

The Love Letter

Volume 48

April 2018

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Worship Schedule

Sundays 8 and 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

Mission Statement: Celebrating and sharing God's love in a welcoming community of faith, while serving others.

Looking Ahead

April 4: FISH Resumes

June 6-9: Vacation Bible School

June 27-July 1: Triennial Youth Gathering



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²³ **J**esus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, 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 12:23-24

Wheat: this is what I'd like to contemplate for a while as we begin the season of Easter, and the beginning of new life springing up around us. Having grown up on a farm that grew wheat, I have many memories of it—some that, after talking to my husband about it, I learned not everyone has had. So let's talk about it.

The Easter song, "Now the Green Blade Rises," speaks about the green blade springing forth from the ground, but it does not describe the feel of it. Walking through a lush green, newly sprouted wheat field is amazing! As a kid, and maybe even as an adult, this is where I imagine sneaking off with a blanket to have a picnic, making sure my bare feet were touching its softness, and my hands as well.

And as wheat is harvested, most of it is made into food for the world. It is often a tasteful ingredient in many types of bread fed to people all around the world. Even that is not the end of wheat's usefulness. The long stems that have been cut are often rolled into big bales of golden straw that become the soft and warm bed of many animals and, once upon a time, probably the bed upon which Mary and her baby Jesus laid. It was also the ingredient with which the Israelites in their bonds of slavery were forced to make bricks. And wheat was possibly harvested by Ruth, where her and Naomi found new life after great tragedy. So as you can see, wheat has many connections to the life of God's people and the life of Jesus.



However, the bigger text of this story is about how a single grain of wheat grows, dies, and sprouts lots of new life: new life that I want to be a part of and breathe in all around me. Of course, this single seed that sprouts everywhere around us is Jesus, who brings life to so many by dying on the cross, being buried in the dark, only to rise to spread joy and bring new life to many.

For through wheat, God has worked miracles and touched many things. God through Jesus has brought forth new life, fed the masses, become bread for the world and been the landing spot for many precious lives to fall upon. And it was a grain of wheat that Jesus used to explain to us why his death had to happen, only so new life could spring forth.

And it is also why we have to die to ourselves, so that we too might bear fruit for the world. That is what we are doing when we help to make sure those around us are getting fed, like with our Lenten mission dollars. When we follow Jesus to the cross, or when we have to walk through tough times in our lives, but choose to still bear witness and give thanks to God, then we too are dying and bearing much fruit for the sake of the world. *(continued, next)*

PASTOR'S PAGE

Other times, the green blades of new life are springing up around us with new life and we don't even notice, because we've been too busy thinking about dying to see the new life, the new ideas, and ways we are bearing fruit for the world.

And to all this, I say, Alleluia! May Jesus Christ be praised! God's love is a wonderful gift, but the gift of life everlasting to accompany that unconditional love and forgiveness is indescribable and awesome beyond measure.

May we continue to return to be fed and nourished by the bread of life, and continue to die to who we are, and arise to be who God has called us to be each day. Amen.



Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!
Now let's get busy living anew in him, too.

-Pr. Becky <><

NURTURE

Thank you for Lenten Soup Suppers

**THANK
YOU**

Thanks to everyone who participated in and assisted with the Lenten Wednesday soup suppers! A special thanks to the Choir members, Council members, Men's Ministry Team, Lisa Rieff, Women of the ELCA as well as their spouses and family members who prepared such great meals with more than enough for everyone! Thank you for helping to create an opportunity for our church family to share meals and fellowship with each other during Lent.

Kathy Christiansen Retirement

What an amazing journey it has been! Kathy Christiansen is hanging up her stethoscope after 43 years of nursing. Please join us in the celebration of this event on **April 14**, anytime between 2-4 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of the church. Please, NO cards or gifts, but there will be a basket for canned goods for a local food bank.

Dire Lion food truck will be catering some fun "afternoon tea" foods, so a RSVP to sharonkc@cox.net or 402.657.4601 would be appreciated.



NURTURE

Vacation Bible School: "Shipwrecked"!

Save the date for VBS, **June 6-9**, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evening, plus Saturday morning followed by lunch.

We need many volunteers to make this program a success. Prayerfully consider what time and talents you can share with our VBS and contact Heather Christensen at heather@lord-of-love.org.



OUTREACH

Habitat for Humanity Dates

They say Nebraska has two seasons: winter and construction season. Our Habitat for humanity host dates this year are **May 5 and Aug. 11**. All skill levels are welcome. Habitat Omaha does not allow youth under age 16 to be on the job site.



