

He had told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? ~Micah 6:8

The prophet Micah asks, what does God require of us? He asks this question in a time of dishonesty, corruption, and injustice. A time when the leaders and the people had gotten so far off track that they were completely lost.

Had Micah posed this question to the people, the answer probably would be something along the lines of sacrifice, showing up for worship, giving offerings.

But instead, Micah asks this question and then answers it from God's point of view. And the answer should never cease to shock and surprise us, to make us uncomfortable as we wonder: am I really doing that?

God doesn't require the things we have come to expect like showing up for worship, knowing the Bible frontwards and backwards, having all the right beliefs. Instead, God requires that we do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. These actions are not optional for a life of faith.

So often we think of faith in terms of what we believe and how certain we are about those beliefs. But Micah wants us to think of faith in terms of what are we inspired to do, how does our belief in God change how we live our lives. And Micah is not the only voice in Scripture asking this question. In the New Testament we hear "faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." And we hear Jesus summarizing a life of faith as loving God with our whole being and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Faith is not a feeling but a verb, it is the way we live out our lives with the kind of love that humbly walks with God, seeks out justice, and extends kindness to all. This is what God requires.

Micah reminds us of this not to shame us, because the truth is we all miss the mark. None of us are perfect and we all struggle with this. But although we might not be perfect, we can still try. And with God's grace we can grow to love more deeply so that justice, kindness, and a humble walk with God become more and more how we live.

So how today, or this week, or this month will you live your faith? How will you seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God? Faith is about what we do with what we believe.

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Leslie

The Compass



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Admin Team Notes

The new Admin Team had its first meeting of 2024. One of the most important tasks we worked on is making sure our Personnel Policy is in compliance with the new employment regulations enacted by the Minnesota legislature for 2024.

Last fall we had a team (Don Ericson, Ron VanNurden, Kendra Pflipsen, Duane Daby and Pastor Leslie) who conducted our first internal audit (for 2022 finances). We thank them for their service! We gained knowledge about the process and plan to complete our next audit for 2023, in the first quarter of 2024. The audit team identified improvements to be made to our processes, which strengthens our processes. Doing an audit doesn't mean we are doing anything wrong—it helps us do things better.

From a financial standpoint, for 2023 our giving exceeded our expenses by ~\$3,400! We were very prudent about our spending and our congregation was generous in their giving. Thanks for everyone for their prayerful giving!

A member of our congregation asked a member of the Admin Team a valid question — if we have a healthy balance in our checking account, how come we worry so much about our budget? It's true. We do have "money in the bank," both in our checking account and our savings account. But what happens if people aren't faithful givers? We have many fixed expenses like salaries, electricity, plowing, mowing, internet, etc. If we aren't careful and our expenses exceed our giving too often, we will erode our "nest egg." Plus, the balances of our checking and savings accounts contain monies that are designated and aren't available for just any use— i.e. Boutique money, money given and earmarked for missions, previous memorials, a cemetery fund, a reserve fund in case we have to pay for an unbudgeted and unforeseen expense like a new furnace, etc. The Admin Team takes pride in being a good steward of the church's resources, so please feel free to ask questions whenever you have them!

It's a new year and a new day! As it says in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

—Pat Solheid, Chair, Admin Team

Admin Board Meeting

The Admin Board meeting will be meeting on Tuesday, February 13th at 6:30pm. If anyone needs to attend via ZOOM, please contact Pastor Leslie for link information.

Inclement Weather Information

This is just a reminder that during the winter, from time to time, it may become necessary to cancel worship services on Sunday due to inclement weather. When this happens, we want you to be aware of where you can find information on our worship services. We have several places you can look. First, the Snow Desk on Wilmar Radio's website. Second, you can check our social media pages on Facebook and Instagram. Third, you can check our church website. Lastly, check your email, because we will send out updates with regards to cancellations. Thank you!

Ash Wednesday



Ash Wednesday is February 14. This year we will have two (2) services: one at 10:00 am following Coffee Corner and one at 6:30 pm. Please attend whichever one is most convenient.

February Missions & Outreach

Our Mission Focus for February will be the Dahl Family, who has lost two children recently in a horrible accident. All excess mission funds will go to them, along with Prayer Shawls, to help cover medical and funeral expenses. If you choose to write a check, please put DAHL FAMILY in the note. Please give generously.

Lenten Project – Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14th. We will gather 40 ITEMS FOR 40 DAYS! There will be bags in the Narthex. Please take one home, place one item in the bag each day. On Palm Sunday, we'll place all the full bags on the steps in the Sanctuary, Pastor Leslie will bless them and then volunteers will take them to either The Link in New London or to New To You in Willmar. You can also take your bag and donate yourself if you wish.

Blood Drive – Our next opportunity to host a Blood Drive, is Friday, March 8th, from 9 am – 3 pm. The drive IS currently open, so you can schedule your appointment now! Looking for a few volunteers to help check in folks. If you can volunteer, please contact Jenny Daby! The Red Cross provides EACH donor with a \$10 gift card, and you get to choose the store! Additionally, because our church has hosted so many times, we're receiving a REALLY cool Red Cross soft-sided cooler. Anyone who donates or volunteers in March, will earn a chance to win this cooler!



Celebration Bash

Our next Celebration Bash will be February 4th 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!



Coffee Corner

Our next Coffee Corner will meet on Wednesday, February 14 at 9:00 am in the fellowship hall. Please join us for some good coffee and great conversation!



February Birthdays

Wanda Zaske 2nd
Joy Baker 4th
Deb Bronner 6th
Kyle Denz 6th
Brody Duke 11th
Jayden Nelson 17th
JoAnn Wright 18th
Mary Jane Young 22nd
Richard Kelvington 24th
Carol Underland 24th
Jordan Peterson 28th

Feb. Anniversaries

Jim & Pat Solheid 18th



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

Youth Meals Needed

Youth Group is looking for people to provide meals for their meetings for about 8 people. If you are interested, please contact either Donna Smith, Sarah Friesen, Ralph Dickerson or Tiahna Rohloff. Current dates available are February 18, March 6, March 17, April 3, April 17, May 1, and May 15.

Remember to 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. Teals will donate 1% of our receipt totals to Cross Roads to put towards our many missions and outreach projects. All receipts will be accepted, even those from previous years.



Christmas Joy 2023 was a HUGE success! This Year, The Link was able to provide 119 families with Christmas gifts (including 361 children and 63 adults)!!!! It is extremely humbling to see the giving spirit of those in the community! We are grateful to each and every one of you that participated in Christmas Joy 2023 to make Christmas a little brighter for those struggling to make ends meet!

The Food Pantry. In December, The Link welcomed **28 new families** and served **157 households** - distributing a total of **8,651 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 **10 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 over **100 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).

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**

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February 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.