



CHRIST THE SERVANT LUTHERAN

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2019

January Birthdays

Katelyn Hall	1-1
Mick Kullbom	1-4
Warren Bennett	1-6
Lisa Cornelio	1-7
Emilee Olson	1-15
BJ Koeppe	1-16
Tara Peters	1-17
Tammy Buckendahl	1-22
Lucas Petersen	1-25
Jason Jones	1-30

February Birthdays & Anniversaries

Bob & Susie Lutz	2/2
Doug Witte	2/8
Mary Lund	2/9
Dagney Petersen	2/11
Jeremy Olson	2/12
Millie Drey	2/18
Rhonda Beed	2/19
Korrie Hall	2/19
Deb Olson	2/20
Roger & Donna Young	2/20
Nell Finkral	2/23
Joy Potts	2/25
Jan Puls	2/27
Carter Olson	2/28

POINSETTIAS

Lonnie and Margaret Svitak: in memory of our parents
Dennis and Linda Miller: in memory of Dennis' parents and Linda's dad
Linda Cyboron: in memory of Dean and Linda's parents
Chuck and Jeanne Nicholson: in memory of loved ones
Mike and Nell Finkral: in celebration of the Savior's birth
Don and Mary Ann Knee: in memory of loved ones
Steve and Mary Lund: in memory of Pastor Steve's parents and Mary's dad,
and in memory of Mary's mom, Marian
Gary and Mary Weich: in memory of family
Peggy Werlinger family: in memory of Tim Werlinger
Broders family: in memory of Grandpa Beaudette

Card of Thanks

Thank you to everyone for the thoughts, prayers
and cards during my mom's passing. God Bless!

Rhonda Beed family

My Letter to the Congregation: **“Do Less So That We Can Do More”**

If you look at our church calendar for the next two months, you may wonder where the activity is or lack of it when compared with previous church calendars. Our leadership is looking at doing less for a while (“pruning”) so that we can do more later (“bear much fruit”). Christ the Servant, like 80% of the churches in America, is part of a growing group of congregations who have either plateaued, are declining, or aging. As a result there is a growing *holy discontent* or *spiritual restlessness* among Christians in America today. One of the best known preachers of our day (Francis Chan) is among those who are sounding the alarm that the church in America is losing its Kingdom focus and DNA. Jesus did not build His Kingdom atmosphere with His disciples by using a ten-week Bible study or some program. His Kingdom was built on relationships where these relationships were built with others. Over the years the church in America has become a church of programs – build a good one and people will come. That may be true in the beginning (“attractional”) but with time such programs are not what makes people stay (“discipleship”). The church has always been based on relationships – one at a time over time. There is no shortcut to this process but when it forms and takes hold it expands exponentially. Sadly, I have witnessed this Kingdom culture drift over the years in favor of “quick-fix” solutions.

As a result the Congregation Council will be discussing a book, *Who Broke My Church?*, on a Friday night/Saturday retreat in February at the Immaculata Monastery in Norfolk. The author of this book, Kent Hunter, was the keynote speaker at our LCMC National Gathering in Des Moines last October. Here are a couple of key paragraphs in his first chapter:

“How would you describe your spiritual life? Is it thriving or simply surviving? Is it spiritually prospering? Flourishing? Successful? Is it growing vigorously? *You will never do what God wants you to do unless you become who God wants you to be.* What about your Christian community, your church? *Your church will never do what God wants your church to do unless the people become who God wants them to be.*” (page 1)

“Much about Kingdom culture is counterintuitive. Most everything Jesus says when He begins, ‘The Kingdom of God is like . . .’ is not the way humans normally understand the world. Jesus did say, ‘My Kingdom is not of this world.’ Get that? Your spiritual life is *not* like this world. Your church is *not* like this world. It is not supposed to be like this world.” (page 2)

“In John 15, Jesus speaks from a Kingdom culture perspective. He says, ‘He prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more.’ Really? This is Kingdom math. It is different from what you learned in grade school. You learned addition equals more. Kingdom math says subtraction equals multiplication, by God’s power. Less is more, but less of what? The impact of Kingdom culture results in less impurity, fewer distractions, less of all those time-consuming activities that diminish the strategic impact of the Kingdom. The result is spiritual focus. This changes everything. The air you breathe is a movement. This is Kingdom atmosphere.” (pages 3-4)

Hunter goes on to address some of the symptoms of this Kingdom culture drift. He asks each of us a personal question.

