


THE MESSENGER

Vermont Lutheran Church's Mission Statement:

Christians **A**ctively **R**eaching Out **E**xperiencing Christ and **S**preparing His Word

From the Interim Pastor's Desk . .



Pastor Rebecca will begin to briefly answer the submitted questions "Ask me anything....about the Bible!" Some of the questions may require months of newsletters articles and a 250 page essay to answer, but she will do her best to answer them in two pages or less. If you would like to discuss a question in person, please visit her at during office hours. Please remember some of the topics covered may be sensitive to some individuals and you may have a different perspective on it, but this forum is to get the Pastor's reflection on the question.

Why do we confess that we believe in the "resurrection of the body," and then we use cremation or become fertilizer? You're not the first to ask this question. In fact, the ancient church in Corinth, Greece asked Paul this question, though not in your exact words.

First off, let's clear up a big misconception. According to the Bible, when we die we do NOT become angels. Not only does the Bible gainsay this, but the first big theological controversy of the church, the Trinitarian Controversy, made is crystal clear that when we die we do not become angels. That issue was at the heart of the controversy.

So what then, does the Bible say happens when we die? It says that our individual beings converge (either immediately or at the Second Coming -- the Bible is of two minds on this issue) with God's eternity which grants us eternal life. But that's hard to picture, especially given the cremation/fertilizer issue.

Let's turn to Paul's explanation.

35But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" 36How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. 39Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is

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another. **41** The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; **43** it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; **44** it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. **45** So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"[[f]]; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. **46** The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. **47** The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. **48** As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. **49** And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we[[g]] bear the image of the heavenly man. I Corinthians 15.

I guess the way to understand it, especially looking at verses 42-44, is that by a divine mystery God retrieves our natural beings and endows them with his eternity.

One thing is for certain – this is a cornerstone of Christian theology. Perhaps the greatest theologian of the modern era, Karl Barth, was asked on his deathbed what is at the heart of Christianity. His response was, "the resurrection of the body." *Pastor Rebecca Clancy*

Ask me anything....
about the Bible!



Again, Pastor Rebecca is eager to answer any and all questions you may have about the Bible. Please submit your questions to the church by email, and they will be answered in the newsletter.

HIGHLIGHTS



Sunday School Fun!

HIGHLIGHTS (continued)



Men's Meatball Dinner a Big Success! Thank you to everyone who participated in making the annual Meatball Dinner an event to remember. Through your effort, we raised \$2,234 for our ongoing mission outreach. Mange Tusen Takk! *Peter Antonie*

CABIN FEVER RELIEVERS— Pine Ridge Indian Reservation

We ran out of time at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation presentation. Here are some short additional video clips for you to see more:

<https://youtu.be/myoH1aEZaVk> Russell's Direct Descendant Story

<https://youtube.com/shorts/kKcTzRL1bOc?feature=share> Wounded Knee 1

<https://youtu.be/--b3NzUSf0M> Wounded Knee 2

https://youtu.be/_flg12kzu68 Lakota Creation Story 1

<https://youtube.com/shorts/-KzhsstumzM?feature=share> Creation Story 2

<https://youtube.com/shorts/ybHMiMvJsuM?feature=share> Creation Story 3

NEWS



INREACH TEAM

One of the most important responsibilities of our church is to fill the needs of our members. We have a NEED! We are looking for five more people to be part of the In-reach Team to help plan ways to help our members during their greatest time of need. The goal is to answer the question "How can we help?" The team will organize visits to hospitalized, institutionalized, others desiring periodic visits in conjunction with the pastor and organize any additional needs our members may have during their time of need such as meals, transportation to appointments, etc. Please contact the church office if you would like be on the team to plan if you are just available to provide a visit, meal and/or transportation.

CABIN FEVER RELIEVERS—PHILIPPINES REVISITED

7 - 8 PM, Sunday, March 3rd

AT THE VERMONT CHURCH GATHERING PLACE

Paul Ohlrogge will share information, photos and stories of his 40-year long relationship with the Philippines. Paul first went to the Philippines as a Peace Corps volunteer, where he met his wife, and will relate his experience of living with a Tribal Minority group called the Ifugao people who are famous for their meticulous work on Rice Terraces high in the Cordillera Mountains. Paul and his family returned to the Philippines many times over the years, most recently with his son Peder last summer.



All are welcome to hear the whole story with a complete slide-show in the third of this year's [Cabin Fever Reliever](#) travel series. Popcorn and light refreshments will be available for your enjoyment.

