

We've all just been handed something very special: a "brand, spanking-new" New Year with which to do some very special things. OR not. It's really up to us.

Newness is something that is very popular in our American culture. Who doesn't enjoy that "new car" smell, that fresh out-of-the-box aroma of a new pair of leather shoes, or the feel of that nice Christmas sweater you just opened?

Even now, New Year's resolutions have that new car smell at the moment. Our resolve is high to make this year different than other years. But if the truth be told, the average time between the moment we make our resolutions and their demise is a sad three weeks. By that time all the newness has been aired out of them – and they become mere chores. It's one of the reasons I don't make resolutions.

Instead, I'd like to offer us a different focus on the year ahead. What are the most important "provisions" that you will need for the journey? When you think about the most challenging times in your life, what are the most important things that have tided you over?

Personally, I can think of some precious things that have gotten me through. The majority of these things take up little or no physical space, which make sense because Jesus always encouraged his disciples to travel light. In Mark 6:8-9, Jesus "charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics." His point was to focus them, not to be impoverished, but to clear their vision of material things so that they can clearly see the most precious provisions of all: other people, and the presence of God in those people.

Of the most precious things on my journey, I count the kind presence of friends in dark hours. I stockpile in my mind the sound of their voices. I also hoard up within my soul those moments when I have been transported by beauty far beyond the ordinary. The ring of truth in scripture; a perfect poem, or word of wisdom from a spiritual master. And those transcendent moments when I hear the voice of God through music or song. You know these moments when you experience this soul-stirring moment, as when I baby reacts to their mother's singing.

These are my provisions for the times the wind blows. So, at the beginning of this new journey of 2024, I ask you to contemplate this: Who and what are the real provisions of your life? Think of them, and tuck them away in that special part of your heart that you reserve for precious things.

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Leslie

The Compass



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Admin Team Notes

On December 12, we had a "crossover" Admin Team meeting with the members of the current Admin Board and the new members coming on in 2024. Thanks to Howard Carlson, Carrie Duke, Dustin Pflipsen and Tom Smith for their faithful service on the board. A big welcome to Jean Ericson, Keith Lippert, Annette Muetzel and Randy Ronning for agreeing to serve on the team. We look forward to another year of working together to serve the congregation of Cross Roads to help fulfill our mission as faithful Christians.

While the Admin Team serves as the overall committee for SPRC, trustees, finance, etc., we have established a sub-committee that will first review and discuss any items or issues relating to our paid staff. Members will be Linda Kelvington, Pat Solheid and Jean Ericson. Linda will continue to be the identified SPRC Liaison. Duane Daby will continue to be the Finance Liaison and Dave Evermann will continue to be the Liaison for Trustee issues. At this juncture, no one has been identified for the Lay Leader position. We decided to function without this position for the time being until such time that someone comes forward to fill the role, or we decide we need to actively recruit someone because we can't function without it.

Also, a "shout out" of thanks to everyone who attended our charge conference on December 10 and approved the budget and compensation package. With Reverend Leslie now having authority to preside at our charge conferences since her ordination, coordinating and conducting the meeting went very smoothly this year. Our final 2024 budget as approved at the December 12 Admin Team meeting will be \$159,334 (as the final property insurance numbers were received).

We won't have our final 2023 finance numbers until January, but it looks like we may finish in a neutral position and even may be slightly "in the black." Thanks to everyone who continues to support Cross Roads Church with their tithes and offerings, and to those who submitted pledges for 2024. Also, on behalf of the Admin Team I'd like to thank Don Ericson, Ron VanNurden, Reverend Leslie and Kendra Pflipsen for finalizing an internal audit for 2022 and bringing their suggestions to the Admin Board. Now that we have the process in place, our audit of 2023 will be completed earlier in the year than our 2022 audit was. It's prudent for us to conduct these audits as a part of being good stewards for the resources that are given to the church by our members.

As we head into 2024 with optimism and hope, we ask for your prayers and support as we provide the oversight for the "inner workings" of Cross Roads Church so we can continue our 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.

In the spirit of Christ,

Pat Solheid, Admin Board Chair

Admin Board Meeting

The Admin Board will be meeting on Tuesday, January 9th at 6:30pm.

Missions & Outreach

Happy New Year Cross Roads! If anyone has any ideas for the Mission Team for 2024 please reach out to Jenny Daby!!

January, 2024 Mission Focus – The Minnesota Conference's Project Ag Grad...Project Ag Grad is a mission project of the Minnesota Annual Conference of the UMC. This project funds the fellowships for eight students who have obtained PhDs in production agriculture. They are teaching, researching and mentoring in several countries. The goal is to help developing countries produce enough food for their citizens by educating the most promising students in production agriculture. In other words.....helping people help themselves! The current student Vanessa Kambi is from the Democratic Republic of Congo. She expects to complete her master's degree next spring and then will return to Africa to help her people. Please donate generously to this program!!

Christmas Un-decorating

We will be putting away the Christmas decor on Wednesday January 3rd at 3:00 pm. Please consider helping with this project! We will be going out for dinner afterwards.

In addition if you have a quality Christmas tree that you are considering getting rid of please contact Pat Evermann as we are in need of replacing two of our trees for next year.

2024 Lay Readers Needed

2024 will be here before you know, and the Worship Team needs YOUR help.

We are looking for individuals who would be interested in helping Pastor Leslie as Lay Readers. For those of you have worshipped with us recently, you have seen what this entails. Lay Readers lead the Call to Worship, prayers, and read Scripture.

If you are interested in helping during worship service as a Lay Reader, please let Pastor Leslie know.

Christian Education Team Leader Needed

Cross Roads is looking for an individual with a heart for learning to help encourage learning in others! Our congregation is in need of a Leader for our Christian Ed Team. If you think you would be interested in this position, or know someone who might, please reach out to Pastor Leslie.

Coffee Corner



Our next Coffee Corner is scheduled for Wednesday, January 10 at 9:00am. Please join us for some good coffee and some great fellowship.

Celebration Bash

Our next Celebration Bash will be Sunday, January 7 following worship, where we will celebrate those who have birthdays and anniversaries during the month. Be sure to stay following our service and share in some good cake, coffee, and some wonderful fellowship!



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.



The Link's Open House Fundraiser was a great success! We are grateful to each and every one of you that came to support The Link and to all of you that have supported The Link's mission so far in 2023!!!!

The Food Pantry continues to see an increase in need. In November, The Link welcomed **27 new families** and served **165 households** - distributing a total of **10,067 pounds of food**.

Wildcat Backpack and Snack Pantry. The Link is currently serving **93 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 November, your donations were able to support **7 families** by helping with medical bills, gas, utility bills and rental payments along with providing budgeting support, networking and referrals for additional basic needs. **Household Exchange.** The Household Exchange Program was able to provide **27 families** with much needed winter gear, furniture and other household necessities in November.

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).

Christmas Joy 2023- If you would like to contribute to Christmas Joy, you can still donate financially. The Link uses any financial contributions to purchase items for families to meet any basic needs they listed on their Christmas list that they don't receive from their shopper. (i.e. if they are in need of winter gear, socks, underwear, clothing, etc we will purchase those items and wrap them up for families and send them with their gifts).

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.

CURRENT NEEDS: Gently used winter gear and kids clothing. 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
Spicer, MN 56288

320-796-2339
www.crossroadsspicer.com

January 2024

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.