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*Two churches, one faith.
A community of faith and hope.*

NEWSLETTER **May 2019**



Signs of Life

Easter is not too far behind us now. Our Lenten journey is over, and joyful Alleluias have returned to our worship and have taken root in our lives. Alleluia means "God be praised." The Psalmist captured this praise when she wrote: "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein. Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy. Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the hills ring out with joy before God."

And this praise rises from the deepest levels not only of creation, but of our souls, our spirits, our minds, our hearts, and our bodies; because this new life is irrepressible. It may be impinged upon, in our broken ignorance we may make scary, ugly faces at it, we may feel unworthy of shining too brightly; but in the end, new life will always win out. That is simply how our loving God's wonderful universe is wired.

Richard Rohr wrote that the seeds of Easter resurrection were planted in the Incarnation. That if God, who is beyond time and space, and who within time and space is omnipresent, omniscient,

and omnipotent; if God can (self-empty and) squeeze Godself into, and incarnate into one human body, then what keeps us from understanding resurrection as an only slightly-different version of incarnation?

And the risen life of Christ is reflected in greening lawns, in budded stems which poke up out of the ground, in the increasing collection of riotous flower colors in hanging pots at almost every store to which we go. The risen life of Christ is embodied in genuine forgiveness, in helping others when asked, in empowering others to ask for help when needed (instead of enabling them to maintain an "I'm not worthy" attitude), and in human touch. Jesus' compassionate touch was intrinsically healing. And resurrection was not only, not just, not simply a historical event, but Christ made resurrection available to us in each and every moment, for healing and new life.

In Michigan, winter hangs on for as long as it can, and autumn breezes seem painfully premature. But in between the last frost and the last leaf that falls, there is an explosion of life. Of outdoor everything. Of camping and boating and fishing and lazing on beaches. Of yard work and car washing and gardening and beers on the back deck. And of wonderful Michigan cherries (last year I called the grocery store twice to find out when they'd be in). It's all because nature has taken her cue from the very blueprint of creation, which exudes new life. Year after year after year.

And yet there is death and new life. People die and others are born. There is a time for every purpose under Heaven (Ecclesiastes 3). But I wonder if we might (also) begin to use words which reflect cycles instead of end points. Words which reflect continuums instead of gaps. Words which, like a Möbius strip, have no beginning or end, but exist in two realms at the same time. Words which, like cherry seeds, are planted, so that new and delicious life can emerge. I wonder. And I thought I heard a lake clapping her hands and a cherry tree praising God. Alleluia!

The Rev. Mike Wernick

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH COMMUNITY MINISTRY

Kim H. and Laura K.

Current/Upcoming Events

The annual **flower sale** to benefit the **Diaper Depot** is wrapping up soon; orders are due Sunday, May 5, and flowers can be picked up on Sunday, May 19. Grab extra order forms for your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers!!

The Pentecost offering will go to Two Churches' **Adult ESL** (English as a Second Language) program. Please be generous!

The final **UTO** (United Thank Offering) in-gathering will be Sunday, May 12. That same day, we will launch the **TCTO** (Two Churches Thank Offering). For more information on this exciting new ministry, please see Lisbeth E.'s article elsewhere in this newsletter.

Community Ministry's **next meeting** will be Thurs., May 16, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at Kim H.'s condo. Our meetings are open to everyone and **include a potluck dinner**. If



ACCESS' annual **Walk for Good Food** (formerly known as the Hunger Walk) will take place on Sunday, May 5. Please sponsor one of our walkers (Mary T., Paul K., and Rev. Charles H.) and/or see Mary or Paul to get involved as a volunteer.

Our next workday at **St. Mark's Breakfast Café** is Sunday, June 30. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the Community Ministry bulletin board in June. Thanks to Liz R. for coordinating our efforts for this important ministry. If you sign up but then find that you cannot make it for whatever reason, please let Liz or one of the other volunteers know as soon as possible.

you'd like to see what we're all about, please come! Just let Kim know you'll be attending so the meal can be planned accordingly. If you can't make the meeting but would like more information, please see Kim or Laura K.

Recent Events

The Good Friday offering is going to **The Pantry** (for Ascension folks) and to the **Diocese of Jerusalem** (for Holy Cross folks). The Easter offering is being split between **Lutheran Disaster Response** and **Episcopal Relief and Development** to help these agencies respond to the many recent natural disasters both here in the United States and abroad. The amounts will be published in next month's newsletter.

SPRING FLOWER SALE



Diaper Depot
Judy M.

Thursday, **May 2nd** from 6-8 p.m.
Wednesday, **May 15th** from 10:00 a.m.-
Noon

Our annual **Spring Flower Fundraiser** is underway. Purchase a beautiful hanging basket or pot of flowers and you'll be helping Diaper Depot supply diapers to families in need.

All plants are from **Ludema's Floral and Garden**.

Choose from several varieties and colors ranging in price from \$5.00 - \$16.00.