BOOK CLUB—THERE IS STILL TIME TO READ THIS MONTH'S BOOK

Looking for something to do this winter season. Let's read a book! The first selection will be *Who Is This Man?: The Unpredictable Impact of the Inescapable Jesus*. Pick up your book at a local bookstore and if you finish it early, pass it onto another member to read. Have it read by our zoom meeting on **March, 10:30am-11:30pm—RESCHEDULED!**

LECTURE SERIES CONTINUES

Pastor Rebecca Clancy will resume her lecture series on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month after church. All are welcome

HUNTER SAFETY INSTRUCTION

Anyone born on or after January 1, 1973 must have a hunter safety certificate in order to purchase a hunting license in Wisconsin. We will be hosting a Hunter Safety Training Course in the Gathering Place on March 21 and 22 under Wisconsin DNR guidelines and with qualified Hunter Safety Instructors. We will have slots for 20 student participants and there is no age restriction regarding enrollment. Adults are also welcome to participate and each session will begin at 6:30 pm and run until 9:00 pm. Instructional materials (a student workbook) will be provided and the enrollment fee of \$10 per student (payable to the lead instructor) will be waived for any church member signing up. The classroom instruction will be followed by a "field training" exercise on Scott and Liz Herring's property (on Hwy 78), on Saturday March 23. This field training will begin at 8:30 am and run until 2:30 pm and will include the proper handling, loading and unloading, and firing of firearms on a prescribed shooting range, under Safety Instructor supervision. Please contact Bill Meddings at 608-630-1066 or wtm2@chorus.net to reserve your spot. Upon completion of the course, participants will be awarded their Hunter Safety Certificate and assigned a permanent Customer Number with the DNR. Thanks, *Bill Meddings*

Your Jigsaw Puzzle Library News

Are you ready to do a little traveling this March?

Where to?

How About:

- the Grand Canyon?
- New York City?
- a rustic Colorado Cabin in the Mountains?
- Paddy wheel boat trip down the Mississippi?
- take a trip to London?
- take your family and your DOG on a road trip out West?
- back in history to King Arthur's World?
- the Kids' favorite—Disneyland?



You get to decide and the Library can help you
Take that trip without leaving your home!

Beautiful Puzzles in the **Month of March Section** of the Library can take you to any of these places
FREE & with No Travel Hassle! Give it a try.

MISSION TEAM

The Mission Team is wrapping up it's 4-part questionnaire for the congregation. We will share the results of that report very soon. As of this writing, you can still share your opinions of how you see Missions at Vermont currently and in the future. We will take paper and electronic responses until Wednesday evening March 6. WE DO WANT YOUR INPUT!

"JUST THINKING OF YOU" LENTEN PROJECT

The *Just Thinking of You* table is set up in the Fellowship Hall for you to write a note or more to both Vermont members who are not able to regularly attend worship and to our neighbors who are living in assisted living or nursing homes nearby. The Gift of Time is the most precious gift we can share and we have provided the table, the pens and the notecards for you to share in this mission project! Thank you for your Time!

We are also excited to be adding new members to the Team. We will introduce them in next month's Messenger! Our core team, Ellie Boebel, Joanie Haugen, Jeff Dickinson and Klover Schafer, along with Pastor Rebecca, have thoughtfully and prayerfully worked on our Mission Statement and our structure. They deserve a big Thank You!

CONFIRMATION MISSION PROJECT

Confirmands are collecting Change for Change. Bring your spare change to church, and throw it in the milk jar located in the Narthex. They have collected \$1,282.92 through the end of February and will continue to collect throughout the school year. They will use the first \$1,000 to purchase a "Milk Menagerie" from Heifer International. A Milk Menagerie consists of four lactating animals - a water buffalo, a heifer, and two goats -- which will be donated, along with training, to an impoverished farmer from one of the nineteen countries with which Heifer International works. A little change can make a big change.

LENT SCHEDULE

Soup Suppers with Lenten Study

Come join us for a Soup Supper each Wednesday night at 6 pm with a Lenten Service following the supper at 7pm.

