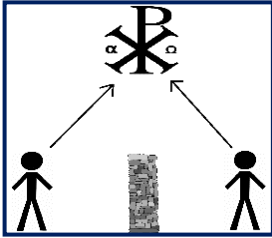


FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
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*Embraced by God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we share this gospel of hope and healing
within and throughout our community*



Relational Health in Christ

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. ¹¹Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. ¹²Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Col. 3:1-17 ESV)

It's November! We might wonder where has 2020 gone? Some of us might be asking when is 2020 going to be over? I for one have found myself asking, "what am I going to focus on in this November newsletter?" There certainly isn't a lack of topics. The election and our current political atmosphere, ongoing concerns related to COVID-19, Thanksgiving and the rest of the holiday season, these are just a few of the topics available. One might even argue that since it is close to Reformation Day, we could also talk about the subject of grace and conflict with the body of Christ. Yet as broad as all these topics are, one topic that I noticed weaves its way through all of them and that is the subject of social/relational health in Christ.

You may remember that Jesus sums up God's commandments entirely on the basis of relationship. Love God and Love neighbor. You may also have noticed, scripture doesn't stop there and leave us to try to define love for ourselves. Read 1 Corinthians 13. It talks about the subject of love and relationships in great detail. We often hear this text at weddings, but its words are meant for the entire body and bride of Christ, the church.

Similarly, Colossians 3, which is also sometimes used as a wedding text, defines our relationship to each other in terms of our relationship to Christ. Regardless of what characteristics God may have created us with, or what groups we may have chosen to identify ourselves with, Christ is the defining factor for believers and one who defines our relationships. As the drawing above seeks to illustrate, when Christ draws us closer to Him, He draws us closer to each other. Nothing allows two people to overcome the barriers between them, more than God's forgiveness and genuinely seeking the Lord. Moreover, as we grow closer to the heart of God, we will start to reflect His heart, including for those who may not yet have a heart for us. In contrast to all the behaviors that break down relationships listed in the text above, notice the relational behaviors that grow in us as those holy and beloved by God: honesty, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, bearing with one another, forgiveness, love, and thankfulness. Now, if we are only looking at others, we might still be tempted to only display these behaviors when there are shown to us. We might also be quick to play the blame game when our relationships with others are not going well. However, if we focus on Christ, and seek to display the behaviors He would have us display in our relationship with other people, regardless of their actions, this could go a long way toward our own relational health (a healthy attitude toward others and our interactions). Hopefully, this will also lead to healthier relationships. Still, it is also important to realize that we can only be responsible for our part. We can't control others, but that should not stop us from growing, praying, and reaching out in love to all.

So what does this have to do with the topics at the beginning of this article. Clearly things like COVID-19 and politics have put a strain on many relationships (This includes with people we may have never met, like some of those in Washington, and yes those too are relationships). Thanksgiving and the holiday season can also be both a blessing and a strenuous time for families and relationships. For some, loneliness and distance are a big part of these times. Throw in COVID-19 and politics amid our normal holiday routines and things can get even more messy. Therefore, my encouragement to you is to ponder the following questions: How do you set your heart on Christ during these times? How do you encourage others to do the same alongside you? How do you apply the behaviors and lessons of love found in 1 Cor. 13 and Col. 3 to this? (*Read them again several times*). Are there things you are going to have to take hold of or let go of as you grow in your trust in God and in regards to your own relational health in Christ? Yes, these are difficult questions, but if you begin by looking to the Lord for forgiveness and help you are already on the right track. After all, Christ is the one who draws us all together. Thanks be to God!

- Pastor Eric Schoech



Our outdoor movies have been a great source of fellowship during this highly unusual year. This photo was taken during the showing of "Inside Out" last month.

VOTERS ASSEMBLY

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! WE WILL HOLD OUR ANNUAL VOTERS MEETING ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15 RIGHT AFTER CHURCH SERVICES. THE 2021 BUDGET WILL BE PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL AND OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION DISCUSSED.

Thank You!

Let's face it, over the last year there has been plenty we could complain or get discouraged about. Yet, I pray we also have been reminded of the gift it is when we can come together. Being able to come together, gather around God's Word, and support each other as the body of believers, is a true blessing. Praise God that even though things have been a bit different, by the grace of God we have still been able to find ways to continue to do these very things.

