

Christ's Messenger



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH The American Association of Lutheran Churches

March 2023



In the Hands of the Refiner

Christ Lutheran Church

Pastor Gary DeSha
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218-727-2076
pastor@clcduluth.org

Church Office
218-722-7537
church@clcduluth.org

2415 Ensign St
Duluth MN 55811

Website: clcduluth.org

Every Month:

Adult Bible Study

Wednesdays
at 6:30 PM

Esther Circle

First Thursday
at 10:00 AM

Council Meeting

Second Thursday
at 6:30 PM

Food Share

4th Thursday
from 11:30-12:30

AA

Meets at church
Mondays at 6:30 PM

Lent As Transition

The First Sunday of Lent is an important one in the life of our church. Together with Ash Wednesday it marks the beginning of the journey we all make in following Jesus to His Passion in Jerusalem, His death at Calvary and His Resurrection. While this is a personal journey for each of us who follow Him, it is also the journey of the church as we move together towards the heavenly Jerusalem where we shall be united with God through the saving works of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Gospel passage of Jesus going out into the desert at the beginning of His public ministry sets the scene for our Lenten journey. We are told he was 'tempted' for forty days and forty nights. 'Tested' is a better translation. He struggled to prayerfully discern His mission, while being confronted by the Devil, and affirming at the end of His desert journey that "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4).

Lent is marked by transition, like the people of Israel moving through the desert from one place to the other. For you, the forty days of Lent may be similar to the forty years Israel wandered the desert in search of the Promised Land. They were delivered from slavery in Egypt, led by the faithfulness of Moses who himself never entered that land, although he saw it from afar.

The most painful slavery suffered by the Israelites was that they were forced to worship the false gods of the Egyptians. During their deliverance from Egypt, Israel was enabled to begin worshiping the one true God in the Tabernacle. Now, Lent is a time to examine the false gods that we worship in our own day and take seriously the words "repent and believe in the Gospel."

At a time when the evil of slavery is fought against in every western nation, it is good to be reminded of the things that individually enslave us whether these be money, material goods, power, or fleshly appetites.

God calls each of us to make a journey to that desert place which is deep within us. It is dry and arid because this is a place where the heat is oppressive, no growth takes place, no healing takes place, and the water of God's grace to refresh it is missing. The Psalms have a lot to say about healing waters and bones which need to be brought to life again by our turning back to God. "Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that You have crushed rejoice" (Psalms 51:8).

(cont. on page 3)

Assisting with March Ministry

March 5

Ushers: Mark Youngren; Keith Youngren
Trustees: Wendy & Carol
Scripture Reader: Jim Carlson
Communion Assistant: Jim Carlson

March 12

Ushers: Carolyn Lofald; Grace Wells
Trustees: Laurie & Laura
Scripture Reader: Mark Wiita

March 19

Ushers: Bill & Jan Arezzo; Jim Carlson
Trustees: Jim & Laurie
Scripture Reader: Keith Youngren
Communion Assistant: Gary Lofald

March 26

Ushers: Jim Carlson; Mark Youngren
Trustees: Bill & Grace
Scripture Reader: Sue DeSha

*If you have a conflict with these dates,
please contact Jim Carlson at 218-343-6755*

Coffee/Fellowship Servers

March 5: Sue DeSha

March 12: Esther Circle

March 19: Karen Blakesley

March 26: Esther Circle

April 2: Sue DeSha

April 9: Esther Circle

April 16: Karen Blakesley

April 23: Esther Circle

April 30: Volunteers

Financial Update

January, 2023 Income: \$8,079.00
January, 2023 Expenses: \$11,213.48

*Monthly income was under
expenses by \$3,314.48*

January Mission:
Father Daughter Ball: \$352.00

Full financial reports are
available in the office
upon request



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Lent Soup Supper and Study Wednesdays in March. Supper at 5:00 PM. Study at 6:30 PM.
- Esther Circle meets the first Thursday of the month at 10 AM. All ladies are welcome to join the Circle for devotions, prayer, and fellowship.
- The next food packing date is Tuesday, March 21. Distribution is Thursday, March 23 from 11:30-12:30. Thank you so much for all of your prayers and support of this ministry!
- Quilters will meet Tuesday, March 21 at 9 AM.