To sign up go to: tinyurl.com/elfcoalition2018. The reservation code is elf2018. The address for the house is: 2204 Evans St.

ENDOWMENT FUND

Machame Hospital Orthopedic Fund

Through the Endowment Fund and other sources, Lord of Love has supported the Poor Person Orthopedic Fund at the Machame Lutheran Hospital in Tanzania.

Today I would like you to meet Safina Mwanga. Safina had a gate fall and broke her upper leg. She had a pin inserted in her leg and was in traction for many weeks at the hospital. She was recently released from the hospital. Lord of Love was able to help her family pay for the operation and hospital stay via the Poor Person Orthopedic fund.

If you have any questions about the endowment fund or how to contribute, please contact Doug Aden.



MISSION

Mission Dollars Update

Thanks to all who have given so generously to the special Wednesday evening Lenten offerings, soup suppers and the Easter offering. Those offerings are being divided, with \$715 going to the ELCA Global Barnyard to purchase a family farm. The remainder is going to the Food Bank for the Heartland.

A group of about 16 members from Lord of Love travelled to the Food Bank's warehouse for a tour and to volunteer on March 24. Lord of Love's group packaged more than 900 meals to go home to families in need through the Backpack Program, in partnership with schools in Nebraska and Western Iowa.



Congregational Vitality and Leadership: Focus at ELCA Conference of Bishops

Meeting under the theme "To Claim and Test Our Heritage," the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) engaged in discussions around two key priorities for this church: congregational vitality and leadership. The conference, which met March 1-6, is an advisory body of the ELCA that includes 65 synod bishops, the presiding bishop and the secretary. *(continued, next)*



Congregational Vitality and Leadership, cont.

In her report to the conference, ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton stressed upholding the foundation of the church. Eaton addressed this through the lens of the four main emphases that provide the framework for the work happening across this church: **We are church; we are Lutheran; we are church together; we are church for the sake of the world.**

"When we say we're church, we say, therefore, our foundation is Christ and we gather around word and sacrament," Eaton said. "That's foundational. We want people to go to church, be faithful in the use of the means of grace and pray without ceasing. We need to get back to basics."

Speaking to the second emphasis, "we are Lutheran," Eaton underscored the Lutheran understanding that "in the suffering and death of Jesus, through grace and faith, we live in the promise of the resurrection."

Eaton also asserted that the sacraments "are an important part of our life together. When we talk about baptism, it's not just the event that happens for the newly baptized but (Martin) Luther's rich understanding of baptism that informs and supports every part of our life," she said. "Do we talk about that in our congregations?"

Recalling the words of St. Paul, Eaton reflected on the third emphasis, "So, we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually, we are members one of another." "In baptism, we are incorporated into the body of Christ," she said. "How do we help our people understand that they are part of something greater than themselves?" Eaton connected the fourth emphasis to



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

congregational vitality: "We're church for the sake of the world. How many of our congregations are just trying to hold on to their little patch of territory? And that's intentionally part of the congregational vitality piece – that we're connected to God, we're connected in our congregations, but we're also connected with our communities."

In closing, Eaton told the conference she is willing to serve another six-year term as presiding bishop. "If God and the church will have me, I'm willing to stand for election again," she said. Election for an ELCA presiding bishop will be one of the key actions at the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, Aug. 5-10 in Milwaukee. Eaton was elected to her first term as presiding bishop at the 2013 Churchwide Assembly.

The conference also received an update on the congregation vitality project. The project was created to deepen the ELCA's understanding of congregational vitality—what it means, how vital the ELCA is now, how vitality can be cultivated and how the ELCA can foster cultivation. Key findings identified in the report include: The most vital congregations can be any size or shape; vitality is not directly connected to numeric growth nor is it related to congregation location; more vital does not mean more sustainable.

Read the release from which the above is excerpted at: elca.org/news-and-events

YOUTH

Support National Youth Gathering Participants

We have 11 youth and two chaperones attending the National Youth Gathering in Houston this July!

The congregation has been immensely supportive of our efforts to share in the costs of this faith formation event, and we are most grateful! The event will cost approximately \$1,200 per participant for five days of travel, lodging, food and conference participation.

We will launch our final efforts to raise funds on **Sunday, April 8**. You will have an opportunity to choose an envelope numbered 1 through 100. You make a donation to the Youth Fund in the amount on the envelope. Various envelopes will have surprises in them that you can win such as baked goods or yard work. So pick your envelope wisely!

If all envelopes are picked and returned with donation amount, we will raise \$5,000! This will offset our costs tremendously while leaving money in the Youth Fund for future events.

