

I wrote this article for our newsletter a few years ago, but since it is so relevant for today and the world we are living in, I decided to share it with you again, with some slight revision.

Change can be hard for anyone. Change seems to be, for many in our society, a nasty four letter word (or in this case, six letters). We don't like change in our lives, because it messes with the expected and usual; it messes with our routines and traditions. For example, my Donald and I began about two years ago having Taco Tuesdays each week. Every Tuesday we have tacos for dinner. When I complain about having to eat tacos so often, we will take a week off, or if we have something to do on a Tuesday evening and cannot cook at home, you would think the world was coming to an end for Donald. Change, in whatever form it comes, is difficult for all of us.

The first fall I was here at Cross Roads, I attended the Breakthrough Renewal Institute at Hubbard UMC in Park Rapids. One of the topics discussed over and over again was how we can change our church congregations to meet the needs of those who need the Church, and need Christ. It is challenging for us in the church to realize there is no going back. The past is in the past and what used to work has lost its effectiveness. However, this doesn't mean we need to "dis-remember" who we are, or forget who we are and where we came from; how we got to where we are today continues to shape us as a local congregation and a global Church. This also doesn't mean we have to agree with everything that happens, but the vital that we acknowledge that traditions and institutions should never replace the why of what we are doing. Never let your pessimism over change become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In the book of Malachi, we are told that God never changes. What that means is that God is, and should be, the only constant within the Church. Traditions, institutions, ministries, programs, etc. may change; God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. However, we are also told in Jeremiah that God, in sending Jeremiah to see the potter work, is clear that just as the potter reworks a piece of clay that has failed, God too can rework human beings, societies, even the world. God is graciously flexible, and the "clay" he works with (humanity) has a mind of its own, and God must respond accordingly.

Because of this, we need to realize that we must not get weighed down by our own expectations of what the Church, even our local congregation, should be, because God will always defy every expectation. When God calls God's people to ministry, God equips. So perhaps what we need at Cross Roads in 2021 is a new story; not a better story with better answers, but one with better questions. Who do we need to reach? How can we most effectively do that? How can rise up and be in the strength of the Lord? How can we be the hands and feet of Christ? We still have an identity, and within that identity is our context. What is our purpose? What do we want to accomplish, and why? Are we willing to get out of our comfort zones to do what Jesus has called us to do? Can we change from a congregation that is for its members and those who attend, to a congregation that is for those in our communities who need Christ? Can we change from being accountable to people to being accountable to the mission of God? God's mission should always be at the center of everything we do.

Change often comes from the need for something better. In the past almost two years, the need for better and safer has become a necessity to keep those we care about and love healthy. God knows what we need better than we do and God wants to help us find that better thing. Our relationship with God is knowing our place, and having a humble spirit in that place. It is about putting the needs of God and God's people before our own. We have much change in the last few years at Cross Roads, but I believe it has been very good for our congregation. And I believe that more change is coming. We have an opportunity to learn how best to reach those in our community who need to see Christ in us. What will we become now, with our neighbors, and with God?

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Leslie

The Compass



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Bible Study Options for the Fall

We are kicking off several new Bible study small groups this fall. There are many topics, formats, and times to choose from. Pastor Leslie hopes you will consider joining one (or more if you wish) of these groups to learn more about Scripture and the teachings of Jesus. Below are some highlights and times for each of the studies being offered.

The Difficult Words of Jesus- In this study, Dr. Amy-Jill Levine shows how some of the most difficult teachings of Jesus would have sounded to the people who first heard them, how they have been understood over time, and how we might interpret them in the context of the Gospel of love and reconciliation. This study will be held in a hybrid version (in person and online) at the church on **Tuesday mornings at 10:30 am beginning October 5th**. This study is a 6-week course.

Sermon on the Mount- In this study, also by Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, we will be introduced to the major topics in the Sermon on the Mount, learning historical and theological contexts, and be shown how the words of Jesus echo his Jewish tradition and speak forward to reach hearts and minds today. This study will be held at two times beginning **Thursday, October 7 (10:00 am and 6:00 pm)**. The morning class will be a hybrid version of in person online (in the church library), with the evening class being completely virtual. A link for the evening class will be made available on our church website. This is also a 6-week study.

Jesus Feminist- This study will be a long term study, beginning **Wednesday, October 6, at 10:30 am**. We will meet every other week and will be delving into the book by Sarah Bessey entitled "Jesus Feminist," where we will explore God's radical notion that women are people too. This study will be held the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month in the church library and will continue until we have completed the book (approximately 12 weeks). We will be taking breaks for the holidays.

If you are interested in any of these studies, please contact Pastor Leslie to sign up in order to make sure we have enough study guides/books available.

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Celebration Bash

On Sunday, October 3, following worship service, we will be celebrating everyone who has a birthday or anniversary in October. There will be coffee and cake available for anyone who is interested in helping us celebrate.



October will be the first month in a new ongoing tradition. Each month, we will celebrate on the first Sunday of each month after worship the birthdays and anniversaries of those during the coming month.

We hope you will plan to join us in October, and every month, as we celebrate these milestones in the lives of congregation members.

