from February 2010 to December 31, 2020.

Thanks to our outgoing 2020 Nominating Committee of Tom Pituch (chair), Bryan Bedford, Kristin Wedemeyer Goss, John Humrichouser, Michael Lue, & Janet Schiopota for creating a slate of candidates for all positions.

CONFIRMATION CLASS IN DECEMBER VIA ZOOM

On Sunday, December 13th, Pastor Matthew will lead the monthly Confirmation Class via Zoom for all 7th and 8th graders. Pastor Matthew will give you the link if your student is interested.



7TH—12TH GRADERS ZOOM TO SUNDAY SCHOOL



Mr. David Schiopota, the leader of the 7th - 12th grade Sunday school class, hosts a weekly Zoom group for the class from 4 to 5 PM on Sunday except on November 29th. Please contact David if your student wants to participate.

FAITH WEDNESDAY ON ZOOM WITH PASTOR MATTHEW

Pastor Matthew leads a Bible study at noon on Wednesdays via Zoom most weeks. See the *Weekend Messenger* to know what will be discussed that week. Contact Pastor Matthew at pmatthew@ctktwinsburg.com for the Zoom invitation to the class. Everyone is welcome to participate!

ANY COLLEGE/TRADE SCHOOL GRADUATES THIS SEMESTER?

Please let Wendy know in the office if anyone is completing an undergraduate or graduate degree or certification at a trade school in this pandemic-affected semester. Tell her the student's name, the school name, the degree or certification earned, and any future plans so that she can include it in an upcoming *Messenger*.



YOUTH ROAD RALLY / PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT SUCCESSFUL

A Youth Road Rally & Photo Scavenger Hunt was held Sunday, November 8th. The event was a great success (after I figured out the technical hurdles)!

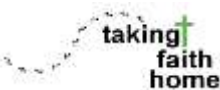
Kudos to the Harnaks, Hartlands, Lues, and Schiopotas for all representing with a team and vehicle! It seems the clues may not have been hard enough in that every team completed almost every clue in the allotted time. (Note to self...make much harder clues next time...and make more of them!)

The final point tallies were all very close but the Schiopotas and Harnaks squeaked out first and second place, respectively.

Submitted by David Schiopota, Youth Advisor

FAITH FORMATION AT HOME!

Watch your email inbox Fridays for the weekly resource *taking faith home* that will allow your family to participate in faith formation, even without in-person Sunday school.



INTRODUCING CTK'S NEWEST MEMBER!

Welcome to Julien James Michalek, son of Ctk member Laurel (Pereksta) & James Michalek, and grandson of Ctk members Lynn & Mike Pereksta. Julien was born in April 2018 and was baptized by Pastor Matthew the afternoon of Saturday, November 7th. Thanks to the unseasonably warm day, the social distanced baptism was held outside. Julien's sponsors are Lynn & Mike Pereksta, Ellen & Steven Michalek (his paternal grandparents), and Frank Sayre & Kim Zelasko. God's blessings on Julien and his family!

Baptism

OUR CONDOLENCES TO TOM ROYON'S FAMILY

Ctk member Tom Royon, who joined Christ the King October 26, 2003, entered eternal rest and the Church Triumphant on November 2, 2020, just one day shy of the seventh anniversary of the death of his beloved wife of 60 years, Carole. In happier days, Tom was an enthusiastic member of the Senior Choir, along with Carole.



Tom was the father of Diane Procop (Michael) and the late Thomas "T"; He was grandfather to Jennifer Lue (Michael) and Tracy Norris (William) and great-grandfather to Grace & Noah Lue and Abby & Will Norris. The Procops and Lues are members of Christ the King, and Norrises have worshiped here for special family events.

A public viewing and private family funeral services were held November 14th with inurnment at Lutheran Cemetery, 4566 Pearl Rd, Cleveland, OH 44109. Contributions in Tom's memory may be made to Cypress Hospice, 2 Berea Commons, Suite 1, Berea, OH 44017. Rest in God's peace, Tom.

WITH THANKS FROM FAMILY OF THOMAS ROYON

We offer our heartfelt thanks to our church family for the cards, flowers and donations in my Dad's memory to Cypress Hospice, where their team of angels cared for him in his final days. He is now reunited with my Mom after a very long seven years without her.

