



# Lifetimes

August 2023

## From the Pastor



Pastor Kai Nilsen

**W**hen you think of what makes life worth living, where does your mind go? What are the experiences you are drawn to, the relationships that enliven you, the beliefs that guide you? This fall we will explore those questions and more in our sermon series, *Life Worth Living*. Let me be clear, this is not a judgment on the value of one person's life over another. This is an invitation to examine what makes your life meaningful, gives it purpose, provides direction, specifically as Jesus' followers.

In John 10, Jesus said, "I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly!" What did he mean then? What does it mean for us now? What gives worth and value to our living?

The themes we will explore include:

### **9/10: A Jesus' shaped vision for life: (Colossians 1: 15-20, Matthew 25: 31-46)**

For Jesus' followers, life worth living begins by knowing, at an ever-deepening level, Jesus' vision for life. How did Jesus live? Who did he interact with? How did people respond?

### **9/17: You are here: (Romans 7:14-20, Luke 14: 15-24)**

When we take a journey, we can only know the "way" to go if we have some sense of where we start and where we want to go? So, let's start with being honest about how we value and regard the spiritual journey. What do we desire? What are we willing to do?

### **9/24: What we focus on and do, we become: (Ephesians 3: 14-21, Mark 10:17-22)**

Learning about the power of spiritual habits is essential for a transforming life. Spiritual practices strengthen our inner being, ground us in love, and help us make decisions about what life issues need to be addressed.

### **10/1: How then shall we live? (Philippians 4: 4-9, Luke 3: 7-14)**

Doing what is good, honorable, and commendable (in Paul's words from Philippians) is the invitation for the totality of our lives. Understanding our ordinary lives as places where God is present and alive is one of the great early journeys in a robust life of faith.

### **10/8: Your Life is plural: (Romans 9:9-18, Luke 5:27-32)**

A full life isn't just the life we live. It is not just for us. A life worth living initiates learning spaces in our hearts for others who may live vastly different lives than our own.

### **10/15: One day at a time: (Colossians 3:12-17, Matthew 6: 25-34)**

This "life worth living" doesn't develop overnight and, in fact, is a life-long quest lived wherever you find yourself and "one day at a time."

### **10/22: Failing and forgiving:(2 Corinthians 5: 16-19, Luke 7: 36-50).**

How do we rebound and re-boot our relationships when our lives are not lived in the way that we desired or hoped? How do we forgive ourselves and move on without carrying the burden of guilt or shame?

Are these the only questions for a "life worth living?" No. But, this fall they will be our questions. There will be other ways you will be invited to deepen your immersion in these questions such as question guides for the sermons that you can use on your own or with a few others and small groups based on some of the primary themes.

As Jesus' followers, what makes your life meaningful, gives it purpose, guides your direction?

Look forward to diving in this fall! Peace, Kai



Jim Meinen  
President

A strategic plan is an important tool for any church that wants to be effective in its ministry. It provides a roadmap for the future, helping the church to focus its resources and efforts on achieving its goals. The plan will focus on where we want to go and how to get there. It also ensures that everyone is working towards the same goals.

Creating a strategic plan can be a challenge, but it is essential for any church that wants to be successful. The process can be like herding cats: you have a bunch of different people with different ideas and you're trying to get them all to agree on a single course of action. It's a lot of work, and it can be confusing. But with effort, the rewards can be great.

I am pleased to say that our church is currently in the process of creating a strategic plan. We started with initial vision concepts created by Pastor Kai, and we are now in the process of translating that vision into an actionable three-year strategic plan. We narrowed down all the vision ideas into three strategic pillars:

1. Deepening our Faith
2. Serving and Transforming our Community
3. Responsible Stewardship

Through a series of workshops and discussions, a large number of ideas were generated for each of the three pillars. These ideas are put into buckets, which we are calling "themes." Therefore, each pillar has at least two themes associated with it. And finally, out of each of the themes comes our three-year strategic goals.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 2019 authorized developing a social statement on government, civic engagement and the relationship of church and state that will be presented to an upcoming ELCA general assembly. The fundamental ELCA commitment: as we talk together about tough social issues, we form a community of moral deliberation. You have an opportunity to engage in study and discussion of civic life and faith based on a study by the ELCA in small group sessions facilitated by Carol Lacey or as part of a self-study. In the small group, each gathering will include prayer, scripture, discussion, and a chance to get to know one another. The group will not cover specific issues,

