



Lifetimes

July 2023

From the Pastor



Pastor Kai Nilsen

Recently, I got away from the rhythm of work for eight days—a few days with my Renovare’ ministry friends and then a six-day immersion in the mountains of Colorado with my wife, culminating in a concert at the iconic Red Rocks amphitheater outside of Denver. Though it was only eight days,

the newness of the breathtaking vistas and the daily variation of activity and rest disrupted my rhythm enough that by the end of the time I couldn’t even remember what day it was. I think that’s one definition of a good time away!

Reflecting on that time, I was struck by how quickly we can fall out of rhythm in life. How quickly our habits can change.

The habits and rhythms we keep in our lives shape who we are, for good or for ill. I often use the phrase, “What we focus on and do consistently is what we become ultimately.” So, habit and consistent rhythms, rather than being dismissed as boring or rote living, are, in fact, necessary components of a growing life and faith.

What is consistent about your rhythm of life? What is changing? What habits are life-giving? What habits have changed for good or for ill? How do the seasons of the year create shifts in your rhythm and habit?

As a community of faith, consistency of rhythm and habit are essential for growth. We need to see each other in worship or in small groups to be reminded that we are not alone and to be encouraged to live the life that Jesus imagined for us and invited us to live. We need consistent habits of reflection and spiritual reading and giving and serving to center our scattered lives on our core vision at Incarnation of “a world filled with God’s grace and love.” To create a world filled with God’s grace and love we need to be people filled with God’s grace and love. Remember, what we focus on and do consistently is what we become ultimately.



Red Rocks Amphitheater

So, I invite you to reflect on the rhythm of your days and the habits of life and faith you are keeping. I know how quickly we can fall out of our rhythm. I’m also aware that, sometimes, the getting back into rhythm takes a lot more intentionality than the falling out of rhythm.

As this summer season lengthens, I invite you to consider how you are connecting with these habits of the faith:

- **Worship:** How are you connecting with community this summer? Seeing you gathered together is a great source of joy.
- **Giving:** Has your pattern changed this season? Your consistent generosity is essential for our planning and implementing of ministry through all seasons.
- **Serving:** How are you offering yourself to your neighbors, your church? Check in with someone you haven’t seen in a while. It may mean the world to them.
- **Spiritual Reflection:** What is the daily work you are doing to keep focused on God’s grace and love? Know God’s grace and love are available and accessible all the time.

See you soon. Peace, Kai



As the President of the Church Council, I am writing to express my gratitude for all that we have at Incarnation Lutheran Church.

*Jim Meinen
President*

We have so much to be grateful for at Incarnation. We have wonderful worship services, led by our inspiring pastors, and accompanied by our beautiful music. We have a variety of ministries for children, youth, and families, all of which are led by our staff and dedicated volunteers. We have small groups that provide opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth. We support a number of community-based ministries, and we have this wonderful church facility which is a place where we can come together to worship, learn, and grow. We also have the generosity of our members, both financially and of their time and talents.

Some recent examples of volunteering include the 80 volunteers who made the Children's Vacation Bible School possible this year. Your hard work and dedication made it a truly special experience for the children who attended. We have over 30 volunteers that are mowing and landscaping our cemetery; maintaining a beautiful place to visit loved ones and saving us thousands of dollars. We have many people volunteering at our worship services, with children, youth and family ministries, funerals and luncheon services and the list goes on. Presently, we are looking for volunteers for hospitality on Sunday mornings, window cleaning crews, landscaping crews and many more ways to serve. Our volunteer opportunities are all listed on our website. Visit <https://www.incarnationmn.org/serve/> to identify ways you can serve.

So, what does it mean to volunteer? Two of your Council Members shared why they like to volunteer their time to serve on the Council. Amy Johnson said, "I enjoy being

on Council to learn more about the church, form new relationships, help ensure all voices get heard, and to help our community thrive." Tracy Strantz said, "It's been great connecting with congregation members and staff to better understand our goals, hopes, challenges, and successes in developing our 2023 priorities."