God's peace to you all,
Mike & Diane Procop
Jenn, Michael, Grace & Noah Lue



*The church is the people,
NOT the building!*

THANKS FROM THE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE CENTER (TEAC)

Mike [Pereksta],

It was so nice to see you yesterday! I was never so surprised to open the envelope to find the generous donation for The Emergency Assistance Center from the Lester Endowment Grant at Christ The King Church!

We will try to acknowledge the grant in our next E-Newsletter that reaches a little more than 1,000 subscribers.

Again thank you for supporting the mission of helping our local neighbors in need through this difficult season!

Grace and Peace,

*Joyce Hunt, Executive Director
The Emergency Assistance Center*



Tim Stahlman	1-Dec
Linda Mondry	3-Dec
Dottie Wheater	3-Dec
Aiden Ripley	4-Dec
Bob Roe	4-Dec
Nathan Spagnola	6-Dec
Lynn Pereksta	7-Dec
Lisa Doty	13-Dec
Carlton Spitz	13-Dec
Doug Corbin	15-Dec
Greg Tulley	15-Dec
Ray Kendrick	18-Dec
Claire Schiopota	18-Dec
Truman Goss	19-Dec
Jenn Lue	20-Dec
Ariella Smiddle	21-Dec
Rich Wilhelms	22-Dec
Glenn Fasnacht	24-Dec
Braden Susnik	24-Dec

FILL THE BUS A RESOUNDING SUCCESS!

[Christ the King members donated food to the annual Fill the Bus campaign by TEAC, and the currently-paused Tuesday Women's Bible Study group made a cash donation.]

On behalf of The Emergency Assistance Center, THANK YOU for your abundant generosity for our local neighbors in need! Despite students learning remotely and interrupted schedules, the Fill The Bus Food Drive did very well!

This year our community and schools in Nordononia and Twinsburg came together in a collaborative effort to support the cause!

You have provided 14,600 pounds of much needed food for TEAC!

We really appreciated those who dated the cans and boxes before they arrived at the Center.

We also wanted to thank the Twinsburg City School District for sending a box truck with all of the donations from each of their buildings. That was a huge help since we have limited volunteers.

Your donations not only offer food but hope for a brighter tomorrow. Thank you again!

Sincerely,

*Joyce Hunt, Executive Director,
The Emergency Assistance Center*



Charlie & Dolores Poulton 26-Dec

Dear Friends at Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study Group,

Thank you for your very generous donation of \$105 to The Emergency Assistance Center in support of the Fill the Bus food drive. Your gift has been designated for food purchases only. With so much instability in the world right now due to the coronavirus pandemic, we are so thankful that with your support we can help relieve some of the anxiety by providing food for struggling families in our community.

Fill the Bus 2020 was a wonderful cooperative effort in the Nordononia Hills and Twinsburg communities. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, including remote and hybrid learning in the schools, a total of 14,600 pounds of food was collected!

We hope that you have a very wonderful Thanksgiving. We are very thankful for you and the help you give to others.

Warm regards, *Joyce Hunt, Executive Director, The Emergency Assistance Center*



THANKS TIMES THREE FROM HAVEN OF REST FOR ENDOWMENT GRANTS

Haven of Rest Ministries in Akron received an endowment grant from Ctk's Lester Endowment for \$6,000. They were greatly appreciative, as these three thank you messages attest.

Dear Joanne [Ciarniello] and Church Friends,

Thank you for the very generous donation of \$6,000.00! Truly the donation is a blessing and you and your church are such a blessing to us! Thanks to the generosity of your church and your desire to make a difference. As we discussed, \$3,000.00 will go to the Women's Auxiliary Outdoor Lighting Project. You indicated we could use the rest of the money wherever needed.

On behalf of ReV. Jeff Kaiser, Executive Director, we want to thank you for this wonderful gift. Thanks also from Kathy Walker, the President of our Women's Auxiliary. She was very excited when we told her about your donation. The LED lighting is so much brighter than our former lighting and it uses less electricity! We will all feel safer with the brighter lights at night, our clients, staff and visitors. Thanks for helping to make that happen.

