



Pastor Tim's Council Report- March 2023

Grace and peace to you my family in Christ. I am writing this report in a busy time as we move through Lent and head towards Easter. There is much to whine and complain about but my Lenten calendar, which I helped to put together, says that I am supposed to “fast from whining and complaining” so... 😊.

Actually, I love this time of year. I love to hear the perspective of the retired pastors at the preach at our Wednesday evening services. I love to hear the singing at our Holden Evening Vespers service. I love to hear the stories that come out of the experiences that our members are having with our Lenten Daily Activity Calendar. I love that we are moving closer to the powerful Holy Week worship and the celebration of Easter.

Worship remains an intense focus for me. As you are likely aware, Mara Hassenbein needed to resign her position as Worship Coordinator and we have now been operating without her (and someone else in her position) for a month. I am grateful to Jenelle Smith and Malia Hassenbein who have taken on the duties of producing the bulletins and PowerPoints for weekly worship. There is a definite learning curve, and they are powering through it. Jenelle is taking on most of the work and I am very impressed with how she is quickly learning this new language of Lutheran worship and spotting the details. She has been an excellent addition to our staff.

In addition to our needing to fill the slot of worship coordinator we continue to search for a leader for our 11am service. It is a part time and specialized position that it is very difficult to find someone to fill it. We had Kelsey Packman, our Ascension School's music teacher, fill in as interim for the month of January and now the band, led by Jeannette Ruggiero and Chris Trytten are doing yeoman's work to lead. I have been working to find both interim leaders and a permanent leader but the prospects have been sparse. I have a meeting with a potential leader next week so please pray the position gets filled as quickly as possible with a person of quality who can bring needed energy to our service. I see so much wonderful potential for growth in that service- more so than any other and it must start with a good worship leader.

So much more could be written about. I am grateful to work with an incredibly dedicated staff, who, to a person, loves the mission of our church and shows up every day to further it. As you will see by the other reports, the work gets complicated and problems arise, but our staff likes to tackle those difficult problems- and often has fun doing it together.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Tim



Church Council Report – Pastor Steve Herder

March 1, 2023

In this Lenten season we appreciate our worship leaders, and those who work behind the scenes, to make our worship services so meaningful. Pastors Tim and Julie have given us outstanding sermons, and our music groups are each a huge blessing. Pastor Chamie created our Lenten calendar, and we thank our worship leaders for the Wednesday night services with the beautiful Holden Evening Prayer Service.

Each day I post a Bible reading on our Facebook page, part of one chapter as we move through the New Testament in 2023. Today was a post from Luke 16 and by the end of March we will conclude John's gospel. Each Monday Susanne Hopkins shares a devotion and I find a photo to go with it. May the written word of God keep pointing us to the Living Word of God, Jesus our Savior! We have over 2,000 people connected to our Facebook page and we seek to use it as a good outreach ministry for our congregation, school, and foundation, and for our local and global ministries. The post that received the most attention (over 1,200 hits) was the video we re-posted from 2018 that Addie Behm recorded of Don Bielke greeting the children after chapel.

This past Sunday Julie [Herder] and I did the "Walk Against Hate" held at the Conejo Creek Park and enjoyed the time with our friend from Temple Adat Elohim, Marcia Gordon. Kaylee, Aidyn, and Trevor Searway also walked. We were pleased with how large the crowd was. Kaylee and I said at Tuesday's staff meeting that we'd like Ascension to help sponsor the walk next year and to get more people involved.

In the past month we have seen more of our Ascension friends hospitalized than we can remember in recent months. Your pastors would ask you to let us know when you are in the hospital and when you return home. Sometimes it's a short interim at a physical rehab place, and we appreciate visiting you there too. Our love and prayers are with each of you who are healing and those who are still hurting. Here's a photo of a home visit with Norma Schillerstrom, 96. She sends her love to you all.



If you'd like to join our email prayer group, let Linda Morrow know. She sends out two or three emails a week to keep us updated on prayer requests from individuals, ministries, and ELCA Prayer Ventures. (On the back of my council report is the updated list of prayers for leaders.)

Our Community Concerns Team, led by Chris Daleiden, has been very active with our food pantry ministries. Thank you for responding so well when asked to contribute (March 4 and 5). Thanks to Tania and Barry Disselhorst and other families who help with the monthly hot meals program on the third Tuesday of the month.

Our Global Ministries Team helped provide leadership for our February Adult Education Classes, led by Drs. Louise Evenson, Carol Bartell, and Christina Sanchez and Cal Lutheran students Nina from Zimbabwe, Naomi from Tanzania, Angela from Kenya, and Ohla from Ukraine. Our first class was a combination class with leaders from Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (Karla Leitzman) and Friends of Fieldworkers of Ventura County (Dr. Martita Martinex-Bravo). Our GMT is now meeting on the first Monday of each month at 3:30pm in the school bungalow at the east end of the upper parking lot. Welcome!