I want to encourage all of us, as I often do this time of year, to rejoice, to give thanks to God, and to pray His continued blessing on this congregation. I know I do. I thank God and I thank you for all of the efforts great and small that serve this community of believers and those around us, even during challenging circumstances. My prayer for all of us is that we will continue to let our light shine and connect people to Jesus, and I rejoice that redeemed in Christ and Growing in grace, *we will continue to care because God cares.*

Pastor



Bob Hassel	November 3
Sam Grossnickle	November 3
Kirk Martinsen	November 3
Thomas Price	November 5
Becky Graef	November 6
Rebekah Peterson	November 6
Dave Brandt	November 7
McKenzie Temme	November 9
Sandy Hernandez	November 12
Bruce Berner	November 13
Dave Pilz	November 13
Haley Fryman	November 14
Charlene Leffert	November 28



Holiday celebrations can make us acutely aware of our loved one's absence. Grief Share's "Surviving the Holidays" offers a way for those who are mourning the death of a loved one to plan for the holidays so that they can cope and celebrate. Built around a video and the discussion of key ideas, Cindy Boese will lead this 1 1/2 hour program on two separate Sunday afternoons, November 15 and December 6 from 2-4 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Valparaiso. Please contact the church office at 219-462-8207 ext. 210 or email churchoffice@immanuelvalpo.org if you plan to attend.

THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

*"We are a Minister of Reconciliation."
2 Corinthians 5:18*

I don't know about you, but of the seven roles of Christians from St. Paul in 2 Corinthians, this one leaves me the most unsettled. I'm not sure that I want this task.

In its broadest sense, reconciliation means 'coming together'. It has aspects of truth, justice, forgiveness, healing, and love. When we are working to reconcile, we are trying to overcome a division between two people or groups or nations. But before that can happen, apologies and forgiveness must take place. And that is where my unsettledness begins.

"How often should we forgive our brother?" Jesus' disciples ask. They are keeping fingers crossed that Jesus will respond with just once. Instead, seven times seven. In other words, don't stop – ever. When apologies and forgiveness are present, both parties have become open and vulnerable to each other. Then, reconciliation can take place. It is the last step of true forgiveness.

For us, as baptized children of God, we are called – expected – to reconcile with one another. When there is a rift between us and another, we work hard to heal the wound. It may even be necessary to bring in a third party – a fellow Christian – to aid in the healing. And that is the second duty for us as baptized children. Not only do we reconcile with someone else when there is a problem, we need to be available to be the third party if so asked.

Reconciliation is not easy. Nor is forgiveness. But my unsettledness, and I hope also yours, disappears in the model of God who gave his own son to be the third party in the reconciliation between God and us.

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." 2 Corinthians 5:18

★ Choose ★
**PLEASE
RETURN
Signs and Stakes
After Election
For Future Use
Thank You**

The Red Cross will hold a Blood Drive here at Faith on Sunday, **November 8 beginning at 1:00pm**. No need to sign up, walk-ins are easily accommodated. All pertinent sanitation and social distancing will be observed. The need is great, please give if you are able.



Advent Evening Worship will be streamed on the 3 Wednesdays in Advent (December 2, 9 and 16). Watch the December newsletter and Sunday Bulletin Announcements for more details.



Thank you to all of you who helped support those of us who rode during Sept. to fight children's cancer. Together you and I raised **\$544.96** for the Children's Cancer research fund, and the team I was a part of raised **\$1,143.87**. All told **134,751 riders** in the USA road **6,189,573 miles**, and raised **\$14,723,333**. May God use these funds to bring healing to many.
Pastor Eric

**Pray for Faith members
and others participating
in the Discipleship to
Missional Community
Training
(D2MC), October 28-30.**

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Know someone who needs care?

Caring for others may look different these days, but it certainly hasn't stopped, nor has the need.

- If you know someone in need of pastoral care, including yourself, let pastor know.
- Continue to contact the prayer chain and ask for prayers from the church prayer team.
- Get creative....

1. Look for ways to help neighbors
2. Support families dealing with school challenges
3. Get a few people to sing outside a shut-in's window or
4. Visit them from a distance on a front or back porch while the weather is good.



FAITH WORSHIP SCHEDULE

During the current covid 19 crisis, all services are held both in the church and in the parking lot. For parking lot services tune your radio to FM99.1. Wednesday Advent Services will be streamed on December 2, 9 and 16.

All Saints' Day, Nov. 1, 9:00am Holy Communion w/Remembrance of the Faithful Departed

The 23rd Sunday after Pentecost, November 8, 9:00 am Morning Prayer

The 24th Sunday after Pentecost, November 15, 9:00am Holy Communion

Christ the King, November 22, 9:00am Morning Prayer

The First Sunday in Advent, November 29, 9:00am Holy Communion

The First Wednesday in Advent, December 2, 7:00pm Evening Prayer (streamed)

The Second Sunday in Advent, December 6, 9:00am Holy Communion

The Second Wednesday in Advent, December 9, 7:00pm Evening Prayer (streamed)

The Third Sunday in Advent, December 13, 9:00am Children's Service

The Third Wednesday in Advent, December 16, 7:00pm Evening Prayer (streamed)

