

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

– 2 Corinthians 5:17

Do you ever think about why we celebrate New Year's Day? It's really just another day, so why is it so important for people to mark a date change on a calendar?

I suspect it's because a new year offers a new beginning, the chance to start fresh. There's a reason January is the most important month of the year for gyms and diet programs, because it seems like a fresh chance to start again, to improve yourself. It seems like a natural time for beginning something, which is why lots of people make New Year's resolutions (whether they stick to them or not is another story!).

The Christian life offers lots of opportunities for fresh starts, for changing what we've been doing or beginning to live differently. Each week in worship, we begin our prayers with a time of confession where we admit what we've done wrong. We admit to God and to each other that our lives are not perfect, that we're not living the way we ought to live, that we're doing things we ought not do and failing to do things we ought to do.

Then, immediately after confession, we hear God's response. We hear the good news that because of God's forgiveness, because God loves us, we all get a fresh start. Psalm 103:12 says God has taken our sins away from us "as far as the east is from the west." The slate is wiped clean. We don't need to carry the weight of our sins or guilt with us any more. We are forgiven!

And then we run into the next week (or maybe just the next day...or the next couple of minutes!) and it doesn't take long before we sin again. It doesn't take long for us to forget about what God has done for us. We take the burden Jesus has taken from us and we pick it back up and start trying to carry the weight of our own sins again. But we always have another opportunity to remember God's love. God never gets tired of forgiving us!

But you don't have to wait for a new year to have a fresh start. Each day offers the opportunity to wake up and remember that you are a baptized child of God. You have been claimed, redeemed, and set free by Jesus Christ. After hearing the promise of forgiveness and absolution in worship, we continue the only way we can, by together giving joyful thanks to God in song and by learning more about God's grace and love for us by hearing God's word. See you in worship!

Your Servant in Christ,
Pastor Leslie

The Compass



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Pastor Leslie Vacation

Pastor Leslie will be on vacation from January 9-18. If there is an emergency, please contact one of the Admin Board members and they will either help you, or they can provide you contact information for the on-call minister.

Administrative Board Notes

The generosity of time and resources that the Cross Roads community extends to others is amazing at any time of the year, but it's awe-inspiring at Christmas. So many efforts, large and small, made the Christmas season just a little bit more joyous in so many ways for so many others. It's tricky to try to list everything we did at the risk of missing something, but the congregation gifted 10 Bless-A-Home baskets, delivered cookies for nursing home residents, served a meal to Family Promise, hosted a Bloodmobile, and collected items for local food and assistance groups. The flames of generosity were fanned by our members at Cross Roads but the spark that got it started for most of these initiatives was Jenny Daby, our Missions and Outreach leader. Kudos to Jenny for her vision and organizing skills. We also played "secret Santa" to a local family who has taken in a family fleeing a war-torn country, thanks to Diane Maurice. There were there acts of generosity as well, whether it was continuing to weave plastic sleeping mats, delivering Meals on Wheels, feeding the dinner to our youth or ministering to those who are incarcerated or homebound.

As it says in the song, "Pass It On," it only takes a spark to get a fire going...what can you "spark" in 2025 that can become a "fire" in our congregation or our community? How can you serve or better serve to continue to walk in the footsteps of Jesus? There will continue to be many opportunities, some large and some small, as we look forward to the new year and making our mark in 2025, and if you have a suggestion for a new idea or initiative, be the "spark" or bring it forward!

Thanks to everyone who served on the Admin Team in 2024, and welcome to Tiahna Rohloff who will join us in 2025. *Please note that the meeting date has changed to January 21 at 6:30 p.m.*

As we ring in the new year, stay safe and continue the excitement!

Pat Solheid, Chair, Admin Team

Admin Team Meeting

The date for the January Admin Team Meeting has changed. The meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 21 instead of on January 14. Please mark your calendars!

Imagining Team Meeting

The Imagining Team will meet on Wednesday, January 8 at 6:30 pm in the church library.

Celebration Bash

Sunday, January 5 will be our next Celebration Bash. Following worship, we will gather in the fellowship hall for a time of conversation and friendship as we eat some great treats and celebrate with those who have birthdays and anniversaries during the month. Be sure to plan to stay and join us!



Missions & Outreach

Happy New Year!

I'm very excited to start a new year of mission activities. For January, our Mission Focus will be Arrive Ministries.

Arrive-Willmar is part of the larger group, Arrive Ministries. They are a refugee resettlement agency providing essential services and practical assistance to refugees and immigrants to advance self-sufficiency. They mobilize volunteers, in partnership with local churches, to extend love and friendship to our new neighbors to promote thriving in a new homeland.

They seek to love refugees and immigrants in a holistic way: practically, socially, and spiritually.

Arrive-Willmar does not receive any government funding, so our donations are very important. They offer a variety of classes, which you can volunteer to assist; including teaching English, teach sewing/mending, join a mom's group, host a cooking group, help with summer activities, organize donations, help a family move into their home. In addition to cash, they need gently used furniture, mattresses, dishes, and other home goods. Lynn Van Nurden is a faithful volunteer at Arrive, so please ask her about this wonderful ministry.

Jenny Groen, the Area Program Manager will come to our church to present a Mission Moment on Sunday, January 19th, during worship!

Mission Leadership is needed - If you'd like to lead a small portion of our Mission activities for 2025, please plan to attend an information meeting on Sunday, January 26th, right after worship!!

Jenny Daby, Chair, Missions & Outreach

January Birthdays

Sheryl Nelson 4th
Jeanette Fixsen 9th
LuMae Erickson 10th
Scott Doty 13th
Pat Solheid 14th
Eric Bjonfald 15th
Brian Nelson 15th
Judy Zachariason 22nd
Jordan Baker 26th
Kendra Pflipsen 27th
Leann Navratil 30th
Troy Rohloff 30th



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



NOVEMBER 2024 IMPACT FROM THE LINK

THE FOOD PANTRY



In November, The Food Pantry reached another record of **223 households** served- including 371 adults, 237 children and 62 seniors-distributing a total of 13,416 pounds of food!

The Link was also able to provide 100 families with Thanksgiving meals this year thanks to Thrivent Financial, The Open Door, Crossroads Community Church and individual community members!

CLIENT OUTREACH and HOUSEHOLD EXCHANGE



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.

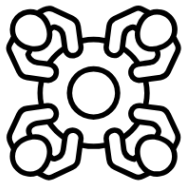
In November, your donations were able to support **129 families** by helping with medical bills and prescription cost, utility bills and rental payments along with providing budgeting support, networking and referrals for additional basic household needs including clothing, winter gear, dishes and furniture!

WILDCAT BACKPACK AND SNACK PANTRY



The Wildcat Backpack Program is again providing students from NLS for the weekend. Currently, there are **131 students** benefitting from this program! If you would like to sponsor a child for the year, please call Ashley at 320-354-5465

The Snack Pantry is currently providing snacks for over 30 teachers at NLS to distribute to their students throughout the school day.



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: Crossroads Community Church (Spicer).

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;

Donate financially-

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

CURRENT NEEDS:

SHOPPERS FOR CHRISTMAS JOY! Gently used clothing & winter gear and household essentials. Food: Kid friendly food (corn dogs, chicken nuggets, french fries, pizza, snacks, etc.), Monetary donations.



Donations made easy

Monthly giving at the 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**

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January 2025

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.