

On November 19, 1863, in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Abraham Lincoln began a speech with these words: “Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” He was referring to the American Revolution and the Declaration of Independence, which states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights.” Another 158 years have passed and we are still discussing what it means for people to be “created equal.” We seem to know in our hearts that we were created equal, all in the image of God, but we struggle with what that means when the person we are talking about is different in any number of ways. Before we condemn others for this struggle, we have to consider this is not a new struggle. We find the same struggle in the Bible.

Peter, who is very careful to remain clean, is called to go to a Gentile household and to witness to the grace of Christ and offer salvation. God, knowing Peter would struggle with this direction, gave Peter a very pointed vision; one in which God left no doubt in Peter’s mind that God was the God of all persons. Peter goes. His initial comment to Cornelius is “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.” (Acts 10:34b-35 NRSV). Peter, the loud-mouthed, impetuous follower of Jesus and who is careful to maintain the law, admits that God calls all people to follow the way of Christ. He changes his understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus, of who God calls to be servants, and of who God accepts. Paul shares the same message in Galatians 3:28 using different words. Paul even dares to challenge the need to follow the law to be a follower of Christ at the church in Jerusalem. He calls the apostles to create space in the assembly of believers for those who have traditionally been on the outside—the Gentiles, who were considered pagans beyond hope.

Several years ago I attended a funeral for a long-time member of my home church. One of the ministers who spoke used Revelation 21:24-25, “the nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.” She went on to explain the gates will never be closed because all will be welcome, there will be no enemy to keep out and no fear of others to cause us fear. I hear the fear we have of others in the ways we seek to protect ourselves from those we see as “other” and the harm or death they may cause us. We carry guns and live in homes with alarms.

Then I see people who do not fear “others.” I remember many years ago the story of a man who murdered several young girls at their Amish school in Pennsylvania. The families and friends of these young girls were so incredibly forgiving, with one grandfather even remarking, “we must not think evil of this man.” One Amish man reportedly even held the gunman’s sobbing father in his arms for over an hour, providing comfort and love. The Amish willingness to forgo vengeance does not undo the tragedy or pardon the wrong, but rather constitutes a first step toward a future that is more hopeful.

I am tired of living in fear and long to see others as equal and as my siblings but I still have a way to go to be in that place. But if I don’t take the first step and take the risk, I will never arrive at that place. I invite you to come and walk beside me as we come to see all people as our equals, our siblings in Christ, those for whom Christ died on the cross. This truth comes from scripture: Galatians 3:28, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are **one** in Christ Jesus” (*emphasis added*).

Happy Fourth of July, may our beloved country lead the way in bringing peace, equality, and unity to the world.

Pastor Leslie

The Compass



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Updated Office Hours

We have resumed having regular office hours. The new hours are as follows: **Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 9am to 12noon** each of these days.

Pastor Leslie will be in the office on Tuesday and Thursday mornings (as Mondays are her Sabbath); however, as always, she is available to meet at other hours by appointment, whether it just to chat or for a specific topic of conversation.

*****The office will be closed July 5th in observance of Independence Day.**

Admin Team Meeting

The Admin Team will be meeting on Tuesday, July 13, 6:30pm, in the church library. Pastor Leslie will send a link out for Zoom if you are unable to attend in person.

Youth Boating Trip

Attention all Youth! We will be having a boating trip on Wednesday, July 14, at 2:00pm. This will be held at the home of Pat & Jim Solheid. We will be heading out onto Nest Lake for an afternoon of fun in the sun. Bring your towel and sunscreen and join us. There will also be kayaks for those who prefer a little slower method of boating. We hope to see you all there!



Teacher Looking for Books



One of our young adults at Cross Roads, Tiahna Rohloff, will begin her first year as a teacher at Willmar Middle School, teaching 6th Grade ELA (English/Language Arts).

Tiahna is looking for books to fill her classroom. She is more than happy to take donations, and is also willing to pay for them (remember she is a first year teacher). She would really like to have a classroom library full of books for all of her students at all reading levels. They can be chapter books and non chapter books.

If you have any books you would like to donate to Tiahna's classroom, please contact her at (320) 894-1388 or email her at tiahnarohloff2@gmail.com. Thank you for your support!!

