



In the Hands of the Refiner

Candid October Reflections

It is October, the leaves are changing or have already changed their colors. Each individual leaf is falling gently to the ground to provide the uninterrupted cycle of feeding the earth. The winds are whipping up, and the rain is colder now, than in the summer. Refreshing summer rains are now turning into a threat of snow, cold wetness that dives deep into our bones. The night air howls, and the moon shoots through the clouds as they race along pushed by a prevalent wind; certainly not in control. What happens when the seasons change? What happens when it is no longer summer – no more camping, water skiing, swimming, or hiking. At least not here in northern Minnesota. The winds of change are coming to our country too. These winds are prevalent too, and are purposed, leading to what, we will soon find out. Where is God in this season of change? Where is He leading us? The following are some thoughts about a lot of different things, but insights I hope help you through this upcoming season of change.

One of the things in my life I have really come to understand is that any other "work" that I have done has not brought satisfaction to my life other than working in ministry. The only other thing that I think that I would love or that would bring satisfaction to my life would be to play music (drummer in a band). However, with that, my ego would be tested for sure! I have worked elsewhere in my life, and it brought some satisfaction, as in bringing home a paycheck and knowing I can pay the bills with it, etc. Preaching, teaching, ministering to people, pastoral counseling, and being an under-shepherd have brought fulfillment and solace. My wife is very intuitive and recognizes in me that in no wise would I really be happy doing anything else.

Dallas Willard wrote an article about the reason for the dissatisfaction of a minister. The main reason for the dissatisfaction of a minister and mainly for the Christian is the lack of satisfaction with God. We must find satisfaction in Jesus Christ, in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - the most blessed Trinity. There can be no other satisfaction in the Christian life other than God. We must love God with all of our heart, with all of our mind, with all of our soul, and with all of our might. We must put everything into being satisfied in Him. The more satisfied we are with Him; the more God is glorified in us. There is no other reason for responding to God's call in our life, be it salvation or the call into ministry.

This week has been very revealing. Almost like a revelation, and yet not contrary to His Word. It has been a personal revelation into what my life has become, because as Oswald Chambers says, "he squeezed me into a wine that can be poured out." However, a grape has to be ripe before it can be squeezed into juice. I have experienced the ministry of the Holy Spirit upon my life. He has been so patient with me. Molding and shaping. Pruning and cutting. Finally, squeezing. They say that the best wine is better when it has aged. Well, I am 66 and it appears that my life is just beginning. I have been through a military career. I have "done" ministry. I have lost loved ones. The circumstances of my life have been essential parts of it, and I have realized that God has put me in this place of blessing within His rule and reign. God is blessing me where I am. All that I have lived IS my life. God IS good, all the time. Every event, every tragedy, every disappointment, every loss, and every moment has been right where God wanted me to be so that when the hour is right the outcome of my growth will benefit those Who He has destined to intersect with my path. Follow me, as I follow the Lord, it's a great place to start.

Christ Lutheran Church

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 Christ Lutheran
Church Duluth

 Christ Lutheran
Church Duluth

Website: clcduluth.org
President: Ouitdee Carson
V.P.: Carolyn Lofald
Treasurer: Sandy Carlson

Every Month:

Every Wed. at 6:30 PM
Bible Study

Mary Circle

First Thursday of each month
at 9:30 AM (Postponed until
further notice)

Esther Circle

First Thursday of each month
at 10:00 AM

Dorcas Circle

Second Tuesday of each
month at 1:00 PM (Postponed
until further notice)

Lutherans for Life

Second Sunday of each month
at 6:30 PM (Postponed until
further notice)

Council Meeting

Second Thursday of each
month at 6:30 PM

Having retired from the US Army, with the understanding of leadership, authority, and servanthood, I found that they do not exist beside each other nor complement each other. Authority is given to those who are chosen to lead. It is anarchy for someone to dictate their leadership hence they are a dictator. There are many leaders in the Church out there who are dictators, and people still follow them. Jesus sent out His disciples under authority and with authority. What I understand this to say is that Jesus delegated the authority given to Him by the Father to His disciples, and from them to you and me. I see this as the true "apostolic succession." It is not the man-made hierarchy from which a bishop may ascend, but it is the power of God upon Jesus, Who then came to us with power in the Holy Spirit. To be a servant is in essence a person who takes care of his Master's business. The servant has surrendered himself to the Master. The servant obeys his Master. He always trusts in the word of his Master. The servant models himself after his Master because of His glorious characteristics. By faith, the servant does not flounder during a struggle. The servant of God knows that the Master has his back. He is always there, and sometimes coming with reinforcements to help him in battle. God enables His servants with His gifts, and by His Spirit molds and shapes his God given skills and talents to do His will and purposes. The servant trains other servants to work and lead according to the will of God, for the glory of God alone. This is about you beloved of Christ Lutheran Church.

