

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

--1 Corinthians 10:4-7

It's February, the month of Valentines and heart-shaped boxes of candy...so what else is a pastor to write about in the newsletter but love? Thanks to the mass commercialization of Valentine's Day, love is everywhere. Love is all around us!

Is it really, though? I mean, sure, our culture is highly proficient in and dedicated to promoting romance. I've lost count of the number of jewelry commercials on TV today, and I tip my cap to the advertising folks.

But while romance is as abundant as ever, it seems that love is a different story at the moment. It seems that love is harder to come by in the public sphere. Violence always leads off the news broadcasts. And public discourse has become hostile to the extent that political differences have even driven wedges between close friends.

But as people united in Christ, we are called by God to love others even if it's not the most popular thing to do. Fortunately, the Bible is a great resource to help us do this! One of the best descriptions of love in the Bible is the passage I quoted above, written by the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church. These words to the Corinthians are some of the most enduring words in the Bible, and are familiar to many people because they are often read at weddings.

Despite that common use, though, the implications of the kind of love described in 1 Corinthians 13 are wide-ranging. Loving with this sort of patience and gentleness invites others into our lives, providing fertile ground for relationships to grow. Strangers we may at first lump into a category become individual people we truly see, know, and appreciate. Love like Paul describes is able to topple the walls of fear and discord that seem to be so effectively separating people right now.

This is the kind of love God calls us to offer to the world not just this February, but every day of every month of every year. Let this love be our Valentine to everyone, showing the love God has for us in Jesus Christ by offering that same love to others.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Leslie

The Compass



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Worship Leaders Needed

The Worship Team at Cross Roads is in need of help, and we are looking for YOU!

2023 will be a great year to get involved (again, or for the first time) helping with various areas of our worship service. We are looking to include more of our congregation in the worship service (out front and behind the scenes). Below are ways you can help:

-Lay Readers: Pastor Leslie and the Worship Team are looking for members of the congregation who are willing to read scripture, help with announcements and lead the Call to Worship and pray. You are welcome to do as little or as much as you are comfortable with.

-Communion: the Worship Team is looking for folks who are able to help come early on Communion Sundays to prepare and set up, and then clean up following worship.

-Celebration Bash: the Worship Team is looking for people who would be willing to provide a cake on the first Sunday of each month for our Celebration Bashes, as well as 2-3 people to make coffee, serve cake, and clean up afterwards.

If you would be interested in helping in any of these areas, please contact our Worship Team Leader, Diane Maurice, or Pastor Leslie.

February Missions

The Missions Team will have two special projects in February:

1) School Lunch Debt

According to the Education Data Initiative, there are 1.54 MILLION students who can't afford their school lunch. A 2019 School Nutrition Association survey shows more than 75% of school districts in the U>S> had school meal debt. That came out to be about \$262Million in outstanding meal balances every year.

The excess mission collections for the month of February will be donated to the NLS schools to help address their school lunch debt. Please give generously.

2) Lenten Project

A special project for Lent has been created. Lent begins February 22nd. There will be special Lenten packets available in church beginning mid February to help you get ready. A white trash bag with a purple ribbon will be available to each family or person who wishes to participate. The project is called "Forty Items for Forty Days". Everyone needs an opportunity to clean out their closets. We're asking you to place ONE item in the bag each day of the 40 days of Lent. On Sunday, March 26th, bring your bag to church and place on the steps in the sanctuary. Pastor Leslie will say a special blessing over the items collected. Then you can take your bag to the donation place of your choosing! If you don't want to take it, the Missions Team will ensure they get donated.

Admin Team Notes

If you are on the Admin Team (or if you'd just like to attend), mark your calendars for the next meeting which will be Wednesday, February 8. This is a deviation from the normal meeting date.

At the last Admin Team meeting, we worked on finalizing our Facility Policy. This policy will give us more structure about the use of our building and grounds. For example, there will be a form for members to complete if they wish to borrow any church property (tables for graduation parties, as an example). This will help us maintain better control over our assets and ensure they are returned back to us. After we finalize the Facility Policy, we will focus on a Finance Policy and a Personnel Policy.

Hopefully everyone has been attending worship in person or watching on-line for Pastor Leslie's sermon series on stewardship based on Adam Hamilton's book, "Enough." The sermons are thought provoking and prompt self-reflection. I hope you're enjoying it as much as I am.

Lots of good things are on the docket for the upcoming weeks. Tuesday's Table will likely be over by the time this newsletter is published, but I'm sure that I can accurately predict that it was a rousing success and the soup was great! Another Bloodmobile is scheduled for March 10. And, if you can believe it, Lent begins on February 22. Come for coffee on February 8. If you can help the youth group with a meal, check out the available dates in the weekly email.

