



From the Pastor

In the summer of 2019, the ELCA will meet in Churchwide Assembly to discuss, deliberate, and vote on our 13th social statement: Women and Justice. In anticipation of this important work, this year's newsletter series will be on the existing 12 social statements of the ELCA. If you would like more information, you can find all of the social statements at elca.org/socialstatements.

This month Pastor Jay Mitchell of Christ Ascension Lutheran Church in Philadelphia, PA is our guest writer.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

This month we take a look at the ELCA's social statement on the Death Penalty. This choice was intentional. The month of April begins with the Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord, Easter Day. We begin having just shared the story of our savior who was the victim of the death penalty. Yet, while we wear symbols of Christ's execution around our necks and decorate our sanctuaries and homes with them; and while we recognize that God works through Christ's execution for our salvation; nevertheless this does not mean that the death penalty should be used without regard to the dignity and rights of all persons as beloved creations and children of God.

The ELCA statement affirms three things at the very outset of the conversation about the Death Penalty. It reads, *On the basis of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions we hold that, through the divine activity of the Law, God preserves creation, orders society, and promotes justice in a broken world. God works through the state and other structures of society necessary for life in the present age. The state is responsible under God for the protection of its citizens and the maintenance of justice and public order. God entrusts the state with power to take human life when failure to do so constitutes a clear danger to society. However, this does not mean that governments have an unlimited right to take life. Nor does it mean that governments must punish crime by death. We increasingly question whether the death penalty has been and can be administered justly.*

The ELCA is a church made up of many different individuals who hold a variety of views on this particular subject. All are welcome to the Table, yet as a whole, the ELCA stands opposed to the death penalty. There are three reasons given in the social statement for this stance. They are:

- + It is because of this church's ministry with and to people affected by violent crime that we oppose the death penalty.
- + It is because of this church's commitment to justice that we oppose the death penalty.
- + It is because of this church's concern regarding the actual use of the death penalty that we oppose its imposition.

continued on next page

THIS MONTH....

- ◆ **Easter Sunday--**
April 1
- ◆ **Office Closed--**
Monday, April 2
- ◆ **Mission Statement**
BBT, Spring
Potluck--Sunday,
April 15, 10:15am
- ◆ **Office Closed--**
Monday, April 16
- ◆ **Spring Ladies**
Luncheon--
Saturday, April 21
- ◆ **ECSW**
Stewardship
Event at Trinity,
New London--
Saturday, April 28

From the Pastor continued

This month Pastor Jay Mitchell of Christ Ascension Lutheran Church in Philadelphia, PA is our guest writer.

While the ELCA, by adoption of this social statement, stands opposed to the death penalty, there are several footnotes to the statement that draw our attention to the very real and often deeply held beliefs of Lutherans on both sides of this issue. However, while we understand that God has granted the State—through virtue of the Law—the right to oversee both the rule of justice as well as the execution of those deemed a risk to the greater good of society; the issue of injustice, racism, classism, and various other abuses in the criminal justice system draw us to stand against the Death Penalty.

As Lutherans we hold equally both Law and Gospel. We hold that God works in the world both to keep order as well as to free us from our bonds. And in this season we celebrate just what the freedom means and at what cost it was won. But when we look to how justice and mercy, rule and promise, are enacted in our society we can see that when we stand in solidarity with the oppressed, the marginalized, the exploited, the demonized, the “other,” we must stand against the current use of the death penalty which is disproportionately enacted against exactly these folk. The ways that race alone can be seen in direct correlation with the enactment of the Death Penalty is staggering.

We explored the Criminal Justice system, our modern day slavery of Mass Incarceration, and ministry among those affected by Mass Incarceration, last month. Conversation around retributive justice, restorative justice, deterrents to crimes, and various other issues also inform our understanding around the Death Penalty.

As we celebrate our God who works precisely through the death of our Savior, let us continue to seek ways to bring God’s reconciling love into the world and live into the abundance Christ’s resurrection grants us.

Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia!
Pastor Jay

From the Treasurer

**“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have,
for such sacrifices are pleasing to God”
Hebrews 13:16**

Here is our financial picture for the month of February. It looks a little brighter! The income for the month of February totaled **\$22,605** and our expenses totaled **\$18,748**. This gives us **\$3,857** less the principal payment on the mortgage of **\$2119** or **\$1,738**. If we add January’s numbers in we get the following two-month totals:

Income	\$ 46,496
Expense	<u>44,547</u>
	1,949
Mortgage	<u>4,239</u>
Deficit	<u>\$ (2,290)</u>

The good news is that our Current and Loose Offerings for February was only \$523 short of budget. We need to keep this up so that we continue to gain on the deficit. I encourage you to keep up with your pledge. The Finance Team and Council are beginning to look at options for funding next year after the grant from the ELCA ends. Please keep us in your prayers as we work through the many options that are before us. As always, the Finance Team, Amy Hertel, John Christensen, Stan Plageman and myself are available to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your continued stewardship.