Order Deadline – May 6th

Pick-up Date – May 19th

Please make checks payable to **Ascension Lutheran**

and place in Office Admin. folder by office (hanging bin on the wall)

Our third collection of Direct Your Dollar receipts is over \$55,000!
When we collect \$150,000 in receipts, Diaper Depot will receive a check for \$1,000.
Thank you for your support!



Many Changes Coming!
(Diaper changes, that is!)

The Diaper Depot received two pieces of good news this past week:

Earlier this year **Great Start**, an organization that helps low-income families, asked for our help with a survey. They wanted to determine diaper needs in our community. They frequently refer clients to us, so we were happy to help. As a thank you for us returning a large number of the surveys to them, **Great Start** awarded us 25 boxes of diapers. We'll be picking them up from **Meijer** in time for our next distribution.

Then, a few days later, we received the wonderful news that **Grand Rapids Christian Ministries**, in response to a grant proposal we had written a couple months ago, had awarded us a grant to purchase diapers. The check for \$5000 will supply us with diapers for several months.

Our thanks to both **Grand Rapids Christian Ministries** and **Great Start** for supporting our ministry to help those who cannot help themselves---**babies**.



Beginning in June, and for the summer months, we will begin offering a worship service on Saturday evenings at 5:00 pm. Current planning is for this to be a spoken service (no music), taking the place of our current 8:00 am Sunday morning service. We will continue to have our 10:00 am Sunday worship with music.

Leadership will reassess our worship schedule in the fall.



From UTO to TCTO on May 12

Lisbeth E.

Our own **Two Churches Thank Offering** will replace the United Thank Offering (a ministry of The Episcopal Church) here at Two Churches on May 12. We have created our own thank offering program to allow all our members to feel more personally involved in sharing thanks for all the good things we experience. Like UTO, TCTO encourages us all, individually and/or as families, to consciously think about the good things in our lives, whether great or small, and then express thanks for these good things in prayer and by putting coins in offering boxes (available starting May 12) as a tangible sign of these thanks. The contents of the offering boxes will be collected once a year, around All Saints' Day. The total will be divided equally between **Lutheran Disaster Response and Episcopal Relief & Development** so that our thanks can help provide care for our neighbors in need. All monies will go to these two relief organizations. Any costs associated with the program will be paid for by Two Churches or separate, specific donations. For more info on these relief efforts, check out these links:

[Lutheran Disaster Response](#)

Episcopal Relief & Development

Our **United Thank Offering** will end with a final Ingathering, also on **Sunday, May 12** (and on the 19th in case anyone misses the 12th). As usual, the monies collected will be sent on to the **Episcopal Church United Thank Offering Office** to be added to offerings from other parishes and then used to make grants to help people throughout the world.



We want to pray with and for each other as we move along our spiritual journey together. Please lift up the designated persons throughout the week in prayer. May our Lord Jesus Christ use this ministry of prayer to build His Church in love!

April 28-May 4: Sue and Bob R.; James and Yvonne S.; Kay S.; Jan S.; John and Polly S.

May 5-11: Jeff and Jessica S.; Adam, Christie, Joshua, Leah and Michael S.; Brian and Kathy T.; Andrew and Hannah T.; Mary T.

May 12-18: Andrea T.; Katie V.; Rich and Judy W.; Co and Randy W.; Dan, Marjri, Lizzie and William W.

May 19-25: Rev. Mike W. and Joel F.; Ivan W.; Helen W.; Esther Y.-P.; Susan and Larry Z.

May 26-June 1: Al and Ann A.; Mary A.; Ruth B.; Kevin, Jill, Kate, Meg and Beth B.; Tony, Cheryl, Marisa and Anthony B.

Please continue to pray for peace and our troops stationed throughout the world.



***Scripture Readings
for May***

May 5 - Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:1-6 [7-20]
 Psalm 30
 Revelation 5:11-14
 John 21:1-19

May 19 - Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 11:1-18
 Psalm 148
 Revelation 21:1-6
 John 13:31-35

May 12 - Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:36-43
 Psalm 23
 Revelation 7:9-17
 John 10:22-30

May 26 - Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 16:9-15
 Psalm 67
 Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5
 John 14:23-29 or John 5:1-9

For Coffee Hour Hosts and Worship Server lists, please consult the previously emailed lists, which are also posted on the bulletin board outside of the church office.

If you are interested in volunteering in some capacity, please contact:

Hospitality/Coffee Hour - Hannah T. @ hannah.c.temple@gmail.com

Readers for Sunday 10am Worship - Roy M. @ GrandRapidsMorris@comcast.net

Assisting Ministers or Acolytes for Sunday 10am Worship - Rev. Mike @ rectorpaster@comcast.net or
 Deacon Kim.