The prayers and repentance we undertake during Lent are meant to be signs of transformation – the transition from death to life. *“Soundness is not in my flesh, because of Your indignation, peace is not in my bones, because of my sin”* (Psalms 38:3).

Even though individualism is one of the identifying marks of the day in which we live, being members of the church, the Body of Christ, reminds us that we are not alone. For we are told to *“Bear one another's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ”* (Galatians 6:2).

When we do have the sense of being alone, it is then we must pray, *“Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, do not be far from me; make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation”* (Psalms 38:21-22).

Each of us is moving through transition every day hopefully being transformed into the image of Christ. How we transition in our Christian life during Lent is up to us. By deep introspection, confession of sin, and repentance, we move closer to God and our lives become *“less of me, and more of God.”*

Less of me means loving, helping, and praying for others, *“Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints”* (Ephesians 6:18).

More of God means loving God with all our soul, with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our strength and our neighbor as ourselves. It means transitioning from self-service, self-reliance, and self-satisfaction to being in service to God; by trusting in and relying upon God alone for all of life; and knowing that when we are truly satisfied in God, we are truly glorifying Him. *More of God* means the sacrifice of the self. It means willingly giving ourselves up to God's will and His purpose for our lives. For St. Paul commands us, *“Therefore I exhort you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—living, holy, and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may approve what the will of God is, that which is good and pleasing and perfect”* (Romans 12:1-2).

Lent is the transition from self to God – from sin to freedom. Lent is the intimate understanding of our lives hidden in Christ with God. *“Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God”* (Colossians 3:2-3).

Lent is the transition from moving from the desert to an oasis of rest – from a dry death to a life drinking from the rivers of living water flowing out from us unto eternal life.

Lent is the transition from not knowing to knowing and experiencing an abundant life, having been raised from the verge of spiritual death to a transformed of life.

Lent is where we emerge from a dry and dusty grave, into the breeze that blows away the crustiness, enabling us to inhale the breath of the Holy Spirit – which is the holiness of God. We are made new once again.

“For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:19-20).

During your journey of Lent, allow yourself to sense the transition God wants you to make. Pray to discern the direction God is leading you during Lent. Make the adjustments He puts upon your heart. Be honest with yourself because He knows your heart, and therefore, be honest with God.

“Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:12-14)

Have a meaningful, thoughtful, and prayerful journey of Lent.

In Christ's Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary DeSha". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Gary DeSha
Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church

The Comfort of a Christian Funeral

We buried more than twenty from our church in 2022. Take a moment and pause to remember with love and thanksgiving their lives. It was heartbreaking as we grieved with each family, and we grieved our own loss of dear brothers and sisters in Christ. Yet, the Holy Spirit was ever faithful to set a table of comfort with His gifts; the gifts of gathering in the name of our Lord Jesus, sharing the best memories, crying tears of release, laughing despite loss, sharing warm hospitality, giving and receiving love and encouragement, praying, praising, and hearing God's Word of hope eternal.

Great and glorious is the comfort of looking up when we are overcome by the separation of death. The pain of loss is measured by the love shared, and in those first moments and days after a death our attention is fixed on our own overwhelming emotions, the souls left behind, and the arrangements that must be made. Thanks be to God for Pastor DeSha and other assisting Pastors who have served as the bridge from soul to spirit, from this life to the next. They help us quiet the pain and gather our thoughts. We are reminded of God's love and forgiveness. We can rest in the finished work of faith in Christ and our baptism. We remember favorite hymns and Bible verses, and we are encouraged to gather and compose those final words, expressions of honor, and photos that will help us release our loved one into God's care.