I really believe that when honestly spoken, saying that you appreciate someone drives deep into them the admiration, respect, validation, and encouragement you have for them. If someone helps you and you appreciate it, it means that you are happy they would take the time to do something for you. To be recognized for something teeters on the balance between pride and humility. We all want to be recognized. I have always liked crowds. I have always liked being a drummer in a band, while getting the recognition through applause fed my ego. This ego was "edging God out." The applause was based upon what I did as a musician. However, when playing in a band that is leading worship and all thought is off me or the other band members, my ego is transferred into another place, "exalting God only." When we recognize people for their work or ministry, we must be sure and safe to say, "To God be the glory" for great things He has done through so and so. Yes, it is important to encourage, appreciate, affirm, and recognize, all the time where exalting God only is kept in the forefront of our minds and hearts.

My understanding of a congregation is that a congregation is a group of people which may include people who are already Christians, burnt out Christians, Christians from other denominations, angry Roman Catholics, converted Jews, unchurched, de-churched, and people with a lot of baggage. A congregation may include those who do not know how to pray or know how to pray but never do. A congregation may include those who love to worship God, to sing new praise songs, psalms, or old hymns. A congregation may include those people from a variety of economic backgrounds. They may include garbage collectors, mechanics, fast food workers, retail store employees, customer service representatives, teachers, doctors, lawyers, construction works, heavy equipment operators, daycare workers, and lawn service providers. A congregation may include those of any race, ethnic, or cultural background. A congregation includes people who need God and need to be disciplined by the leadership of the congregation.

(continued on page 3)

As your pastor, I am challenged daily to be able to relate, hear and listen to, teach, preach, care, and nurture a wide variety of people. I think of a picture of people from all parts of the world in the community of faith, and then I picture myself speaking to all of them at once. I have always had a vision of a multi-racial, multi-generational community of believers. The challenge that ensues is being enabled to lead such a group of people in discipleship in order to equip them to reach out to others within our local community and make disciples.

I have discovered that the main battle we fight as Christians is with ourselves. The battle contends with our own self-defeating characteristics and the attitudes that go along with them. Sometimes it seems I am not as self-aware as I should be. However, I remember many years ago that I worked extremely hard at being self-aware, and I was very much into knowing and understanding why I felt the way I did. Maybe it has something to do with loss. When you find out that your spouse has been diagnosed with a potentially fatal disease, you kind of lose touch with yourself and concentrate on your spouse. You lose yourself. That is what happened to me. It was so evident to others than to me. You are so not self-aware when you are so depressed that nothing is felt, and your feelings have disappeared. Understanding these battles is especially important. You cannot go it alone. That is why the Body of Christ is made up of different members, each having their own function and place in the Body. The Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the Church is God's project and Jesus said He would build it. Our confidence must come from God and the Holy Spirit will confirm and affirm us. We do not allow pride to get into our way. Many times, we have to get out of our own way. With God's grace and mercy, the Holy Spirit will work that out within us to His glory.

How do you deepen a disciple? The first thought in my mind is the words of our Lord, "The gatekeeper opens the gate for Him, and the sheep hear His voice. He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. When He has brought out all His own, He goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow Him because they know His voice." John 10:3-4 (NRSV) An obedient under shepherd understands who the Shepherd is and follows the Shepherd's instructions. The analogy of a shepherd caring for his sheep is what I think about daily. How do sheep emulate the shepherd? The sheep come when they are called and they have an intimate relationship with the shepherd. Yes, they are animals; however, animals are sensitive creatures. So, with the Christian minister who is an under shepherd, he calls out to the sheep, and is tender with them, and in reflecting Jesus Christ in their acts and behaviors, the sheep come to trust the shepherd and feel safe.