May Calendar

Wednesday, May 1

10:00am Morning Prayer
 11:15am Bible Study

Thursday, May 2

9:00am TOPS
 6:00pm Diaper Depot Open
 6:30pm Morris Dancers

Friday, May 3

9:00am ESL Class

Sunday, May 5

8:00am Worship w/o music
 9:00am J2A Class
 10:00am Worship with music
 11:15am J2A Parent Meeting

Monday, May 6

7:00pm Centering Prayer

Thursday, May 16

9:00am TOPS
 6:00pm Community Ministry @ Kim's
 6:30pm Happy Souls
 6:30pm Morris Dancers

Friday, May 17

9:00am ESL Class

Sunday, May 19

8:00am Worship w/o music
 10:00am Worship with music
 10:45am J2A Class

Monday, May 20

7:00pm Centering Prayer

Tuesday, May 21

9:00am ESL Class

Wednesday, May 22

Tuesday, May 7

9:00am ESL Class

Wednesday, May 8

10:00am Morning Prayer

11:15am Bible Study

Thursday, May 9

9:00am TOPS

6:30pm Happy Souls

6:30pm Morris Dancers

Friday, May 10

11:00am Keith Small's Funeral

Saturday, May 11

10:00am NWLMSTFSOGI

Sunday, May 12

8:00am Worship w/o music

10:00am Worship with music

Monday, May 13

9:00am Sr. Foot Care

7:00pm Taize Service @ St. Mary's Catholic Church

Tuesday, May 14

9:00am ESL Class

Wednesday, May 15

10:00am Diaper Depot Open

10:00am Holy Eucharist

11:15am Bible Study

Thursday, May 16 – Saturday, May 18

N/W Lower Michigan Synod Assembly in Mt. Pleasant

10:00am Holy Eucharist

11:15am Bible Study

7:00pm Council Vestry Mtg.

Thursday, May 23

9:00am TOPS

6:30pm Happy Souls

6:30pm Morris Dancers

Friday, May 24

9:00am ESL Class

Sunday, May 26

8:00am Worship w/o music

10:00am Worship with music

Newsletter deadline - email articles to Jill @ nl2churches@att.net

Monday, May 27

7:00pm Centering Prayer

Tuesday, May 28

9:00am ESL Class

7:00pm Worship & Music Mtg

Wednesday, May 29

10:00am Holy Eucharist

11:15am Bible Study

Thursday, May 30

9:00am TOPS

6:30pm Happy Souls

6:30pm Morris Dancers

Friday, May 31

9:00am ESL Class

[View Calendar on our website](#)

A Reminder of Our On-going Ministries and Volunteer Opportunities

Ongoing Programs

Don't forget the "**Noisy Offering**" (loose change offering, although paper currency is also gladly accepted!) that we take in on the **first Sunday of each month**. This money is donated to **ACCESS of West Michigan**, a local ministry seeking to end poverty and food insecurity. The April offering brought in \$42.50. Thanks to Kay S. for counting the donations every month.

Please remember our ongoing collection of non-perishable foods for **The Pantry**. This month, we have been asked to collect **canned fruit (including "light" varieties) and applesauce**. Don't forget that we also have an ongoing collection for The Pantry of **personal care items** such as feminine hygiene products, toilet paper and other paper products, "ziplock" baggies, toothpaste, etc. These items cannot be purchased with Bridge Cards and can be quite costly, especially for someone already struggling with food insecurity. Watch for "BOGO" sales. Many thanks to all who support this vital ministry to our neighbors and to Kay S. for delivering our donations every month after they've been blessed by Rev. Mike!

We continue to collect SpartanNash store receipts to reach the **Direct Your Dollars** goal of \$150,000 in qualifying receipts for the third time. Please remember that the entire printed receipt is needed (e-receipts do not qualify). Once the goal is reached, Diaper Depot will receive another check for \$1,000. Let's fill up that truck again -- we already have over \$55,000 in receipts!

The **Samaritas** collection of magazines (non-news-oriented preferred), greeting cards, artificial flowers, and fabric is also ongoing. Please place your donations in the far-right collection bin in the Narthex. Thanks to all who donate, and to Joel F. for delivering the donated items.

Warm Up America volunteers knit or crochet afghans for children entering foster care. These works of love go to children entering foster care, providing them with warmth, comfort, and something to call their own. If you're interested in participating, please see Kay S. Donations of **washable** yarn (no wool, please) are always much appreciated and can be placed in the basket on top of the collection bins in the Narthex. If you purchase more than one skein at a time, purchasing two or more of the same color is most helpful, as it takes at least four skeins of yarn to make one afghan. Thanks to all who donate(d) yarn to this special ministry!

Volunteer Opportunities

The **Diaper Depot** needs your help! If you can assist at the scheduled distribution times, please sign up (on the bulletin board next to the Sacristy door) and lend a

hand. Currently, help is no longer needed with re-packaging diapers on Sundays. Diapers are ordered online and delivered directly to the church, saving a lot of time in shopping and hauling. Due to the timing of the deliveries, a dedicated person or persons repackage the diapers shortly after their arrival. Thanks to everyone who helps with or donates to this important ministry! For more information, please see Shirley N. or Judy M.

The Pantry can always use volunteers! If you're interested, please see Kay S.

Care Team Ministry

Help is available with rides, food, visits, communion, and calls. If you have a need, or know someone at Two Churches who does, please contact Laura K. or Rev. Mike.

You can find us at:
4252 Breton Rd. SE
Kentwood, MI 49512
HC: 616-949-7034
ALC: 616-455-8108
twochurches@comcast.net

[Map it!](#)

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