

September 2021

Pastor Debbie

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Center United Methodist Church

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August 2021 has come to a close and school has begun. I would like to personally thank the folks who were so gracious to help with the Back to School Luncheon for Center Consolidated Schools on August 11, 2021. There are so many precious servants of God who helped to make this annual luncheon a big success. The faculty and staff were so appreciative of the luncheon and the school supplies. Elementary school principal Jared Morgan wanted me to give a special thank you to our church for doing this every year and all the wonderful cooks who provided the delicious food and the amazing saints who set up, prepared, served, and clean up for this tremendous undertaking. It is greatly appreciated especially after the very difficult year last year and continuing uncertainty for this school year. We would like to thank Mary Bloxson, Peg Dalby, Marilyn Eagles, Betty Felmlee, Glenda Holcomb, Sue McClure, Linda Mix, Cozette Price, Jolene Robinson, Linda Warsh, Linda Wilson, and Glynnis Williams for their generous donation of food and a special thank you goes to Kitty Entz, Carol Hollmer, Anthony Lobato, Hannah Metzger, Janet Myers, Charleen Schaeffer, and Lori Sanchez for the wonderful variety of delicious foods and their **service before, during, and after the luncheon. We've been focusing on scripture about spiritual growth and formation. You have given us a beautiful example of spiritual formation by your willingness to use your time and talents to reach others for Christ. I hope your spirit grew three sizes, as mine did from such an amazing display of love. To think that this luncheon has gone on for over twenty-five plus years and has continued through the pandemic is a testimony to the power of God's love and grace. Thank you so much.**

Thank you to all who showed their support for Mary Morffit's family by attending her celebration of life on August 27th. I would like to thank Betty Felmlee, Kitty Entz, Linda Mix, Lori Sanchez, Charleen Schaeffer, Linda Wilson for providing the salads for the meal after the service and Betty Felmlee, Hannah Metzger, Linda Mix, Lori Sanchez, and Charleen Schaeffer for their gracious help in serving the meal. Again the beauty of the spirit of God at **work in our midst. Thank you so much for being willing servants to show God's love. Thank you to all who supported Debra Greenbank's family by attending the graveside service in Monte Vista on August 28th.** Both Mary and Debbie will be greatly missed by all. We can honor their legacy by continuing it with the strength and guidance of Jesus Christ.

As we begin September, we will be continuing our focus on spiritual formation by recognizing the gifts and graces we have been given by God, by reaching out to God and others, and by regenerating our first love in Christ. I invite you to join me in reading a small but powerful book *The Treasure Principle* by Randy Alcorn 2017 edition. Beginning the first Wednesday in September at 6:30 pm our bible study will resume with the bible study workbook that goes along with *The Treasure Principle*. I will be preaching for seven Sundays on the seven chapters in the book. There is a Kindle and Audible version of the book that you may wish to use. We will be providing the written material each Sunday prior to the weekly Bible study. The Bible study will be via Zoom or in person at Center. I invite both Center and Saguache to participate. Our first lesson will be September 1, 2021 at 6:30 pm.

Thursday, September 2, 2021, Center will host Cookin' with Your Neighbor where we have an opportunity to be the church to the community by feeding them physically and spiritually. Let's reach out to those who haven't attended and give them a special invitation to join us. Let's not forget those who are homebound and may need a ride to the dinner or for us to bring dinner to them. Remember the spiritual principle – the more we bless others, abundant blessings are poured out on us. Prayer, fellowship, reaching out to God and others to build relationships for the kingdom of God are only a glimpse into the many ways to grow spiritually. We will be providing the main course of Spaghetti and meat sauce and meat balls. We invite you to add to the meal with your choice of salad, side items, or desserts. If you are unable to bring anything, know you are welcome whether you bring anything or not. God's abundance always provides; another gift of the spirit.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.... Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."
- John 15:4 (NIV)

I am working with several other ministers in the valley to participate in 10 Days of prayer prior to the anniversary of September 11th. Center will host September 9th with times to be announced once everything is finalized.

I'm sure you will want to support Lewis Entz on his 90th birthday. There will be a simple reception honoring Lewis on September 11, 2021 from 1-4 pm. If you cannot attend, I'm sure you will want to send him birthday wishes.

Another opportunity to reach out to our community is Movie Night September 16th at 6 pm. We will be showing *Cruella*. Not only a wonderful movie will be shown free, but there will be free food and snacks. This is not just for kids but for anyone. Again, please invite neighbors and friends for a wonderful night at the movies at Center.

