

People often ask me if I believe that prayer works. It is a curious question, because my first response would be to try to understand what the person means by “works”. If they mean that every time we pray for something to happen, it does, then no, I don’t think prayer really works like that. I could pray for a hamburger to suddenly appear in front of me within the next 5 minutes, but I honestly would not expect that to happen unless I got up and made it for myself.

Do I believe that God acts in the world, and that sometimes prayer might influence that? Yes, I do believe that, but as to how and when such things happen, I cannot say. For me the most direct action of prayer is to focus us on an issue or a person. Through that focus perhaps we can invoke God’s actions, but at the very least we can encourage our own actions towards the issue and help change the outcome as much as it is within our power. I do believe that God works in the world, but I also believe that God works through us.

As I write this, I have to be honest and say that I have spent the last few days in mourning and frustration. I read an article at the beginning of this week regarding the number of mass shootings in this country to date. Since January 1, we have had 241 mass shootings according to the website gunviolencearchive.org (which defines a mass shooting as 4 or more people injured and/or killed, not including the shooter). To put that into perspective, there are 150 days between January 1 and May 31. That means we have had more shootings since the beginning of 2023 than we have had days thus far this year.

What does one say in the face of such a thing? We are often at a loss for words, and so as an attempt to let those in grief know that we support them, we will say something like “You are in my thoughts and prayers”. I certainly understand the sentiment behind that, and have said things similar myself, but unfortunately the frequency of these tragic events and the almost expected identical responses have made such sayings cliché. The definition of being “cliché” is to be a phrase or opinion that is so overused that it loses any sense of original thought or conviction. That is the issue with such words-- we have used them so often because there have been so many tragedies, and the words lack genuineness, regardless of the intent behind them.

Do I still pray when such events happen? Have I been praying lately? Yes, I have, and will continue to do so, but my prayers have changed. Instead of simply praying for comfort and peace for those who have experienced loss, I pray for action and change. I focus more on that aspect of prayer I spoke of earlier, the ability that prayer has to encourage us to understand and address the issue. I could spend a great deal of time discussing all of my opinions regarding violence in our society, and what I think are the solutions. I might be right and I might be wrong, and some of you might agree and some would likely disagree.

Instead, I will mention three major areas that are always brought up after such events: increased security, mental health treatment, and gun control. I’m sure each and every one of you has some opinion about which of these would be most effective, perhaps all of them would, and perhaps something else entirely would help stem this tide of violence. I won’t tell you what to believe; you need to answer that for yourself, and we need to answer that as a country that seems almost unique in such casualties.

What I will tell you, however, is that if we continue to do nothing of substance, as we mostly have in the last many years, then nothing of substance will change. So yes, I believe in prayer, and yes, I have prayed for the grieving parents of children taken way too soon, but I also pray that we have the will, as a people united, to do something about it.

Peace and Blessings,

Pastor Leslie

The Compass



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Admin Team

It seems like the snow just melted and now the 4th of July is less than one month away! "For everything there is a season..." it says in Ecclesiastes 3:1, so NOW is the time to enjoy the warmth and joy that summer in Minnesota has to offer!

This newsletter will come out before the formal ceremony for Pastor Leslie's ordination ceremony on May 31, so I don't have any highlights to recap of the event, but in advance, I want to congratulate Pastor Leslie on this great accomplishment. She's worked tirelessly towards this goal for a long time now.

The Admin Team has been working on a variety of things, but the maintenance of God's "house" has been at the top of the list from mowing to bug spraying to new flags to fixing the entrance sidewalk. One of the larger activities that will be done is to compile a list of outside chores that need to be done (watering, trimming, etc.) with the plan to ask members of the congregation to step up and help. In recent years, these things have been done by just few souls and it's wearing. We need to share the burden (many hands make light work), so in the next few weeks, you'll see more information on a schedule and a request for people to help out.

Also, over the course of the summer, there are plans to repair and re-stain the playground equipment to make it more inviting.

The Admin Team is planning to have a longer meeting on June 14, from **6 - 8 p.m.**, so we can start our review of the church Finance Policy. It's been on the list for several months now, but it keeps getting pushed back on the agenda as we run out of time! There will no Admin meeting in July.

Enjoy the summer days ahead -- they will speed by!

Pat Solheid, Admin Board Chair

Celebration Bash

Our next Celebration Bash will be Sunday, June 4 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 and coffee, and some wonderful fellowship!



