

Have you ever wondered why we pray? Prayer is one of the central spiritual disciplines of faith. It is so important that in 1 Thessalonians the Apostle Paul urges the faithful to "pray without ceasing." This is certainly a daunting task, especially when sometimes prayer can feel empty and pointless.

Sometimes our prayers can seem like they have devolved into a cosmic wish-list, where we tell God what we would like to happen in our lives, the lives of our friends and family, in the world. We rattle off lists of situations and hurts that we would like God to address, and while I firmly believe that God listens to these cries of our hearts, I know that sometimes when my prayers feel like a to-do list to God they can feel hallow. I wonder sometimes, why am I telling you this God, when I know you already know about it.

In these moments I return to that question, why do we pray? Ultimately the purpose of prayer is to connect with God.

Henri Nouwen writes, "prayer is first of all listening to God. It's openness. God is always speaking, God is always doing something." When our prayers feel dull perhaps this is a reminder that prayer is not only about us speaking to God, but also us listening. How often do you call a friend or relative on the phone, list the things that are going on in your life, thank them for listening, and then hang up? Hopefully never—I doubt that friend would appreciate it much.

But how often do we allow our prayers to be moments of silence, when we listen to how God is speaking and moving. We pray not only to share our lives with God, but also to open ourselves up for God to share Godself with us.

Henri Nouwen goes on to write, "I know the only way for me to see the world is to see it through God's eyes." And this, surely, is another reason why we pray. When we listen for God, when we notice how God is moving, we begin to see the world through God's eyes. Prayer is transformative in this way; it trains our vision to see the belovedness of the world more clearly. It helps us to see the places of light and hope that shine in the darkness.

So why do we pray? The answer is that there are many reasons, more reasons that we could list or understand. But ultimately it has to do with the way God desires connection with us and we desire connection with God.

One final quote from Henri Nouwen: "the only way to pray is to pray, and the only way to pray well is to pray much." There is no right or wrong way to pray, no prayer of the heart that is better than any other. And there is no better time to pray than now, right in this moment. Take the time to sit with God in prayer, even if just for a moment, to listen to the voice of the One who calls you, "my beloved child."

Love 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 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, be 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.

Coffee Corner

Cross Roads "Coffee Corner" is held the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month in the Fellowship Hall. 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.

Currently the Coffee Corner will provide only coffee; however, you are welcome to bring any type of treat you like for yourself or others. And bring a friend, especially someone who doesn't have a church family. This would be a terrific way to introduce them to folks at Cross Roads in a casual setting.

We look forward to seeing you soon!!



Covid-19 Update

The Administrative Team of Cross Roads met last week, and one of the items discussed was the increasing number of COVID-19 cases across our state, as well as the decision by the Minnesota Annual Conference to dial back our re-opening guidelines to "Yellow." If you are not familiar with this guidelines, you can find more information at www.minnesotaumc.org. The state is at an over 6% positivity rate mark (5% is the threshold used to determine if the virus is under control). However, in Kandiyohi County the positivity rate is currently at 7.6% (as of the time of this being written). This number has decreased since last week, but is still well above the 5% threshold.

Because of the recommendations by our Annual Conference, and in the spirit of abiding by John Wesley's first general rule to "do no harm," we are dialing back our guidelines as well.

Beginning this past week, all in-person attendees to worship will be encouraged to wear masks while indoors. We do have some people in our congregation who, for whatever reason, have not been vaccinated, and we want to respect their wishes but at the same time do everything we can to keep them safe and healthy. Additionally, we are asking all family units to social distance from one another. Please do not shake hands, hug, etc. We will also refrain from any congregational singing at this time to help prevent the spread of any of the variants now being seen in our area.

Please remember, we are a church family. Just as we would for our biological families, we love and care for one another and we want to do whatever we can to keep those in our family safe from any sort of harm. This is the second general rule of John Wesley, "do all the good you can."

Meals on Wheels Volunteers Needed

The Dethlefs Center in Spicer is looking for volunteers who can help with a Monday route for Meals on Wheels. This is about a 30-35 mile route which runs from northeast of Green Lake to Lake Florida/Ringo Lake. It would only be Mondays and you are welcome to volunteer for just one day or multiple days.

If you would be interested in helping with this route, please contact either Pastor Leslie, or you can contact Stacy Adams directly. Her email is communitycenter@cityofspicer.org.

Thank you for continuing to support those in our communities who need meals delivered to them through this vital outreach program.

Sept Birthdays

Jean Wolff 1st
Hayden Duke 2nd
Carter Bjonfald 3rd
Kaleb Smith 3rd
Kim Rohloff 4th
Barb Springman 6th
Elijah Kennedy 7th
Logan Duke 13th
Jaden Smith 15th
Pat Evermann 18th
Trenton Rohloff 21st
Don Ericson 22nd
Diane Maurice 27th
Robin Ryks 30th

Sept Anniversaries

Richard & Linda Kelvington 4th
Brian & Jean Wolff 10th
Merle & Judy Kluver 12th
Dwight & Robin Ryks 22nd
Jeff & Diane Duke 24th
James & Beth Schultz 24th
Jeff & Amy Denz 26th



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



August 2021 Updates

It's official! The Community Closet and Revive and Redeem have become one and will now be called Community Revival Boutique and Thrift. Many amazing volunteers worked together at the beginning of the month to move everything from the 2 stores to our new location which we did in less than 4 hours!!!! We are now located in the Midtown Plaza Building at 15 Main St S, New London. The grand opening for the Thrift Store is yet to be determined. We have a lot of people working hard at getting it set up and ready for shoppers to come in again! Stay tuned for an official opening date!

At present, our plan is to move the Food Pantry and the Outreach offices by the beginning of September so The Link and the Thrift Store will all be one! So, if you (or anyone you know) would like to help us move the Food Pantry and offices on September 1, please call Ashley at 354-5555 and we will fill you in on the details. We need packers, movers and unpackers. Our hope is to have it done in one day so our food pantry is only closed to the public for the afternoon of September 1.

Grateful is an understatement! We have been praying for larger space to better meet the needs of our neighbors in need and our community as a whole. Our dream has finally become a reality!

The Food Pantry welcomed 42 families in July, served 31 children, 65 adults and 13 seniors. 2366 pounds of food was distributed and 978 pounds of food was donated from community members and churches.

Senior Food Delivery- The Link volunteers have been out delivering some food to seniors in that benefit from not going out and about. 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 6 families in the month of July. 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 2 families in July by giving families in need clothing, dressers, dishes, curtains, bathroom rugs and other kitchen utensils.

Tuesday's Table:

Tuesday's Table continues to be cancelled until further notice.

If you would like to donate to any of these programs specifically or to our general fund, please see below for more details.

And as always, YOU are The Link....

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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September 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