



A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR SCOTT

Anacortes Lutheran Church - September 2023 Newsletter

Dear Members and Friends of Anacortes Lutheran Church,

We have enjoyed a beautiful summer and are now thinking about 'regular' things starting up again. School, regular meetings, choir, Sunday School, and more! Some of course never took time off during the summer and so may not even notice that life is getting busier. But of course, added to the traditional happenings that we look forward to are some new ones.

Some things that are looking a bit different in September and October: We will be starting off September with worship on the 3rd at 9:30am. We will then be returning to our 10am worship time on September 10<sup>th</sup>. And entering into October (the 1<sup>st</sup>) we will be kicking off our 9am Education Hour (for all ages) with a breakfast and then start into classes on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Sunday School and Confirmation will begin their classes and the adults are invited to gather in the Fellowship Hall for a conversation about ideas of what should be offered for education. I have some ideas, but would also like to hear about what you would like to be learning during this time.

During September and October, I will also be offering opportunities for conversation with those who are interested in becoming members of Anacortes Lutheran. There have been some new faces around on Sundays and I would like to have some conversations with those who are interested in membership. There will be different times offered so that people can work it into their schedules.

We will also be continuing to use the Narrative Lectionary to guide us in our Sunday worship reading selections. We have been using the Revised Common Lectionary that generally gives us 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Readings and a Gospel Reading. The Narrative Lectionary uses Scriptural selections that give us the 'flow of the Story' of God's people in the Bible. We begin in Genesis and travel through the stories of the Jewish Scriptures and then work our way into the Gospels and the Christian epistles (no they are not the spouses of the apostles). It has been created to help us see the overarching Story of God's People and often reminds us that we are a part of that Story today.

There are a few other surprises that are coming up as well, but we can't let all of the rabbits out of the hat at one time! Stay tuned to the weekly emails, the social media posts on Facebook and Instagram, the Scoop, and other announcements happening around campus.

May we walk this path together as God's people at Anacortes Lutheran Church!

Blessings,

Pastor Scott

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**IT'S TIME FOR SOME SEASONAL SCHEDULING!**

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**Property Work Parties are back!!!**

**Please join us on the first Saturday of each month at 9am and help us keep our church beautiful! There is much work to be done, and we all know these things are much easier with more help. We hope to see you here on September 2nd!**

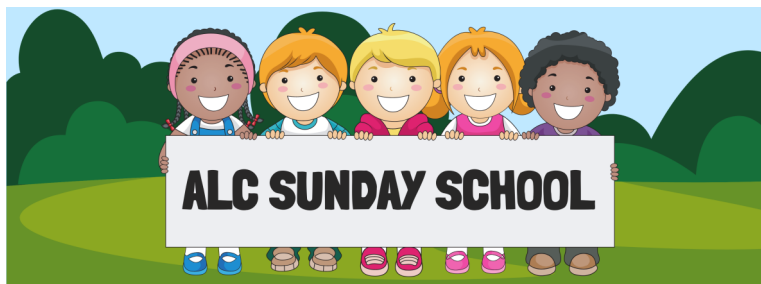


**Starting Sunday, September 10**

**NEW FALL SCHEDULE**

**SUNDAY WORSHIP—10:00 am**

**FELLOWSHIP HOUR—11:00 am**



**October 1st 9-945 AM  
All Ages Breakfast Celebration**

**October 8th 9-945 AM  
1st Day of Sunday School &  
Confirmation**

**Oct 8, 15, 22, & 29 9-945 AM  
Sunday School & Confirmation**



Please contact Heather if you are willing to teach  
Sunday School 1-2 times a month.

You can choose to teach PreK-K, 1-2, or 3-5.

All lessons prepared for you!

904-982-0290

HeatherRHarrington@gmail.com



# Youth Ministries:

Building solid foundations and strong connections.

## **Pool Party:**

We had about 36-40 people for the pool party. 30 of us swam and played in the pool, and after, everyone joined in the BBQ and music.