Coffee Corner

 On the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month in the Fellowship Hall, our newest small group, Cross Roads Coffee Corner, will be held. Everyone is invited to come as frequently or as little as you like. This is a time for coffee and fellowship; just a way to catch up with what is going on with others in the congregation, especially those you perhaps haven't had a chance to really talk to since the pandemic began, or those you would like to get to know better.

Our next group time is on Wednesday, October 6 at 9:00am. Come join us any time you like and we look forward to seeing you soon!!

Parent Small Group

Our Parents Small Group will be held on Sunday, October 10 beginning at 4pm. It will be at the home of Kendra and Dustin Pflippen. We will be having a potluck, so bring whatever dish you would like to share with the group. Drinks will be provided by Pastor Leslie and Don, or you are welcome to bring your own as well. We will have a time of food and fellowship and just catching up with one another. This group is for all parents of our congregation, children and youth. We look forward to seeing you all then!



Oct Birthdays

Konnor Rohloff 3rd
Jeff Denz 12th
Joel Hagen 28th
Michael Sasse 29th
Kevin Bronner 30th

Oct Anniversaries

Kevin & Deb Bronner 4th
Brian & Sheryl Nelson 8th
David & Pat Evermann 20th
David & Annette Muetzel 26th
Gerald & Pat O'Connor 28th



*If we have missed your special day²,
please let the office know.*

A Note from our Admin Chair...

Fall is definitely in the air. While we haven't had a frost yet (at least we haven't at the time I'm writing this), we know it's just a matter of time. Yards are being decorated with pumpkins. Crops are ready for harvest. Long sleeves and jackets are a must more frequently now. The days are definitely getting shorter. And, Christmas is just over 11 weeks away. (The 4th of July was over 12 weeks ago!) No doubt about it--a new season is beginning.

With October we starting winding down 2021, but we also start ramping up for 2022.

Pastor Leslie and the Nominations team members will soon begin their task of lining up new committee members and chairs to take over for those who are "retiring" from their church positions at the end of the year. I encourage each and every congregation member to reflect and ask themselves, "How can I serve Cross Roads?" There are no shortages of ideas in our congregation, or any congregation for that matter, but we need people who are willing to step up and help make things happen, not just offer suggestions and ideas for other people to make happen! Pastor Leslie does her absolute best to keep our congregation rolling along, but she can't do it alone!

Whether you're interested in finance or outreach or the administration of the church, or interested in music or small groups or worship, there is a place for you somewhere in our church!

As it says in 1 Peter 4:10, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

Please pray and contemplate what role you could play in the church. If you have thoughts or an interest, don't wait to be approached but talk to Pastor Leslie, Lay Leader Al Boonstra or me to get your name in front of the nominations committee! YOUR church needs YOU and YOUR service as we head into 2022!

God's blessings to all.

Pat Solheid, Admin Team Chair

P.S. You can expect to get an update on finances to come out with the third quarter giving statements later this month.

The LINK Update

It's official! The Link and Food Pantry and the Community Revival Thrift Store are now all in one location! Thanks to the many volunteers that showed up on moving day, the transition was so quick and painless. The Food Pantry only had to be shut down for one day! In August, our amazing volunteers put in over 746 hours to help get everything ready for the store opening and the other programs to continue to run smoothly. The Thrift Store is located at 15 Main St. S, New London. The entry for the store is off Central Avenue and donations are taken in the back of the building by the big brown garage door. The Food Pantry and Outreach offices are now located at 20 Central Ave. E., New London. The entry for outreach and The food pantry is on the back side of the building. The Food Pantry hours are now Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday from 10am-3pm or by appointment. The Community Revival Boutique and Thrift Store opened on September 8th and had an amazing first week! Donations of clothing and most household items are being taken Wednesdays-Fridays 10-3 and Saturdays from 10-2 (or by appointment).

Volunteers Needed!!! If you or anyone you know would like to volunteer in the Community Revival Boutique and Thrift Store, we are in need of more volunteers. The Store hours are Wednesday-Friday 10am-3pm and Saturdays 10am-2pm. If you or anyone you know would like to volunteer 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.

In August, **The Food Pantry** welcomed 4 new families, served 21 children, 53 adults and 18 seniors in August. 2213 pounds of food was distributed and 425 pounds of food was donated from community members and churches.

The **Wildcat Backpack Program** is starting up again this month! It is free to any families that attend the NL-S school district and is completely confidential. Each week volunteers pack 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 snacks, 1 fruit, 1 treat and 2 drinks to send home for the weekend with those families that have signed up. One staff at each school is assigned to place these bags in the locker of each student requesting the backpacks during the school day to ensure confidentiality. If a family prefers to not have them sent home from school, but would still like to utilize the program, they can come into the Food Pantry Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday between 10-3 or by appointment. If you know a family that could benefit from this program, please have them call Ashley at 320-354-5555.

Senior Food Delivery- The Senior Food Delivery program is designed to deliver food to anyone that is homebound. 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 5 families in the month of August. Throughout the month, The Link was able to help with utility bills, rent payments, medical bills and gas for medical appointments. The Household Exchange Program also served 3 families in August by giving families in need a dresser, couches, a recliner, dishes, kitchen utensils, bathroom necessities and a few beds.

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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October 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