Cathy Sell, Treasurer

Redevelopment Team

Have you ever played Jenga? It's a block game: you have squares each made of three long blocks, stacked in alternating directions. You start with a tower of blocks, and on each turn, take a block from the bottom and place it at the top. As you play and the bottom becomes weaker and the top becomes heavier, you have to be more and more strategic about how to make everything balance. It's a fun game, but not a good way to make a sustainable tower.

There's a tower of "building blocks" that is used to talk about congregational life. Take a look:



Built on the foundation of Jesus Christ, the tower takes shape. Notice how "programs" sits at the top, not because they are the most important, but because they are not essential. The other blocks need to be in place and healthy in order for programs to be added to the top.

The Redevelopment Team has been using this image in guiding us in focusing our work.

This image is also helpful in explaining why we aren't doing some things that you may be familiar with. It can feel a little strange to explain a negative, or to explain why we aren't doing something, but there are always reasons. For example, congregational leaders decided not to pursue

serving at the brat barn this year. We also decided not to host the LifeLine Screening company again.

The block tower also explains why we have been doing certain things. For example, the March Breaking Bread Together potluck and core values events and the upcoming April Breaking Bread Together potluck and purpose event. We need to have a clear and shared sense of our mission and purpose in order to continue to grow in healthy congregational life.

The following word cloud is made up of the core values identified at March's Breaking Bread Together. The size of the words is proportional to how many times that value was identified. What do you think? Is this an accurate picture of CCLC? There are some words and phrases which might come together as we continue listening for God's voice in discerning our purpose.



Spiritual Life

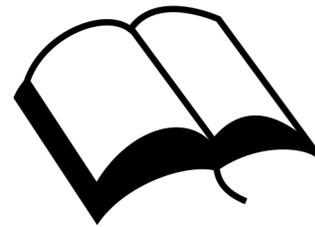
Good Brews

Good Brews (Faith & Daily Conversations) will start up again on Wednesday, April 18th at 7pm. All are welcome to join us Wednesdays at 7pm at The Ravine for conversations around faith, the bible, and daily life. Make sure to check the weekly eblast as the location may vary.



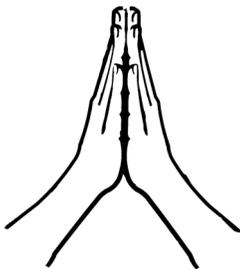
Bible Study

Interested in learning more about the Bible? Adult Bible Study meets Tuesday mornings at 9:15am in the fellowship hall. All are welcome to join us!



Prayer Chain

If you are interested in joining CCLC's prayer chain, please contact Mary Hammer at mjhammer@aol.com.

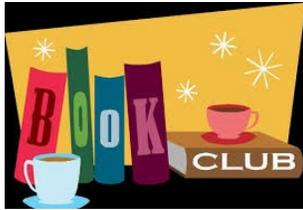


Worship Assistants

Do you enjoy reading aloud? Greeting others as they arrive on a Sunday morning? Making cookies? Helping out "behind the scenes"? We are always looking for more people to serve in our various worship duties. A general informational session and training will take place **Sunday, April 29th**, after coffee hour. If you are planning to attend, please RSVP to the church office.

Parish Life

Book Group



Please join the CCLC Book Group on April 16 at 6:30pm for a discussion of the book The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah. Named the best historical fiction read and People's Choice Award for fiction in 2015, The Nightingale tells a part of World War II seldom seen; the women's war. The book tells the stories of two sisters, separated by years and experience, by ideals, passion and circumstance, each embarking on her own dangerous path toward survival, love, and freedom in German-occupied war-torn France--a heartbreakingly beautiful novel that celebrates the resilience of the human spirit and the durability of women.

All are welcome to join in the discussion whether you read all of the book, some of the book or none of the book. Come share in the conversation!

Books are available in the Church Library for check out.

By Deb Anderson

Can-the-Mortgage

For the past several years, Christ Community has had an on-going appeal for aluminum cans with the proceeds from the recycled cans used to help pay down the mortgage on our building. If you want to participate, it's easy. Just leave a bag of cans in the rectangular plastic container behind our regular church trash bins next to the childcare fence. Please make sure there aren't any other recycling materials (tin, plastics, paper, trash) in the bags.