It was great seeing some of the kids that weren't the strongest swimmers being so encouraged by those who were better swimmers. In my daring attempt to start the fun, I swung out on the rope swing to attempt a back flip, landing in a flawless dive. I managed a slapping backwards belly flop that got peals of laughter and got kids jumping in the pool after me.

At the end of the time in the pool, even those who were nervous about swimming were jumping off the diving board and cheering each other on to push their limits. It was awesome to see everyone come together as a church family and laugh and just enjoy being present with each other.

## **VBS:**

We had 46 participants and 24 Volunteers.

We had a blast putting on this program for the kids, though we may have needed more practice without dances. We fumbled through the first couple days and got a lot of laughs, by the fourth day we were pretty good though. We even performed for the church the following Sunday.

We finished off VBS with water balloons and root beer floats. I learned that our kids have way better pitching arms than I originally gave them credit for. I was soaked in a matter of minutes.

## **Camping trip:**

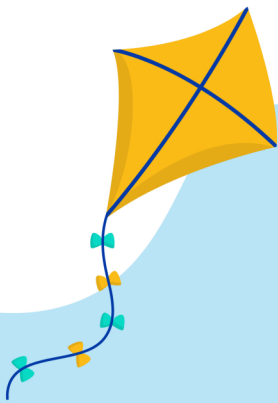
We had 19 teens camping and 6 chaperones.

During our trip we had planned a hike based on the information given by the app All Trails. It claimed the hike to be "easy/moderate". We learned the hard way that means about a mile of 45-degree switch backs and another mile of a winding trail to a secluded lake front. In the end the lake and picnic were well worth it. Most of the kids and even a couple chaperones were ready to quit and head back but we encouraged them to keep pushing. In the end no one quit, and everyone made it to the lake. We tested our limits and pushed past what most of us thought we could handle. It was a great feeling of accomplishment in the end.


For me personally, this was the first big devotion I planned and got to do start to finish. I was thrilled to bring it to the youth of our congregation and loved how much they listened and participated in the discussions. But more than that we had several of our youth invite friends to this trip. They don't come from religious backgrounds, but they were the most eager to learn and participate. After we got home everyone who was invited to the trip asked to be included in our youth emails and really wanted to become part of our church family. That trip doubled our middle school youth numbers and helped build bonds between the high school and middle school groups.

Since this trip I have gotten several texts and emails from parents thanking us and sharing their appreciation and the immediate affect we had on the kids' daily lives. They are eager to volunteer and encourage more activities like this. I love that we made such an impact with one event.

Kenny Smith, Youth & Family Ministry Director  
Jobun Tornga, Associate Youth Activities Coordinator  
[youth@anacorteslutheran.org](mailto:youth@anacorteslutheran.org)



# ALC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP



## Date

Friday Sept 8  
5:30-7:30 PM

## Where

Anacortes Lutheran  
Church  
Fellowship Hall

## Contact Us

Heather Harrington  
904-982-0290  
[HeatherRHarrington@gmail.com](mailto:HeatherRHarrington@gmail.com)

## Activities

Dinner  
Devotion  
Games  
Crafts

## Grades

K-5





# Youth Calendar

## SEPTEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Family Sunday	4	5	6 Back to School	7 MS youth group 6:30-7:30pm	8 Elementary youth night 5:30-7:30pm	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 Community service ??	18	19	20	21 MS youth group 6:30-7:30pm	22	23
24 Oyster Run Pancake Breakfast??	25	26	27	28	29	30

## OCTOBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Family Sunday	2	3	4	5 MS youth group 6:30-7:30pm	6 MS Over- Nighter 5:30pm →	7 → 10:00am
8	9	10	11	12	13 Elementary youth night ??	14
15 After Church Craft day	16	17	18	19 MS youth group 6:30-7:30pm	20	21 Pumpkin Patch Family 12:00pm@ Gordons 
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 	31 Trunk or Treat 3:30-5:30pm ALC parking lot				



# Camp-out at Larrabee State Park



**1ST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH SEPTEMBER 3, 2023**  
**FAMILY & PRAISE SUNDAY**

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**PRAISE SUNDAY - 1st Sunday of the month**

We will be singing contemporary Christian Music.  
Led by the **Praise Team:** Matt Kerschbaum, Dana McCoy,  
& Kenny Holzemer with our lead singer Rock star himself, Pastor Scott Peterson.