Stay engaged, stay active, stay involved and stay warm (if you haven't fled Minnesota for warmer weather)!

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:10

Pat Solheid, Chair, Administrative Team

Coffee Corner

Our next Coffee Corner is scheduled for Wednesday, February 8, at 9:00 am.

We are looking for someone to coordinate this date, as Linda Kelvington is out of town. If you are interested in coming a few minutes early to make some coffee and put out the coffee "fixins," please contact Pastor Leslie.



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

Youth Group Meals Needed for 2023

Cross Roads Youth Group will be taking a short hiatus for the holidays, but will resume our regular scheduling on January 4, 2023.

Therefore we are in need of folks to help with the following dates for dinners (lunch on Sunday):

Wednesday, February 15, Sunday, February 19

Wednesday, March 15, Sunday, April 16

Wednesday, May 3

All Wednesday evenings meals begin at 6:30 pm and Sunday lunches are immediately after worship service.

If you are interested in providing a meal for the Youth Group for any of these dates, please contact either Donna Smith (our Youth Group Team Leader) or Pastor Leslie. This is a great way to meet the youth of our congregation and get to know them!



February Birthdays

Wanda Zaske 2nd
Joy Baker 4th
Deb Bronner 6th
Kyle Denz 6th
Faith Duke 8th
Brody Duke 11th
Marjorie Green 15th
Jayden Nelson 17th
Kathryn Sasse 18th
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.*

The Link Updates

2022 brought big change as we said goodbye to our Executive Director, Chasity Ommodt. Chasity served The Link as the Outreach Director for 6 years before becoming the director in 2019. She moved with her family to sunny Arizona, but continues to provide support and answer questions to ensure a smooth transition. We miss her, but wish her the best on her new adventure and know her passion and love for The Link will always remain and her connection to our community will always be strong.

In 2022, The Link was able to serve 60 families with common household needs with our **Household Exchange Program**. The Household Exchange program takes in donations to provide families when they are getting back on their feet.

On average throughout 2022, **The Food Pantry** served 64 households monthly (including, on average, 95 adults, 52 children and 25 seniors) and distributed a total of 40,481 pounds of food. The need of food has increased significantly the past couple months, requiring The Link to increase their food budget to meet the needs of the people served.

The Wildcat Backpack Program is currently serving 84 children. Each week, students from the NL-S High School pack the bags and deliver them to each school to ensure our students nutritional needs are met on the weekends when they are not in school. If you know a family that could benefit from this program, please have them call Ashley at 320-354-5555 or Vicki Mickelson at NLS schools at 320-354-2252 ext. 2607.

The Link's **Client Outreach** program served 86 families in 2022 by helping with medical bills, utility bills and rental payments. This program also connected families with financial resources outside of The Link to help with bigger bills and necessities, including housing for homeless families. With the communities support, we were also able to help 78 families with our Christmas Joy program.

Tuesday's Table: Tuesday's Table is officially back! The schedule is as follows: 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)

As always, a HUGE THANK YOU to those who have donated food and/or monetarily and to those who have prayed for and with us here at The Link! With the increased need for food and in client outreach, we are asking for your continued support- financially and prayerfully.

Volunteer Opportunities: In 2022, our amazing and dedicated volunteers put in over 4620 hours to keep our programs running smoothly. If you are interested in volunteering (on-call or on a more consistent basis), there are many opportunities available. Please call Ashley at 320-354-5555 for more information! Our wonderful volunteers are the center of our mission and we could not do what we do without them. Many relationships have been built through volunteering (there is never a lack of laughs and fun with them and their support in and outside of The Link is something we are forever grateful for.)

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**

3400 113th Ave NE
Spicer, MN 56288

320-796-2339
www.crossroadsspicer.com

February 2023

Christian radio stations in the area:

K-Love 90.9

KTIS 92.7 & 98.5

Spirit 92.9

March Blood Drive

Cross Roads is hosting another Red Cross Blood Drive! On Friday, March 10, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

What do we need from the congregation and the community? Two things:

- 1) If you are able to give blood, go to the Red Cross website and put in your zip code to find our blood drive. Then sign up! You can also call 1-800-RED-CROSS to sign up. We need to have at least 30 people registered to give blood in order for the Red Cross to hold the blood drive.
- 2) We need volunteers (2-3 per shift) for two hour shifts to work the check-in desk and possibly help pass out refreshments.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Jenny Daby at (320) 470-0518 or jennydaby5@gmail.com, or you can contact the church office or Pastor Leslie.

