

From the Pastor



At a recent staff meeting, I asked them to share what they will be doing to renew their bodies, minds, and spirits this summer. As you might expect, many talked about a time of vacation, of getting away either to a specific location or just away from the daily rhythms of work. All good. But, what I think we all know is that renewal doesn't come once

Pastor Kai Nilsen

or twice a year. In fact, if that's the hope, the unfortunate truth is that it simply doesn't last.

Renewal, like any spiritual desire, needs to be practiced consistently, intentionally, and purposefully. And, Lord knows we need some renewal in our time.

Writer Caroline Burke reflected on the rising rates of depression in our country. According to a recent Gallup poll, 29% of American adults reported having experienced clinical depression in their lifetime, up from 19% in 2015, with women and young adults being particularly susceptible. She surmised that COVID may not have been the driver but it certainly exacerbated the contributing circumstances of social isolation, loneliness, and economic uncertainty.

In a recent article, US Surgeon General, Vivek Murthy, picked up this theme, raising the caution flag around the growing sense of loneliness in our country comparing its effects on our bodies to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Muthy, "I'm asking people to recognize that our disconnection from one another is one of the most foundational issues we are dealing with in our society today."

Take a vacation if you are able. No question. But, what else can you build into your ongoing life.

We recently ended our sermon series on *Awe*, based thematically on a book by Dacher Keltner. In his research, Keltner discovered the life-giving and renewing

properties of our experiences of awe and invites us to consider how we can engage them daily. Here are a few to consider:

- Daily connection to the natural world, specifically allowing yourselves to wonder about its beauty and complexity.
- Daily connection with people you care about. Our stories matter to one another.
- Consistent acts of kindness offered to others.
- Communal Gatherings (we call them worship) where we encounter the vast mystery of a God who created us in love, for love.
- Add your own to the list.

Whatever you decide to do, do it intentionally, consistently, and purposefully. The Spirit of God is always available and accessible in renewing ways.

As we gather for worship this summer, our preaching theme will be *Reimagining the Way*. We will use pivotal stories from the book of Acts as guides to ask our own questions about how God is asking us to re-think who we are as a faith community today. Remember, this very God who transforms communities, renews individual lives!

Look forward to seeing you in worship this summer!

Peace, Kai



Highlights was my favorite children's magazine. It was often found in the waiting rooms of doctor's offices. As a child, I remember going straight to the "connect the dots" puzzle, and with excitement, I would connect the numbered dots to create a picture. This example is a reminder that we

Jim Meinen President

often can't see the big picture when we are in the middle of things. But if we trust God

to keep everything moving forward, we can eventually look back and see how all our experiences have come together to create something beautiful and meaningful.

Similarly, your Council is hard at work connecting dots to help strengthen our church. For example, one of the Council's five priorities is the creation of a 3-year plan. This plan consists of three strategic pillars:

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

The third pillar, Responsible Stewardship, is linked back to three of your Council priorities which are a) conduct an internal audit (underway), b) budgets with positive net contributions and c) rethink giving. All are intended to strengthen our financial position so that we have the resources to grow.

Recently, the Stewardship Committee and the Council had a joint workshop designed to identify ways to "rethink our giving." The focus was on our operating budget. The church's operating budget can be overlooked, but it is the heart of our church. It has been broadly flat over the past several years. A budget that does not increase, can potentially inhibit the church's ability to grow ministries and touch the lives of more people in different ways. The budget funds the programming and staffing of our key ministries which include a) children, youth and family, b) worship and music and c) adult ministries. It also supports the ongoing operational costs of our church and the vital role the administrative staff plays to keep everything running smoothly.

Often it is easy to get into the cycle of just do as we did in the past. Breaking the cycle of the traditional giving strategies and introducing new innovative approaches is not only exciting but will prove to be fruitful. The joint workshop resulted in a long list of creative strategies to strengthen our giving culture, identify new ways to give, and ideas on how to capture and share the stories of how our church has touched so many lives over the years. The Stewardship Committee will prioritize these giving strategies and implement those that look to be most promising.

When we grow our operating budget, that growth will connect back to the other two pillars in the 3-year plan. It will provide resources to help us touch the lives of more people and deepen their and our faith and it will help us serve and transform our faith community. We can trust that God has a plan for our lives. Even when we don't understand what is happening, we can trust that God is working in our lives for our good and we can also trust that God will connect the "dots" in our lives.