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**FAMILY SUNDAY - 1st Sunday of the month**

Where kids are encouraged to assist in worship service.  
You can sign up at our Opportunity Desk for future months in the year

We are looking for the following support in service

- Entry Greeter (2)
- Welcome Desk Greeter (1):
- Usher (2)
- Acolyte (2)
- Reading (1-2)
- Communion Assts: (+1)
- Noisy Offering Attendant (2)
- Personal talent of instrumental/poetry reading
- Fellowship Treats
- Assist serving/clean up with fellowship hour.

To encourage active listening with children during the service 5 words are chosen by the Sunday schoolers to be used in the Pastors sermon. Thank you for allowing us to support your children's growth in their faith in our Lord.

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**NOISY OFFERINGS - 1st Sunday of the month**

This is another highlight of Family Sunday and is to be designated for a youth activity.  
What great lessons learned about tithing and saving? WOW...what a family of givers in our congregation.  
Thank you all!

**GET-TOGETHER - TACO TREATS**

Friday, SEPTEMBER 8, at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

The theme is: "Cookies R Us".

Please remember to bring a small plate of cookies and the corresponding recipe.



**BINGO IN THE MORNING**

Saturday, SEPTEMBER 16, at 10:00 a.m. in Conference Room #2.

Snacks are provided. Please bring your own drink.

Please sign up at the Opportunity Desk or call, text, or email Julie before Wednesday prior to the monthly get-together event.

No sign-up required for Bingo in the Morning — just come and have fun.

