

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

405 Kennedy Avenue, Duquesne, PA 15110

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A Partner in the ministry of Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries

Pastoral Team

Rev. John J. Gropp: 412-680-7867 Rev. Brenda Henry: 412-390-8005
Rev. Susan Devine: 412-496-4889 Rev. Alexander Sumo: 614-218-6730

September 2023 Volume 45 No. 9

We are the Church, gathered and equipped, sent and scattered, for faith in action.

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. (Matthew 14: 13-14)

The vocation of being a pastor comes with many opportunities for growth and beautiful moments of joy and witnessing the Holy Spirit at work. In this journey of being your pastor for almost 4 years (can you believe that?) I have certainly experienced those growth, joy, and Holy Spirit moments. However, over time, there is one thing I have encountered that I must admit makes me sad. It is the phrase "Pastor, I know you have a lot on your plate, or I know you are really busy" as the opening to a conversation. As your pastor, I want to be there with you and for you; especially in those moments when you are at a crossroads, experiencing a difficult time, as well as to share in your celebrations and joys. However, what makes me even sadder is to learn afterwards that someone chose not to reach out because of concern for "bothering" me. There is an old saying "what you don't know can't hurt you." I have come to realize that is not a true statement. Lack of information only prevents one from extending care and support at best and serves to create division and harm at worst.

As your pastoral team we recognize and acknowledge that caring for 10 congregations carries with it a lot of responsibility, the need to prioritize our tasks, and to have flexibility in our schedule to adjust to the unexpected. We are constantly learning the importance of balancing the care for our congregations, with care for our families and for ourselves. However, what we have learned and what remains true is we cannot be present for you if we are unaware there is a need or want.

In the gospel of Matthew chapter 14 we read the story of the beheading of John the Baptist, cousin

of Jesus. Upon learning of the death of his cousin, Jesus naturally wanted to take a moment to grieve. However, the crowd followed Jesus. What was Jesus' response to the crowd? He had compassion on them. He stopped and he cared for them.

Being present to care for the crowd was an important part of the interaction between Jesus and the crowd. The crowd making known their concerns was also necessary. We as your pastors fully acknowledge that for us to be *better together* we must rely on each other...our shared partnership. Caring for our community is not an exact science. It is relational. And relationships are messy. Even the best efforts to care for one another will result in missing cues, misreading signs. The most helpful way to maintain healthy relationships is by transparent conversations. Sometimes those conversations are not easy and may not provide the desired outcome for everyone; however, we cannot learn what is needed without open dialog. This dialog helps us to faithfully respond to what we are commanded to do - love our neighbor.

The grace filled portion of the story however does not end at the compassion and caring. As we look further in the narrative of Matthew chapter 14 we see that this was the beginning. This narrative also contains the feeding of the 5000 by Jesus. So often we see this as a miraculous moment where Jesus multiplied five loaves and two fishes. However, it is more. This miracle is also the result of team effort. The disciples had to make known their concerns for the crowd to Jesus. They had to search for a means to feed the people. The loaves and fishes came from someone (a little boy we are told in the gospel of John 6:1-15). Could Jesus have done the miracle

without the aid of the disciples and the little boy? I believe so. And yet, Jesus' actions remind us that God works through us and with us.

Let us continue to care for one another by being present for each another. The next time a concern comes up know that you may reach out to us – **we are not too busy to stop and care.** AND, trusting the presence of God to work in us and through us, we will be the family that God has called us to be.

In community together,
Pr. Brenda on behalf of PLUM Pastoral Team

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PLUM (Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries) includes:

Bethany Lutheran, Dormont
Christ Lutheran, Duquesne
East Liberty Lutheran
Hope Lutheran Church, Forest Hills
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Irwin
Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, North Huntingdon
Messiah Lutheran, Munhall
Resurrection Lutheran, Oakdale
St. Andrew Lutheran, East Carnegie
St. Paul's Lutheran, Canonsburg

The next PLUM Board Meeting is 7 PM on Monday, **September 25, 2023**, on Zoom. Christ Lutheran reps on the PLUM Board are Elsie Ferencz, Deann George, Kathy Hays, and Mary Anne Novak.

PLUM's afternoon worship services are on Zoom on **Sundays at 3 PM. All are welcome!** Bulletins for worship services on zoom are always available on the PLUM website, www.plumofpa.com.

The call-in line for worship, Bible Study, and Meetings:

Zoom online: <https://zoom.us/j/401596541>

Zoom by phone: **+1 646 876 9923 Meeting ID: 401 596 541#**

It is PLUM's mission to be LIVING CHRIST'S LIGHT OF HOPE IN OUR COMMUNITIES. PLUM will:

- ❖ Provide stability of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care.
- ❖ Foster opportunities for connectivity among individuals, congregations, and communities.
- ❖ Develop lay leadership for sharing the Gospel.
- ❖ Encourage freedom to care for neighbors.



At Home Prayer Service

Wednesday, September 6, 2023

7:00 pm on Zoom

Taizé is a contemplative style of Christian worship characterized by the repetitive singing of simple harmonized tunes, interspersed with readings and prayers. Whether you are someone who is new to Taizé, or someone who already appreciates this beautiful way to connect to God, community and self, please consider joining us. All are welcome!



