



May 2021

Special Upcoming Events



Newsletter article for May 1, 2021

Council summary: On April 11 Virginia preached in person at Lord of Life following all covid protocols. That gave pastor David a dedicated week off (as per his contract). In the past, Pastor David has worked his 3/4 time plus more as he would edit and upload even the services for his off week. It means that now, on Pastor David's off week, there will be no online worship. Over the next little while, council and Pastor David will begin planning what our re-opening will look like once the pandemic is better controlled in the months ahead. Our online version of council installation worked well! The synod has accepted the tweaks we've made to our constitution, as it aligns with their template. Please watch for notification about a **congregational meeting** we have to have to accept the changes that were made. The meeting will be on Zoom in the near future. We received the Faith-based and Cultural Facility Relaunch Grant of \$1,271 that will help towards the upgrades we made to facilitate online worship. Great job, Julie and Eila!

The National Church has suggested a Bible Book Club. The Bible book we read for April is Amos, which we will discuss on May 6 at 7

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pm via Zoom. In May, we are reading Mark to be discussed on June 3 at 7 pm on Zoom. Please contact Pastor David for the Zoom link, whether you have read the book or not. We always have lively discussions about women's rights, patriarchy, wrath, prayer, the Good News...

Update from Live Different:

I had a Zoom meeting with Live Different board members about the needs that volunteers on short term build projects have. The 21 people at the meeting represented 180 build projects in Mexico, Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Thailand. We discussed some of the changes Live Different has made over the years that we've worked with them. It's important when mistakes are recognized and there's a willingness to make changes, whether it's in an individual or in an organization. Live Different's development model "combines sustainable community development practices with integrated volunteering, resulting in meaningful and long-term positive outcomes for all parties involved. Our projects focus on mutual empowerment, as our volunteers work alongside community members to meet basic human needs, while motivating one another to shift their perspectives towards life-long kindness, hope, and change. The five key elements of this model are community, relationship, basic needs, dignity, and humility". We acknowledged that context matters and relationships matter. Charles reminded us that we also need to know when to leave and to have an exit strategy. Those at the meeting felt as though we had gained more for the build experience(s) than we'd given. We've made friends, seen a community grow and flourish, and look forward to helping again when the pandemic is over. In the meantime, Live Different continues to provide emergency food and health care through their community development fund.

From the Synod:

1. Can the church recapture what it was in the first century—a distinctive community willing to stand against the status quo, to confront the ways of empire, and to embody the gospel? This year's Festival of Homiletics theme is "**Preaching for the Future Church.**" Together, we'll explore how the promise of the gospel gives hope and shapes ministry for the church now and in the future. **Plan to attend the all-virtual 29th annual Festival of Homiletics, May 17–21, 2021.** There are two ways to participate:

- Watch for free: Four to five prerecorded video sessions will be available each day—at no cost.

- **Purchase a** recording package: Gain full access to bonus material and watch sessions at a later time. Bonus materials include additional speaker presentations, live workshops, learning opportunities, and exclusive vendor connections. **Registration** is open. We hope to see

you at the virtual Festival of Homiletics! For more information, [click here](#).

—The Festival of Homiletics team

2. The Synod convention will take place on Zoom on Friday evening, July 16, 2021 and Saturday, July 17, 2021. There will be 3 virtual sessions to view ahead of time to become familiar with the topics that will be voted on at convention. Donna Bornhuse has put her name forward as our delegate for the meeting.

3. The ELCIC National Convention will take place in July 2022 in Calgary. Nominations for **delegates** from the congregation are due on May 15, 2021. If you are interested in attending or would like more information, please contact a member of council.

4. Hastings Lake is offering Family **summer camps** (Sunday evening to Friday) and weeklong youth camps, if covid restrictions allow, as well as day camps that will take place in churches in Viking, Irma, and St Albert.

5. Kuriakos Camp is offering several virtual **activities** throughout the months of spring.

6. Mulhurst Camp is offering two family **camps** (from Friday to Monday) as well as children's camps at Mulhurst, and day camps at Hosanna Lutheran and St Paul's Lutheran.

On a personal note: On Saturday, April 24, 2021 Cheryl and I attended the **Area Gathering** by Zoom along with 68 others from the Northern area of the Synod. The topic was Leading in Challenging Times. The session was led by Susan Beaumont who has authored a book called "How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going". She discussed "liminal time" as the space between something old (in the past) and something new (in the future). It is different from change management, because with change, we have an intent to move from A to B and just need to manage the barriers that are in the way of attaining that goal. With liminality, we are unsure about our future and can't exactly pinpoint what it will look like. Beaumont pointed us to Ezra 3: 11 - 13 where the people rebuilt their temple.