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

Among the Congregation

Prayers: People as they recover from U.S. storms; Ella Friedman; Wayne Quehl; Anne Cremons; Lynda Thompson; Richard Ulvenes; Carol Beckerleg; Carl & Jan Kuhrmeyer; Mary Blomquist; Gene Lindholm; Carl Johnson; Karen Ruff; Marian Ness; Jim Crawford; Kara Genia; Joe Stepka; Lowell Odland; Erica Bratland; Linda Hudepohl; Chris McDermid; Debbie & Jim Morse's daughter-in-law; Larrie Reese's sister's son-in-law; Ken & Rosalie Grosch's nephew; Mike Wielenberg's parents; Bill Fitzsimmons' brother; Al and Carolyn Ek's son; Matt Pokorny's friend, Noah and Noah's family; Gene & Mary Lou Lindholm's friend; Adam; 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 Orris Haraldson on his death; the family of Rachel Kraemer on her death; the family of Peggy Wald on her death; the family of Mary Ulvenes on her death; Carol Lacey & family on the death of her brother-in-law **Confirmed:** Carter Ballman; George O'Brien; Alex Ogden; Daniel Tyler **Baptized:** Peter Thomas Bergman, son of Andy & Jennie Bergman

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Weddings, graduation celebrations, holidays, get togethers—all are important, and all can produce lots of waste. The average American wedding typically dumps 400–600 pounds of trash into landfills. Choose alternatives to trashing: Collect and compost food scraps and compostable plates and utensils. Avoid paper and plastic, substituting glass or ceramic dishes, serving platters, and silverware, which can be washed and reused. Home or locally grown seasonal bouquets mean fewer transport emissions and less likelihood of poor treatment of the farm workers—a justice issue. Once the event is over, deliver the flowers to a hospital, nursing home, or to some people you love or who need a lift. Compost any flowers that have withered.

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.

Woodworkers

Tuesday, June 6, 7:00 p.m., at Dick Trapp's garage, 1045 Lake Oaks Drive, Shoreview.

We will discuss whatever is on your mind in addition to summer projects. Bring along a friend and, as always, feel free to bring along a showand-tell item.

Vacation Bible School 2023 SOL VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2023 June 19 – 22, 2023 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon Ages: 4 years of age – 4th grade \$25 per child \$70 family max (Scholarships are provided) HALLEY **RINGO** This year's Vacation Bible School theme is STELLAR - SHINE JESUS' LIGHT. Kid's will explore how Jesus shined hope, love, forgiveness, and joy to the world - and how we can do the same with his power! During our time together, kids will experience faith discoveries, memorable music and epic adventures that help kids grow in relationship with Jesus. COSMO ASTRO Registration deadline is June 14! Don't forget to invite your friends!

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Enjoy hot dogs, frozen custard with toppings, lawn games, bouncies and a climbing wall.

Plenty of parking for bikes, strollers, skateboards, cars, or whatever you use to get to the party at Incarnation Lutheran Church. We'll be at the Northwest part of the building, near the grassy area at Door 6.

This awesome event won't run itself. We need custard scoopers, glad greeters, bouncy bystanders, etc. If you would like to volunteer at either (or both) of our shifts (2:00-4:15 or 4:15-6:30 p.m.). Email Nate Bergengren at nbergengren@incarnationmn.org to help!

Cherish All Children Hybrid 5K June 11



Walk together Sunday, June 11, 11:30 a.m. at Victory Memorial Parkway.

Join in this fun event where YOU can make a difference in keeping children safe! Walk or run at a time and location that's best for you, or meet up with Cherish All Children's church and community partners for a group walk on June 11 at Victory Memorial Parkway (4499 Victory Memorial Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55412).

Help us raise \$20,000 so we can have an even greater impact with youth and families in the coming year. Enlisting others to sponsor you is an easy way to accomplish this goal; consider asking 10 friends to sponsor you for \$30 each. If you're unable to participate, you may also sponsor a participant or make a general gift and support this work of keeping children safe from sexual exploitation. Learn more, sign up for this free event, or donate at cherishallchildren.org/events. Questions? Ask Joy at joy.mcelroy@cherishallchildren.org.

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All Hands on Hope 2023 MobilePack[™] Feeds 1,595 Kids for One Year!

We have officially started the summer season here in Minnesota. Families are counting down the days until the last musical concerts, track and field days, and graduations mark the start of a new season. As we prepare to enjoy Minnesota's blissful, but brief summer, we wanted to reflect on the success of the 16thAll Hands on Hope MobilePackTM held April 26-30, 2023, on site at Incarnation.