*Enjoy the last days of a sunny summer, stay safe, and be happy.*

*We look forward to seeing you soon.*

*Paul and Julie Dusenbury*

B	I	N	G	O
4	26	43	59	70
9	30	41	55	68
7	23	FREE 32 SPACE	50	63
8	20	31	60	75
13	18	34	52	69

**CHOIR IS STARTING UP! COME JOIN US!**

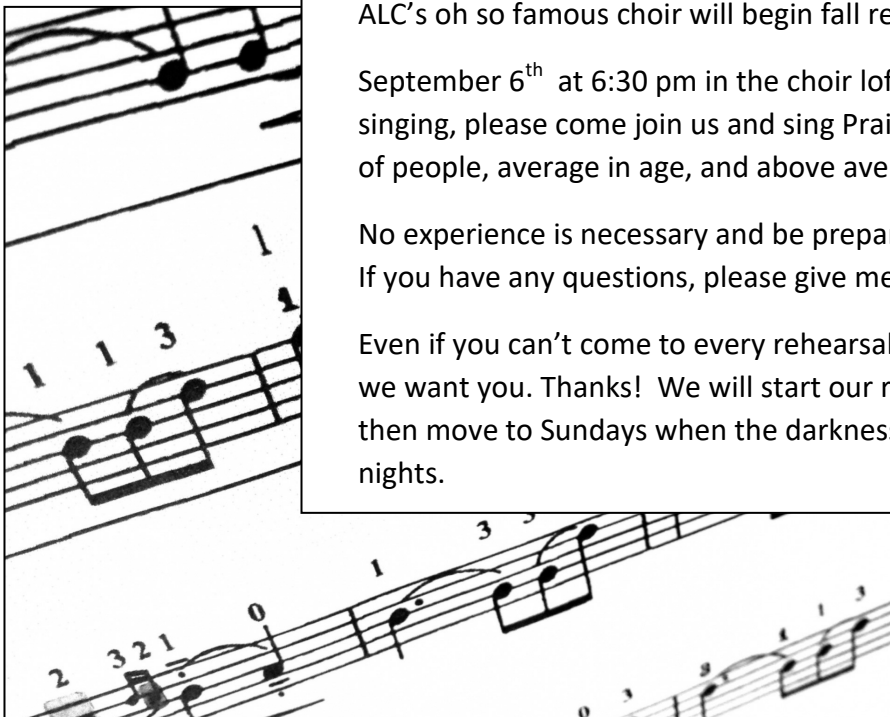
**Wednesdays at 6:30 pm**

ALC's oh so famous choir will begin fall rehearsals on Wednesday,

September 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm in the choir loft. We need more singers! If you enjoy singing, please come join us and sing Praise to the Lord! We are a very fun group of people, average in age, and above average for everything else!

No experience is necessary and be prepared to laugh a lot and have a good time. If you have any questions, please give me a call or email.

Even if you can't come to every rehearsal or every Sunday service that we sing, we want you. Thanks! We will start our rehearsals on Wednesdays this year and then move to Sundays when the darkness is too dark in the dark of Wednesday nights.



# *FIVE BEST REASONS TO JOIN THE A.L.C. CHOIR:*

(Thank you to Jan Woodall)



Reason # 5. You want to add some aerobic exercise to your Sunday morning. The jog up the stairs to the choir loft will fill the bill. Whether you choose to sit with the choir during the entire service, or sit with your family during worship and come upstairs to sing, you'll get that little aerobic boost!

Reason #4. You've got a slight crush on Laurie Julius-Carver. You'll be in good company! The entire choir thinks she's great. She puts up with our schedules and allows us to show up and sing whenever we can. Even though we might not make it to an 6:30 Wednesday evening practice, she's happy to see us at the choir warm up at 10:00 a.m. Sunday morning. She is very patient and kind with our limited singing skills and she keeps the music interesting.

Reason #3. You were a jock or a brainiac or a slacker in high school so you never had time for choir and regret that. It's not too late to have a fabulous choir experience!!! The worship choir takes singers of all voice ranges and skills. If you've got the enthusiasm for a choir experience, you will be welcomed with open arms. If you find the music a little daunting, Laurie will help you!

Reason #2. You would like to get acquainted with some really cool members of the congregation. That's the worship choir for sure! You'll never meet a nicer group of folks who know how to laugh together, support each other, and pray for each other's cares and concerns. I bet you'll fit right in!

Reason #1. You would like to become more involved in the worship experience at ALC. Choir is the answer! We sing almost every week and the music supports the particular Sunday's theme or scripture readings. Even better is the fact that the congregation will love your participation, too! The choir music is always well received.

***WE ARE BACK! Come join us, starting September 6  
at 6:30 pm.***



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## WHAT IS WELCA?

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Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

### OUR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.

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## CIRCLES

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- ◊ Women's Bible Circles will meet on September 12th. We look forward to seeing you there!

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## FROM THE WELCA PRESIDENT - LOIS CASSIDY

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The 12th National Triennial Convention/Gathering of the Women of the ELCA is scheduled for September 21-24th in Phoenix. The last Triennial was in 2017 but because of Covid it was not held in 2020. It was decided to keep the three year tradition and wait until 2023. In the past there have been as many as 2000 women from the United States in attendance.

**This September there will be over twenty women from our PNW Synod attending including Lois Cassidy.** There will be Bible study, featured speakers, music and learning opportunities which will have the theme "Just Love" as the main focus.

There is still time to register if any woman would like to attend. To find out more about WELCA or Anacortes Lutheran's involvement with the national organization, see Lois for information.



WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING  
SEPTEMBER 21-24, 2023 | PHOENIX  
WELCATG.ORG

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## SEWING NEWS - Come & Join Us!

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### SEWING DAYS -

Tuesdays - September 5, 19, & 26. We meet in the Fellowship Hall from 9 am - 2 pm. Bring a lunch and join in the fun!

