



Family of Christ Lutheran Church

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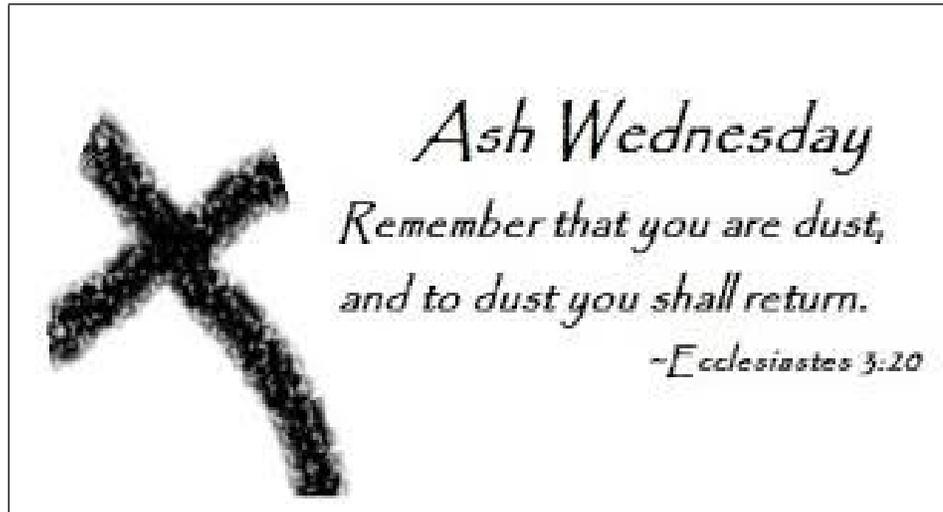
Touching lives with the love of Christ.

Volume 14, Issue 3
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Saturday Service Location:
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
2703 9th Ave NW
Rochester, MN 55901

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www.familyofchristrochs.com](http://www.familyofchristrochs.com)
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A Journey Through Lent

“A Journey Through Lent – Reflecting on Christ’s sacrifice for us” will be the resource that we are using by Timothy Keller and David Bisgrove as we study the cross this upcoming season. The resource states “Lent is a time in which we anticipate the victory of the light and life of Christ over the darkness of sin and death. It corresponds to Jesus’ time in the wilderness. This 7-week sermon series and study guide are from select Psalms which help us in times of self-examination, difficulty, and dryness and invite us to make our hearts ready for remembering anew Jesus’ death and resurrection.”

Why would anyone want to study difficulty and dryness? First of all, it helps us understand what Jesus went through. We can’t possibly begin to appreciate the resurrection with all of its majesty and grandeur without first catching a glimpse of the agony and pain of the cross. Difficulty and dryness give us perspective and allow us to appreciate the blessings of life more fully. Spring is going to be absolutely beautiful this year. How do I know that? Because there is going to be a greater anticipation and appreciation for the season following all this snow. The greater the adversity the greater the blessing that follows it for those who endure. Difficulty and dryness never last forever and when you take the opportunity to draw closer to God in those dry times when the joy does come, it is so much sweeter because of the past experiences you’ve had to endure. The sun seems brighter, the birds sound louder, the flowers smell sweeter and the sky looks bluer. Your perspective is different so that you can now more fully appreciate the light because you have had to endure the dark.

Psalm 30:1-5 says “I will exalt you, Lord, for you rescued me. You refused to let my enemies triumph over me. O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you restored my health. You brought me up from the grave, O Lord. You kept me from falling into the pit of death. Sing to the Lord, all you godly ones! Praise his holy name. For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime! Weeping

may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning.”

This is the Psalm of a man who understood suffering, pain and darkness. That is why we study difficulty and dryness not because we desire it in our lives, but when we walk through it and focus on God and his word in the midst of it, we are able to enjoy the deliverance so much more fully. The sickness makes you more appreciative of the health. The snow makes you more aware of the spring. The suffering makes you more grateful for the deliverance and the death makes you more thankful for the life.

