

It may seem strange given this is the December Newsletter, but I would like to write briefly about Easter and its relationship to Advent. Now, you may think maybe I have gone off the rails because after all, Advent relates to Christmas not Easter. Christmas, and the massive thing it has become culturally, has become the central event of the Christian year. It is certainly as time to celebrate. We celebrate the birth of our savior, but I think also we are celebrating much more. Whatever may have been worrying us as the school year began begins to ebb. The kids may be back into a routine, and even when it comes to gift giving, which is never easy, at least we may begin to recognize what people in our lives need as we connect with them more deeply. So, you will never see me or hear me fighting over Christmas, I love it, in all its guises, and I love celebrating it in church, especially this year.

It is important to note that if, as N.T. Wright says, you removed the Christmas from the Bible (and I am not suggesting we do,) you would lose one chapter in Matthew and two in Luke. If you removed Easter, you wouldn't have a New Testament. Advent is surely a time of waiting, with our blue liturgical colors on full display, we know that as the color suggests, we are somewhere in between darkness and light. Advent belongs to the Old Testament as we await the birth of the one who will save us all. But while we wait for the spontaneous inbreaking of grace into the world in Jesus, we should not be afraid to take time and remember the fact that the grace experienced in the birth, life, ministry, words, death, and resurrection is always reflected in the church not simply when it celebrates the miracle of Christmas, but when it experiences God's justice rolling down like never ending waters. That justice, brought to us in Jesus, is what we seek and is what begins at Christmas time, as we celebrate the ushering in of God's kingdom. This happens in small ways as well as large. It happens in the building of relationships, the integration of grief into our lives, the budding signs of hope in a broken world, giving a gift. The small, local experiences are just as capable of telling the world about our savior as any wide scale program or policy can do.

A Christmas birth leads us to Bethlehem, it leads to a cross, and an empty grave. It leads us to one another and new ways of living in grace, peace, and love. Have a wonderful Advent season! Have a merry Christmas, and do not forget what Jesus came to do. Remember that Jesus came for you!

Peace,
Pastor Leslie

The Compass



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Christmas Worship Services

Below is worship services during the Christmas season:

- December 21 Blue Christmas Service-online only, 6:30pm
- December 24 Worship, 9:30am, in person and online
- December 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 4:00pm, in person and online.



Update From the Admin Team

When December rolls around, it hails the end of the year--the calendar year, that is. December also hails the Advent season. Advent means the arrival of a notable person, thing or event. In Christian life, it hails the birth of Jesus, the arrival of our Saviour ("Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace," to quote Isaiah 9:6). It's a season of joy, love, anticipation and hope.

In the administrative life of our church, December is the end of our physical and fiscal year. Of course, we won't have any final results of our budget until January, but through the end of October, things started looking up. Our deficit of giving to expenses narrowed to (\$1,630). Historically, December is our best giving month so hopefully we can close that gap even further, if not eliminate it altogether. As we've mentioned before, we do have some financial reserves, but if we dip into them without being able to replenish them, we eat into our "nest egg" that keeps us afloat when times are lean or unexpected expenses arise.

The Admin Team has prepared a preliminary budget that will be presented for approval at the December 10 Charge Conference. Since Reverend Leslie is ordained now, we are able to hold the Charge Conference on our own, without having to involve the district or the district superintendent. Our conference will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 10, led by Reverend Leslie. Coffee and cookies will be available. Please plan to attend. The meeting will be brief and it's a great way to stay abreast of the inner workings of our congregation.

Enjoy the holiday season and let's celebrate the birth of Jesus and our love for our neighbors and for the world!

Pat Solheid
Admin Board Chair

2023 Charge Conference

Cross Road's Charge Conference will be held on **Sunday, December 10**, following worship service. There will be treats and coffee for this event. All members of the congregation are invited to attend, as we will be approving the pastor's compensation, presenting the 2024 budget, and other church matters.

Due to Charge Conference, our **December Celebration Bash** is being moved to Sunday, December 10 and will be held prior to Charge Conference.

December Missions & Outreach

December is a time of giving. God, our heavenly Father, gave us the greatest gift of all...Christ Jesus his son! Let us, in the spirit of giving, participate in the many opportunities available in December!

Family Promise – Thank you to Mellody Hanson for serving the folks at Family Promise on Thursday, December 7th.

Bless A Home – we will continue to gather donations for Bless A Home in the month of December. We will be providing 10 families with a food tote that contains the fixings for a holiday meal; complete with a ham donated by Tom & Donna Smith. Thank you to Bonnie Triplett for making the cutest snowmen to include in the totes and to Robbie Johnson for making crocheted snowflakes. We will also use the funds to purchase gifts for three families (11 people) A huge thank you to Kendra Pflipsen and Pat Solheid for being great shoppers!