Familiar and well-loved hymns like "Great is Thy Faithfulness" and "Rock of Ages" remind us of God's promises as we sing out to Him, sometimes through tears. What an honor it is to play the best of God's encouraging music with the those who mourn. Isaiah 61 reveals to us the unfathomable kindness and favor of our Lord when we are broken-hearted. He brings comfort to those who mourn, pouring out beauty for ashes, gladness for mourning, and praise instead of fainting. We are fragile and impressionable in times of grief, and the Lord's presence with us during a Christian funeral lifts our heads and opens our eyes to the vision of heaven, the hope of our dear one, and our hope as well.

After the Scripture readings, prayers, and family recollections, the funeral service turns to a message of comfort and hope for family and friends who have gathered. Pastor often weaves together the faith of our loved one and the Gospel message so powerfully that we see, as it were, their joy in the presence of the Lord fully restored, no longer ill or suffering, and our pain is eased. Our grief is lessened because they are safe and secure, and our faith for today and the future is strengthened.

Family members, perhaps a son or granddaughter, rally their emotions and public speaking courage to share with those gathered the highlights of their dear one - amazing, endearing, accomplished, and sacrificial acts of love and service that have also inspired us.

A Christian funeral is often a time of sharing food and fellowship. It is perhaps the most honorable of family reunions where a flesh and blood family joins with their spiritual family to celebrate the earthly life and the eternal life of their loved one. The Holy Spirit is with us during this time as well. He fills those who prepare and serve in His name with the gift of hospitality. Esther Circle ensure that each table is set with care, using napkins of a favorite color and flowers that evoke a special aspect of our loved one. There's a reason we relish "comfort food" in times of like these. Comfort food like meatballs, mashed potatoes, and gravy, fried chicken, cheesy potatoes, ham sandwiches, coleslaw and bars bring back happy memories of holidays, family picnics, church potlucks, and special events.

We give thanks for the women of the church, Judi in the office, Gary in his care for the building, and Pastor Gary who leads this special ministry of comfort at Christ Lutheran Church. Above all, we give thanks and praise for the many ways God comforts us as we experience the death and funeral of those we love, and as we anticipate our own passage from this life to eternal life with our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. Receive the lyrics of this tender hymn written by Martin Luther.

"Asleep in Jesus"

*In peace and joy I now depart
At God's disposing;
For full of comfort is my heart,
Soft reposing.
So the Lord hath promised me,
And death is but a slumber.*

*Him Thou hast unto all sent forth,
Their great Salvation,
And to His kingdom called the earth,
Every nation,
By Thy dear and wholesome Word,
In every place resounding.*

*'Tis Christ that wrought this work for me,
My faithful Savior,
Whom Thou hast made mine eyes to see
By Thy favor.
Now I know He is my Life,
My Help in need and dying.*

*He is the Hope and saving Light
Of lands benighted;
By Him are they who dwelt in night
Fed and lighted.
He is Israel's Praise and Bliss,
Their Joy, Reward, and Glory.*

~ Martin Luther from "What Luther Says"

In Christ's Love,
Sue DeSha
320-815-1561
suedesha@gmail.com





Our 27th Annual Father Daughter Ball!!

We had a wonderful time celebrating our 27th annual Father Daughter Ball. Our events this year were held on Saturday, January 21, and again on Saturday, February 11, 2023 at the DECC. We had 422 guests for the first evening. When attendees were asked to raise their hands, over half acknowledged they were there for their very first time. We had 680 attendees the second evening. We offered our guests the ability to reserve a table when they ordered six or more tickets. The largest reserved table held ten. This made the seating process much easier. Open seating was available for the rest of our guests. Cost of a ticket was \$30.00 per person. Gary Lofald was our emcee both evenings and Pastor Gary provided a wonderful message.

