



In the Hands of the Refiner

The Beginning of the Third Year

February is an odd month. Every four years one day is added. It has less days than the other months. February is the month after January and the month before March. In the month of February on the fourteenth day is when we celebrate love and regard Valentine's Day as something romantic, the event in which we celebrate close relationships. It is the month in Duluth where we think that we are on the downside of the harshness of winters cold.

For me, February is the start of my third year here at Christ Lutheran Church. I can't believe it has already been two years. However, I've been thinking of the Church, our church and the Church Jesus is building. I am thinking that Christ Lutheran Church is part of the Church that Jesus is building.

I am thinking about the Keys of the Kingdom. "There thrones for judgment were set, the thrones of the house of David." Psalm 122:5 (ESV)

The idea was *to rule justly*. "And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. Isaiah 22:22 (ESV)

"And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken." Ezekiel 34:23-24 (ESV)

"My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes." Ezekiel 37:24 (ESV)

"But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them." Jeremiah 30:9 (ESV)

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Word of God, who holds the keys that are related to the prophecy regarding King David and how the King of Kings would rule and reign over all.

"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." Matthew 16:18-19 (NASB)

The explanation of Matthew 16:18-19 is that Jesus is prophesying about His victory over death!

We have here the figure of two buildings, the Church of Jesus Christ on the Rock, and the House of Death (Hades). In the Old Testament the 'gates of Hades' (Sheol) never bears any other meaning than death. It is not the picture of Hades attacking Christ's church, but of death's possible victory over the Church. The *ecclesia* is built upon the Messiahship of her master, and death, the gates of Hades, will not prevail against her by keeping Him imprisoned.

It was a mysterious truth, which He will soon tell them in plain words in Matthew 16:21, "From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day."

It is echoed in Acts 2:24, "God raised Him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it." And in Acts 2:31, "He foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption."

Christ Lutheran Church

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 Christ Lutheran
Church Duluth

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

Every Month:
Wednesdays:
4 PM Confirmation
5 PM Youth Bible Study
6:30 PM Adult 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

Dorcus 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

PLEASE JOIN US ON

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17 AT 6:30 PM

FOR ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE



Wednesday, February 24 at 5PM
Join us for Lenten Soup Supper Study

We are tentatively planning soup suppers for Wednesdays in March also.



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!

**YOU'RE INVITED TO JOIN US VIRTUALLY
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2021
AT 6:00 P.M.**

*ON FACEBOOK OR OUR WEBSITE:
FATHERDAUGHTERBALLDULUTH.ORG*

**THIS EVENT IS PRE-RECORDED, YOU WILL BE ABLE
TO VIEW AT OTHER TIMES AS WELL**

Christ's church will prevail and survive because He will burst the gates of Hades (death) and come forth as Conqueror. He will ever live and be the guarantor of the perpetuity of His Church. The verb *katischuō* means to *have strength against*. What appears in this verse is the sense of gaining the mastery over. Therefore, the *ecclesia* which consists of those confessing Jesus Christ as Peter has just done will not cease. The gates of Hades (death) will not have mastery over the Church. The gates of Hades or the bars of Sheol will not close down on it. Christ Jesus is risen and will keep His Church alive!

Regarding the "keys of the Kingdom," the "keys" themselves is the authority delegated to the disciples and to all Christian's to admit entrance into the Kingdom through the preaching of the Gospel, especially those called to proclaim the Gospel. Jesus delegates authority to human leaders in the church who are called to govern His church on earth, under His ultimate authority, through the proclamation and application of His Word, and the administration of the Sacraments.

So, to "bind" (*dēsēis*) in rabbinical language means to forbid; to "loose" (*lusēis*) means to permit. Matthew 16:18-19 relates to John 20:23, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

This also relates to the story Jesus told of a brother sinning against someone in Matthew 18:15-18, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

What Jesus delegates to the disciples and to Christians is the authority, power, privilege to declare the terms under which God forgives or refuses to forgive the sin of wayward souls. This has its basis upon repentance and confession of sin.

"Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades." Revelation 1:17-18 (ESV)

"The Holy One, the True One, the One who has the key of David, who opens and no one will close, and closes and no one opens..." Revelation 3:7 (CSB)

I have been thinking about the name of the church God wants us to build and it is Christ Lutheran Church. Because the church is the Body of Christ, it is therefore, Christ's church. It is Lutheran because we uphold the one and only apostolic faith and doctrine handed down to us through God's Word, the Creeds of the historic Church, and the Lutheran confessions. These are those of which we believe, teach, and confess.

There are standards He wants us to uphold. Those standards come from God's Word, the Bible, which is inspired, infallible, inerrant, and authoritative. Nothing else is our rule for faith and life.

Warfare means all the while we fight the good fight; all the while entrenched in a fierce battle for the lost dying souls in our community and for our own souls as we proclaim the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ.

This is the strategy of our warfare, keeping in mind still, that we are victorious through Jesus Christ, the Victor, and Vanquisher of our enemy! We are reminded that the gates of hell (hades) will not prevail against Christ Lutheran Church! This is most certainly true!

May God bless your February!

Your Pastor,



Dear CLC Family and Friends,

The Gift of Hospitality

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to the church according to God's will. There are a variety of spiritual gifts, and they are given for the common good of God's family, the church. One of these gifts is hospitality, and some of God's people have a special ability to reach out, make guests feel welcome, invite over, organize gatherings, generate unity, and inspire celebrating. Yet, all of God's people are instructed to "be hospitable" - to love people with hospitality.