As we look to the future, we will continue to need the generosity of our members. Our revenue to date is below budget, which puts pressure on our expenses. Volunteering your time is a good way to help relieve this financial pressure by saving on expenses and ensuring the vitality of our ministries. I encourage you to consider how you can use your gifts and talents to serve our church.

We can follow Jesus' generosity by giving our time, talents, and resources to help others. When we are generous, we are not only helping others, but we are also following the example of Jesus and growing in our faith. No matter how you choose to get involved, you can be sure that your gifts and talents will be appreciated. We are a church that is built on the foundation of generosity, and we are always looking for new ways to serve others. There are many opportunities to get involved and I am confident that you will find a way to make a difference.

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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Among the Congregation

Prayers: Walter Bzdok; Ian Fallgatter; Faith Zernicke; Martha Husby; Wayne Quehl; Anne Cremons; Lynda Thompson; Carol Beckerleg; Carl & Jan Kuhrmeyer; Gene Lindholm; Marian Ness; Jim Crawford; Kara Genia; Joe Stepka; Lowell Odland; Linda Hudepohl; Chris McDermid; Bob & Sue Lange's nephew; Debbie & Jim Morse's daughter-in-law; Mike Wielenberg's parents; Bill Fitzsimmons' brother; Al and Carolyn Ek's son; Maddie St. Martin's friend, Jesse; Jon & Jill Nelson's friends Steve & Suzanne; Roger & Dede Mattison's friends, Linda and Yvonne; Nancy Haugen's friend Joyce

Sympathy to: the family of Al Anderson, on his death; the family of Erica Bratland on her death; the family of Orris Haraldson on his death; the family of Mary Sandness on her death; the family of Mary Blomquist on her death; the family of John Moncrief on his death; Mary Flanagan and family on the death of her sister

Baptized: Avery & Hailey Nesser, daughters of Patrick & Katie Nesser; Charlotte Sederberg; daughter of Alex & Libby Sederberg; Nora Joy Nelson, daughter of Kirk & Kacie Nelson

Preschool Positions Available

Incarnation Preschool is seeking qualified candidates to fill teaching roles for the upcoming school year. Positions vary. Additional hours for positions are required throughout the school year for meetings, training, 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 or 651-766-0723.

Preschool Finishes Wonderful Year

Incarnation Preschool finished off the 2022-23 school year at the end of May by celebrating a wonderful year of learning and the 25th Anniversary of the school overall! Families gathered to support their children and the preschool program. There were two days of musical programs, laughter, tears, and ice cream treats (sponsored by Boulevard Autoworks). We are proud of Incarnation's longstanding presence in the community and that we have instilled God's love in thousands of children! Year 26 starts in September. For more information on preschool registration for fall, contact Kirsten Henry at 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.

Visiting Friends: A New Care Team Opportunity

Are you someone who would enjoy visiting a friend from Incarnation? Do you know someone who could benefit from a visiting friend?

The Incarnation Care Team is launching an initiative to provide a way for people to connect with one another. The Incarnation Care Team matches volunteers with others who have needs in the congregation. Historically, the Care Team connects volunteers with others who need rides to church or to a medical appointment. Leaders Marilyn Arny and Dianne Timmer believe connecting with others through visits will support those who are experiencing isolation, especially as a result of the pandemic.

Incarnation members Jerry Dufeck and Dale Anderson became acquainted over the past couple years. Jerry began checking in with “Dr. Dale”, as he calls him, with visits and phone calls. Dr. Dale Anderson is a retired surgeon and emergency room physician who will be 90 years old this month. Due to changes in his health, Dale moved to an assisted living facility in Stillwater to be closer to his son, Lance. Lance brings his dad to worship at Incarnation and appreciates Jerry’s regular visits and calls.

As an ELCA rostered deacon, Jerry volunteers at both Cerenity Senior Care in White Bear Lake and Lyngblomsten Care Center in St. Paul, visiting people at the direction of the staff chaplains. Jerry feels this work is life giving to him and wants to encourage others to consider connecting intentionally with others in the congregation.



Jeffy Dufeck, Dale Anderson, and Lance Anderson reconnect at Sunday services.

Are you someone who would enjoy visiting a friend from Incarnation? Do you know someone who could benefit from a visiting friend? If you are interested in participating or have questions, contact Julie Durbin in the Incarnation office.

