

If I were to give the newsletter article you are reading a title, it would be Hard Lessons to Learn. One of the great blessings and curses of the Christian faith is we are able to be there for one another in time of loss and pain. Now, I'll be the first to admit that my role in the church admits me into many of these times of loss and pain (I can't recall the number of times that I've been invited to someone's death-bed); however, the truth is that each and every one of us are called collectively to be there for each other in those times. While it is hard to endure these events, in retrospect, it is often in the midst of pain and loss that we can learn significant lessons of life.

I have often asked, and been asked by others, the seemingly eternal question of, "why is it that God allows bad things to happen to good people?" I have to admit that I have a standard answer (one that I believe whole-heartedly, but standard nonetheless) that bad things happen not because God allows it, but because of the fallen nature of humanity (I could go on about this, but for now I will let this suffice). Recently, however, I have realized that some of the most significant lessons I have learned have been ones which come on the heels of "bad things," of loss and pain. Let me share a few of those with you now.

Lesson # 1: Life, at least our mortal life, is not eternal. Between 2003 and 2015, Don and I had to say goodbye to his father and mother, and my father and step-mother. When you are 25 years old, having to bury your 49-year-old father is something you cannot imagine. Because when are young, we tend to not think about people growing old, or losing those closest to us who aren't even in their 50's or 60's. More recently, as Don and I have begun to age, we have realized we have more days behind us than ahead, especially in the last month or so with the loss our dear, dear friend, Joe. Losing a friend who is only 53 years old causes you to pause and understand that life is not forever, at least not in the earthly sense.

It often takes tragedies in our lives to realize life could end at a moment's notice. In a split-second, lives can be changed forever. It seems to me that many of us, myself included, often have trouble with this lesson as it relates to our faith. We know there is something we should do; something God really wants for our lives but we think to ourselves, "I'll do it tomorrow, there's always time to do that latter." The problem is sometimes there isn't time to do it later. Sometimes the only time we have is now. Lesson #1: Life, at least our mortal life, is not eternal.

Lessons #2: God loves you no matter what. Now, many would say that this lesson seems to be obvious; it is, after all, it's one of the basic tenets of the Christian faith. We worship a God who loves each of us so much that God was willing to allow Jesus Christ to be crucified to provide hope to us. There is nothing we can do that can or would take that love away from us. God loves us, no matter what. This was a hard lesson for me to learn because for much of my life I saw myself as unloved and unworthy, never quite measuring up to what others in the faith thought God wanted me to be. Because of those feelings, I sought to find value someplace, anyplace else. Yet, no matter where I looked, I could never find something that made me feel truly worthy and loved for very long. UNTIL...I began attending Cape Carteret Presbyterian Church. Embarking on a renewed faith journey made me realize I was worth something not because of anything I did in my life but because God was willing to let Christ die for me. I was a beloved child of God. Life has never been the same again. God loves me no matter what. God loves you no matter what. It was a hard lesson for me to learn and I suspect there may be some of you who have found it hard to learn as well.

I wish I could write and say that once we realize God's love for us everything is magically okay from there on out. But I cannot; to do so would be a lie. Truth be told, this may well be the one lesson I struggle with the most. I find it sometimes hard to remember that God loves me no matter what. It is hard to realize there is nothing that can happen in our lives here on earth which will separate us from the love of God. It is sometimes hard to look through the lenses of our lives and see there is hope out there because of the great love God has for us.

I have struggled with depression and anxiety at various times in my life. These periods of time usually correspond to some stress I am experiencing. I know there are others out there who struggle with life as well. Sometimes it feels as though there just isn't much point in it all and we develop, if not outright suicidal thoughts, a sort of apathy toward life. When these storms of life come, I hope and pray we will all remember that probably hardest of lessons to learn, that God loves you, God loves me, God loves each of us more than we will ever know. No matter what.

Lesson #3 will have to wait as I have run out of space.

Peace and Love to you all!

Pastor Leslie

The Compass



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CONGRATULATIONS TO PASTOR LESLIE!!

Pastor Leslie has mentioned that she was selected for a church leadership program. In true Pastor Leslie style, she was very humble about it.

The Practical Church Leadership Certificate Program is a program developed in partnership with Dakota Wesleyan University and the Dakotas-Minnesota Area Lilly Grant Initiative. The program began July 11, 2022 with a three-day orientation and concludes in July 2023.

As the chair of the church's Administrative Team, I received a letter from Bishop David Bard encouraging our support. The letter explains that Pastor Zeek was selected as an individual with high potential in leading our church to growth and missional effectiveness. It further states that while many pastors receive excellent education in college and/or seminary, the Conference is learning that additional competencies are needed to effectively lead churches into the future.

As Pastor Leslie has mentioned, she will engage in a year-long learning in the stewardship of finances and resources, development and growth of vision, and planning for strategic change and growth. She will be required to complete two applied learning projects that will directly benefit our church. A coach will be working with her and will likely request to connect with church leadership. There are various activities that will take place throughout the year and more information will be forthcoming on those. For right now, I ask you to join in full support and partnership with Pastor Leslie as she embarks on this journey.

Pastor Leslie is not very good about asking for help or for people to take over church duties! But with the additional work required by this program, we need to be there as she asks, or as we see an opportunity, for us to step in and provide assistance to her.

Pastor Leslie, congratulations on this recognition and honor! Know that we are here for you!

Pat Solheid, Administrative Team Chair

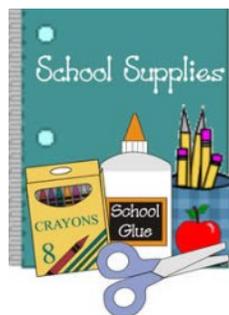
Mission & Outreach

JULY...Thank you Cross Roads— we filled every single slot for the Meals On Wheels delivery program. This program is vital to these folks. Sometimes, your food delivery is the only social interaction they might receive for the week!