How do sheep acquire information? Teaching the sheep where to go, when to come and to be obedient is how the sheep process the information the shepherd gives them, and he teaches them by a variety of means. The shepherd's crook or the herding dog helps teach the sheep and give them direction. Therefore, with the Christian minister who is an under shepherd, he teaches the sheep from the Word of God, he feeds them milk first and then meat when they are mature. He cares for them with gentleness, and humility. He does not allow his temper to control him when a sheep wanders or is disobedient. The under shepherd is patient and kind. How do we examine the sheep? Through teaching. The Christian minister encourages the sheep to apply what they have learned and all the while encouraging the sheep to want to learn more and grow in Christ. Sometimes discipline is done to restore a sheep back into the fold, but only with loving kindness and humility is this accomplished. Worship and the appropriation of the means of grace, preaching, teaching, small groups, prayer, the Lord's Supper, and baptism all are ways to lead a sheep to even examine themselves, and test themselves. The means of grace enable the Christian minister to develop healthy and whole disciples so that they too can go into all the world and make disciples themselves. Don't you like it when I preach to myself?

Have a crisp, pleasant, and bountiful fall season!

Pastor Gary



The Annual Congregational Meeting
will be held on Sunday, October 25 at 10:45 AM
An information packet about the meeting will be delivered to
you soon via email or regular mail.



*As of October 4, Communion will be inside the church
on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.
There is no more drive-thru communion.*

Here is the procedure for Holy Communion during worship in the Sanctuary, this Sunday, October 4, 2020.

1. Upon entry into the Sanctuary, the ushers will give you the same elements that have been handed out at our Drive-In Communion (1 disposable cup containing a wafer and grape juice)
2. The communion liturgy will be same that we've done during our Drive-In Communion and will be part of the worship service like we've done in the past.
3. Each person will hold on to their empty cup for the remainder of the service.
4. At the end of the service, as you leave the Sanctuary, the empty cups will be discarded into a trash receptacle.

For those who watched the worship service via Facebook Livestream, and are receiving the Sacrament at 10:45, here is the procedure for Holy Communion:

1. Upon entry into the Sanctuary, the ushers will give you the same elements that have been handed out at our Drive-In Communion (1 disposable cup containing a wafer and grape juice)
2. The communion liturgy will be same that we've done during our Drive-In Communion.
3. Each person will hold on to their empty cup until the end of the service.
4. At the end of Holy Communion, as you leave the Sanctuary, the empty cups will be discarded into a trash receptacle.

As has been the practice since reopening during COVID-19, masks and sitting at 6 foot intervals (social distancing) are required.

Sunday services are still livestreamed on our Facebook page:
Christ Lutheran Church Duluth at 9:30 AM



Christ Lutheran Church Duluth



Christ Lutheran Church Duluth

Two special guests on Sunday, October 18th at church!

MN Adult & Teen Challenge will be at the church on
Sunday morning, October 18 at 9:30 AM.



The MN Teen Challenge Virtual Gala will be held on Thursday, October 15 at 7 PM

For details and registration go to: mnc.org/Duluth-gala



Brook Mohar from Camp Jim (Jesus is Mine) in Pillager, MN will be with us during the service as well. Camp JIM exists to lovingly teach and model the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ, and to encourage people to grow in faith and service. The camp has been providing quality, affordable, year round camps, rentals and retreats to churches, youth, families, and adults for over 85 years.

Community Food Share Giving Challenge

"In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Acts 20:35

"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7

*"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."
Hebrews 13:16*

Hi, this is Pastor Gary! I included the three verses above because I believe they are telling us as to the mission we have at Christ Lutheran Church, "To know Christ, and make Him known." Our dear brother in Christ, Don Olson, came to the church council with a challenge and \$1000 to get food to the needy and make the community aware that Christ Lutheran Church is here for them. Since then, we have had three Community Food Share events, and the last one had the most people turn out to receive their bag of groceries. It was amazing and fantastic that we had 42 cars come that day, and only two who had come before!

At our last church council meeting, I initiated a challenge to all the council members. It was based upon the church's need of at least \$500 a month to provide a bag full of groceries for a family of four. As of this writing there are 56 families that have signed up to be notified of the next Community Food Share. Each bag costs approximately \$10 to fill.

So, I am now issuing a challenge to you, Christ Lutheran Church. Last Sunday, I donated \$500 toward a Community Food Share. That is above my normal tithe and offerings. I challenge you to give the same way. Give whatever amount that God puts on your heart. These are exciting times in which we live, and there are people that are truly in need because of COVID-19 illness, being laid off, or losing their jobs.



Let us as a congregation not neglect doing good, share what we have, and help the weak and needy with food. For the Lord said, "for I was hungry and you gave me food." Matthew 25:35

Thank you!