May each of you, your families and your church be blessed and protected by God! May you continue to flourish especially in your sharing the gospel in such practical but difference making ways!

Very Gratefully,

Michael Solosky

Development Officer, Donor Relations

Dear Joanne [Ciarniello] and Friends,

Your most generous gift to Haven of Rest toward Care of the Homeless and the Auxiliary Project is such a blessing. Thank you for supporting men, women and children in our community who need our help during these uncertain times in the world.

With fall and winter weather just around the bend, your thoughtful donation is making a difference for individuals and families who are in dire need of shelter, food, and clothing for the harsh weather ahead. Your kindness is such an encouragement to both the Haven of Rest staff and our neighbors who are homeless and hurting.

Thank you so much for partnering with us to continue the work of God and offer hope and a future. Be blessed during the holiday season.

In Him,

Rev. Jeffrey A. Kaiser

CEO

Dear Friends,

How can we thank you enough for your generous contribution toward helping the hungry and homeless and also toward our Women's Auxiliary project for safe LED lighting? We are so very grateful to you. Your partnership has been a true blessing to us through many years. Haven of Rest thanks the Lord for your compassionate, prayerful, and giving hearts!

It has been such a challenging time for all of us as we go through this season of COVID19, and we've been praying for the safety and well-being of not only everyone here at the Mission, but for our faithful supporters as well. We look forward to a time, hopefully soon, when we can once again invite our friends into the Mission for a visit, or to a luncheon, or to visit Christ the King. We sincerely appreciate all you do to help us further His Kingdom.

Blessing to all of you!

Rose Rose

Church Relations

Haven of Rest Ministries

At the table together

By the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, Rev. Elizabeth Eaton

Living Lutheran Editor's note: *In keeping with this month's theme issue, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton is sharing her favorite food and faith story, which originally appeared in her September 2017 column.*

Old recipes are precious things. They give instructions about how to prepare a dish, but they are so much more. They are filled with memories. They connect families as they are passed from one generation to the next. They bring events and people from long ago right into the present. I am looking at a recipe card that has that effect on me. It's my mother's recipe for stuffing for turkey. It's written in her neat hand—a skill I never mastered. It's a basic recipe, just bread and butter and onions and celery and poultry seasoning. I don't even have to read it now when I make stuffing, but I like to look at it because it puts me right back into Thanksgivings past.



Thanksgiving in our family was an *event*. The Eatons have been gathering for Thanksgiving dinner for nearly 70 years. We traded off between our house and my aunt and uncle's home. When it was our turn we got up early and started cooking.

Out came the recipes and equipment. There were no food processors in those days. We had a cast iron food grinder that clamped on to the edge of the kitchen table. It was kept in its own special box. It only made an appearance once a year and its emergence signaled that Thanksgiving had arrived. Grinding the celery was

no problem. Onions were another story. My brothers and I spelled each other at turning the crank until we were overcome by the fumes.

No matter what, when my mother or my aunt announced, "Supper's ready," we all came to the table together. We were family, we shared our lives, we loved each other.

My parents and my aunt and uncle established this tradition shortly after World War II. We have always had three and sometimes four generations present. A lot has gone on in our family and in the world these past decades. Marriages, children, moves, deaths, war, recession, elections, the '60s. We are a lively bunch and none of us lacks an opinion or the ability to express it. Conversations were spirited and sometimes heated. My father and my uncle served in the army during World War II. My older brother and older male cousins didn't support the Vietnam War. We belong to different political parties. We are Lutheran and Catholic and members of the Unification Church and unchurched. We are liberal and conservative.

But no matter what, when my mother or my aunt announced, "Supper's ready," we all came to the table together. We were family, we shared our lives, we loved each other.

A lot is going on in our church and in the world right now. We are a changing church, which brings its own tension. We live in a wired world where news is instantaneous and continuous. We don't agree on everything. We belong to different political parties. We have varied ethnicities. We're liberal and conservative and everything in between. We're in an "either/or" world. And we are contending with cultural forces that exacerbate division. But by the tender love of God, by this ceaseless pursuit of the Spirit, we are members of the body of Christ. We are family. We share our lives. We love each other.