⁹ Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. ¹⁰ Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. ¹¹ Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. ¹² Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. ¹³ When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. Romans 12:9-13 (NLT)

Sometimes we skim over a word or phrase in the Bible assuming we know what it means. I have a professional background in the hospitality industry, so I assume that when the Bible uses the word hospitality it's talking about serving meals, providing lodging, and planning celebrations. Notice my emphasis is on what the giver does. Digging deeper, we discover that hospitality is also about who the receiver is. Let's take a closer look at Romans 12:13. The first part of the verse is about helping God's people, but the second part is about helping others. How do I know this? Hospitality in this verse is the Greek word "philoxenia," and it means to share love with strangers; to open your church, home and heart to people you don't know in addition to helping your church family.

Welcoming Strangers and Guests

There is man who walks in Piedmont Heights.

He walks in Hermantown too.

He walks in all kinds of weather wearing sadness and an old sweatshirt.

He walks in our parking lot, and I see him from my kitchen window.

He is alone, but often speaks to someone I can't see.

His name is Jeremy.

Maybe you know the person in this little story. I asked him his name once when I saw him in the mall parking lot, and I pray for him when I see him. I want to tell him about Jesus, and invite him to church but I'm afraid. Let's pray that God would fill us with His love so much that we can't pass by strangers without reaching out with love and hospitality. Let's look past the masks, with hidden smiles that burst out through our eyes. Let's be ready to share the hope we have in Christ though there are many challenges behind us and before us.

.Let's gather with love and care for worship, and Bible studies, and especially as Lent approaches and soup suppers will again be served. Let's pray and love and serve each other and our community. When we love one another and Jesus is lifted up, the Father will draw all kinds of people to faith, hope and love



**ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP
FEBRUARY 17, 2021 AT 6:30PM!**

**LENTEN SOUP SUPPER & STUDY
BEGINS FEBRUARY 24 AT 5:00PM**

**CONFIRMATION CLASS ONLINE WEDNESDAYS AT 4PM WITH
PASTOR GARY**

CLC YOUTH BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS AT 5PM WITH SUE
We're studying the Book of Romans at the parsonage!
Invite a friend :)

ALL CHURCH BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS AT 6:30PM

Join Pastor Gary in Fellowship Hall to study the awe-inspiring Book of Revelation!

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY & PRAYER FRIDAYS AT 9AM WITH SUE

All women are invited to grow in faith and prayer together Friday mornings. The devotional Bible study "Beloved Apprentice" will be provided. We will meet in Fellowship Hall each week. Think about inviting a friend. Refreshments provided. Call 320-815-1561 with questions or if you need a ride.

CLC FOOD SHARE

Thank you for your generous donations and volunteer service for the CLC Food Share! We will continue sharing groceries with school district families the third Wednesday of every month. February grocery packing is caught up. Food share distribution is Wednesday 2/17/21 from 11:30am - 12:30pm.

Don't forget Your Valentine on Sunday, February 14th.

Pastor and I carry your hearts in ours!

In Christ's love,

Sue

320-815-1561

suedesha@gmail.com



Happy Birthday!

<i>Ouitdee Carson</i>	<i>February 1</i>
<i>Al Decker</i>	<i>February 4</i>
<i>Judy Stocke</i>	<i>February 24</i>
<i>Darlene Saaf</i>	<i>February 25</i>
<i>John Kubiak</i>	<i>February 28</i>

*All the days ordained for me
were written in your book,
before one of them
came to be.
How precious to me are
your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
Psalm 139:16,17*

*Dear Christ Lutheran Friends,
Thank you for all the gifts at Christmas. I enjoyed them all!
Sincerely,
Evelyn Johnson*

*Thank
you!*

*Dear CLC family,
A huge thank you for the prayers, plant, and cookies that were delivered to me by Mike and
Wendy for Christmas.
Love and God's blessings,
Del Sandberg*

*Dear Christ Lutheran Church,
The ladies of Esther Circle would like to thank everyone who donated to our annual hat & mitten tree
for the children of Piedmont Elementary School. We collected a record number of donations this
year!
Thank you!*

2020-2021 Hat & Mitten Tree

*Hats: 69
Mittens: 5 pairs
Gloves: 35 pairs
Earband: 2
Neckies: 5
Headbands: 3
Socks: 3 pairs
Slippers: 1 pair*



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
All of our students from pre-school to college
Mission of the Month: Father/Daughter Ball
Our Country, Military & Police
The teachers and students at all schools

Persecuted Christians throughout the world
The steadfastness of our faith
The family of Yvonne Terry
The family of Don Johnson

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	Eli Miletich
Dennis Peterson	Carol Sogard	Donna Swanson & Family
Mark Malander	Barb Hanson	Darlene Saaf
Laviere Johnson	Brian MacDonald	Del Sandberg
Norma Johnson		

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



Our sympathies to the family and friends of Yvonne Terry who passed away Saturday, January 23. At this point there are no services planned.

Our sympathies to Laviere and all of the family and friends of Don Johnson who passed away Friday, January 29.

Financial Update

December 2020 Income \$26,365.98 December Expenses \$11,699.73

Monthly income was over expenses by \$14,666.25

YTD Income \$164,030.15 YTD Expenses \$175,464.62

YTD income under expenses by \$11,434.47

Adjusted YTD income (PPL): Income \$27,400 over expenses

November Mission: Fellowship of Christian Athletes—\$457.00

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