"Are you one of those who have drifted from Kingdom culture? No, it wasn't on purpose. It wasn't a conscious decision. No believer intentionally develops a strategy to wander from Kingdom effectiveness. However, in so many churches, among so many Christians, decisions are based on what seems logical. Directions are chosen on winning arguments and majority votes. By contrast, Kingdom culture relies on biblical input to discover God's direction." (page 4)

"Many Christians experience death by meetings, not life by discipling. Corporate behavior over focused outreach. The flashy program is more attractive than spiritual formation. *Robert's Rules of Order* trumps prayer to sort out what God wants. Leaders quote the latest fad rather than inspired Scripture. This is the disease of spiritual dry rot. As many churches have discovered, it is terminal. The health of a church is a reflection of the spiritual vitality of the believers within it. Thriving churches are filled with individuals who live Kingdom culture. This is the atmosphere that breathes life into the Christian movement." (page 4)

Hunter says the long-range danger of Kingdom drift is that it puts a congregation into a spiritual "rut" that can lead down a road we do not want to travel. He compares this rut to a rut in the road.

"In northern Canada, there are two seasons: July to August . . . and winter. At the end of August, the rains come and the rural roads become ruts. Then, overnight, they freeze. At the place where the pavement becomes a dirt road is a sign that reads, CHOOSE YOUR RUT VERY CAREFULLY, YOU WILL BE IN IT FOR A LONG TIME. Some churches have been in a religious rut for a long time. Some Christians act like they have been in a rut forever. Someone has said, 'The only difference between a rut and a grave is its length, depth, and how long you're in it. What is this rut?'"

The rut for many Christians is subtle slippage from Kingdom culture. It is quiet, subtle, and often escapes notice. It is like slowly changing temperature. Your spirituality cools, and your church cools to the cause of Christ, one degree at a time. The church veers off its course, one person, one idea, and one activity at a time. It is a slow drift, but it is deadly.

We are warm in the bed of salvation by grace through faith. We've got that nailed! We know we need forgiveness. Our faith is in the Savior who died on the cross for our sins. Our salvation is secure. It is so easy for us to take on the aura of a spiritual country club. To those who don't yet know Jesus, we are an odd group that occasionally invites others to come to our building, eat spaghetti, and donate to a youth mission trip." (page 7)

Hunter then addresses why it is necessary to do less for awhile ("pruning") so that more fruit can grow in the days and years to come.

"It makes little sense to cut traditional programs and activities, but these activities cause burned-out believers. It is a hard sell to focus on spiritual formation (re-formation, transformation). Yes, God's Kingdom isn't anything like the world where we live. It takes serious faith to be sold out to God's plan. It

takes trust in Jesus to focus on Kingdom culture and expect the church to flourish and thrive. It sounds strange. Someone changed the verse to add this insight, 'You will know the truth, and the truth will make you . . . 'a little peculiar.'" (page 5)

And then Hunter paints the picture of promise and hope.

"What would happen if you focused on Kingdom culture for a year or two? Could that lead to more outreach? More joy? More community impact? The growth of God's Kingdom *inside* people? The growth of God's Kingdom as Christians engage those in social networks? What if you, and others, were full of the King? Would the King's Kingdom become a Jesus epidemic? Would it change your church? Your community? The world? Instead of *belonging* to the church, what would change if you focused on *being* the church?"

As the Congregation Council meets and discusses this book, one of the tasks will be the development of our spiritual DNA – our values, our beliefs, our attitudes, our priorities, and our worldview. As we consider each of these areas, the Congregation Council will be seeking ways to have conversations with the entire congregation in each of these areas. This will not be a quick fix or a quick timetable. We will allow time for this Kingdom culture to rise and develop within us with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Anything can be written in each of these areas, but it is quite another thing when they are written in our hearts and lived out in our daily lives. Hunter returns to the Lord's Prayer.

"In the Lord's Prayer, we pray that we want God's will to be done on earth, in our lives, and in our churches, just like it is done in heaven. Our drift from Kingdom culture makes these words empty. We forget that inside the will of God, there is no failure. We forget that outside the will of God, there is no success. We have drifted." (page 9)

Watch and listen for ways you can join the conversation with our Congregation Council. Pray for wisdom. Pray for discernment. Pray for direction. Pray for a mighty working of the Holy Spirit once again among His people at Christ the Servant.

Seeking Kingdom living,

Pastor Steve

Sunday Worship – Season of Epiphany

The Appearing of God in Christ

The months of January and February is the time of the church year which we call the Sundays after Epiphany (January 6 when the Wise Men arrive at the manger). The time after Epiphany is a time to emphasize that Jesus came to earth for all people. Epiphany means “to show forth, appear, manifest.” Our first two Sundays will celebrate the Day of Epiphany and the Baptism of our Lord. Then we will observe six Sundays after the Epiphany until the Transfiguration of our Lord on March 3 (Ash Wednesday will begin on March 6). We have begun the Year of Luke when we will hear the early days of Jesus’ ministry and His call upon us to “fish” for all people. Please join us during these important Sundays that will lead us once again to our 40 day journey to the cross during Lent.