"11 With praise and thanks, they sang this song to the Lord: "He is so good! His faithful love for Israel endures forever". Then all the people gave a great shout, praising the Lord because the foundation of the Lord's temple had been laid.

12 Many of the older priests, Levites, and other leaders remembered the first temple, and they wept aloud when they saw the new temple's foundation. The others, however, were shouting with joy.

13 The joyful shouting and weeping mingled together in a loud commotion that could be heard in the distance".

Today we are going through a liminal period with the pandemic and what life was like before and what it will be like in the future. Other examples include racial justice and political turmoil. Ms. Beaumont pointed out that the opportunities during this time of uncertainty include creativity, rediscovery of our core identity and purpose (who do we serve?), a shedding of what no longer fits, and group discernment and collective wisdom (as we work with God). The threats during this time include anxiety, denial, changing power dynamics, and tricksters (whom she describes as charismatic people who thrive on chaos). Those seem to be the people who are the most vehement on the news, in my opinion, as they want their voices to be heard and their "rights" recognized! Or the former president who made inflammatory comments on Twitter!

To get through this time, Beaumont suggests we move away from knowing all the answers and move towards unknowing; we can acknowledge that knowing is not enough. She also says to move towards paying attention, listening well, and seeing what might be. And finally she advises that we surrender or move from dogged persistence to being more contemplative. After her presentation, we were split into smaller groups for discussion where we noted things that have emerged in our own congregations since the pandemic. So, as we contemplate what our next steps will be as a congregation, ponder the following questions that I heard during the area gathering.

What do we anticipate as we start in-person worship?

What have we learned about what's important to us?

What's our core identity and purpose?

What will Holy Communion look like? What should it be now?

What former practices or ways of being do not fit anymore? What's a better way?

Please forward your thoughts, questions, and ideas to Cheryl or me and we will add them to our council discussions as we move through this liminal time.

Heather Zirk

Social Concerns

Submitted by Donna

Just a reminder that May 3 to May 9 is mental health week. A lot of us are struggling with mental well-ness due to CoVid. It is hard to imagine how people who were struggling mentally before CoVid are managing now. I am sure they could use our prayers at this time.

I recently read a book that I highly recommend for any age to read it is called The Boy, the mole the fox and the horse and it is written by Charles Makesy. For those who don't generally like to read it does have drawings as well. I found it very uplifting and I would like to share a couple of quotes from the book.

"When the big things feel out of control.... focus on what you love right under your nose"

We don't know about tomorrow" said the horse, "all we need to know is that we love each other".

"What's your best discovery?" asked the mole

"That I am enough as I am" said the boy

And my favourite is; the mole asks the boy

"What do you want to be when you grow up?"

"Kind" said the boy.

Just think how much healthier we would all be if we could just remember to be kind to those around us who are struggling with issues we know nothing about. Sometimes a smile makes all the difference.

On a different note thoses interested in participating in the community garden this year please get in touch with Lynn she also has seeds for those who need any. Her email address is lynnzaiff-deen@gmail.com.

Thanks for your time and if anyone has any ideas regarding social concern please reach out to me at donnabornhuse@hotmail.com.

March 2021 Financial - Newsletter Julie Lutter

Part A Our income:

We had donations of 6,595.00 for March which is down from February. (11,190)

We received our wage subsidy from the Federal Government for \$4,975. This was for months July through to December. We did get some rental of \$2,600. This gives us a total of \$14,170.

We will again apply for a wage subsidy for December to March.

Part B Our expenses: total \$8,813

Our Utilities were over \$400 **each** for gas and electricity/water. Considering we are using the church sanctuary only for recording the online service and we have no one in basement, the electrical and water bill should be lower. Heating Costs are about the same.

I looked at 2020 Electrical and Water bills for January to March – which were \$614, \$ 850, \$723. Therefore in 2021 our electricity and water is lower at about \$400. It is a big building.