Here is another simple recipe: flour, water, wine, the body and blood of Jesus. A meal of healing, forgiveness and thanksgiving. No matter what, when our Lord tenderly and urgently invites, "Supper's ready," we all come to the table. There in our common brokenness we meet each other in Christ.

Blessedness and thankfulness

By Nelson H. Rabell-González

These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14).

This verse, assigned as the first lesson for All Saints Sunday, reminds us that a life of faith isn't devoid of struggles, hardship or death. The good news in this text is that Jesus has claimed those who have "come out of the great ordeal."

I am a pastor in Lodi, a rural town where many migrant workers from California's Central Valley live and work. They have been hit hard by the pandemic. As I write this reflection, I've already buried a migrant woman who died of COVID-19. More than a dozen migrant families who are part of my congregation have been infected. Most don't have the privilege or luxury of working from home. They must continue showing up to the vineyards, meat- and fruit-packing facilities, restaurants, construction sites and other essential jobs. This blessed community, which has washed its robes in the blood of the Lamb, is living "the great ordeal."

Nevertheless, I see their faith, joy and will to live. Although they believe that our society at large doesn't deem them essential, they are convinced that their work is needed for the sake of the wider community. I've had many conversations in which these congregants express pride in their work. They are the blessed ones that Jesus mentions in his Beatitudes: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

Some of us who have the privilege of working from home have also experienced the power of death. This pandemic has made evident that we are all fragile human beings who need God to "wipe away every tear" from our eyes (Revelation 7:17). We have lost loved ones, friends, classmates, colleagues, pastors, co-workers and cherished leaders due to COVID-19.

As people of faith, we grieve those who have gone before us, but we also give thanks for their lives and time with us. They are now in the blessed presence of the one in whose blood they have cleansed their robes. But Christ's blessedness is also for us here and now.

Like the 10 lepers from the Gospel lesson assigned for Thanksgiving Day (Luke 17:11-19), we long for mercy. We need mercy. We ask Jesus to give us the mercy that the world is not able to give us. May our blessedness lead us to work for justice, solidarity and compassion toward the most vulnerable members of our society during this pandemic and thereafter. Amen.



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Nelson H. Rabell-González is associate pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Lodi, Calif. He was born and raised in Puerto Rico and is a graduate of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (2002). Rabell-González is married to Dr. Fabiola Ramos. They have two children: Hiram Rabell-Ramos (18) and Sofía Rabell-Ramos (16). Their dog's name is Lucas.

Food truck ministry builds relationships

By Jocelyn Fuller



Amy Beitelschees-Albers comes from a family whose parents lived their faith more than they talked about it. “We were good Lutherans,” said the pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, North Manchester, Ind.

She also comes from a long line of people who were blessed with the gift of cooking and hospitality. While the food is important, Beitelschees-Albers believes it is really about sitting around the table after the meal, talking and building relationships with people.

So it’s no surprise that she started a food truck church called So Much More Ministries.

The ministry serves meals in a southeast Fort Wayne, Ind., community that could be considered a food desert, with few churches or conveniences. Every Thursday, the truck is parked at the corners of Paulding and Hanna streets in an empty parking lot. There the ministry shares food and friendship with anyone in need of a hot meal, warm hospitality and prayer.

This journey started many years ago after Beitelschees-Albers heard about Shobi’s Table, a St. Paul, Minn., ministry that isn’t just a food truck—it is church. “This is how we need to do church, as the church needs to expand and we need to get out of our four walls,” she said.

After finding a food truck originally used to feed the homeless in Washington, D.C., Beitelschees-Albers began renovating the vehicle with the help of friends and family.

“I really wanted to see how to use food and a healthy meal as a conduit to build relationships and to share the love of Christ.”

To get started, Beitelschees-Albers applied for and received a grant through the Lutheran Foundation in Fort Wayne. After finding a food truck in Columbus, Ohio, that was originally used to feed the homeless in Washington, D.C., she began renovating the vehicle with the help of friends and family.

In September 2019, the food truck church began its ministry. From that September to March 2020, So Much More Ministries was serving around 20 meals every Thursday.