The event was a great success, in terms of packing meals as well as bringing the community together to support our ministry partner, Feed My Starving Children (FMSC). During 14 shifts over five days, more than 1,900 volunteers packed 582,336 meals. That number translates into feeding 1,595 of God's beloved children for one year. To date, we have raised over \$180,000 to meet our financial goal. and the all-important set-up and tear-down crews. We had a team of volunteers who prepared and handed out samples of the MannaPack[™] meals to all volunteers before and after some shifts. All of these volunteers were treated to nutritious meals provided by different



volunteer groups throughout the weekend.

FMSC Action Group member Claudia Wiebold says, "It was so exciting to feel the energy and the enthusiasm throughout all of the spaces used for the All Hands on

Hope MobilePackTM. Our community (Incarnation members and our neighbors) was excited to be packing!"

In addition to feeding 1,595 children for a year, the MobilePack is an excellent way to build community and join together in service with neighbors. "I connected with a man that often walks along the bike path on Hodgson Road," says Wiebold. "I often pass

him, either in my car or on my bike. When I saw him in the labeling room, I took the opportunity to greet him–and met his wife in the process. Now I have names to go along with these faces."

As the planners of the event, Incarnation's FMSC Action Group would like to thank everyone who supported this experience, whether as a volunteer, a financial supporter or someone who prayed for its success. This work couldn't be done without your partnership. Look for more information regarding our 2024 MobilePackTM in *Lifetimes* or by following our social media accounts:

Facebook: @IncarnationMobilePack Instagram: @fmsc_at_incarnation

For more information or questions, please contact Mike Vant at mjvant@gmail.com.

There were many highlights over the five days of packing. The Incarnation FMSC Action Group, FMSC staff and the ILC Prayer Team kicked off the event with a prayer in the parking lot over "Fancy Nancy," the semi-trailer that housed the ingredients and pallets of packed meals. While our volunteer numbers did not reach pre-pandemic levels, the volunteers

who showed up were dedicated and efficient, which in turn yielded a large number of meals packed. We were delighted to see not only members of the Incarnation community who have been faithfully volunteering since 2007, but many members of the greater community including large groups from Roseville Lutheran Church, the Mounds View Girls La Crosse Team (players, coaches and parents), Calvary-Spring Lake Parish from the Rush Lake area, MN Tzu-Shao group, several local Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, basketball teams, small groups, National Honor Society students, scouts, neighborhood groups and many more. We had several companies who not only financially sponsored the event, but also provided volunteers including Thrivent Financial, Kevari, Trafera, Reell, Tradition Bank, Legacy Wealth, and Eagle Brook Church. More than ever, this was a larger community effort and we are grateful for the support of so many.

Many volunteers assisted behind the scenes, serving as Welcome Ambassadors, greeting volunteers and helping them register and get ready to pack, box makers, labelers,

1,900 Volunteers 582,336 Meals 1,595 Children Fed for One Year <u>\$180,000 Raised</u> **God's Amazing Love!**

A Few Notes from Worship & Music

Greetings Everyone and Happy Spring/Summer!

I am excited to update you on some wonderful enhancements to our Sunday morning worship experiences. During the months of June and July, both morning services will be held in the Sanctuary. During these months we will be implementing a new software system that significantly updates the presentation of visuals and graphics during worship. Having both services in the Sanctuary will allow the tech and worship planning teams the opportunity to learn the system in one space with adequate time between services to make sure things run smoothly.



In addition to the new software, a substantial portion of this project involves installing hardware and new pieces of equipment. Installation has begun in the Sanctuary and will start in Incarnation Hall in June and July.

We gratefully thank you for your patience as we grow into this new and exciting improvement to the visual aspect of our worship experience!

We look forward to seeing you in worship! Sean Turner Minister of Music and Worship

Troop 416 Scouts Help with FMSC

Thirty Scouts, leaders, and family members from Troop 9416 (sponsored by Incarnation Lutheran Church) packed food for hungry children as they participated in the Feed My Starving Children Mobile Pack[™] at Incarnation Lutheran Church on April 27, 2023. During the shift 240 boxes or 43,000 meals were packed by all who gathered to help. During this shift alone, the food that was packed will feed 120 children for a year! The following Scouts participated: Gannon, Pierson, Wade, Noah, Eli, Nick, Hayden, Hunter, Arlo, Leo and Jordan. The Scouts agreed that this type of service was not only a great way to help others, but

service was not only a great way to help others, but it was also quite fun!