	2017	2018	2019
	Total bill amount	Total Bill amount	Total Bill amount
JAN	\$ 546.69	\$ 620.85	\$ 625.05
FEB	\$ 543.97	\$ 654.84	\$ 674.71
MAR	\$ 563.69	\$ 587.82	\$ 643.86

	2017	2018	2019
	ONLY elec- tric cost	ONLY elec- tric cost	ONLY elec- tric cost
	\$ 269.00	\$ 284.00	\$ 356.88
	\$ 256.00	\$ 313.00	\$ 368.97
	\$ 270.00	\$ 274.00	\$ 353.24

GRANT

We are successful with our application. \$1,271.00

The letter will be attached.

The grant was from Alberta Culture for extra expenses due Covid-19. We could add in our hand sanitizer and other cleaning expenses. There were several expenses upgrading the equipment for producing online services. A cart was made to hold the camera and other expenses included some wiring, microphone.

I am sure Pastor David will gladly explain how everything works to produce an online service. Maggie supports the service with music.



April 20, 2021

Julie Lutter
Lord of Life Lutheran Church of Edmonton
2710 - 79 Street NW
Edmonton, AB T6K 3Z1

Dear Julie Lutter:

RE: Faith-based and Cultural Facility Relaunch Grant

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, I am pleased to advise you that your Faith-based and Cultural Facility Relaunch Grant Application No. FCFR-095386 to assist the Lord of Life Lutheran Church of Edmonton with its relaunch has been approved for \$1,271. An electronic transfer of funds will be sent to your bank account in the coming weeks.

As Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women, I am extremely honoured to support this one-time program to enable facilities to safely hold spiritual, religious, cultural and ceremonial events. The Government of Alberta is proud to support organizations that improve the quality of life in our communities.

Acceptance and use of the grant funds will confirm your agreement with the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement in your application. If you have any inquiries, please contact Faith-Based and Cultural Facility Relaunch program administration at 1-800-642-3855.

I wish you health and wellness during these times with hopes for a strong recovery.

Sincerely,



Leela Sharon Aheer

Minister

cc: Christina Gray, MLA
Edmonton-Mill Woods

Own Your Brokenness Finding God in your Failures

Submitted by Pastor David

When Katie Langston attended a lecture by a C. S. Lewis scholar, she was struck by how the scholar could “humbly and honestly spoke of his failings and the love of God” She had always heard religious speakers talk about how they had conquered their sinful tendencies and faults. In her tradition, you fought sin with every ounce of your being. But here was an accomplished man, a religious scholar who could “own up to his brokenness in the present tense, not as something he had successfully overcome” And about this moment Katie Langston wrote,

“That was it ... I’d never known anyone to admit such a thing out loud. It was the cardinal rule of Mormon spirituality: Be ye therefore perfect, and if you couldn’t be perfect, you must do all you can to fix it. Try harder. Get absolution from priesthood leaders. Pray more. You didn’t name your brokenness. You battled it, sought to excise it with every ounce of energy you possessed. To admit powerlessness in the face of your deficiencies was to let your deficiencies win — to let Satan win.”

Katie Langston was one of those people who had lived her life very focused on her sins. As she failed to meet her own moral standards, she would be filled with religious anxiety, and she would repeatedly pray desperately for forgiveness. She obsessed over her guilt. Encountering a religious person who wasn’t crushed by guilt was an eye-opening experience for her.

This brush with God’s grace continued as she enrolled in other classes and was assigned to read a biography of Martin Luther. She noted both she and Luther shared the same obsession with their guilt. “I was blown away by how much I resonated with his experience. . . The confessors in his monastery were so sick of him coming again and again. ‘Come back when you have something real to confess!’ they would tell him. I resonated with his experience of God’s grace, and wrestling with Paul in particular, and understanding that righteousness is a gift that God gives us through Christ.”

Katie Langston, was following that well-worn path that young monk Martin Luther trod, the road from debilitating guilt to the discovery of God’s love, and God’s total forgiveness. This gift of grace turned her life in a new direction. Her Mormon faith was not able to feed her need for gospel and grace, so she switched denominations, and she chose to become a Lutheran pastor and write about her experiences. Her book is called, *Sealed: An Unexpected Journey Into the Heart of Grace*. And I stumbled across her story at this website: <https://religionnews.com/2021/04/27/from-mormon-missionary-to-lutheran-pastor/>

Katie Langston's story is common enough, there are lots of people who are racked with guilt, full of worry that God will never forgive them until they have conquered all their sins. That guilt can be debilitating, the pursuit of godliness can be frustrating, and some never get past this. Yet, God touches people's lives, those who feared God's wrath can discover that God's love is so powerful God can actually, really and truly love their miserable, unworthy souls even with their faults and brokenness. This story is common. I have experienced this, and I am thinking about a diaconal minister I know, Lorraine Schrader, who, like Katie, came to Lutheranism from a similar experience as a Jehovah's Witness. Yet, even as a denomination that particularly focuses on Gospel and grace, we still have among us people who cannot shake that feeling of guilt and shame.