On any given Thursday night, there isn’t just food and prayer available at the truck. To build relationships in the community, there are also activities for everyone, including word searches, trivia, and questions to learn more about each other and about faith, such as “When was a time when you experienced God?”

When once a regular Thursday night was serving around 20 meals, So Much More Ministries has been providing anywhere from 80 to 120 meals during the pandemic.

(Continued from page 12)

Once the pandemic hit and shelter-in-place orders took effect, So Much More Ministries took a five-week break to figure out how to manage the ministry, knowing that serving meals would still be necessary. When they took the truck out again, the need for food had increased greatly. When once a regular Thursday night was serving around 20 meals, they have steadily been providing anywhere from 80 to 120 meals during the pandemic.

“With people being laid off, people are hungry,” Beitelschees-Albers said.

Not only does this work take a lot of time and effort, it takes resources. In the year it has been operating, So Much More Ministries has done a handful of fundraisers, going to church festivals and catering meals for congregations. Once COVID-19 hit, the fundraising dried up, but the need only increased.

Beitelschees-Albers has a new passion project to do fundraising that takes her back to her roots of cooking—a church cookbook. It will be something a little different from the church cookbooks that have been passed down and sit in kitchens across the country. Not only will this cookbook have recipes, it will also share the stories and traditions of those recipes from the people who have submitted them. The project started this fall and is still in progress.

Reflecting on this ministry, Beitelschees-Albers said, “This has nothing to do with me, other than how God has used me and the gifts he has given me.”

To learn more about So Much More Ministries, visit its Facebook page.



Jocelyn Fuller is senior director of Strategic Communications for the ELCA.

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CTK COVID-19 COMMUNITY RELIEF FUND FUNDS STILL AVAILABLE!

Through November, CtK has been able to directly support nine households in need through the COVID-19 Relief Fund. Although recipients' names are not published for privacy concerns, all these individuals got the support they needed to pay important household expenses, such as rent, car payments, and utilities. In all cases, these are community members who have been unable work or whose income has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds have been gratefully received.

We are blessed to offer this resource to those in need and encourage anyone to direct potential recipients to Pastor Matthew, Mike Coss or David Schiopota. CtK members are also encouraged to consider giving to this fund above and beyond their regular giving to the church.

Submitted by David Schiopota

[Editor's note: As the number of coronavirus cases increases this fall and winter, please contact Pastor Matthew, Mike Coss, or David Schiopota if you know someone who is suffering as a result of the pandemic. This includes people for whom federal pandemic assistance may be running out at the end of 2021.]

UPDATE FROM SHOE COLLECTION FUNDRAISER

Late this summer Denise Tearney's nephew Nathan Williard with his wife Katie held a fundraiser to help defray the cost of adopting their second child. CtK members contributed numerous bags of shoes, and the Williards collected 170 bags of shoes for 4250 pairs! This exceeded their collection when they adopted their first child. They are grateful to everyone who was able to help out!

PRAY FOR MEDICAL WORKERS & COVID-19 RESEARCHERS

Because of THE recent surge in the number of COVID-19 cases around the country, including locally, Ohio is under a 10 PM to 5 AM daily curfew and Summit County is under a Stay-at-Home directive through at least mid-December

Pray for safety and strength for medical workers who are under extreme stress due to the pandemic, in addition to being in danger of contracting the virus.



Pray also for guidance and wisdom for researchers developing coronavirus treatments and vaccines and for those responsible for implementing an equitable, workable plan to distribute the vaccine worldwide when safe and effective ones are approved.



DECEMBER MESSENGER 2020

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Email office@CtKTwinsburg.com to receive a link to this publication via email.



Blue Christmas Evening Prayer, Monday, December 21st
Online Worship on CtK Twinsburg channel of YouTube

Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24th
7 & 9 PM - Outdoor Worship with Holy Communion
Also on CtK Twinsburg channel of YouTube

Christmas Day, Friday, December 25th
Online Worship on CtK Twinsburg channel of YouTube

1st Sunday of Christmas, Sunday, December 27th
9:30 AM Outdoor Worship with Lessons & Carols, Holy Communion
Also on CtK Twinsburg channel of YouTube

*The church is the people,
NOT the building!*

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Sunday Outdoor Worship w/Communion9:30 AM
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