We were able to bless two dads from MN Adult and Teen Challenge to bring their daughters and attend free of charge on February 11. We thank those that contributed to our Father Daughter Ball Mission of the Month to offset our costs. Total collected was \$742.00.

As some of our attendees were not able to attend at the last minute we were able to feed all of our volunteers their meals. We served salad, rolls, mashed potatoes, lightly breaded chicken breast with champagne gravy and whole baby carrots. We served ice cream for dessert with sprinkles on top. We offered a pop, lemonade and juice station where guests could purchase a cold refreshment. New this year was an additional charge to provide coffee for our guests. This was a cost of \$40.00 per gallon of fresh ground and brewed Duluth Coffee Company coffee.



Our theme this year was “Sweet As Candy”, featuring red and white candy canes. We decorated our tables using white table cloths with red napkins popped into the water glasses. We placed a 9” glass cylinder vase on a square mirror tile in the center of each table with plastic candy canes and peppermints suspended in clear gel inside. We also floated a candle on the top. We placed three red votive candles on the mirror around each vase.



We sprinkled Hershey kisses on the mirrors along with individually wrapped candy canes. We worked with Northland Special Events for our room decorations. Over our dance floor, they hung white lights from the ceiling underneath red and white draping. The backdrop was done in silver draping with red and white up lighting behind. Our Banners were hung on either side with up lighting from the floor to accentuate them. On either side of the DJ we had balloon bouquets and a candy cane balloon cluster was hung high on the drape behind him. The rest of the room had alternating red and white up lighting. We hope to have a slide show on our Facebook and our web site and to share some pictures from each night. Check out our fatherdaughterballduluth.org website.

Lynnette's Portrait Design was there to take pictures of all the dads and their daughters both nights. Lynnette also gifted our Teen Challenge Dads by taking their photos at no charge. We are so thankful to Ken Pogin, the owner of Duluth Event Lighting. He has been so gracious over the years to provide our accent lighting at no charge to us. It is well over a \$1000.00 value. This has been a huge blessing. Our secretary Judi created our programs and tickets this year with some suggestions from Gary our custodian – they are both very creative! We printed our tickets in house. ShelDon printed our programs for us. Custodian Gary also came down to the DECC both Saturday mornings to help us set tables and hang banners – what a gift he is!

We are so thankful to our contributors for their monetary donations. Arrowhead Orthodontics gifted us with \$1000.00. The Sunshine Group, Lynnette's Portrait Design and Ogston's Body, and Paint each donated \$500.00, and discoverpc.net donated \$100.00. Our Esther Circle donated money for four tickets for our Teen Challenge families. These donations certainly help offset our overhead costs. We were blessed to receive gift certificates to give as prizes to our guests from Applebee's, Black Woods Grill in Proctor, Duluth Huskies, DEFY Duluth Trampoline Park, Skyline Social and Games, Glensheen, Great Lakes Aquarium, Outback Steakhouse, Perkins Family Restaurant, Sammy's Pizza in Hermantown, Valentini's, & Marcus Lakes 10 Cinema. We gave stuffed animals away which were purchased at a discount from Walgreens the day after Valentine's Day in 2022.

We thank our members that stepped up to volunteer this year: Mike & Wendy Pickar, Melissa Pickar-Ellis, Jim & Sandy Carlson, Grace Wells, Glen and Marilyn Nelson, Sue DeSha, Gary Lofald, Mark Wiita, Kim Kirkland, along with our committee. We also had Derek Lofald and his friend Libby Bodin operate the coat room for us the first night and our Julie Guddeck and her friend Britt and Lofald's grandson, Brody Bruns, helped the second evening. Derrick Ellis, of Skyline Entertainment was our DJ for both evenings. Derrick is the son-in-law of Mike and Wendy Pickar. He has been doing a great job for us!