Here are some additional details about our strategic planning process:

- We are using a three-year planning cycle. This will allow us to make adjustments as needed, but it will also give us enough time to see the results of our efforts.
- We are using a collaborative approach. As mentioned above, we held a few workshops with staff, council and church leaders including committee chairs and past council presidents.
- We are identifying other ways to receive congregation input.
- We are using a results-oriented approach. We want to make sure that our plan is focused on achieving specific goals.
- We will begin the plan in 2024 and work to align our 2024 budget to the plan.

We believe that this strategic planning process will be a valuable tool for Incarnation. It will help us to focus our efforts, stay on track, use our financial resources wisely, and make a difference in people's lives.

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### 2023 Council Priorities

1. Create a 3-Year Plan
  2. Increase Transparent Communications
  3. Conduct an Internal Financial Audit
  4. Create Budgets with Positive Net Contributions
  5. Rethink Giving
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## Small Group: Civic Life and Faith

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but rather how to engage in conversations around civic life. Group members will prepare by reviewing materials and videos and, following each session, will be able to send survey responses to the ELCA. Group members will also be able to be part of Kairos forums on this topic (Sept. 24, Oct. 1 and Oct. 2). Sign up for the fall group or take part in a self-study. Register by emailing Denise Floe at [dfloe@incarnationmn.org](mailto:dfloe@incarnationmn.org). More information: [www.incarnationmn.org/ministries/small-groups/new-upcoming-small-groups/](http://www.incarnationmn.org/ministries/small-groups/new-upcoming-small-groups/)  
When/Where: Thurs., 7:00-8:30 p.m., Hybrid (Incarnation or Zoom), on 9/7, 9/14 and 9/21

## Positions Available at Incarnation

### CARE OF CREATION CORNER



Consider this quote from folk singer and environmental activist Pete Seeger:

If it can't be reduced, reused, repaired  
Rebuilt, refurbished, refinished, resold  
Recycled or composted  
Then it should be restricted redesigned  
Or removed from production.

Or for more fun and thought, check out  
the YouTube and sing along at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhaXBCLmxiE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhaXBCLmxiE)

Incarnation Lutheran Church has a part-time **Faith Formation Leader for Children's Ministry** position available. This person will assist in adapting curriculum for the program year, assist in executing ministry on Sunday and Wednesday for children in Preschool through fifth grade, assist with the planning and preparation for family and pre-teen fellowship events throughout the year and assist with special projects as they come up. The ideal candidate will have a heart for Jesus and children along with a minimum of 2 years of experience working with children in a ministry setting. Computer skills are required. This position has flexibility to work remotely or in an office environment. If you feel you are the ideal candidate, please submit a cover letter and resume to [dgriffith@incarnationmn.org](mailto:dgriffith@incarnationmn.org) by August 14.

**Incarnation Preschool** is seeking qualified candidates to fill teaching roles for the upcoming school year. Positions vary. Additional hours are required throughout the school year for meetings, trainings, prep work, orientation, and school events. Substituting hours are also available if interested. For more information and job descriptions, contact Kirsten Henry at [khenry@incarnationmn.org](mailto:khenry@incarnationmn.org) or 651-766-0723.

## Mobile Blood Drive Coming to Incarnation



**American Red Cross**

Incarnation and American Red Cross Blood Services are excited to announce that we will collaborate on bringing mobile blood drives to Incarnation.

This will be a wonderful opportunity for us to:

- provide a vital service to the community (contribute lifesaving blood products like red blood cells, platelets, and plasma).
- connect with the surrounding community. We plan to recruit donors from Shoreview, North Oaks, and other surrounding areas and not just from the Incarnation congregation.
- expand the usefulness of Incarnation's amazing physical facilities.

We have scheduled the first drive for Tuesday, August 15, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Please visit <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/donation-time> to reserve your slot.