We thank you for your consideration!



CHURCH COUNCIL

2018 Lord of Love Church Council

Vision and Coordination: Brian Lund, President; Don Rowen, Vice-President; Kathy Christiansen, Secretary; Jackie Combes, Treasurer

Nurture: Chris Rich and Joan Witt

Outreach: Paula Foster and Jesse Brewer

Resources: Brandon Zalesky and Paul Christenson

Worship: Rex Quadhamer and Heather Hansen



RESOURCES

Stewardship Reflection, by Brandon Zalesky

During Lent, we enter a season of preparation, self-reflection and repentance in which we seek to literally “turn around” and realign our lives and focus toward God. It is a time to give up

things as well as take on new life-giving practices, helping us rid ourselves of distractions and our own selfish desires. By doing so, we seek to live and love as more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

From the



**STEWARDSHIP
COMMITTEE**

Everyone usually thinks of January 1 as the time we make resolutions to change who we are or our actions. I have always felt that the season of Lent is more the time when we can make the biggest changes in our lives, because we aren't doing it to fit in with societal norms. Lent is our opportunity to find our own way to refocus our lives toward giving and serving the Lord.

I personally know the feeling of wanting to give back to the church and the Lord. I was intimidated by all the options of how to give back and, with all the options, I made no choices. The only way to get started sometimes is by taking baby steps. My baby step was joining the Stewardship committee. Joining the Stewardship team helped open the flood gates for me to feel more comfortable to taking more opportunities with the church.

So whether you need a little push or need to take a baby step to get more involved, the season of Lent is a great opportunity to get both that push and take that baby step. This can be either refocusing on God or giving back more to the church and getting involved with all the activities.

Project Hope Needs

With our current focus on hunger, the Stewardship Committee continues to remind us of the monthly needs for the pantry at Project Hope. Current needs include:

- Pancake Mix and Syrup
- Cream Soups
- Dressings and Marinades
- Cake and Brownie Mixes
- Applesauce
- Dried Fruit - raisins, cranberries, etc.
- Facial Tissue & Paper Towels
- Small bottles of Dish Soap & Laundry Soap
- Diapers sizes 4, 5, & 6
- Deodorant

**FOOD
DRIVE**



MEN'S NEWS CORNER

Men's Breakfast Group

Men's Breakfast Group meets every Saturday morning at 0700. All men are welcome to attend for Christian study, fellowship and breakfast. Come and join us!



IN OUR PRAYERS

Dick Bell

Connie Bennett (cousin of Karen Armitage)

Jerry Boylan (father of Saylor Boylan)

Jason Combes

Gail Conyers (wife of Kirk Conyers)

Larry Czapla

Sean Duffy (husband of Kelly)

Krysta Figga (friend of Dave & Lisa Rieff)

Babette Garder (mother of Kenn Garder)

Olivia Griffin (daughter of Scott and Dana Griffin)

Ed Guthrie

Pr. Joe Hernandez – Missionary in the Middle East (cousin of David & Chris Boarts)

David Hojnacke (neighbor of the Armitage family)

Jan Hughes (aunt of Paula Foster)

Jim Jacobson (friend of Jon & Carol Novak)

Julie (friend of Pat Brewer)

Kristen Kuhn (friend of Todd & Lisa Meyer)

Izzy Lightle (relative of Kim Gust)

Ken Lineweaver (step-dad of Gwen Edwards)

Ruth Manning

Eileen Nagle (mother-in-law of Tara Novak)

Leona Piehl (mother of Deb Lund)

Judy Quest (friend of Jane Gehringer)

Paul Rumbaugh

Peggy Seck (cousin of Ann Kroll)

Sarge Schuchard

Pauline Shaffer

Brian & Nancy Shinrock

Brenda Thom

Nancy Thoman (stepmother of Ann Kroll)

Alan Walther (brother of Brian Walther)

Steve Wiitala (friend of Karen Mullen)

Caregivers and those who suffer with depression.

Those seeking employment, those seeking to adopt.

Those Who Mourn

The family and friend of Don St. Ours (brother-in-law of Lynda McGraw)

The family and friends of Patricia Sheehan (aunt of Angie Myer)

To add a name to the "In Our Prayers" section, please contact the office at 402.493.2946, send an email to marylou@lord-of-love.org, or fill out a prayer request note available in the narthex and place it in the basket.

Please also let the office know when a name can be removed from the list.