By Al Rasmussen

Save the Dates!

April 15: Breaking Bread Together Potluck & Mission Statement Conversation, part 2. NOTE: This event will be longer than one hour. Please plan accordingly.

May 20: Breaking Bread Together Cookout & Last Day of Sunday School

ECSW Stewardship Event

Embracing Stewardship April 28 @ 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

How to put stewardship at the HEART of your Congregation's LIFE

You're invited! Embracing Stewardship is an outstanding stewardship event for all congregations.

Rev. Chick Lane and Grace Duddy Pomroy will articulate what stewardship means to them and explore a few of the pathways your congregation can follow to deepen your members' understanding of themselves as stewards of God's abundance. Together they bring a multi-generational and "diverse approach" to their discussion on Stewardship. Coming from two generations, they are mindful of the generational perspective and the worlds in which congregations live. Both Chick and Grace have a shared conviction that stewardship belongs at the heart of each individual and every congregation!

Register by April 6 to receive a free copy of *Embracing Stewardship: How to put stewardship at the heart of your congregation's life* at the event.

Final registration deadline April 13th. Books will be available for purchase at the event.

<http://ecsw.org/event/embracing-stewardship/>

Community Life

Donations for Girl's Education

We can help girls go to school!

“I can go to school! I do not think that would be possible anywhere else.”

-Rose Imoya Banner,
senior at Bahr El Naam primary school

Girls attend school at Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, managed by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and supported by our gifts to ELCA World Hunger. Many of the students have been out of school for years due to conflict and displacement from their communities. The majority are from South Sudan. With LWF's support, the hardworking students at Kakuma regularly score among the highest in the nation on primary exams.

With our 2018 mission outreach project of contributing to the “school house” on our altar every Sunday we are helping make it possible for girls like Rose go to school. **Through the end of March, we have received enough money in the “school house” to send five girls to school!** By Al Rasmussen

Save the Date!

CCLC will be hosting the “Faster Than the Pastor” 5K race on June 16! We will need people to serve in a variety of ways on the morning of the 16th. Stay tuned for more information and race registration details.

Spring Ladies' Luncheon

The Spring Ladies Luncheon will be held on April 21st at 11:30am at church. Watch your mail for the invitation coming soon. Mark your calendars and plan to attend this great event!

Blast Off for Books Drive

The ELCA Youth Gathering has recognized the need to lift up literacy in Houston. Building a foundation of literacy starts before entering Kindergarten. Students who read at home become strong writers, critical thinkers, and more successful students than those who do not. Houston Independent School District estimates that 74% of the students in the district come from families who struggle to provide books for their children. This means the students begin each school year at a disadvantage.

In joining the Gathering's Blast Off for Books campaign, you will help ensure bright futures for Houston's students. The books you donate will be distributed at community book fairs, camps and other events around the city as part of the Gathering's Service Learning experience. By putting books in the hands of Houston's economically disadvantaged students, you can help change lives. Note that we will only accept these books (new or lightly used).

See more details at this web address: <http://ecsw.org/assembly/synod-assembly-2018/>

April 2018

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

1 Easter 8:30am: Rehearsal 9:15am: Worship No Sunday School	2 Office Closed	3 9:15am: Bible Study	4	5 5:30pm: Childcare 6:30pm: Finance 6:30pm: Redevelop.	6 Bridge	7
8 8:30am: Rehearsal 9:15am: Worship 10:15am: Sunday School Council Meeting after coffee	9	10 9:15am: Bible Study	11	12	13 Bridge	14
15 8:30am: Rehearsal 9:15am: Worship 10:15am: Sunday School BBT - Mission Statement Potluck	16 Office Closed 6:30pm: Book Group	17 9:15am: Bible Study	18	19	20 Office Open	21 Spring Ladies Luncheon
22 8:30am: Rehearsal 9:15am: Worship 10:15am: Sunday School 10:15am: Community Life team meeting	23 May Newsletter articles due	24 9:15am: Bible Study	25	26	27	28 ECSW Stewardship Event @ Trinity, New London
29 8:30am: Rehearsal 9:15am: Worship 10:15am: Sunday School	30					

The Good News

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Rev. Amanda Nesvold

The Good News

is a monthly newsletter sent to members and friends of Christ Community Lutheran Church.

The deadline for the May issue of

The Good News is:

~~Monday, April 23, 2018~~

Like us on  Christ Community Lutheran Church-ELCA