### Celebrate and Say Goodbye - August 20

Join us as we celebrate Adam Boldenow, Formation Leader for Middle School Ministry and Britney Iacono, Formation Leader for Children's Ministry as they leave their part-time positions here at Incarnation. Adam will be moving to Milwaukee where they will be on an internship through the seminary as part of the requirement as Adam pursues their MDiv. Britney will be focusing on her full-time position with Metro State University as an Academic Advisor. There will be a reception following both services.





Winter can be a challenging time for many families, and your generosity will provide warmth and comfort to those who need it most. Please consider donating new or gently-used coats, boots, hats, weatherproof gloves, snow pants and scarves. The families at Solid Ground will appreciate the warm gear as they walk in cold weather to bus stops and as children play in the snow. A collection box will be available inside Incarnation from September 3 to October 1. Monetary donations are especially helpful to purchase coats or boots when sizes are not available to meet the needs of families. Please feel free to invite your family, friends and neighbors to participate. We believe that by coming together as a community, we can make a significant impact and bring joy to the lives of our Solid Ground neighbors. All winter wear donations not used by Solid Ground families are brought to the Alley Shoppe in Arlington Hills Lutheran Church so others can keep warm this winter.

Volunteers will be needed to work in a group setting at Incarnation to help sort and mark donations in September. Additional volunteer opportunities will be



available the first week of October to set up the Coat Shop at Solid Ground and assist families in the selection of winter wear. Times to be announced. If you can help with one or more of these opportunities please contact Claire Gilbert at [claireg11@msn.com](mailto:claireg11@msn.com) to sign-up.

## Apostles Library Book Review



*Today Everything is Different: An Adventure in Prayer and Action*  
by Dirk Lang

Dirk Lang, author of this interesting and thoughtful book, is on the faculty of Luther Seminary and serves as the General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations at the Lutheran World Federation. Many of us remember his worship planning for the Joint Catholic

Lutheran Commemoration of the 500 Years of Reformation held in Lund, Sweden in 2016.

Lang writes of his experiences with his lifelong learning to pray. He outlines a theology of prayer rooted in Martin Luther and relates one significant event/action which has had enormous influence on him and his life in prayer. He speaks of the communal prayer experience and witness of the clandestine prayer groups in East Germany which, during the 1980's grew, became more public, and whose occasional demonstrations led to the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. He says these prayer groups were "an

example of church engaged in public spaces" even if they were essentially underground. Prayer took these groups of believers out into the streets and "peace silenced the powerful."

Because this book was being finished just as COVID began, Lang draws some interesting conclusions. He feels that the faith community is connected in communal prayer that is not defined by seeing faces on a screen or hearing each other read or sing. The Holy Spirit brings about a communion deep through bodies, our existence and through our hearts. He says, "Praying online, whether live-streamed or pre-recorded, heightens an awareness of a depth of communion that constitutes human reality. It does not create that communion."

Psalmody, silence, and prayer. This title will bring life to each of these parts of our faith lives. You will learn a lot by the quietly careful writing, the firsthand experiences, and the continued emphases on prayer and action.



## An August Field Trip Recommendation

The Hunger Awareness and Advocacy Group has learned from a field trip most summers. This 2023 year is no exception, and we invite you to consider joining us. We will join the Garden Party and Fundraiser event at Rice Street Gardens, 1958 Rice Street, on August 5.

Rice Street Gardens, where Maplewood, Roseville, and St. Paul intersect, began in 2016 and has grown to about 270 plots for community gardeners who are eagerly growing healthy food and sharing not only their food but their cultures. On any day you visit you may hear one of nearly a dozen languages spoken by those who rent space there. And you will certainly see some plants that you will not recognize!

On Saturday, August 5, from 12:00 – 4:00 p.m., a special Garden Party and Fundraiser will be held in an effort to help raise monies to purchase the land (currently owned by the St. Paul Water Dept.) so it can continue to host the

community gardens. This is a \$1 million effort and gifts of any size are welcome.

There will be garden tours, food for sale, music, games, a fashion show at 3 p.m., and a promised Karen noodle-making demonstration. Parking will be at Galilee Lutheran, across the street at 145 McCarron's Blvd. N.