Pastor Gary

Dear CLC Family,

You are on my mind; actually you are on my mind and my heart. 2020 has been a challenging year, and if you're feeling like I am, sometimes you may want to either rewind and start over or jump ahead to 2021 right now to see if things get better. But I think our Father in heaven wants encourage us in the midst of difficult times. In our youth lesson this week, we dug into the first chapter of James. Here it is. I have highlighted a few thoughts that stand out to me, and then I'll let God's word speak for itself.

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will

the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

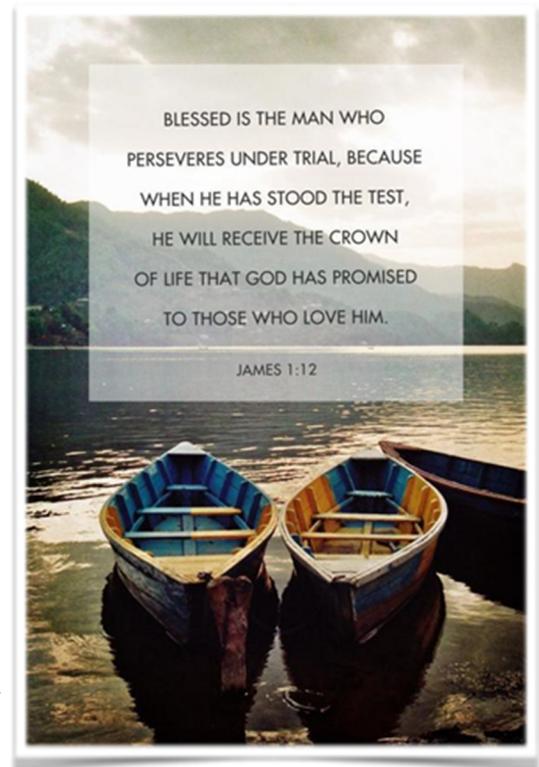
Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. - James 1:2-27

I pray that God will keep you and strengthen you day-by-day in faith, hope, and love; and that He will walk with you through every trial helping you endure with joy! In the precious name of our Lord, Jesus the Christ.

DOES ANYONE NEED A RIDE TO WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY?

I am available between 6-6:30pm on Wednesdays to provide a ride to and from Bible Study. Just give me a call on my mobile number below, or call the church office.



(continued on page 7)

SEE YOU SATURDAY!

Please join Pastor Gary and me at 2409 Ensign Street on Saturday, October 10th from 10:00-2:00pm to see the parsonage updates, enjoy some delicious fall treats, drink some coffee and spiced cider, and fellowship with us in our new home! Give me a call if you want to stop by later in the day.

OCTOBER COMMUNITY FOOD SHARE

We will be distributing groceries to school families the third Wednesday of every month. Grocery packing on Tuesday evenings the day before. October Food Share packing on Tuesday 10/20 at 6:30pm and distribution on Wednesday 10/21 from 11:30am - 12:30pm. Please remember to give as you are able to meet our monthly goal of \$500 and check in with Pastor if you want to help packing or passing groceries.

CLC YOUTH WEDNESDAYS AT 5PM WITH ME AT THE PARSONAGE FOR BIBLE STUDY AND...

Invite a friend :)

CONFIRMATION CLASS WEDNESDAYS AT 4PM WITH PASTOR GARY IN THE SANCTUARY!

Blessings and love,

Sue

320-815-1561 / suedesha@gmail.com

October 2020 Maintenance Report

With the dropping temperatures, we have fired up the boilers! The boilers will also be having their scheduled maintenance check very soon. The parsonage boiler had its inspection on September 24. The fire extinguishers are due to have their annual inspection now in October.

We are blessed to have two painters under our roof! Gary our custodian and Judi our church secretary were keeping busy helping out at the parsonage. Thanks to them, Pastor and Sue have been able to move in with just a few small paint jobs left that Sue and Pastor were able to do. We have had Wood Magic come and give the cabinets that were worn some detailing and we are replacing a couple of drawers in the upstairs bathroom vanity that were worn. There were three windows that were not closing properly and Arrowhead Window and Door will be coming with some parts to fix those. The fellow from there is willing to fix those at no charge! We do have one window in the upstairs bedroom that has a seal leak so that will be replaced. We have also installed a new bathroom faucet. Excited to see how Pastor and Sue have decorated to make it "their home". We still need to do a few things to help clean up their garage. Please contact us to volunteer!