So, as you consider how you will spend your season of Lent this year, I encourage you to examine with me the difficulty of Jesus’ path to the cross so that when you do - you will see afresh and anew the miracle of the resurrection. The greatest real-life stories that have the greatest endings and the most inspiring messages also have the most significant conflicts. The greater the struggle the greater the reward. This Lent come and see a man who struggled in great ways during his life on earth in order to bring us the greatest salvation the world has ever seen.

Pastor Jeff

Outreach Funds

At Family of Christ, we are supporting monthly outreach events. Many of these require some form of funding. As such, we do have a Designated Outreach Fund in Savings set up that members may contribute to at any time in support of upcoming or future outreach events. Gifts to the fund may just be marked for “Outreach”.

Treasurer's Report – January 2019

January Income: \$13,046.85 (exc district support)

MN South District Support: None provided.

January Expenses: \$16,946.40 (Paid remainder of school year RCLS Tuition Assistance)

Net: (\$3,899.55)

Checks being held as of Feb 11: None

January-January Income: \$13,046.85

January-January Expenses: \$16,946.40

Net year to date: (\$3,899.55)

YTD Budget: \$15,586.31

March Birthday's & Anniversaries

Mar 04	Dwight Harrison
Mar 17	Jim Link
Mar 24	Michelle Niederstadt
Mar 27	Jeanne Block
Mar 28	Levi Niederstadt
Mar 29	Stephen Olander

Mar 11 Dwight & Pat Harrison

Note: If we have missed a Birthday or Anniversary, our apologies. I believe our list is getting plenty old and outdated. Please email any additions to tim.block@charter.net. Thank you.

Mass Choir

A ***Lutheran Hour Celebration Rally*** will be held on Sunday March 17 at 4 pm at Hosanna Lutheran Church in Mankato. As part of the Rally there will be a mass choir. Dr. Mennicke from Concordia will be the director. If you are interested in participating in the choir, practice is from 2-3:30 pm on that day ~ Sunday, March 17. For any questions, please contact Pastor Heidorn at Grace Lutheran Church here in Rochester.

RCLS Vision 2019 Survey Results

In October 2018, RCLS parents were invited to participate in the Vision 2019 Survey. Each of the 34 questions in the survey targeted a particular aspect of one of five general areas:

- Curriculum & academics
- School culture & community
- Marketing & enrollment
- Communications
- Future direction

The following summary includes brief conclusions for each area, as well as action points that we've identified to address for areas of improvement. Please note that, in general, issues that are identified for "action" were deemed so because many parents (5-10% or more) identified them as a "need."

Curriculum & Academics

Nearly all of the survey respondents (98%) agreed with the leading statement—*RCLS offers appropriate classroom activities, assignments, resource support and/or enrichment activities to facilitate the academic success of my child*, which offers an overall perception of RCLS's curriculum and teaching methods.* This response suggests that students are learning and parents are perceiving excellence. However, there are a couple of areas that parents raise as concerns: inconsistency in maintaining academic rigor from class to class and how the theory of evolution is handled.

Action Points

- 1.Choose new curriculum materials in such a way that the materials support differentiation and demand academic rigor. Curriculum materials are evaluated on a regular schedule. Currently, the math materials are in review. As a result of this survey, we are prioritizing both "rigor" and "differentiation potential" in new materials.
- 2.Engage faculty in a vertical teaming process for planning across grade levels to ensure academic rigor and preparation for the next level. This planning process will take place in June in preparation for the upcoming school year.
- 3.A collaborative dialogue between the association pastors, the school faculty, and the principal will increase sensitivity to the range of views about evolution in this Christian community. RCLS is committed to a literal interpretation of the creation account in Genesis 1, but we do want to be sensitive to and respectful of other opinions. Ultimately, this is because we want to

teach students to engage with ideas critically and to engage with people respectfully. We will teach this, first, by modeling the same.

*Data from a recent survey of 2018 RCLS graduates indicates that RCLS students are exceedingly prepared to excel in high school. For more information and confirmation that the RCLS curriculum exceeds expected standards, [see the recent Bobcat Blog post, "How Do RCLS Students Do in High School?"](#)

Culture & Community

The survey contained 13 questions intended to measure parent perceptions of the spiritual and social curriculum of the school. Overall parents are especially pleased and perceive the students as safe, spiritually nurtured and socially supported. Also noted, parent responses in this segment do suggest there is room for improvement when it comes to offering opportunities for feedback/input, ensuring non-Lutheran families perceive a sense of belonging and inclusion, and welcoming new families into the school.