July Birthdays

Warren Gerdes 7th
Mike Duke 11th
Mitchell Duke 11th
Lylas Boonstra 12th
Dwight Ryks 15th
Taylee Pahl 18th
Vernon Dean 25th
Kent Springman 26th

July Anniversaries

Doug & Patty Decker 5th
Mike & Jodii Evenson 13th
Nick & Judy Zachariason 20th
Richard & Robbie Johnson 21st

A Note from our Admin Chair

It was a great pleasure on June 27 to have a celebration in the church — our first after-worship gathering in well over a year! As you know by now, Pastor Leslie turned 50 and our congregation celebrated with her by having a brunch potluck after worship. It felt good to be with people who care about one another and to join in on celebrating a milestone for Pastor Leslie who has done so much for our congregation in the two years she has been here. It felt good to eat a meal and commune with church members in person! Thanks to everyone who helped coordinate and contribute to the event to make it possible. I also want to give a shout out to Faith Duke. Faith baked and decorated the birthday cake for Leslie. She did a fabulous job, and we were thrilled that she shared her talent with us. Neighbors loving neighbors!

There wasn't any "grassroots" interest in having a float in the Fourth of July parade in Spicer this year so we won't have a presence there. However, we were able to help another group out. We had boxes and boxes of freeze pops that we had handed out in previous parades and we weren't quite sure what to do with them. I had seen a request for parade candy from the Hawk Creek Animal Shelter so I reached out to them, and they were thrilled to have the freeze pops for their parade crew to hand out. Helping out another organization doing good in the community was definitely a silver lining for us not having a float. Neighbors helping neighbors!

I also would like to give a shout out to Pat and Dave Evermann who work behind the scenes keeping our landscaping alive. There's no hope for the grass right now, but Pat and Dave frequently are at the church hand-watering plants and shrubs. We have many unsung heroes who do things behind the scenes to keep the church going, but with the scorching heat and lack of rain, Pat and Dave are really going above and beyond! Neighbors caring for neighbors!

Philippians 2:4 says: *"Everyone should look out not only for his own interest, but for the interests of others."*

I think we do a pretty good job of this at Cross Roads, as evidenced by the examples above but "loving thy neighbor" is an ongoing endeavor! Things we do, large and small, help us care for our neighbors around us and allow us to leave things just a little bit better than we found them.

God's blessings to all, and I hope you continue to enjoy the summer.

Pat Solheid

Save Your Teals Receipts!

Cross Roads UMC is continuing to be part of the Teals' Market 1% Receipt Rebate Program. When you shop at Teals, save your receipts, bring them to church, and put them in the special Teals Receipts box located just outside the sanctuary in the narthex area. We will do the rest! Teals will donate 1% of our receipt totals to Cross Roads to put towards our many missions and outreach projects.

This is a great opportunity to take part in a local business giving back to our community. Thank you for your support!



June 2021 Updates

Ribfest 2021 was a huge success and we are finally settling back into a more “normal” routine after all the planning and preparation. There was close to 200 volunteer hours put in on the day of Ribfest as well as the rib teams that spent countless hours setting up and preparing for the festivities. After coming off a year without being able to have any large gatherings, we were thankful the event went off without a hitch and even more thankful to those who were able to be a part of making Ribfest 2021 so successful. Ribfest is our largest fundraiser and it went as smooth as we could have hoped!

In May, **The Food Pantry** welcomed 5 new families, served 18 children, 58 adults and 22 seniors. 1750 pounds of food was distributed and 612 pounds of food was donated from community members and churches.

The Wildcat Backpack Program is done for the school year, but we will continue to serve families as needed throughout the summer. If you know a family that could benefit from this program, please have them call Ashley at 320-354-5555.

Senior Food Delivery- The Link volunteers have been out delivering some food to seniors in that benefit from not going out and about. If you, or someone you know, is interested in learning more about this program please have them call Ashley at 320-354-5555.

The Link’s **Client Outreach** program served 4 families in the month of May. Throughout the month, The Link was able to help with utility bills, rent payments, medical bills and gas for medical appointments. There was also a few families impacted by a fire that were able to utilize some household goods from the household exchange program.

Tuesday’s Table:

Tuesday’s Table continues to be cancelled until further notice.

We have begun to see an increase in need for The Food Pantry and our Client Outreach services since June hit. If you would like to donate to any of these programs specifically or to our general fund, please see below for more details.

Monthly Giving Opportunities:

The Link makes monthly giving a convenient option for our donors. You can set up online giving through The Link’s website at www.youarethelink.org or directly through your bank. If you would like to make a one-time donation, you can send a check to P.O. Box 823, New London, MN 56273 or via Venmo @The-Link-1. Please contact Ashley at 320-354-5555 or email her at ashley@youarethelink.org for more information.



**Cross Roads Community
United Methodist Church**

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July 2021

Christian radio stations in the area:

K-Love 90.9

KTIS 92.7 & 98.5

Spirit 92.9

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