Hosted by:

March 6 - Men's Group

March 13—Women's Group

March 20 - Choir / or another volunteer group



Maundy Thursday—March 28th—service at 7 pm

Good Friday—March 29th—Community Service at 1pm

United Methodist Church of Mt. Horeb,
9542 Co Hwy S, Mt Horeb

Easter Sunday—March 30th service 9:30 am

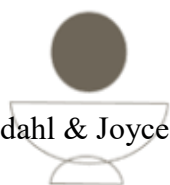


SAVE THE DATE
June 15th, 2024

Monthly Financial Report

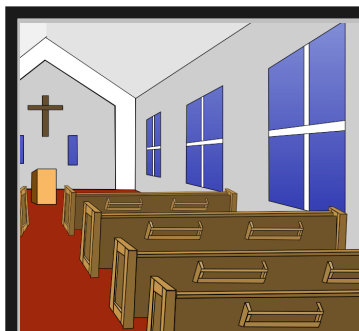
February 2024

	Contributions			Operating Expenses		
	2024	2023	Change	2024	2023	Change
Monthly	\$ 7,516	\$ 21,370	\$ (13,854)	\$ 12,788	\$ 12,793	\$ (5)
YTD	\$ 15,658	\$ 27,176	\$ (11,518)	\$ 27,008	\$ 256,250	\$ 758



Jill Dybdahl & Joyce Howery

**MARCH
ALTAR GUILD**



Attendance

February 2024

4th	70
11th	66
18th	79
25th	66

Lent 2024



ELCA World Hunger

In Colombia, Lucilda has benefited from your generosity to ELCA World Hunger for many years — from financial support to continue her studies during the pandemic lockdown to several hens that provide her with a daily nutritious meal. "The project has helped my family a lot," says Lucilda. "Thanks to the chickens we have, we can have breakfast every day. They have also helped me to continue studying very judiciously, and when I finish school, I want to be a successful professional."

16 SAT

21 THU

A simple water well or other water point can help as many as 600 families gain access to clean, safe water. A gift of \$250 can provide a share of a clean water project.

22 FRI

This World Water Day, set aside time to pray for neighbors near and far who face water scarcity and water injustice, and give thanks for the local leaders whose tireless efforts inspire our hope. Read more about World Water Day on the ELCA World Hunger blog.

25 MON

Lord Jesus, you have called us to follow you. Grant that our love might not grow cold in your service, and that we might not fail or deny you in the time of trial. For you live and reign with God and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

27

"Hope and freedom join the circle: Mary to the garden came, saw the radiance of the marvel, heard the Risen call her name; boldly may we heed Christ's call, step beyond the garden wall, beautiful the feed proceeding with good news of death's defeating."
—"Signs and Wonders" (ELW 672)

12 TUE

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what [God] has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life" (Ephesians 2:8-10).



17 SUN

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT
Read and reflect on John 12:20-33.
Read the Week 5 material in ELCA World Hunger's Lent study guide.

23 SAT

"Let justice flow like streams of sparkling water, pure, enabling growth, refreshing life, abundant, cleansing, sure. Let righteousness roll on as others' cares we heed, an ever-flowing stream of faith translated into deed."
—"Let Justice Flow Like Streams" (ELW 717)



24 SUN

PALM SUNDAY
Read and reflect on Mark 16:1-9.

26 TUE

"Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

28 THU

Gather all you've collected throughout your Lenten journey and add up your total gift to ELCA World Hunger. Make your donations online at ELCA.org/WHLent or bring your gifts to your congregation. Thank you for working creatively and courageously toward a just world where all are fed.

29 FRI

Creator God, redeem your creation awaiting resurrection: restore lost habitats and inspire protection and care of waterways and soil. Create new possibilities for communities where a changing climate threatens access to food and water, grant relief from natural disasters and nurture new growth. Amen.

GOAL AMOUNT:

13 WED

Your gifts matter—in Ghana, Colombia, the United States and other countries around the world. Learn more at ELCA.org/Hunger. Thank you!

14 THU

Generous God, you sustained your people in the wilderness. Give courage to all who lead in times of crisis and need. Prosper the work of those who aid victims of famine and drought. Bring peace in places where disputes over resources cause violence. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

15 FRI

"Todo la tierra espera al Salvador y el surco abierto, la obra del Señor, es el mundo que lucha por la libertad, reclama justicia y busca la verdad." —"Todo la Tierra" (ELW 266)
"All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last! Furrows lie open for God's creative task: this, the labor of people who struggle to see how God's truth and justice set everybody free." —"All Earth is Hopeful" (ELW 266)

20 WED

Holy God, the heavens declare your glory. Renew your creation. Provide leaders in the struggle for clean air and water; protect creatures and crops that rely on healthy ecosystems; give all people the willingness to repent when our way of life pollutes the earth and skies. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.



In Wisconsin lead exposure is an issue statewide and children are most at risk of developing lead poisoning. With support from ELCA World Hunger, Hephthia Lutheran Church offers lead-free education to community members and distributes water filters to each new participant. "I hope this ministry can continue to be a resource that others can utilize so that their children can be as happy and safe as mine," says Mrs. McElroy, a participant in Hephthia's ministry.