The title of her memoir "*Sealed*" sounds like it is inspired from the words used at baptism, "child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever." God has forgiven our past sins, our present sins, and our future sins. We are free to grow into the mature adults in the faith, not focused on our failings and mistakes, but focused outwards on the needs of those around us. Think of it this way. A professional musician isn't a musician that doesn't make mistakes, but rather, a professional musician keeps singing after that flat note, and keeps playing after the fingers fumble on that complicated chord.

Of course, there are those that are terrified that if we declare that someone's future sins are forgiven, that people will go on crime sprees, or just not care about their faults and failings. But, no, the opposite is true. Freed from the burden of guilt, and thankful for the gift of love, people are empowered to work on improving themselves, ignoring the sins that had really worried them, and working on other stuff that matters more. What we grow in ourselves will always be a patchwork of some good and some ugly bits, but, that patchwork is who we are, and that patchwork is what God loves. Our parents, spouses and children have all learned to love us with our faults, so why can't God?

Scrupulosity

One thing that Katie Langston wrote about was that she had received a diagnosis of "scrupulosity, a religious form of OCD, (obsessive compulsive disorder)." She even went on to say, "[Luther] almost certainly would have had the diagnosis of scrupulosity if such a thing had existed [in his time]". This "scrupulosity" was a new word for me, and it got me doing some research. I discovered that this is indeed a psychological condition "characterized by pathological guilt about moral or religious issues. It is personally distressing, objectively dysfunctional, and often accompanied by significant impairment in social functioning."

God does not want us to go through life distressed and dysfunctional, and so God empowers the Church to absolve. We speak the words of absolution so that terrified consciences will find relief from this guilt. The word absolution is often used to refer to the part of confession liturgy where the

pastor announces that sins are forgiven, but it isn't the words of liturgy that matter, is it what is heard in people's ears. When we hear that relief and know what God does for us, we know absolution. And so, this gift of absolution is a gift that all Christians can take and share with those who need to hear it.

It might seem strange to talk about a psychological disorder in the context of faith and spirituality. Some might find it strange to talk about Luther as having a psychological disorder. But, Luther's flaws made him who he was. As a young monk, he was obsessed with his sins and forever confessing them. The word "scrupulosity" is really a handy word to put perspective on that. God's love extends to those of us who suffer from anxiety, depression, OCD, addictions or any form of psychological disorder.

And in Luther's case, his discovery of God's grace was the therapy he needed to get past his personal distress and many of his life's dysfunctions. The fact that even the founder of our denomination could have issues is a reminder that having issues is normal. Being defective is normal. We are all in this together, with all the hang-ups and baggage we bring. Jesus didn't come for the healthy and perfect, he came for everybody else.

Sometimes, discovering the existence of a word that describes what an individual struggles with can be a insightful flash of grace. I am going to add the word scrupulosity to my lexicon because the normal reactions of guilt or worry about missteps and sins can grow in some people to be truly debilitating, and we should be willing to name what is happening to them.

If anyone reading this is struggling with guilt or shame, you can always talk to your pastor (me!). If obsessing over guilt is a destructive force in your life, there is also value in talking with a counsellor. Being aware of the struggles other people may be facing can be helpful. Perhaps that C. S. Lewis scholar that spoke freely of his failings had no idea that someone like Katie Langston was in the crowd that night. But know that the next Katie Langston is out there, and, when we can own our brokenness and still stand confidently before God, (or a class of undergrads) we may open doors to people discovering grace. Sometimes the most powerful spiritual thing we can say is that we can say is an admission that we are sinners, and yet we are at peace with God.

Cleaning the Cross

Thank you to Pastor David, Lars, Walt, Robyn, Sue and Maggie!

Scaffolding needed to be set up. The church elders help and instruct the young man.....



Cleaning day involved dusting and oiling.





May 2021 Message for Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders

Dear Beloved of God –

The Synod of Alberta and the Territories will gather in convention in July under the theme, “On the Road,” inspired by Luke 24:13–35. It is the post-Resurrection narrative of two people journeying from Jerusalem to Emmaus, where they are joined by a stranger who, when recognized, vanishes, and the two race back to Jerusalem.