We were able to keep our prices consistent with years past. Moving forward, we will need to pay a nonrefundable deposit of \$1000.00 per night to secure our future dates. Unfortunately, other events are now booked out for many years so we are not able to get back-to-back weekends as we have had in the past. To continue this mission for years to come we look to our church for prayer and for help with donations. By the Grace of God and with His hand of blessing, we hope to provide this event for many more years to come as we share His Word with our attendees. Fathers and father figures are so important in the lives of these young ladies. It is truly a wonderful and memorable evening for all that attend and we are honored to be able to bring it to our community for the last 27 years.

In Christ, Your Father Daughter Ball Committee:

Kolleen Carlson, Joanna Danielson, Debbie DeRocher,
Kristine Holt, Carolyn Lofald, and Laurie Wiita





March Mission of the Month: KDNW—Life 97.3 Radio

Life 97.3 promises to always be family friendly and play positive and uplifting music that helps you connect with God. Life 97.3 exists to lead people to Christ and nurture believers in their spiritual growth through Christ-centered media.

Life 97.3 is a part of the Northwestern Media Network, from The University of Northwestern in Saint Paul, MN. They provide the transmitter for our area to receive Christian broadcasts from Northwestern college which includes broadcasting on 90.5 Faith Radio. Today, Northwestern Media operates 14 listener-supported Christian radio stations throughout the Midwest.

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

March Maintenance Report

A thank you goes out to Gary our custodian and Jim Carlson for their help with shoveling and snow blowing. With this last snow fall, the snow banks have gotten quite high at our entrances, so nose out slowly when pulling into the roadway. There has been a little heaving of the pavement at the back entrance again. Please be careful in that area. We have the “Watch Your Step” sign out. The melting has also left a considerable amount of ice in the lower part of the lot so please be careful when walking to your vehicle.

The cardboard in the kitchen exhaust fan is doing a good job keeping the cold out of the kitchen. Just a reminder that you will need to remove the cardboard if you want to turn on the overhead fan.

Custodian Gary has been very attentive in keeping everything clean for us. He left work early on Friday the 24th to come back to church and clean up for us before the funeral on Saturday. So thankful he is dedicated to our church and cares for it so well. We are blessed to have him!

We were able to get through quite a few items in our storage closet and have organized the shelves. Custodian Gary is also working on finishing this up so he is able to paint the floor in that room.

Please call if you have any suggestions, questions, and/or concerns. My number is 218-390-8357. We thank God for blessing us with all that we have and it is an honor to be able to take care of His home.

In Christ,

Carolyn Lofald
Maintenance Chair

Happy Birthday!

*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!*

Sue DeSha	March 4
Carol Sogard	March 25
Laviere Johnson	March 26
Olivia Allen	March 28
Lowaine Morris	March 29
Florence Kubiak	March 30

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
The ministry at Union Gospel Mission
All of our students from pre-school to college
Our country, military & police
The teachers and students at all schools

The steadfastness of our faith
Mission of the Month: KDNW
Persecuted Christians throughout the world
Lutheran Vicar Mwavu Ronald and his
two churches in Uganda

THOSE WITH HEALTH NEEDS:

Carol Johnson	Barb Hanson	Mary Jenny
Florence Kubiak	Jane McLean	Mark Malander
Brian McDonald	The Lund Family	Donna Swanson
Linda Anthony	Carol Schramm	Carol Schneeberger
Del Sandberg	Carol Sogard	Darlene Saaf
Jean Clark	Tom & Marlene Stauber	Maggie Kaptonak

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

Sunday services are livestreamed on our Facebook page:

Christ Lutheran Church Duluth at 9:30 AM

You can also log onto our website clduluth.org



Christ Lutheran Church Duluth



Christ Lutheran Church Duluth



Please remember the family and friends of Darlyn Sundstrom in your prayers. Darlyn went home to be with the Lord Thursday, February 9th. Services were held at Christ Lutheran on Saturday, February 25th.

Please remember the family and friends of Bernice Halverson. Bernice went home to be with the Lord on February 14, 2023. Services were held here at Christ Lutheran on Friday, February 24th.