Saturday, September 9, 2023

10:00 am to 12:30 pm

at Christ Lutheran Church

For the **sixth** year in a row, PLUM (Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries) will be working with the faith-based organization "**Rise Against Hunger**" to host a **meal packaging event reinforcing "Gods Work, Our Hands."** We will coordinate an assembly-line packaging of highly nutritious dehydrated meals comprised of rice, soy, vegetables and 23 essential vitamins and minerals. Together we will package 13,000 meals that will be sent to school feeding programs around the world, medical clinics, child growth and development centers, elder care and crisis and disaster centers. **Come join us for this spiritually inspiring event!** To volunteer, please contact Mary Anne Novak.

August 10, 2023 message from Pastor Paul Koch

Warm greetings to all the PLUM churches and their members:

Many of you know of my recent falls and hospitalization. I want you all to know that I am at home now - still recuperating. My wife Sharon has been a very faithful caregiver.

Thank you all for your cards, your good wishes and, especially, your prayers. They all mean a lot to me and give me encouragement to carry on.

I also want to take this opportunity to make a recommendation to you. While I have been home I have spent some time watching the TV series "The Chosen" on PRIME Network. Some of you undoubtedly have heard of it or seen it already. Generally I think it provides a realistic presentation of Jesus' life and ministry. It excludes the exaggerations of films that are produced in Hollywood. And even though the script is not entirely Biblical, I think the added material is fair and helpful. Take a look at it if you haven't already.

And God bless you all, your families, and the PLUM churches.
+Pastor Paul



Ruth Baker, Gordon Boyd, Lenroy Bright, Andy Cerpani, Betty Ciglar, Ian Cogley, Charlayne & Denise DeCecco, Pastor Sue Devine, Gregory Ferencz, Rico Ferencz, Robbie Ferencz, Pastor John Gropp, Beryl Gundy, Lucy H., Marianne Hantz, Richard Jackson, Charlie Johnson, Kelly Keech, Pastor Paul Koch, Lisa Kogler, Ethel Kotrady, Maryanne Lasko, Jeff Moss, Haydn Oskin, Leonard Oskin, David Pederson, Justin Pederson, Donna Reyes, Zach Schmude, Jessie Seliga, Angel Shepherd Grzyb, Harriette Shepherd, George Simo, Kpannah Sumo, Jonella Terek, Tammy Thomas, Lois Tubbs; Children's Hosp: Ozzie Rankin

On July 30 we received **Lenroy Bright** and **Karol Bright** as members of Christ Lutheran Church through Affirmation of Baptism. **Welcome!**



Together, we are the church!

Thanks to all who bring their offerings to worship, drop off or mail offerings to the church, or use PayPal! Your continuing support and faithfulness are greatly appreciated and keep the ministry in and through Christ Lutheran Church alive!



September

- 4 - Nikolai Surmick (2014)
- 5 - Sara Allas
- 6 - Bryce Novak
- 12 - Kathy Hays
- 16 - Evelyn Coughenour (2011)
- 21 - John Allas

October

- 3 - Beryl Gundy (1954)
- 17 - Mary Anne Novak
- 18 - Adelyn Morrison (2014)
- 20 - Barb Helsel (1943)
- 21 - Carlene Oskin (1952)

To have your name/birthday/anniversary listed in future newsletters, or to make a change to the prayer list, please contact Deann at christluthduq@gmail.com or 412-466-7773



Starts September 10 after worship! Join us! There's a place for you!



Donations are being accepted for the **Basket Raffle** to be held at Oktoberfest on October 21, 4-7 PM. Please bring your donations to the church by October 8.

Thank you!

Tickets for adults and children will be available soon!

COME FOR GERMAN-STYLE FOOD & REFRESHMENTS, FRIENDS, RAFFLES, MUSIC & MORE!

And new this year: **BEER SWAP!**

This 21+ swap is like a cookie exchange, but for beer! Bring your favorite fall 6 pack of beer and leave with a whole new 6 pack of fun beers to try!

Please, no Coors, Miller light, Yuengling, etc. (You wouldn't bring Chips Ahoy to a cookie exchange! 😊)



**REFORMATION
Sunday**

On Reformation Sunday, October 29, PLUM will have a joint worship service at 3 PM at Lutheran Church of Our Saviour in North Huntingdon. This service will also be on Zoom. Pastor Blair Morgan will preach. Please plan to join us for a wonderful day of worship, refreshments and fellowship!

There will also be a joint choir. Rehearsals will be October 21, 2 pm and October 29 at 1:30 pm, before the service.

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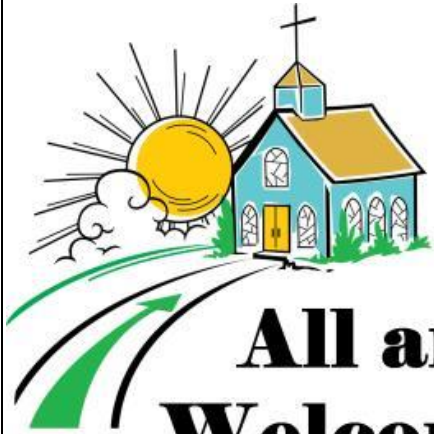
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ELECTRONIC ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



**All are
Welcome**

Time sensitive material

PLUM Fall Bible Study: Seeking Justice



September 14th through November 16th

Thursdays, 7:00 pm on Zoom

September 14 and 21: Justice for Creation

September 28 and October 5: Racial Justice

October 12 and 19: Gender Justice

October 26 and November 2: LGBTQIA+ Justice

November 9 and 16: Justice for Immigrants

***"Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.
Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."***

Isaiah 1:17