Judi and Gary also finished painting the refrigerator area of the kitchen at church and we have gone through and organized those items! They have also rolled up their sleeves and are putting the weather sealant on the playset outback. Thankful that God has given us some warm fall days to complete that much needed project. Again, a big thank you to them!

The Esther Circle will be putting the gardens to bed soon. We thank Jim and Sandy for all their extra efforts keeping the yards and gardens looking so nice. We also need to address some items out in our church garage to tidy that up before winter.

I did meet with Perrault in regard to the siding at the back entrance of the church. Hopefully we will be able to have that area fixed soon.

Thankful we are able to keep our church up and running during this COVID time. If you are able to volunteer for anything, it would be much appreciated. Please call the office and let Judi know. It will be wonderful when we are all able to meet again face-to-face.

God's blessings!

Carolyn Lofald, VP/Maintenance

October Mission of the Month: Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge



For over 30 years Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge has been assisting teens and adults in gaining freedom from chemical addictions and other life-controlling problems by addressing their physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

Teen Challenge offers a residential program for teenage girls and boys struggling with chemical addictions, as well as behavioral problems.

For teens, there are both long and short term options. Programing is provided in a structured therapeutic community offering continuous observation and treatment by professional multidisciplinary staff members.

Additionally, they offer a long term faith-based residential recovery program for adults that assists individuals in gaining freedom from drug and alcohol addiction and the life controlling problems associated with it.

Theses programs are not offered cost free. Each resident is required to pay monthly room and board fees. Some fees are covered by outside agencies, but the majority of funding comes from private sources such as churches, businesses, and individuals.

In addition to your monetary support, there are several other ways you could help, job/intern opportunities, volunteering, or becoming a mentor.

Please prayerfully consider a donation to this month's chosen mission. You may make checks payable to Christ Lutheran Church. Thank you for your continued support in our mission "To know Christ and to make Him known."



A Note About Offering Envelope Numbers:

Please be aware that your offering envelope number may change this year. Make sure to look for your name on the label and not the number you previously had. Thank you.

Financial Update

Dear devoted members of CLC, 2020 has certainly been a challenging year and we are grateful for your continuing prayers and financial support for your church. The council has been working hard to keep expenses down and the Paycheck Protection Loan has helped to carry us through the summer. Offering amounts have dipped over the summer as they typically do, but now more than in the past. Please continue your support either by mailing your offering envelope, dropping it off in the office, or dropping off when you come for communion in the parking lot.

August Income: \$10,753.92 August Expenses: \$10,111.97 August Income \$641.95 over expenses
YTD Income: \$105,508.79 YTD Expenses: \$125,263.72 YTD income \$19,754.93 under expenses
With PPL adjustment: YTD Income \$7,645.07 over expenses

August Mission: Lutheran Bible Translators—\$1,035.00

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:21

PLEASE PRAY FOR....

*Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.
James 5:14*

Our Pastor & the Leadership of the Church
CLC Lighthouse & CLC Clubhouse- kids & leaders
All of our students from pre-school to college
Mission of the Month: MN Adult & Teen Challenge
Our Country, Military & Police

The teachers and students at all schools
Persecuted Christians throughout the world
Piedmont Elementary
The steadfastness of our faith

THOSE WITH HEALTH NEEDS:

Vi Boder	Jane McLean	Ruth Peterson
Bob Johnson	Jean Sundstrom	Ruth Dahl
Mary Jenny	Katie Lund	Carol Schramm
Kathy Stevens	Susan Johnson	Florence Kubiak
Tom & Marlene Stauber	Judy Stocke	Evelyn Johnson
Diane Malander	Carol Johnson	Bryan Goeppinger
Dennis Peterson	Carol Blair	Donna Swanson & Family
Mark Malander	Barb Hanson	Darlene Saaf
Don & Laviere Johnson	Brian McDonald	Del Sandberg

If there are any people who have been accidently overlooked, please contact the church office. We apologize for any oversights.

Ruth Dahl would love to hear from her friends!

Her address is:

Ruth Dahl
22300 Denmark Ave #16
Farmington MN 55024

*Marlys Nelson recently sent a note and gift to the church expressing her thankfulness in being able to watch the services online.
Thank you, Marlys! We are so glad you can join us!*



Lydia Wiita
October 16

Jim Carlson
October 22

Donna Swanson
October 26

Ruth Dahl
October 30



Bob & Barb Johnson celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, Sat. Sept 26!
Congratulations!