Norm Guetschoff, Barbara Krum, Jeff and Jan Specks, and Marilyn Reeve lead the Christian Life Hours at Royal Oaks Inn, Atria Grand Oaks, Sage Mountain, and at a future date, Varenita in Westlake. If you'd like to learn more about this fabulous outreach ministry, talk with anyone of us. To learn more about: Eucharistic Ministry, visit with Pastor Ron Cox, GriefShare with Brenda Heinrich; or Stephen Ministry, Norm Guetschoff.

Both our Ascension School children and our high school youth group made Valentine cards that were either hand delivered or mailed to some of the seniors in our congregation who loved receiving these gifts of love from the younger generations. Thanks, Anna and Nate Hooper!

Most Thursday mornings I attend the Cal Lutheran chapel service at 11:25. I highly recommend it if you can get away at that time. Rev. Scott Hamilton Adams is an inspiring worship leader and preacher and is scheduled to preach here in April. He leads the passing of the peace like nowhere else I've seen, or experienced!

Our congregation's Green Faith Team is active with leader Kristine Werner. Last month we viewed the amazing documentary "The Ants and the Grasshopper." Our Synod Green Faith Team is planning on a Zoom event at noon on World Water Day, March 22.

On February 27th we received the very sad news that Sister Emilia in Peru, 92, had died. Please keep her dear family in your prayers. When you hear us pray for Pastor David, that is her grandson. They have been dear friends to us since our first trip in 1999 and the nine trips after that. As I wrote in my Facebook post about her, "She was small in stature but a giant in the Kingdom of God." With Henri Nouwen in his book Gracias, "I went to Lima, Peru, with a deep desire to help the poor. I returned home with a deep gratitude for what I had received." Emilia was a strong example of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

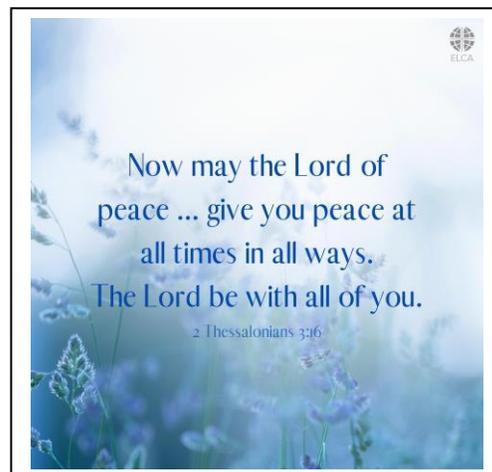
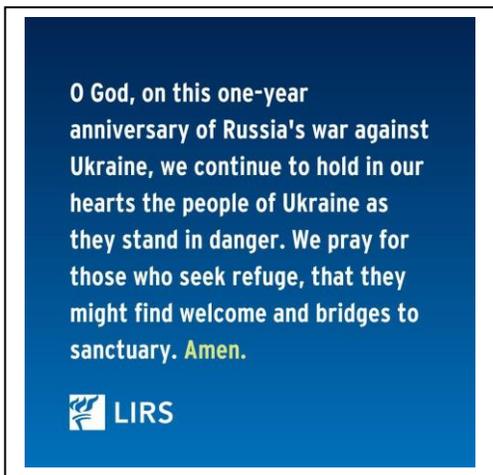


On Feb. 27th I participated in a webinar by Debt Justice from the United Kingdom. “On 27th Feb, 70 years ago, the impossible happened. Following World War II, leaders from around the world came together in London and agreed to cancel Germany’s debt.” Today 54 countries are in debt crisis. In the 2000s we won \$130 billion of debt cancellation for lower income countries. Joining our Zoom were people from Zambia, the Caribbean, Canada, Uganda, Colorado, and California.

As of September 1, 2022, I transitioned to half-time work so that I can spend more time with my family. This past month Julie and I enjoyed the long weekend of Presidents Day and traveled to Sedona, Arizona. I had not been there before and thoroughly appreciated the beauty of God’s creation. That Sunday morning, we worshiped at Christ Lutheran Church and recommend that if you are ever in Sedona. It’s very close to the famous Chapel of the Holy Cross.



Blessings on your Lenten journey to the cross and empty tomb!



Prayers for One Ascension Leadership

“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.”

Colossians 4:2

“In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the saints.”