Be in prayer as we venture into another community experience as we hope to open up Drummond Hall on Friday, September 17th from 7-10 pm to all middle and high school aged kids to come play games, like ping-pong, foosball, and **video games, along with food and snacks providing a safe space for our youth to "hang-out" and have fun.** The need has been expressed and there is the hope that the community will eventually have a rec center, but in the meanwhile we **have the space and opportunity to see if "they will come."** If you would like to help this endeavor in any way, please let the church office know. Thank you in advance for your prayers.

Our district superintendent Chris Carr is planning on being in Saguache on September 19th, so we will be planning **to have Saguache's one church meeting after church on September 19th.**

Please put these events on your October calendar – Saturday, October 9th (9:30-12:30) – Regenerate- a time of spiritual renewal at Beaver Creek Youth Camp (food will be provided – more details to follow) and our traditional Oyster Stew, Chili, and Soup Dinner towards the end of October. Mountain Sky Annual Conference is supposed to be October 21-24th in Ogden, Utah; however, because of the Delta variant may be changed. I will keep you updated.

As I close this article, I would like to thank all of you who have faithfully supported your church's ministries with your time, talent, gifts, and offerings. Both Center and Saguache struggle as we continue to have saints who were faithful givers join the heavenly band, and those of us who remain are struggling to fill those financial holes. God hasn't brought us this far to leave us, but this is a time to reevaluate our priorities and listen to God's leading to tithe and even consider an offering above the tithe.



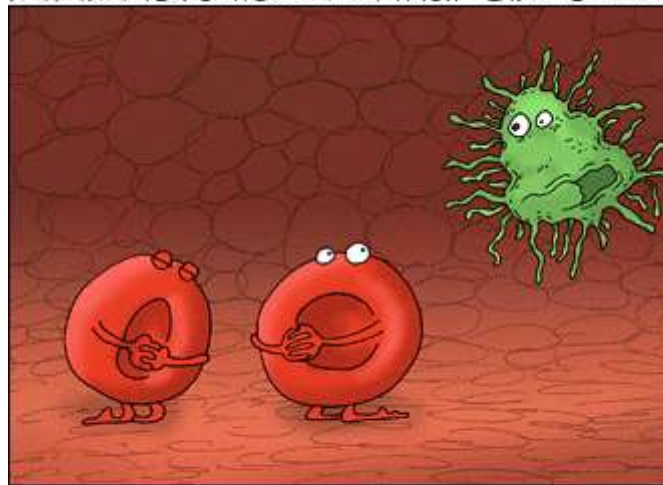
Teacher's Appreciation Luncheon

The Twelve Disciples

Who was Matthew?

September 21st marks the feast day for St Matthew the apostle in the West. While it is mostly celebrated within the catholic church, it marks a time to reflect on who Matthew was. Matthew was a tax collector before his calling to Jesus, and back then, tax collectors were viewed as the worst of the worst. They were hated by devote Jews for their dishonesty, as they notoriously lied about the price of the taxes owed and pocketed the difference, and were hated by the nationalist Jews as they willingly worked for the Roman Conquerors. If the tax collector was Jewish, it was even worse as it was seen as betraying your own to aid the enemy. But despite being a legal thief, Jesus still called him. He told Matthew to follow and he did. No hesitation, no deliberation, Matthew stood up and followed. Then when the Pharisees asked Jesus why he would eat with the tax collectors and sinners, **Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."** (Matthew 9:12-13). Matthew is one of the most powerful examples of the forgiveness God offers everyone. Through his calling we can see that if we offer God our sincere commitment, we too can be forgiven. Matthew left behind wealth and security for a life of poverty and uncertainty, but gained eternal life, and a life free from sin. **Pope Benedict once said, "in the figure of Matthew, the Gospels present to us a true and proper paradox: those who seem to be the farthest from holiness can even become a model of the acceptance of God's mercy and offer a glimpse of its marvelous effects in their own lives". Matthew shows us that it is never too late for anyone, and that all are offered the forgiveness of God if they commit to him and trust in him. As we head in to September and the celebration of his feast day, remember his story, remember his calling. Our lives can be filled with distractions and we forget how simple it can be to hear the call, but all we need to do is take a moment to reach out to God and follow.**

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09-21

ARE YOU RED BLOOD CELLS AWARE THAT YOU ARE WORSHIPPING IN VEIN

Joke of the Month

The Sunday School teacher was teaching a class of children about creation. "Now, children," she said, "Who can tell us what makes the flower spring from the seed?" "God does it," answered one little girl, "but fertilizer helps."