19 TUE

Read the Week 5 material in ELCA World Hunger's Lent study guide.

18 MON

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT
Read and reflect on John 12:20-33.
Read the Week 5 material in ELCA World Hunger's Lent study guide.

31 EASTER SUNDAY

Christ is risen!

Alleluia!

Read, reflect on and rejoice in Mark 16:1-8 or John 20:1-18.



March 3, Third Sunday of Lent

Topic: Universality Title: The Woman at the Well

Exodus 17:1-7

Romans 5:1-11

John 4:5-14

March 10, Fourth Sunday of Lent

Topic & Title: Cain or Christ

Genesis 4: 1-16

Hebrews 12:1-3

Matthew 5:21-26

March 17, Fifth Sunday of Lent

Topic & Title: Troubled Souls

Jeremiah 20:7-9, 11-12

Hebrews 5:5-10

John 12:20-32

March 24, Sixth Sunday of Lent

Topic & Title: Palm Sunday

Psalms 118:1-2, 19-29

Matthew 21:1-11

March 28, Maundy Thursday

Topic: Remembrance Title: Remember Me

Exodus 12:1-4, 11-14

I Corinthians 11:23-26

John 13:1-17

March 31, Easter

Topic: Easter Title: The Word of the Resurrection

Acts 10:34-43

Colossians 3:1-4

John 20:1-18

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Heidi	Doyle	March 01
Shelby	McKenzie	March 02
Lisa	Parrell	March 04
Cole	Rickey	March 06
Tyler	Haugen	March 07
Sara	Amble	March 09
Sadie	Powers	March 09
David	Parrell	March 11
Kent	Norslien	March 12
James	Hanson	March 13
Arlyn	McKenzie	March 15
Alex	Page	March 16
Wes	Childs	March 18
Michael	Dauck	March 21
Jill	Adler	March 26
Mya	Boebel	March 28
Paul	Dybdahl	March 28
Susan	Olson	March 28



ELCA—Mission Support Memo

WE ARE CHURCH
TOGETHER

2024



FEBRUARY 2024 Mission Support Memo

STORYTELLING ENGAGEMENT

"Brutiful" Holy Closure

A story from Southeast Michigan Synod

As you read this story, what connects with you?

What memories do you hold dear with your congregation?

For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted." —Ecclesiastes 3:1

As the writer of Ecclesiastes expresses, there is a time to be born and a time to die. In a world of change and challenges, congregations across the ELCA are wondering about their future and whether they will close. These congregations are worried about downward trends in membership, worship attendance and financial giving. Families and youth have drifted away, and the folks still active are more than weary. One important role of directors for evangelical mission and synod leaders is to walk alongside congregations in identifying future options. This month our story is from the Rev. Sarah Mayer-Flatt, storyteller for the [Southeast Michigan Synod](#) sharing her experience of beauty and difficulty attending the closing service of a local church. We thank Sarah for her reflection:

"Recently I attended the holy closure of Good Samaritan Lutheran Church in Pontiac, Mich. I went to the service with more questions than answers. How does a congregation get to this place? What led up to this process? Where do people go afterward?"

"Through attending this service and interviewing the Rev. Jen Kiefer, assistant to the bishop for congregational and synod life, I have a better grasp of this situation. A holy closure can be a faithful step for a congregation when it reaches a point where its outward expression is no longer sustainable. (By outward expression we mean its existence as a congregation.) This process is an option when a congregation is very small and has run out of energy or when a financial hurdle cannot be overcome. Other options for congregations include yoking, merging and consolidating with another congregation. This kind of decision should not be taken lightly, and while the synod, particularly our director of evangelical mission, the Rev. Sean Ewbank, walks alongside congregations in these conversations of discernment, it is always the decision of the congregation and its leadership. The synod does not come in and close a congregation."

"Of course, this is a 'brutiful' (beautiful and brutal) process: while the church is never defined as a building (we are the church!), memories of baptisms, funerals, weddings, holy laughter and holy tears are attached to that site. Saying goodbye to a church building can feel like the sale of your childhood home. If you've been paying attention to the synod's updates, you know that in the last eight months, three congregations have been faithfully closed and another three have consolidated to form a new congregation, Spirit of Christ Lutheran Church in Clawson, Mich. (but that's another story). St. Thomas in Sterling Heights, Antioch in Farmington Hills and Good Samaritan in Pontiac have all discerned holy closure as the faithful future God was calling them toward. Rev. Kiefer explained that COVID-19 sped up the process for many of these congregations."