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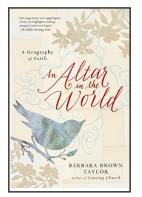
Small Group Ministry

ry something new in a short timeframe! Dive into the Book of Acts (Incarnation's summer sermon theme) or learn about *The Saint John's Bible* (with Incarnation's Heritage Edition) in a summer small group. Explore *Awe* (Incarnation's spring sermon theme) while reading *An Altar in the World* or in a group watching for awe in nature, music, visual arts, stories and more. Consider how to have civil conversations using an ELCA study. Or simply enjoy creation outdoors with others.

More information at: https://www.incarnationmn.org/ministries/small-groups/new-upcoming-small-groups/

Small Group: An Altar in the World

Watch for sacred moments in the small things we do and see every day. Simple practices such as walking, shopping for groceries, working around the house, and prayer can become meaningful ways to experience awe, wonder and a sense of God's presence. This small group will read and talk about selections from *An Altar in the World* by Barbara



Brown Taylor. Whether you are new to this book or have already read it, this is an opportunity to discover new insights in conversations with others. The book encourages us to find altars in the world as we "live with purpose, pay attention, slow down and revere the world we live in." The group will read one of the chapters before each gathering. Leaders: Connie Aram and Jane Trapp.

Dates: 6/27, 7/11, 7/18, 7/25, 8/1 Register: <u>dfloe@incarnationmn.org</u> When/Where: Tuesdays, 1:00-2:30 p.m., at Incarnation.

Small Group: Everyday Awe and Wonder

What inspires awe for you? This group is a chance to talk about the awe found in nature, music, visual art and design, the stories of others and our shared experiences. Extending the



spring sermon series on "awe," this group is a chance to find practices that open us to experiencing awe. The group will draw on insights from a collection of articles, podcasts, videos, sermons and the book *Awe* by Dacher Keltner. Led by Grant Rykken and Denise Floe.

Dates: 6/27, 7/11, 7/25, and 8/8 Register: <u>dfloe@incarnationmn.org</u> When: Tuesdays, 4:15-5:45 p.m., at Incarnation

Small Group: Civic Life and Faith

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. Each gathering will include prayer, scripture, discussion, and a chance to get to know one another. The group will not cover specific issues, 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 summer OR fall group (there are two separate groups) or take part in a self-study.

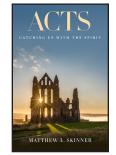
Register: dfloe@incarnationmn.org

Summer Group: Wed., 7:00-8:30 p.m., Hybrid (Incarnation/Zoom), on 6/28, 7/12 and 7/26 *Fall Group:* Thurs., 7:00-8:30 p.m., Hybrid (Incarnation/Zoom), on 9/7, 9/14 and 9/21

More Groups Next Page...

Small Group: Acts - Catching Up with the Spirit

Explore six key themes found in the Book of Acts that are capable of igniting our imagination about the Christian message, the work of God's people, and the challenges of living faithfully in a complex and changing world. This small group will take a closer look at the Book of Acts (the theme for summer Sunday worship).



Led by Mike Styba, the group will read short chapters and watch DVD videos by Matthew Skinner from Luther Seminary. No experience needed.

Dates: 6/19, 6/26, 7/10, 7/17, 7/24, and 7/31 Register: <u>dfloe@incarnationmn.org</u> When/Where: Mondays, 6:30-8:00 p.m., at Incarnation

Small Group: The Saint John's Bible

Explore the illuminations (artwork) and calligraphy (written text) of *The Saint John's Bible*. Hear how this illuminated Bible was created and experience the faith practice of Visio Divina. Discover how the illuminations speak to you



and to others. Led by Grant Rykken.

Dates: 6/13, 6/27, 7/11, 7/25, and 8/8 Register: <u>dfloe@incarnationmn.org</u> When/Where: Tuesdays, 6:30-8:00 p.m., at Incarnation

Summer Fellowship Group: Men's Hiking

Hike a selection of local trails in this group for men, led by Mark Oswood. The group meets once a month to hike 2-3 miles, at a moderate pace on local trails. There is also time



set aside for devotions, led by the group leader. This group is returning with both new and former group participants.

Dates: 6/13, 7/18, 8/15, 9/19 Register: <u>dfloe@incarnationmn.org</u> When: Tuesdays, 6:15-8:30 p.m. (approximately)

Summer Fellowship Group: Casual Biking

Spend Saturday mornings enjoying a bike ride. Bike at a casual pace and connect with others who enjoy biking. This fellowship group will take easy to moderate trails around the Twin



Cities, taking a break mid-point for a devotion and prayer led by Claudia Wiebold (group leader). The group will bike for 2-3 hours, covering up to 20 miles (approximately 10 mph). There will also be a one-time service opportunity. Group members will drive to and meet at each trailhead. Adults are welcome. This group is returning with both new and former group participants.