Movie Night

September 16th we will be having our monthly movie night and will be featuring the new movie Cruella. Set in London during the punk rock movement of the 1970s, the film revolves around Estella Miller, an aspiring fashion designer, as she explores the path that will lead her to become a notorious up-and-coming fashion designer known as Cruella de Vil.



Google.com/images

Cookin' with Our Neighbor

This month Cookin' with Our Neighbor will be on September 2nd at 5:30pm. We will be gathering for some wonderful Spaghetti! We hope to see you at Cookin' with our Neighbor and please invite the community!

Would Jesus wear a mask?

These are crazy times we are living in!

As if we don't have enough division in the world already, now we seem to have a controversy over whether or not to wear a face mask when in public.

Some object to it because they think it makes them look foolish. Others see it as an inconvenience or a violation of their rights. Others cite some of our leaders aren't setting the needed example. Still others claim facemasks don't

protect anyone, or that the whole COVID-19 crisis is a hoax.

We are a sadly divided people! Yet the facts are, our health professionals (locally, regionally, and nationally) urge us to wear a mask when we are in a public setting.

Why? Because even though restaurants, bars and stores are opening up, the COVID-19 virus hasn't gone away.

As I write this article today, confirmed cases of the virus have

spiked in 20 states!

We are currently seeing one new confirmed case in St. Croix County each day, and our numbers have doubled over the past month.

And nationally, over 125,000 people have now lost their lives to this disease!

So can I ask you?

If Jesus were walking our streets today, do you think he would wear a mask in public? Why, or why not?

How do you think Jesus would suggest we best "love our neighbor"?

Would Jesus be concerned about being uncomfortable or inconvenienced? Would his concern be with his vanity and appearance?

Would you see Jesus arguing over his civil rights? Would he insult or make fun of those who were frightened for their lives?

Or, would Jesus discount the counsel of medical experts?

Think of it, friends: The Jesus we preach was willing to experience humiliation, suffering, and death to save the people he loved.

It seems to me, if Jesus would die on a cross for us, he would wear a mask for us.

He would do everything in his power to protect our well-being and show his care in practical ways ... like wearing a mask.

Christians should be leading the way in loving our neighbors and caring for the vulnerable. That is not just Jesus' job, it's your job and mine, too!

What troubles me most in seeing people in public places without masks is sensing our convenience now overshadows our caring.

Liberty has become more important to some than love.

And we have lost a sense of common courtesy and respect for those around us.

Wearing a mask is not the only way to show our faith and our values, but it is ONE of the ways.

As a pastor in this community of faith, I hope and pray this crisis will bring out "the best" in those of us who claim to follow Jesus.

I also hope you will be a living example of Christ's love, care, concern, compassion and respect for those around you.

Please, when you're in a public setting, think about the good of others. Jesus does.

Put on your mask!

John Lestock is pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church in Hudson.



PASTOR JOHN LESTOCK
Bethel Lutheran Church

Steakhouse Potatoes Romanoff

Ingredients

- 1 tsp butter
- 3 large russet potatoes
- 2 shallots
- 3 tsps salt
- 1/2 tsp white pepper
- 1 pinch cayenne pepper
- 2 1/2 C grated sharp white cheddar cheese
- 1 3/4 C sour cream

Recipe by: Chef John (Allrecipes.com)



Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). Butter a casserole dish.
2. Wrap each potato in foil and place on a baking sheet. Poke holes into potatoes using a knife.
3. Bake in the preheated oven until very tender and easily pierced with a knife, about 1 hour and 15 minutes.
4. Let potatoes cool to room temperature, at least 20 minutes. Unwrap. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until completely chilled, 8 hours to overnight.
5. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C).
6. Shred potatoes into a large bowl using a cheese grater. Mince shallots to get 1/4 to 1/3 cup.
7. Add shallots in with the potatoes; season with salt, white pepper, and cayenne. Toss with two forks until well combined. Add Cheddar cheese and mix well. Gently toss in sour cream until barely combined. Transfer mixture into the prepared baking dish, piling it up high, then patting it down very lightly.
8. Bake in the preheated oven until piping hot and top is browned, 30 to 35 minutes.