Apostles Library Book Review



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

This book does not fail to deliver the “unexpected” in helping readers gain both a greater understanding of Christian spirituality and a path to it. On this adventure, an adventure of both the mind and heart, the reader will explore the foundational

underpinnings of baptism, the impact of prayer in many forms--especially in community--and the insights of giants

like Luther and Bonhoeffer. The great beauty of the book, however, is found in the incredibly moving stories Lange shares, including personal stories of the prayer groups and underground church in East Germany prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall. In these, we see firsthand evidence of the spiritual power to be discovered as we simply, faithfully, and prayerfully embrace the gift given in baptism; live faithfully in our everyday lives; and respond to God’s call as a community to walk arm in arm into the world alongside and for our neighbor.

Thank You!



Thank you for your generous gifts of household items and financial contributions in our annual Spring Shower drive for the families at Solid Ground. By providing essential household items, you are not only furnishing homes but also filling them with hope and comfort. Your acts of kindness make an impact in the lives of families who will feel a sense of belonging and stability as they settle into their new surroundings. Solid Ground is immensely grateful for your ongoing support!



For numerous years, Incarnation has engaged in an important summer campaign for the Ralph Reeder Food Shelf called Tons of Love. This has always served as one of the ways Incarnation responds to the weighty issue of summer food insecurity.

While weighing your summer priorities, we pray you will consider supporting the Tons of Love campaign:

- with an online financial gift via realm (go to <https://onrealm.org/IncarnationLuth/-/give/now> – and choose “Ralph Reeder Food Shelf” as the Fund),
- by writing a check to Incarnation with “Tons of Love” in the memo,
- by purchasing a bag of non-perishable food or household items from your favorite store,
- by purchasing (anytime) from the list below of suggested weekly donations focused on needed items which the Ralph Reeder Food Shelf has a difficult time sourcing at a discount.

Bring your donations to Incarnation from June 25 – August 6, any time the building is open.

Remember that your financial donation is very powerful. Stretch your financial gifts and let Ralph Reeder Food Shelf purchase what they need, when they need it / often at discounted prices. Every dollar counts!!

Tons of Love is one way we live into our calling as we respond to the larger world, where food insecurity assistance is needed even more than ever in these days. Our mission: *Filled by God’s grace, we feed the hungry in heart, body, mind and spirit.*

Be a part of getting the most food and household items possible into the homes of as many of our neighbors as possible who especially need it this summer! Thank you for your generosity!

TONS OF LOVE FOOD DRIVE 7/2 TO 8/6 weekly needs



WEEK

1

SUMMER ESSENTIALS-ketchup, mustard, mayo, bbq sauce, grill seasoning, sunscreen, kid-friendly bug spray, band-aids, triple antibiotic ointment.

WEEK

2

LUNCH IS SERVED-macaroni and cheese, chili, soups, stew, ramen, canned tuna and chicken, meals in a can, hormel compleats.

WEEK

3

SNACK TIME - granola bars, cereal bars, fruit snacks, chips, crackers, cookies, pudding, nuts, dried fruit.

WEEK

4

SQUEAKY CLEAN - laundry detergent, dish soap, dishwasher soap, bar soap, body wash, deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste, powdered cleanser, all purpose cleaner, toilet paper, kleenex, paper towels.

WEEK

5

OH BABY! Diapers - size 1 through 6, pullups, wipes, diaper ointment, pouches, toddler friendly snacks.

Share what you can - thank you!

Last year, the Ralph Reeder Food Shelf gave out nearly one million pounds of food to over 43,000 of our food insecure neighbors.



Ralph Reeder
Food Shelf

COMMUNITY EDUCATION
Mounds View Public Schools

A Few Notes from Worship & Music

Summer Greetings from the Music Department!

There are many exciting things in the works this summer. The tech team has been putting in long hours implementing our new software and hardware systems for our new presentation software. This is a major undertaking and has presented many challenges which the team has taken on with a great spirit. The launch of the new system took place in mid-June and although there were a few small challenges, the team reacted quickly and the services ran smoothly. Please join me in congratulating our tech team for their commitment and perseverance as they work hard to provide an enhanced in-person and online worship experience!