ELCA—Mission Support Memo (continued)

“While it may seem as if holy closures are sad and should be avoided at all costs, that’s not the case. Congregations that close can leave a legacy for the greater church in ways that active congregations cannot. For example, St. Thomas in Sterling Heights donated the seed money that Living Waters needed for another accessible building on its property. For years and years campers will be able to come as they are because of this gift. Many of the congregations that have discerned holy closure have also given money to the synod’s Fund for Mission account. This allows the synod to continue supporting ministries that cannot fully fund themselves, such as Grace in Action, Love Rising and our FedUp food truck ministry. In short, a holy closure is living out the teaching of Jesus: ‘Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies it bears much fruit’ (John 12:24).”

“Our God is a God of resurrection, and always makes things new — particularly after death. Keep the ministry of each congregation in our synod in your prayers, that all might continue to live faithfully as members of the global church.”

Living Lutheran

Living
Lutheran

Celebrating Women’s History Month

By Kelly Wilkerson | March 5, 2024



March is Women’s History Month, a time to celebrate the presence, achievements and contributions of women throughout history and to advocate for gender equality. This month provides the [ELCA](#) an opportunity to amplify the vital work it does to support women and promote gender justice.

Leadership continues to be the foundational arena where gender justice lies. The ELCA ordains women and noncisgender men, a tradition started with Elizabeth Platz 54 years ago. Since that time the church has ordained women from all backgrounds and for all positions, including Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. This inclusivity affirms the callings of women within the church and

serves as a powerful testament that gender should not be a barrier to serving in the church.

As we celebrate Women’s History Month, *Living Lutheran* is highlighting a few of the many programs and ministries that support women and promote gender justice. Visit the resources below to explore how these programs bring awareness to, serve and equip women, and stay tuned throughout this month to learn more.

[Women of the ELCA](https://www.womenoftheelca.org/)—<https://www.womenoftheelca.org/>

[Justice for Women Resource Page](https://www.elca.org/Resources/Justice-for-Women)—<https://www.elca.org/Resources/Justice-for-Women>

[50 Years of Ordained Women](https://www.elca.org/50yearsofordainedwomen)—<https://www.elca.org/50yearsofordainedwomen>

Faithful Innovation Learning Communities



You Still Have Time to be a 2024 Faithful Innovation Learning Community!

Participating congregations will discern their unique answer to this question: **“As we listen to God, one another, and our neighbors, what future do we imagine God is bringing forth in our midst?”**

“ The answer needs to come from Christ and our willingness to ask hard questions and listen for answers, as well as our ability to take risks, secure in our standing in Christ.

Click [here](#) to view an email sent on December 20 with all of the details, or click the button below to download an informational flyer.

If your congregation would like to participate, or if you have any questions about Faithful Innovation Learning Communities, contact the Rev. Walter Baires, Associate to the Bishop and Director of Evangelical Mission at walterb@scsw-elca.org.

SCSW Office Move Update



Good news of great joy!

We are delighted to share that next week the synod office will finally have a physical space to call home at Lakeview Lutheran in Madison. **Thank you to all who have volunteered to help unpack and sort through items on Wednesday, February 21.**

An open house and dedication of the space is planned for late spring/early summer.

Call or email

PRAYER

REQUEST to

Jane Hanson - 753-3067 - crabbyjane@hotmail.com

It is our time to build a legacy

Become a member of the Legacy Fund. Members of the Legacy Fund come from all walks of life and are united by a desire to preserve our beautiful Church, Cemetery and adjoining land. Vermont Lutheran Church owns and maintains a cemetery, historic church building, Gathering Place and 115 acres of adjacent land with a hilltop viewscape. Christian stewardship involves the faithful management of all the gifts God has given us, including accumulated, inherited and appreciated resources. Therefore, we created the Legacy Fund to encourage, receive and administer these gifts.

Our goal is to generate and maintain a Legacy Fund of \$1 Million dollars, or more. Through receipt of bequests, grants and/or gifts, contributions to the Legacy Fund and investment growth will serve three very important purposes now and into the future:

1. Expand the cemetery and develop and maintain the adjacent land in a manner that maximizes its natural beauty and preserves its ecological importance; and,
2. Provide funds to pay property taxes on the portion of the adjacent land subject to taxes; and,
3. Provide funds for future maintenance of the cemetery and building and grounds needs of the Church.

Any legacy member whose contribution totals \$1,000 or more will be recognized with a brass plate on a prominently displayed plaque. Annual meeting reports will include all the names of those individuals who made a contribution of any amount that year.

April Newsletter
articles are due
March 28th

to Elizabeth Herrling at
vermont_church@tds.net

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