Action Points

- 1.The school will provide a brief survey at the end of the 3rd quarter of each school year to solicit anonymous feedback about the school year and the classroom experience.
- 2.The Association Churches will consider a by-law change to grant voting rights to two non-association members on the RCLS Board of Directors. The Churches are in the process of considering and voting on this by-law change now. We expect to know the outcome of those votes by June.
- 3.To further facilitate the welcome of new families we will: a) increase the number of Parent Ambassadors, b) facilitate grade-level gatherings before the fall break, and c) initiate a new-family information session at Back-to-School Night. We want all new families to have a sense of belonging as soon as they enter the school. If you are new to RCLS or have been here for years and you'd like to be a part of this effort, please email Mrs. Kaufmann.

Marketing & Enrollment

There is a wide variation in parental perceptions of the school's marketing efforts, but it is instructive to note those aspects of the school that initially drew current families: a) reputation for a positive and safe environment, b) small class sizes, c) caring, quality teachers, d) strong academic and spiritual foundation, and e) a close community. In terms of barriers to enrollment, RCLS must be mindful of all aspects of the school that may be perceived as barriers, most notably the cost of tuition, and market in such a way that perceived barriers are mitigated.

Action Points

- 1.Advertise the Variable Tuition program.
- 2.Increase scholarship dollars.
- 3.Work collaboratively with The Grace Foundation to increase membership with the goal of building a long-term endowment fund that will support tuition costs.

Communications

While communication is viewed as a strength of the school, parents offer some suggestions for areas of improvement. Specifically, consistency in how messages are disseminated, greater use of text messaging, and greater ease of use with Educate were noted.

Action Points

1. Unify communication platforms, methods, and processes beginning with the 2020-21 school year. We know that many of you receive communication from multiple teachers as well as the office, and most of you also access information from your phones. We are working to accommodate these realities and to streamline our processes.
2. Explore the viability of text messaging for some announcements.
3. Identify solutions for supporting parents' interactions with Educate.

Future Directions

Parents were asked to name the school's most important priority or investment for the future. The top four include: a) maintain or increase academic rigor/excellence, b) maintain a Christ-centered approach to learning, c) start a high school, and d) campus/equipment or other needed improvements.

Action Points

1. The school principal and the board of directors will facilitate an exploratory discussion on the matter of establishing a high school. The discussion will be welcome to all interested school parents and will have the goal of determining whether an ad hoc committee is warranted. Please mark your calendars for April 16 at 6:30, when this discussion will take place at the school.
2. Communicate existing plan for campus improvements and academic priorities. The RCLS campus is maintained or updated according to this plan. We'll make you aware of scheduled improvements—including the parking lot—soon.

Conclusions

We are grateful that parents are generally very happy with RCLS and, in the case of identifying the greatest need, many cannot even name an area of improvement. It is significant that comments most often suggest "maintaining" excellence rather than making changes. This is an incredibly desirable place to be! Having said this, we are humbly mindful of those issues that parents name as irritations or areas for improvement. The sort of "customer service" that is responsive to parental concerns is a top priority.

Finally, I note that the strongest message of these survey results is that RCLS is, at the moment, an exceedingly healthy school. While this summary is largely concerned with areas for improvement, the survey also reveals that parents identify RCLS as a physically, socially, and spiritually safe place for children, who thrive at a school that offers Grace, Faith, and Learning for Life. Parents perceive excellence at RCLS, academically and otherwise, and thoughtfully offer suggestions for improvement for a school they love and want to thrive. Again, please do take the time to read the most recent Bobcat Blog post, which reports the well-being of 2018 RCLS graduates after their first semester of high school.

We are honored to partner with you. Thank you for being a part of RCLS.