SUNDAY SERVANTS

8 a.m. Service

10:30 a.m. Service

April 1		
Greeters	Jesse and Pat Brewer	Rieff Family
Liturgist	Jesse Brewer	Dave Rieff
Communion Servers	Pat Brewer	Rieff Family
	Brian Walther	
	Cathy Aden	
	Mike Klos	
Altar Care	Connie Walther, Lisa Meyer	Rosie Avalos
April 8		
Greeters	Jim and Jeri Morgan	Tom and Beth Olson
Liturgist	Dave Hild	Ashley Hamik
Communion Servers	Jim and Jeri Morgan	Judy Messerschmidt
	Nathaniel and Levi Gust	Deb Quadhamer
		Tom and Beth Olson
Altar Care	Mardi Fiske	Pat Wineinger, Shelby Lamoureux
April 15		
Greeters	Doug and Rose Roberts	Charise Adams & Kathy Christiansen
Liturgist	Ron Thom	Rex Quadhamer
Communion Servers	Brian and Deb Lund	Charise and Maykala Adams
	Kelly Duffy	Miguel and Rosie Avalos
	Bill Baker	
Altar Care	Joan Witt	Deb Quadhamer, Judy Messerschmidt
April 22		
Greeters	Ed and Marjorie Keiser	Mike and Christie Klos
Liturgist	Heather Christensen	Karen Armitage
Communion Servers	Jason and Bailee Shupp	Doug Armitage
	Shawn Lorenzen	Karen Mullen
	Brandon Zalesky	Gwen Edwards
		Kathy Christiansen
Altar Care	Angie Meyers	Diana Haye, Marcia Roads
April 29		
Greeters	Paul and Peg Murphy	Paul and Ann Kroll
Liturgist	Paul Murphy	Susan Lueders
Communion Servers	Peg Murphy	Dave Lueders
	Joan Witt	Paul and Ann Kroll
	Matt and Lisa Willard	Julie Thompson
Altar Care	Doug & Rose Roberts, Karen & Dale Fink	Karen Armitage, Gwen Edwards
Ushers		
	8 a.m. Kenn Garder, Craig Pennell, Paul Christenson	
	10:30 Rett Messerschmidt, Rob Anderson, Paul Barnett, John Edwards	

April 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Easter Sunday 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:00am Easter Breakfast 10:30am Worship & Communion	2 Church Office Closed 6:00pm W/ELCA @ Deb Christenson's home 8:00pm AA & Al Anon	3 9:00am Quilters 7:00pm Vision & Coordination Mtg. 7:00pm Optimist Mtg.	4 4:00pm Confirmation 5:30pm Supper 6:00pm Brass 6:00pm W/ELCA Gather Study 6:15pm FISH	5 7:00pm Boy Scouts	6 9:30am Al Anon Mtg. 7:30pm AA Mtg.	7 7:00am Men's Breakfast Ministry 4:00pm Granada Townhomes Assoc. Mtg.
8 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion 1:00pm District 18 AA Plng Mtg 5:00pm Bell Rehearsal	9 8:00pm AA & Al Anon	10 7:00pm Sunnyslope Neighborhood Assoc. Mtg.	11 4:00pm Confirmation 5:30pm Supper 6:00pm Brass 6:15pm FISH	12 7:00pm Boy Scouts	13 9:30am Al Anon Mtg. 7:30pm AA Mtg.	14 7:00am Men's Breakfast Ministry 2:00pm Kathy Christiansen Retirement Party
15 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion 5:00pm Bell Rehearsal	16 8:00pm AA & Al Anon	17 9:00am Quilters 7:00pm Church Council Mtg.	18 4:00pm Confirmation 5:30pm Supper 6:00pm Brass 6:15pm FISH 7:00pm Church Council	19 7:00pm Boy Scouts	20 9:00am Piano Tuning 9:30am Al Anon Mtg. 7:30pm AA Mtg.	21 7:00am Men's Breakfast Ministry 10:00am Cosby Recital
22 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion 11:30am God's Daughter Tea 1:00pm Cox Violin Recital 5:00pm Bell Rehearsal	23 8:00pm AA & Al Anon	24	25 Mary Lou out of the office 4:00pm Confirmation 5:30pm Supper 6:00pm Brass 6:15pm FISH	26 Mary Lou out of the office 7:00pm Boy Scouts	27 Mary Lou out of the office 9:30am Al Anon Mtg. 5:00pm Oboe Rehearsal 7:30pm AA Mtg.	28 7:00am Men's Breakfast Ministry 10:00am Cosby Oboe Recital
29 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion 12:00pm Freeman Piano Recital 5:00pm Bell Rehearsal	30 8:00pm AA & Al Anon					