Colossians 1:3-4

LEADERSHIP

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Rachael Bowen
Camryn Force
Dave Harkins
Ed Klodt
Carrie Leonard
Jeannette Ruggiero
Pete Swavely
Anna Woodward

School Board

Scott Bean
Naomi Little
Kyle Jones
Jocelyn Myers
Steve Smuck
Ashley Steere
Nelly Nassar-Trumbo
Anna Woodward

Foundation

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Stefano Borzone
Anita Cohen
Paul Evenson
Sandra Howe
Lori Hillman
Doug Morrow
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Kris Swavely
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Stephany V. Alfaro
Stacy Andrews
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Maryann Dib
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Arelly Kendall
Jen Ledesma
Nicole Lewis
Grace Ma
Nicole Marie
Karen Martinez
Tanya Mathews
Jenni McCoy
DeAnna Means
Amanda Munoz
Jesica Peters
Jessica Placas
Karyn Ring
Nicole Ruzovic
Marissa Saldivar
Nasha Sobieski
Ariana Stevenson
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Mike Marvin
Pastor Julie McCain
Lan Merrill
Wyant Morton
Margaret Ricci
Cameron Ruggiero
Kaylee Searway
Aidyn Searway
Jenelle Smith
Christian Teufel

Contracted:

Cleaning Staff from Millennium:

Columba, Ady and Jasmine

Landscape Staff from Malibu Landscape:

Efrain, Jose, Manuel

TK- 6 ELEMENTARY STAFF

Connie Angress
Corinne Angress
Ashley Babich
Elizabeth Bonilla
Erin Borchard
Mary Bordokas
Aidan Delkeskamp
Pastor Chamie Delkeskamp
Jennifer Farrell
Spencer Gottmer
Pastor Rich Gregory
Staci H
Camille Harrington
Heather Hartson
Kai Hoffmeier
Carolina Lopez
Emily Lopez
Charlotte Mirada
Tina Mohler
Kelsey Packman
Stephanie Pagano
Jordan Palos
Kendra Saunders
Sara Wallace
Ryan Weber
Zachary Martino

Updated 3.1.23

Pastor Julie March 2023 Council Report

I am settling into my work as dean for our area pastors, and am really enjoying this role as I also learning more about what it entails: I meeting with the other deans and bishop each month in order to figure out how we can better partner with and support the synod and one another. Often the bishop asks us for advice on aspects of ministry, and it is fun to be in this new leadership role. I also gather the pastors together on a monthly basis and plan our time together, and I am slowly starting to meet with 1:1 with the pastors in our area, especially those that are in new calls or in transition. I am having fun with this and grateful for the connection to our synod.

Work on VBS (July 10-14) is in full swing. I have three volunteers who are taking on a big leadership role alongside me, for which I am extremely grateful. We are working now on a decorating plan and on recruiting volunteers. We plan to soon have an easel out in the narthex with various items that people could take home to make, which will include things as simple as gluing and cutting cardboard, to as complicated as making a part of a Mars Rover for us, which will require some woodworking. I am also excited at the collaboration happening with the school, as Staycation and VBS combine for that week, and my collaboration with the Staycation direction has been fun and easy. Because of the big bump in numbers that Staycation will give us this year, we'll do a bit of a soft start this year, not advertising fully to the community, just so that we grow at a pace that's sustainable.

Pastor Tim and I are in an interim time with the worship coordinator position currently unfilled; it leaves many details and extra work on us, and so I just want to thank you for your grace during this time. While Pastor Tim is the worship pastor, we are also collaborating a lot on worship, and I am also having a lot of fun getting to be more creative and plan more services.

The Global Ministries Team led a fantastic bonfire smores event this past week, inviting and celebrating the Confirmation and youth group, while also celebrating fair trade. 45 people were present! This is the kind of out of the box thinking and intergenerational ministry that I wan to celebrate.

We are getting back into the rhythm of giving out faith chests at the anniversary of baptism. We had three families come to receive them in worship, and also have some new people who have responded to the call to help make faith chests. It will be good to get back into this rhythm and have another touchpoint to connect with baptismal families.

I continue eating lunch with the school kids whenever possible, being present at drop-off, and teaching religion (this month, to teach about Ash Wednesday) to 1st-4th grade. I have significant traction in these relationships just in continuing to show up and get to know the kids, and am making significant progress year over year.

This month, many have reflected on what a good school board we have, and I want to echo that. We have a very thoughtful and non-reactive board with some depth of experience and wisdom that has been taking us far. I am also impressed at their ability to think in One Ascension terms (how would the council respond to this? When should we tell them? Should

we collaborate with them on this?—these kinds of questions are being asked, and I am not the one to bring them up!), and I am also impressed by their collective desire to grow in that area.

Together, we are building the One Ascension bridges.