Family Promise – thank you to Linda Kelvington for delivering the meal to the folks at Family Promise. This program is so very important as it keeps some families together with a safe place to stay rather than in their vehicles or on the streets. Cross Roads has committed to providing a meal three times in 2022.

AUGUST...for the month of August we will be collecting school supplies. The Link has graciously agreed to ensure they get distributed. Following are the most common items from the NLS elementary schools supply list. If you'd rather view the list yourself to see other items.....go to www.nls.k12.mn.us for a complete listing. If you'd rather donate cash to the white bucket; the mission team will shop for you! Please leave the items in the Food Pantry box near the kitchen.

#2 pencils SHARPENED
Large pink erasers
Glue Sticks
red ink pen
blue ink pen
Scissors
Spiral notebooks (wide rule)
plastic pencil box
Colored pencils (8-12 pack)
8-10 pack of washable markers
Crayons (24 pack)
Pocket folders (need variety of colors— green, blue, yellow)



In addition...our own Tiahna Rohloff, who teaches 6th grade in Willmar, has provided us with a list of needs for her classroom, which is on Amazon. To access the link for this list, please see the weekly worship email.

Youth Back to School Cookout

Pastor Leslie and Don are hosting a back-to-school cookout for all of our youth and young adults who will be heading back to school or off to college. **Sunday, August 14 from 4-8pm**, all youth and young adults are invited to their home in Willmar (1205 16th St, SW) for a cookout. We will have food, games, and lots of fun before everyone heads off! Please mark your calendars and plan to join in the fellowship!

Back to School Sunday

On Sunday, August 28 during our worship service, we will be celebrating Back to School Sunday with a "Blessing of the Backpacks." All children/youth of Cross Roads are encouraged to attend worship and bring their backpacks which they will use for school. We will say a blessing over the backpacks as well as the students as they prepare to head back to school.

Bible Study

Beginning Tuesday, September 20, Pastor Leslie will be teaching a 10-week study on the Book of Acts, focusing on the formation of the early Church. This study will be held in hybrid version on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 am and Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm. You can attend in-person or online via Zoom. Watch the September newsletter and weekly worship/announcement emails for more information coming soon.

August Birthdays

Pat O'Connor 2nd
Joy Greiner 4th
Tiahna Rohloff 10th
Doug Decker 13th
Michele Albers 14th
Al Boonstra 16th
Karen Dean 16th
Merle Kluver 16th
Shelli Peterson 16th
Kevin Navratil 18th
Bob Kaiser 22nd
Riley Bjornfald 24th
Robbie Johnson 26th

August Anniversaries

Jordan & Ashley Massmann 10th
Eric & Jamie Bjornfald 15th
Joel & Sharon Hagen 17th
Dustin & Kendra Pflipsen 17th
Tom & Donna Smith 17th
Al & Lylas Boonstra 24th



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



June/July 2022 Updates

We are looking for your help! In the past few months, we have seen a huge increase of need in The Food Pantry. Unfortunately, the current food shortage is also effecting what we have available to us for distribution. We are looking to churches to see if anyone would be interested in hosting a food drive to help stock our shelves and refrigerators? Please call Ashley at 320-354-5555 if you are interested in having a food drive and we can share more details.

In June, **The Food Pantry** welcomed 15 new families, served 87 children, 129 adults and 22 seniors. 4114 pounds of food was distributed and 360 pounds of food was donated from community members and churches. Food Rescue also brought in 1685.5 pounds of food from Cashwise and ALDI. **We are currently also in need of more Food Pantry volunteers for Thursday afternoons. If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in volunteering, please contact Ashley at 320-354-5555.**

The Wildcat Backpack Program- This program will start up again when school starts this fall. Families are eligible to come in and pick up backpack food for their children any time The Food Pantry is open, Tuesday-Thursday 10am-3pm.

Senior Food Delivery- The Senior Food Delivery program is designed to deliver food to anyone that is home-bound. 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 and Household Exchange** programs served 9 families in the month of June. Throughout the month, The Link was able to help with rental expenses, medical bills and utility bills for those in need. The Household Exchange program also helped 5 families with furnishing their homes.

The Community Revival Boutique and Thrift Store Volunteers Needed!!! We do have a specific need for regular Saturday volunteers (which could be anything from once a month to every Saturday). The Store hours are Wednesdays & Fridays 10am-3pm, Thursdays 10-4 and Saturdays 10am-2pm. If you or anyone you know would like to volunteer on a regular basis in a fun, fast paced environment, please contact Shawna at 320-347-1047 or stop in during store hours. We have a lot of different jobs available from sorting and pricing donations to opening the store and running the till.

**Donations of clothing and most household items are being taken Wednesdays-Fridays 10-3 and Saturdays from 10-2 (or by appointment). Please call if you have any questions about when/where to drop off items and if there is a need for any of your bigger household items.

Volunteer Hours totaled 927 for the month of June! The work that is done at The Link and Community Revival would not be possible without the dedication to all of our faithful volunteers willing to give their time! Thank you is not enough....we are grateful to each and every one of you!!!

Tuesday's Table:

TUESDAY'S TABLE IS SCHEDULED TO START UP AGAIN SEPTEMBER OF 2022!!!! If your church would like to take part in hosting Tuesday's Table, please call Ashley at 320-354-5555 or email ashley@youarethelink.org or call 320-354-5555.

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.



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Spicer, MN 56288

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www.crossroadsspicer.com

August 2022

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