Blood Drive – we will be hosting a blood drive on Wednesday, December 13th. At this time, we only have 17 donors scheduled. We need at least 30 or the drive will be cancelled. Please sign up and if you can't give, please talk a friend into donating!

Cookies From Cross Roads – a group of folks will be gathering to put cookie gift packages together to be distributed to Bethesda North Pointe and Glen Oaks. We'd like to gift a package to EACH unit at both locations, so if you'd like to donate a dozen or two of cookies or candy, please drop your goods off at church by Sunday, December 3rd. A huge thank you to the youth of our church who baked and donated 8 dozen cookies!!!

2023 was a wonderful year for Missions. I've been working on the annual report to submit to the Conference and it always warms my heart to see how generous this congregation is! **THANK YOU CROSS ROADS!!**

Looking ahead:

Tuesday's Table – January 30th, 2024. Cross Roads will be hosting. If you'd like to assist, please reach out to Diane Maurice or Jenny Daby. The menu will be Chili, grilled cheese, and baked goods for dessert

If anyone has any special ideas for Missions for 2024, please let Jenny Daby know!!

The Cross Roads Mission

To help everyone find joy in their journey by:

Inviting everyone to walk with Jesus,
Growing together as His disciples,
Serving others we meet along the way
And Joyfully Celebrating the Journey

Cross Roads is hosting another Red Cross Blood Drive

Our next blood Drive will be held on Wednesday, December 13th from 12 pm– 6 pm. At this time, we only have 17 donors scheduled. We need at least 30 or the drive will be cancelled. Please sign up and if you can't give, and please talk a friend into donating! EACH donor will receive a link towards a \$10 gift card.



Dec. Birthdays

Barb Gerdes 1st
Judy Kliver 2nd
Cera Finney 3rd
Matthew Friesen 6th
Kay Ruhl 7th
Tom Smith 8th
Dustin Pflipsen 9th
Mae Barker 18th
Bob Erickson 19th
David Evermann 19th
Carson Smith 22nd
Ashley Massmann 28th

Daryl Hoogeveen 30th
Bonnie Hoogeveen 30th
Annette Muetzel 30th

Dec Anniversaries

Don & Leslie Zeek—23rd



If we have missed your special day, please let the office know.



Christmas Joy 2023- We are looking for shoppers!!! If you are interested in blessing a family this Christmas season, there are a few ways to contribute—Please contact Ashley at 320-354-5465 or email director@youarethelink.org by November 30th for more information.

The Food Pantry continues to see an increase in need. In October, The Link welcomed 27 new families and served 137 households - distributing a total of 7878 pounds of food.

Wildcat Backpack and Snack Pantry. The Link is currently serving 90 children each week from NL-S schools! This is an ability to supplement children's food for the weekend when they are not in school. The Link is also currently connecting 29 teachers with snacks for students in their classroom.

Client Outreach. Each month, The Link is able to provide support to a number of families facing hardships, such as (but not limited to): job loss, chronic illness, unexpected change in family dynamics and increase in the cost of living. In October, your donations were able to support 14 families by helping with transportation, medical bills and prescription cost, gas, utility bills and rental payments along with providing budgeting support, networking and referrals for additional basic needs.

Tuesday's Table. A free community meal the 1st Tuesday of the month: Our Lady of the Lakes (Spicer), 2nd Tuesday: Evangelical Covenant (New London), 3rd Tuesday: Faith Lutheran (Spicer), 4th Tuesday: Peace Lutheran (New London), 5th Tuesday: Rotating (call 320-354-5555 for more information).

CURRENT NEEDS: Gently used winter gear and kids clothing.

HOW CAN YOU HELP? Pray for the Link and the community--Help us spread awareness by talking about The Link to your friends and family and sharing on social media-- Donate unexpired food items to the food pantry or organize a food drive-- Volunteer at the thrift store or in the food pantry-- Donate your gently used clothing and household goods- (all proceeds kick back into The Link's programs -- or Donate financially.

Remember for every \$1 donated, The Link can purchase \$10 in food through Second Harvest.

Donations made easy Monthly giving at The Link is convenient. You can set up online giving directly through your bank or by visiting The Link's website at www.youarethelink.org by scanning the QR code. You can also mail your donation to P.O. Box 823, New London, MN 56273, drop off your donation in person or leave your check in the drop box outside of The Link's door at 20 Central Ave E, New London. Questions? Contact Ashley at 320-354-5555.

Thank you for your support! YOU are The Link!



**Cross Roads Community
United Methodist Church**

3400 113th Ave NE
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www.crossroadsspicer.com

December 2023

Christian radio stations in the area:

K-Love 90.9

KTIS 92.7 & 98.5

Spirit 92.9