Dates: 6/10, 6/24, 7/8, 7/22, 8/12 and 9/9 Register: <u>crwiebold@gmail.com</u> *When: Saturdays, 8:30 am-12 noon*

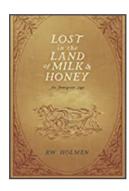
Summer Fellowship Group: Walking

Enjoy walking on trails in Lino Lakes/Shoreview on Wednesday evenings. This small group will meet at a local trail and walk 2-3 miles at a moderate pace for 75-90 minutes. The evening will also include devotions and prayer, led by Nancy Stutzman and Martie Martin (group leaders).

Dates: 6/28, 7/12, 8/2 and 8/23 Register: <u>dfloe@incarnationmn.org</u> When/Where: Wednesdays, 6:30-8:00 p.m.



Apostles Library Book Review



Lost in the Land of Milk & Honey: An Immigrant Saga By RW Holmen

This is the title of another novel by RW Holmen, a Minnesota author with deep Scandinavian roots. (Our library has other of his books, too.) While this novel is not autobiographical, he does say that family stories and experiences do color the story.

A prologue and an epilogue bookend this lengthy story of a Minnesota family from 1891 to the present century. Red cardinals permeate the story, too—they appear and reappear often, and you will learn to watch for them. Pastors, judges, and murderers alike fill the pages as we follow Jonas Jonsson and his offspring in Minnesota. The story moved from Swede Hollow to "a swanky home for the elderly in an affluent Twin Cities suburb." Many names and places will be familiar to those of us who live in Minnesota.

This story could be the story of many families—perhaps yours. Maybe you are the storyteller who remains and needs to share your story with relatives. Could be.

Solid Ground Spring Shower



You are invited to participate in a Spring Shower for residents of Solid Ground which ends on June 4! Most families arrive at Solid Ground with few, if any, household goods and are thrilled to receive needed items when they first move in and begin to settle in their homes.

Please consider donating one or more **new** items from the wish list below and place them in the bin labeled "Solid Ground Spring Shower" located in the Atrium and Gathering Space. You may want to consider writing a note or drawing a picture to welcome the future recipient of your donation. Monetary donations are also appreciated as they will provide needed items througout the year when supplies run low.



Queen and twin size bedding Crib sheet Food storage containers Mixing bowls

Bakeware (everything needed except cookie sheets)



Bath towels

Don't Forget Your Gift to Incarnation Before You Leave for the Lake!



- Send a check to Incarnation at 4880 Hodgson Road, Shoreview, MN 55126
- Give through texting. Simply text ILCTEXT to 73256 and follow the link to complete the process to donate.
- Make a one-time donation or set up recurring donations using Incarnation's online giving form to give to various ministry funds at Incarnation. You select the frequency and date to make your secure donation.
- Bill Pay Many financial institutions offer a way for their customers to set up one-time or recurring payments to vendors and organizations.
- Make a gift via Stock, an IRA or a Donor Advised Fund. Contact Amy Faymoville, Gifts Manager, at afaymoville@incarnationmn.org with any questions.

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We honor the memory of loved ones in the memorial gifts given below: Date Range: 4/25/23 to 5/20/23

Donor Loran & Holly Rieger Larrie & Lou Ann Reese	Fund Name Memorial – Undesignated Memorial – Worship & Music (Sr. Choir)	In Memory of Orv Bratland Orv Bratland
Cathy Carter	Memorial – Feed My Starving Children	Rebecca O'Connor
Marlys J. Nelson	Memorial – Cemetery	Dave Thorstad
Robert Cadwallader Sandra Williamson Jim & Carol Fruehling	Memorial – Undesignated Memorial – Undesignated Memorial – Feed My Starving Children	Mary Ulvenes Mary Ulvenes Mary Ulvenes
Will & Carolyn Liebenow	Memorial – Worship & Music	Peggy Wald

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 <u>not</u> designated, sometimes the family requests what fund they would like the memorials designated to.

Note: If a memorial gift is received and the check <u>isn't</u> 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.

Actual April Operating Giving Actual April Operating Expense	\$165,749.37 \$171,036.09	YTD Operating Giving YTD Operating Expense	\$694,851.82 \$702,065.32
	(\$5,286.72)		(\$7,213.50)
Actual April Mortgage Giving	\$29,011.29	YTD Mortgage Giving	\$146,021.99
Actual April Mortgage Expense	\$20,675.00	YTD Mortgage Expense	\$95,200.00
	\$8,336.29		\$50,821.99

Financial Report - April 2023