With deep appreciation,

Suzanne Lagerwaard
Principal

FOC Meeting Schedule – March

- Council Mtg – RCLS March 11th 6:00pm
 - Congregational input welcome. Request time by communicating with w/ Mark Halbakken by 3/10 for agenda planning purposes.
- Holy Cross - Family of Christ Exploration Team Meeting Thursday 3/7 at 7:30
- Holy Cross - Family of Christ Exploration Team Meeting Thursday 3/21 at 6:30

Holy Cross - Family of Christ Exploration Team Feb Meetings

- FOC Members: Jeanne Block, Dan Kuball, Tim Block
- Holy Cross Members: Tim Heroff, Cindy Wessel, Jo Dean, Roger Lindahl
- Ex-Officio Members: Mark Halbakken, Mark Matthias, Pastor Jeff NiederstadtI
- Feb 4 Meeting
 1. Compared congregational missions
 2. Summary of HC Isaiah Project Blueprint
 3. Reviewed congregational membership maps
 4. Began discussion of continuum of options
- Feb 21 Meeting
 1. Looked at the Continuum of Options and better articulated the ones we wish to flesh out further
 2. Considered high level pros & cons to working together in some capacity

Family of Christ Council Meeting Minutes Feb 11th, 2019

(Pre-Approval)

- Attendees: Pastor, Tim, Rick, Barb, Mark, Natalie
- Called to order @ 6:01PM
- Prayer/Opening Devotion – Mark: Matthew 18:12-14, Luke 15, Luke 19:1, Your Church Experiencing God Together – emphasis on caring for those that have left the congregation or not attending.
 - Discussion followed on reaching out to past members – how, when, ... , handwritten personal invitations. Perhaps define a textual template and have congregation involved in writing a note at end of a Saturday service. Discussion on if Elders could help out here is well.
- Congregational Input:
 - Easter Service – suggestion from member made for single HC/FOC service Easter Sunday

- Staff planning on 6:30 Sunrise , breakfast available in between, 9:30 later service
- Easter Egg Hunt – suggestion from member made for egg hunt at RCLS property allowing for usable inside facilities (restrooms).
- Table setup - suggestion from member to setup a couple less tables to not promote tables w/ just a couple of people.
- Approved Jan 14th Council Mtg Minutes
- Reports
 - Treasurer's Report
 - Cash in checking: \$52,941.09
 - No checks held
 - RCLS tuition discount paid for rest of current school year
 - Pastor's Report
 - RCLS Bd approved nomination of non-assoc members to board so that will go thru member congregations for approval
 - Successful Marriage Conference – 15 couples attended
 - Circuit meeting on Thursday at HC 9:00-12:00 HC doing refreshments for fellowship time.
 - Lent plans
 - Two Fish Frys 3/15, 3/29 w/ service
 - Ash Wed 3/06, Wed nites 3/20 & 4/03 & 4/10
 - Topic: Holy Roar (Hebrew Praise Words – Chris Tomlin)
 - Easter Egg Hunt
 - Staff planning on using RCLS facilities
 - Joint w/ HC, can still use flyers in Gibbs area
 - Church Planter's Conference – May 4 Peter Meier 9-3:00pm at HC
 - Circuit churches will be invited
 - HC & FOC snacks, lunch to be provided
 - Pastor planning vac days for Kayli graduation – Mother's Day 5/11
 - Pastor planning for vac Sat 4/06
 - Joint confirmation with HC in fall 2019 being discussed
 - Pastor/HC planning to extend vacancy contract thru end August (current thru end March)
 - Update on Elders
 - No mtg held – snowed out. Next planned for 2/18.
- Old Business
 - Update on Welcome Wagon "gifts" to new neighborhood families - Natalie & Barb –

- Initial Thrivent Funds used for generic items – no locations, dates.
- Holy Cross "Facilities Use Agreement" extended to Dec 31, 2019
- Blue & White Night 4/12 – Mark's son putting package together for his fishing resort Echo Shores (\$600 that FOC would contribute toward a \$900 package – remainder is business advertising)
- New Business
 - Exploratory Committee update
 - Finalize Location for Easter Egg Hunt
 - RCLS property, facility to be used
 - Thrivent Team Action support for Easter Egg Hunt
 - HC/RCLS use of Peach Jar & NextDoor Digest for advertising to neighborhood
 - Church attendance at HC vs Gibbs
- Future meeting dates
 - Next council mtg Mar 11, 2019 (Natalie – Devotion)
- Adjourned @ 7:30PM