## Thanks, Scouts!



*Thanks to Drew Roloff and his scout troupe who rebuilt the landscape along the church building. They did an excellent job!*



*Seventeen Troop 416 Scouts cleaned up the ILC Preschool playground on Monday July 17. They enthusiastically pulled weeds and smoothed out the pea gravel. In addition, the Scouts stacked some bricks for the church in the back parking lot. Great work Scouts!*

## A Few Notes from Worship & Music

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Greetings from the Music Department!

July has been a wonderful month of music in worship! We are grateful for the gifts of Stephanie Sinclair, Kari Bornhoft, Lou Ann Reese, Michael Gileski, Samantha Kerkoff, and Monica Murray. We are also thankful to the members of the bell choir for ringing on the July 30 and all of the people who sang with us for Summer Choir on the 16th with Paul Tilquist accompanying us on soprano sax! The contemporary musicians have provided inspiring music at 10:30 and *ff* that weren't enough, we had Dixieland musicians from the Jack Brass Band join us on July 2nd for our outdoor worship service. We are indeed fortunate to have such varied and vibrant musical offerings for worship from our members and the greater musical community!

As we look to August, planning has already begun for youth choir and additional bell choirs. Our next and last Summer



Choir date is August 20. Please join us at 8:15 a.m. on the 20th in the Sanctuary for a short rehearsal before worship. Please also consider joining the Senior Choir during the fall. It's a great way to connect with people and provide musical leadership for our community during the worship service.

If you are someone who might like to share their musical gifts in worship on August, the fall, or anytime in the coming year, please contact me at [sturner@incarnationmn.org](mailto:sturner@incarnationmn.org).

Stay cool, and enjoy the last half of summer!

Sean  
Minister of Music

## High School Boundary Waters Trip

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This summer we are blessed to send a group of 11 high schoolers and adult leaders to Wilderness Canoe Base in the Boundary Waters. The camp is located northwest of Grand Marais, up the Gunflint Trail, and has immediate access to miles of pristine North Woods wilderness. It is a perfect location to take students to disconnect from the stress of our modern lives and reconnect with the important things God provides for us. Incarnation has not had a dedicated "high school" trip in over 5 years, and I was very excited at the opportunity to lead a trip of students on such a wonderful experience. Because we have had more in numbers than initially expected fundraising for the trip has had its ups and downs. I ask, would you please contribute to our church's scholarship fund to help make life changing experiences like these possible for our students. Please consider supporting the camp ministry to our high school youth in a few ways:



- 1) "Proud to Paddle" – \$660 per person;
- 2) "Carry a Canoe" – 3 people to a canoe x \$660 per person = \$1980

Of course, any amount helps. Checks can be given to Nate Bergengren, Mike Sell, or Julie Durbin in the front office. Electronic payments can be made on the Incarnation website. Click on "give" and then select "Youth Ministry Scholarship" fund from the drop-down menu. I thank you for your generosity that has always provided the opportunity for our youth to experience God in our community.

Mike Sell (Faith Formation Leader High School)



### ILC Kid's Serve Opportunities

Rebecca is in the process of actively recruiting individuals to serve in Children's Ministry this fall. There is a wide variety of opportunities for you to get connected with this Ministry. [Click Here](#) if you would like to learn more about how you can get more involved with Children's Ministry. The greatest need at this current time is ILC Kid's small group leaders for 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca.

### MSM & HSM Serve Opportunities

Say "YES!" to working with our middle and high schoolers. We are in the process of recruiting individuals to serve in Middle & High School Ministry this fall. There is a wide variety of opportunities for you to get connected. [Click Here](#) if you would like to learn more about how you can get more involved with MSM & HSM. The greatest need at this current time is fun-loving, patient, and gentle male small group leaders for Wednesday, 5:45-7:00 p.m. (note: you do not have to be a biblical expert to lead). If you have any questions, please contact Nate. Peace.