January 6 – (Matthew 2:1-12) **Epiphany of Our Lord**

Christ revealed to the nations

Richard Hillrichs - preaching; Charlie Skoglund – worship leader

January 13 – (Luke 3:15-17, 21-22) **Baptism of Our Lord**

The baptism of Jesus

Join us after worship for our monthly potluck meal

January 20 – (John 2:1-11) **Epiphany 2**

The wedding at Cana

January 27 – (Luke 4:14-21) **Epiphany 3**

Jesus reads the prophet Isaiah

February 3 – (Luke 4:21-30) **Epiphany 4**

The prophet Jesus is not accepted

February 10 – (Luke 5:1-11) **Epiphany 5**

Jesus call the disciples to fish for people

February 17 – (Luke 6:17-26) **Epiphany 6**

Blessings on the poor, woes on the rich

February 24 – (Luke 6:27-38) **Epiphany 7**

Love your enemies

No Wednesday Night Alive

During January and February

Wednesday Night Alive (WNA) will be taking a Sabbath rest during the months of January and February to give some needed rest to our planners and cooks. We will resume our Wednesday evening meal time when we begin our Lenten journey with our Ash Wednesday meal on March 6. As a church body we are entering a season of prayer, reflection and discernment as to the future mission and ministry of Christ the Servant. God has richly blessed our congregation through the years, but sometimes we need to rest for awhile so that we can be revived again. As a result, we are letting WNA rest for a couple of months so that we can enter the season of Lent seeking the will of God as to where He wants us to join Him in His work in this time and place.

January 2019

*Pastor out of office on Fridays
 Office hours: 8:30 to 4:30 Monday-Thursday
 (closed for lunch from 12:30-1:30)
 8:30 to 12:30 Friday

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday*	Saturday
		1 Church office closed	2 No evening activities	3 9:00 Quilting 6:30 MOPS steering comm.	4 5:30 Girl Scouts	5
6 <i>Epiphany of Our Lord (w)</i> 9 Sunday school 10 Worship (T) 11 Fellowship	7	8 4:30 Stewardship	9 5:30 Confirmation	10 9:00 Agape (meets in home)	11	12
13 <i>Baptism of Our Lord (w)</i> 9 Sunday school 10 Worship (C) 11 Potluck 12 Youth Group	14 5:00 Hospitality 7:00 Ultreya <i>Kathy out of office</i>	15	16 5:30 Confirmation 6:30 youth group	17 2:00 Card club 6:45 MOPS	18 5:30 Girl Scouts Newsletter deadline	19
20 <i>Epiphany 2 (g)</i> 9 Sunday school 10 Worship (T) 11 Fellowship 11:30 Mission & Ministry meeting	21 6:30 Council meeting	22 7:00 Kitchen remodel meeting 7:00 Worship committee	23 5:30 Confirmation	24	25	26
27 <i>Epiphany 3 (g)</i> 9 Sunday school 10 Worship (C) 11 Fellowship 12 Youth group	28 6:00 Ultreya	29	30 5:30 Confirmation	31		

T = traditional C = contemporary
 Paraments: (w) = white; (g) = green

Membership Care Team: Arlis Lind, Marilyn Nickols
 Altar Guild: Kay Jaeger, Kathy Rogers (communion bread)

February 2019

Office hours: 8:30 to 4:30 Monday-Thursday (closed for lunch from 12:30-1:30)
8:30 to 12:30 Friday

*Pastor out of office on Fridays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday*	Saturday
					1 5:30 Girl Scouts	2
3 <i>Epiphany 4 (g)</i> 9 Sunday school 10 Worship (T) 11 Fellowship	4	5	6 5:30 Confirmation	7 9:00 Quilting 6:30 MOPS steering comm.	8	9
10 <i>Epiphany 5 (g)</i> 9 Sunday school 10 Worship (C) 11 Potluck 12 Youth Group	11 5:00 Hospitality 7:00 Ultreya	12 4:30 Stewardship	13 5:30 Confirmation	14 9:00 Agape 	15 5:30 Girl Scouts Newsletter deadline	16
17 <i>Epiphany 6 (g)</i> 9 Sunday school 10 Worship (T) 11 Fellowship 11:30 Mission & Ministry meeting	18 6:30 Council meeting	19	20 5:30 Confirmation 6:30 youth group	21 2:00 Card club 6:45 MOPS	22	23
24 <i>Epiphany 7 (g)</i> 9 Sunday school 10 Worship (C) 11 Fellowship 12 Youth group	25 6:00 Ultreya	26 7:00 Worship committee	27 5:30 Confirmation	28	----- MEALS ON WHEELS -----	

T = traditional C = contemporary

Paraments: (g) = green

Membership Care Team: Doris Hoffart, Kay Jaeger

Altar Guild: Mary Ann Knee, Margaret Svitak (communion bread)