In musical news, we will soon announce our selection for the Joyful Noise Choir Director. Our youth choir will begin this fall and will be an exciting addition to our overall music program at Incarnation. There will also be an expansion to the bell choir for kids as well. Any questions



regarding involvement in youth music can be directed to Amy Maakestad at amaakestad@incarnationmn.org.

It was wonderful to have so many voices for our first Sunday of Summer Choir! Their rendition of Joel Raney's "O, Jeremiah!" had boundless energy and enthusiasm! Our next summer choir date will be July 16, and we would love to have anyone interested join us. There is no Wednesday night rehearsal for summer choir, just meet in the sanctuary at 8:15 a.m. on July 16 and we will have a short preparation for our selection that morning. Please consider joining us - it's a great way to lift your voice in worship, provide leadership to the congregation, and make new friends! Any choir member can provide more information or please feel free to contact me at sturner@incarnationmn.org.

See you in worship!
Sean Turner

A Stellar Week of VBS!

What a Stellar week of Vacation Bible School! We celebrated Shining Jesus' Light all week long! We discovered that when life feels dark, when people don't get along, when good things happen, when people need help we can shine Jesus' light! There were so many God Sightings™ throughout the week, a display of God's handiwork in our lives!



Memorials

We honor the memory of loved ones in the memorial gifts given below:
Date Range: 5/21/23 to 6/18/23

Donor	Fund Name	In Memory of
Jack & Karen Ruff	Memorial – Worship & Music (Choir)	Lu Durbahn
Tim & Katie Gray	Memorial – Feed My Starving Children	Bridget Giere
Marlys M. Nelson	Memorial – Ralph Reeder Food Shelf	Mary Sandness
Bev Seabloom	Memorial – Undesignated	Mary Sandness
Rebecca Anderson	Memorial – Operating	Mary Ulvenes
Donald Holmes	Memorial – Operating	Mary Ulvenes
Jackie Best Holmstrom	Memorial – Operating	Mary Ulvenes
Carol Isaacson	Memorial – Operating	Mary Ulvenes
Stacy Rubsam	Memorial – Operating	Mary Ulvenes
Harry & Marian Johnson	Memorial – Endowment	Mary Ulvenes
Ruth Krueger	Memorial – Feed My Starving Children	Mary Ulvenes
Gary & Mary Lunstad	Memorial – Feed My Starving Children	Mary Ulvenes
Nancy Erickson	Memorial – Feed My Starving Children	Mary Ulvenes
Brian Rathke	Memorial – Planting Hope (Synod Campaign)	Mary Ulvenes
Raymond Ulvenes	Memorial – Planting Hope (Synod Campaign)	Mary Ulvenes
James & Susan Wandell	Memorial – Planting Hope (Synod Campaign)	Mary Ulvenes
Norma Cuderman	Memorial – Solid Ground	Mary Ulvenes
Terrence Knapton	Memorial – Solid Ground	Mary Ulvenes
Ruth Larson	Memorial – Solid Ground	Mary Ulvenes
Gordan & Dianne Rathke	Memorial – Solid Ground	Mary Ulvenes
Erik & Amy Sevig	Memorial – Solid Ground	Mary Ulvenes
Catherine Nelson	Memorial – Undesignated	Mary Ulvenes
Kenneth Nieman	Memorial – Undesignated	Mary Ulvenes
Marlys J. Nelson	Memorial – Worship & Music (Hand Bells)	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.

Financial Report - May 2023

Actual May Operating Giving	\$113,361.44	YTD Operating Giving	\$808,213.26	YTD Operating Giving Budget	\$836,738.00
Actual May Operating Expense	\$154,577.87	YTD Operating Expense	\$856,643.19	YTD Operating Expense Budget	\$888,807.52

Actual May Mortgage Giving	\$20,137.83	YTD Mortgage Giving	\$166,159.82	YTD Mortgage Giving Budget	\$124,210.00
Actual May Mortgage Expense	\$20,675.00	YTD Mortgage Expense	\$115,875.00	YTD Mortgage Expense Budget	\$115,875.00