Coffee Corner

Our next Coffee Corner is scheduled for Wednesday, June 14th at 9:00am. Join us for some good coffee and some great fellowship. This is a terrific way to catch up with folks you may have missed on Sundays during worship. We hope you will join us!



June Missions

June Mission Focus will be gathering personal hygiene items for men. In honor of dad's around the world, we'll collect and donate items to the Hope Cares Pantry, which serves those in need 2x per month. We can use the following items; shaving cream, razors, toothbrushes, toothpaste, body wash, deodorant. If you'd rather just donate money, please indicate such on your check and the Missions team will shop for you!!

Blood Drive – our next blood drive will be held on Wednesday, June 7th from 11 am – 5 pm. Please sign up to donate, and if you are on Facebook, please share the post with your friends. We have many slots open!

Boutique News – The next planning session for the Boutique, will be held on Sunday, June 4th in the Fellowship Hall right after the Celebration Bash. We also need volunteers to work. We have lots of opportunities. Keep your crafting going over the summer too!!

June Blood Drive

Cross Roads is hosting another Red Cross Blood Drive on Wednesday, June 7, from 11:00am to 5:00pm. If you are able to give blood, you can call 1-800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter Cross Roads Spicer, to schedule an appointment. We need more volunteers to donate! Last check we only had 13 people signed up. We need 30 or the drive will be cancelled.



Youth Group Summer Events

Our first summer activity is coming up in just a couple of weeks. On Sunday, June 11 following worship, we will have a cookout for lunch, and then we will be traveling to Freeport, MN to visit the Hemker Zoo. Following our visit, we will stop at the Oak Station Coffee and Cone for some ice cream. Any youth who would like to attend are welcome!

June Birthdays

Whitnee Nelson-1st
Coltin Pflipsen-11th
Mike Evenson-22nd
Leslie Zeek-27th
Linda Kelvington-28th

June Anniversaries

Dennis & Donna Gertgen-6th
Ross & Joy Baker -11th
Howard & Mary Jane Carlsen-14
Jim & Doree Leither—21
Bryan & Diane Maurice—28



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



SAVE THE DATE!!!! RibFest 2023 is scheduled for **June 10, 2023** from 2pm-5pm in the large city parking lot behind The Link! If you are interested in having a Rib team, please contact Ashley at 320-354-5465! There will be volunteer opportunities for the day of RibFest! If you would like to volunteer, please let us know!

TICKETS FOR RIBFEST ARE NOW ON SALE! They can be purchased at The Link or Community Revival or by going online: <http://youarethelink.org/ribfest> to place an order. There are 2 options: \$25 tasting ticket (5 ribs and a piece of pie) or \$50 VIP ticket (10 ribs, pie and a drink).

Silent Auction items still needed for RibFest! We have decided to bring back the silent auction to RibFest this year! If you have anything you would like to donate to this, please call Shawna at 320-897-5146. We will also have chance drawings for 2 big ticket items and live music!

Volunteer Opportunities: If you or someone you know would like to be a part of The Link's mission and volunteer at the **Community Revival Boutique and Thrift**, we are looking for extra help on-call and on a consistent basis (mostly Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays). Our store hours are 10-3 Wednesday-Friday and 10-2 Saturdays. Our current volunteers are amazing and have a great time together building friendships. The Food Pantry is also looking for volunteers to help serve families and to help pick up food rescue food from Cashwise and ALDI (Food Rescue is picked up on Monday's). If you'd like to join the fun, call Shawna at 320-347-1047 or Ashley at 320-354-5465.

In April, The Link was able to serve 14 families with common household needs with our **Household Exchange Program**. The Household Exchange program takes in donations such as smaller furniture, bedding, towels, kitchen utensils, pots and pans etc. to provide families when they are getting back on their feet.

The Food Pantry continues to see an increase in need and served 106 households in April (including: 158 adults, 110 children and 37 seniors) and distributed a total of 6403 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 93 children. Each week, students from the NL-S High School pack bags to each school to ensure our students nutritional needs are met on the weekends. 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 6 families in March by helping with transportation, medical bills, utility bills and rental payments. This program also provided advocacy for 6 families, In-depth budgeting support for 11 families, networking for 6 families and provided 14 families with referrals for additional assistance to meet basic needs.

Tuesday's Table's 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.

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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June 2023

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