## 2023 Picture Directory

Now that our faith community is able to gather without masks, you may have noticed some new faces. The Wednesday morning men's Coffee Talk group has a plan to connect names with those new faces—an updated church picture directory. In September, there will be multiple photo sessions on Sunday morning to take family pictures and you will also have the option of submitting your own photo. All those who have photos taken or submitted will receive a free copy of the printed directory which will include only names and photos. As part of this project, we will also be collecting information along with the photos to supplement Incarnation's online REALM directory. So the result of this project will be an update of the 2015 printed directory and an updated secure online directory which can be accessed using a computer or mobile device. Information on how to make a photo shoot reservation or how to submit your own photo will be available later in August.



*Guess who...*

SAVE	<b>BLOCK PARTY</b>
FRIDAY, 9/8 <b>2023</b>	THE
DATE	 <b>4880</b> Hodgson Rd 

### **Save the Date!! Friday Night Block Party – September 8, 5:00-8:00 p.m.**

Incarnation is a community called to be present with our neighbors. So come join the party! There will be inflatables, a 25' climbing wall, a pig roast (veggie options also available), music by The Teddy Holidays, and so much more. This is a FREE event. Full details and opportunities to invite and serve coming soon - look for the sign-up. We get to do this together!

# Memorials

We honor the memory of loved ones in the memorial gifts given below:  
Date Range: 6/19/23 to 7/22/23

Donor	Fund Name	In Memory of
Gary & Mary Ann Anderson	Memorial – Endowment	Al Anderson
Jim & Carol Fruehling	Memorial – Ralph Reeder Food Shelf	Al Anderson
Ken & Rosalie Grosch	Memorial – Undesignated	Al Anderson
Will & Carolyn Liebenow	Memorial – Ralph Reeder Food Shelf	Al Anderson
Jon & Jill Nelson	Memorial – Undesignated	Al Anderson
Marlys M. Nelson	Memorial – Ralph Reeder Food Shelf	Al Anderson
Bev Seabloom	Memorial – Undesignated	Al Anderson
Murt Seltz	Memorial – Undesignated	Erica Bratland
Wes & Mary Thorstad	Memorial – Cemetery	Norris, David & Gayle Thorstad
Jim & Mary DeJarlais	Memorial – Life Haven	Mary Ulvenes
Marie Dold	Memorial – Undesignated	Mary Ulvenes

The list above reflects donations that were made payable to Incarnation Lutheran Church in memory of someone. Memorials are applied to whatever fund the donor designates. If not designated, sometimes the family requests what fund they would like the memorials designated to.

Note: If a memorial gift is received and the check isn't written out to Incarnation Lutheran Church, it will be forwarded directly to the organization that the check was made payable to. Those memorials are typically acknowledged by the organization that receives the donation.

## Among the Congregation

**Prayers:** Maddie St. Martin; Cathy Larson; June Fischer; Kirsten Blaseck; Walter Bzdok; Faith Zernicke; Martha Husby; Wayne Quehl; Carol Beckerleg; Carl & Jan Kuhrmeyer; Gene Lindholm; Marian Ness; Jim Crawford; Kara Genia; Joe Stepka; Lowell Odland; Linda Hudepohl; Chris McDermid; Lorinda & Jim Mishek's granddaughter; Bob & Sue Lange's nephew; Nicole & Troy Heller's brother-in-law; Mike Wielenberg's parents; Bill Fitzsimmons' brother; Al and Carolyn Ek's son; Jon & Jill Nelson's friends Steve & Suzanne; Roger & Dede Mattison's friends, Linda and Yvonne

**Sympathy to:** Dan Strantz & family on the death of his mother; the family of Gary Romstad on his death

**Baptized:** Jackson Ness, son of Christina & Brian Ness

## Financial Report - June 2023

Actual June Operating Giving	\$158,743	YTD Operating Giving	\$966,956	YTD Operating Giving Budget	\$947,409
Actual June Operating Expense	\$161,339	YTD Operating Expense	\$1,017,983	YTD Operating Expense Budget	\$1,042,572

Actual June Mortgage Giving	\$42,536	YTD Mortgage Giving	\$208,695	YTD Mortgage Giving Budget	\$149,052
Actual June Mortgage Expense	\$33,175	YTD Mortgage Expense	\$149,050	YTD Mortgage Expense Budget	\$149,050

**Incarnation Lutheran Church, 4880 Hodgson Road, Shoreview, MN 55126**  
**incarnationmn.org 651-484-7213**