Luke’s narratives frequently take us on the road. More than half of the gospel takes place on or is related to a journey, and each time we know that something important is about to happen: Mary rushes to a Judean town in the hill country where she greets Elizabeth; a road leads Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem; a road is the narrative setting for the parable of the Good Samaritan; a road leads the prodigal back home to his father.

Jesus sets his eyes toward Jerusalem in Luke 9:51 and travels there until 19:28; this is known among scholars as the travel narrative where Jesus is on an extended journey.

The sequel to this gospel, The Acts of the Apostles, continues this theme: at Pentecost people journey to Jerusalem; on the road to Damascus, Saul is blinded and there is a significant change in his career, including his name; Philip meets the Ethiopian eunuch on a road.

There is something about travel that evokes Luke’s literary and theological imagination. There is something about roads: the way they can bring us together; the way they can pose a danger to us all; the way they become a symbol of a faith on the move.

Luke’s narrative take us on the road frequently, and we discover that whenever we start to journey with someone, we really do not know if we will end up where we thought the road was leading.

As the two travelers to Emmaus walk along, talking with each other about the momentous things that had happened, Jesus joins them. After they answer Jesus’ questions, he speaks to them and interprets the scriptures for them, beginning with Moses and the prophets.

As they near their destination, Jesus walks ahead as if he is going further, but they convince him to stay with them, and at the table he takes bread, then blesses, breaks, and gives it to them. Their eyes are opened and they recognize him. Then Jesus vanishes.

But the narrative isn’t finished. The journey isn’t over. That same hour they get up and return to Jerusalem. The verb that the gospel writer uses here gets lost in translation. The word that we translate as “get up” is “*anastantes*” in the original Greek – the verb form of the noun that means resurrection.

This is a resurrection story. The two rise up and return to Jerusalem. They have been transformed, having passed through the shadow of death to new life.

And they return to Jerusalem, the place where the journey, the road, began. But they are not going back to their old normal. They have changed, and so has Jerusalem. Grief, sadness, and loss have been transformed: "The Lord has risen, indeed."

At a recent meeting of Synod Council, our Bible study leader suggested that this Lukan narrative, "The Road to Emmaus," has been incorrectly titled and that it should more accurately be named, "The Road to Jerusalem and Back, with a Pit Stop in Emmaus."

Emmaus was thought to be home, but it was not the destination. Emmaus was simply a pit stop on the road. We thought the destination was somewhere else, but we are back in Jerusalem. Back where grief has taken place, back into the hot seat. Back to the sadness, the loss, where hope once resided.

Back ... and transformed.

Where is the road taking us today? To our homes? Or to a pit stop?

We do not know the future, but we have what we need. Jesus is feeding us. We have the Scriptures. We have each other. We know that we will not get to where we are going without going together. Jesus is with us.

In Christ Jesus – Shalom,
+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

"The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

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Heather Zirk

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T: 780-929-2776 (home); 780-907-3646 (cell)



A group of family and friends are travelling to Mexico in July 2022 for ten days to build simple homes for families in need in Vicente Guerrero, a rural agricultural town on the Baja Peninsula that is home to many impoverished migrant workers.

By purchasing gift cards at face value (in \$25, \$50 or \$100 denominations) your support will assist us in raising money to cover the cost of the building materials, furnishings, and non-perishable food for the families. Every card we sell provides 5 % of its value to our fund. Cards can be used in conjunction with Air Miles and Plus cards.

We will be happy to provide you with gift cards throughout the coming year on a regular basis, e.g., weekly, monthly, quarterly – just provide your contact information!

Thank you for your support in helping us

Council Members

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Special Thank You

Alberta Carpet Cleaning

Special thank you to Alberta Carpet Cleaning for cleaning all of our Church carpets in October free of charge. Please share this act of generosity with your friends and family.

Church Cleaning

Please note that the church inside cleaning will now be totally covered by the Presbyterian and St Mary's congregation.

Prayer Needs

Please keep the following people in your prayers

- Lynn and her family (from Community Garden)
- Hilkka, Eila's stepmom
- Verginia & Ed Burke, Lynneah, Lovayda
- Janie Harding and family (Sister Kathy passed away)
- Donna and her family (entering palliative care)
- Diana Kachkowski
- Zirk Family
- Tommie Yackle
- Mavis Lepp's daughter
- Derek + Taylor Smith and family
- Grundler family