We are still in need of:

- ◆ Sleepers (up to size 24 months)
- ◆ Bath Towels (NOT the BIG ones)
- ◆ Hand towels (darker colors)
- ◆ Baby socks
- ◆ Flannel
- ◆ Combs (big ones)

Save in Christ,  
Julia Rogers 360-293-4232

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## Lutheran World Relief - KNITTING NEWS

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NEXT MEETING—MONDAY, SEPT. 18 + OCT 16  
1—3 pm in Conference Room 1

Please call me to get yarn between meetings and to give your sweater counts, Thanks.

Our Year To Date 2023 Totals are:  
Sweater/hat sets – 173  
Sweaters – 16  
Hats – 0



One sweater/hat set goes into each layette set. We use a fun one piece sweater pattern.

Beginners are welcome and teaching is available.

~Linda Anderson 360-588-1730

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## SOAP COLLECTION LWR - Goal 500 bars!

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Thank you for all the soap,  
so far you have donated 195+ bars!

Our Goal is 500—keep them coming!  
4 oz size Bars - Ivory, Dove & any other brand. Drop soap bars in the pink tub in



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## MEN'S MINISTRY

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WEDNESDAY, **SEPTEMBER 6 & 20**

**7:00 pm** in Conference room 1

Led by: Tom Paul



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## MEN'S THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY

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EVERY **THURSDAY MORNING.**

**7:00 am** in Conference room 1



## OUTREACH

Sharing and Caring

### OUTREACH COMMITTEE NEWS:

We continue to work on our Care Team program. Lacey Smith is still looking for volunteers to assist in the tasks that will be undertaken. The Care Team will endeavor to provide meals, rides to Church functions, and visits for our congregation members who may have a need. If you feel like you could cook a meal, give a ride, or spend a few minutes visiting a fellow member, please let Lacey know. Should you be in need of any of these services, please contact Rachel in the Church office. We have provided a few meals to date and have made some visitations. It's actually a lot of fun; come join in the fun! Thank you Kenny Holzemer for helping with visits. At present the Outreach Committee is a bit lean on members. Please consider joining our team as we endeavor to push forward with vital programs.

### NEW PROGRAM STARTING IN SEPTEMBER:

The Outreach Committee is partnering with the Youth and the Scouts in continuing the food drive. We plan to provide information to the congregation as to what items are most needed by the Salvation Army on a monthly basis. We will provide in house drop off areas for the donations and we will deliver them to the Salvation Army monthly. This will be in conjunction with the new ELCA theme of "God's Work - Our Hands" that will be announced on September 10th. Please watch for the announcements.

### FUTURE PROJECTS:

Some of the ideas kicking around the Outreach Committee that we hope to institute in the near future are as follows:

1. A seminar type training program for visitation and care volunteers.
2. An open house showing the various committees serving the needs of the church and highlighting the volunteer opportunities of each.
3. Re-institution of the Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Program. An excellent way to meet as small groups to socialize and/or bible study.
4. Re-institute the All Saints Dinner.

### PRAYER GROUP:

The Prayer Group is happy to announce and welcomes two new individuals: Jo Bailey and Irene Parker. The Prayer Group meets Mondays at 1:30pm in the Prayer Chapel/Library.

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## PRAYERS - Receive the Gift of Prayer

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A list of Prayer Requests for our Congregation can be found in the Sunday scoop, Thursday Update email and on our website under "Prayer Page." Give the gift of prayer by including these requests in your daily prayers each week.

You have a choice for your prayer request to be: CONFIDENTIAL – Prayer Chain and Pastor only OR PRINTED - Public list in the Sunday Scoop, Thursday Update Email and on the website Prayer page.

To make a prayer Requests or Update a prayer - call the church during office hours at 360-293-9586. Let them know if you are hospitalized, ill, or needing their prayers.

Call Peggy at 360-299-1184 for your prayer needs at any time, including Prayer Chain (*confidential prayer*) & updates to your prayer request. As always, Pastor Scott Peterson is available to pray with you or for you.



# Worship with us this September

SUMMER SUNDAY SERVICE TIME AT 9:30 AM - in person or live stream

Watch from your home by going to our website at <https://www.anacorteslutheran.org> & click tab "Online Ministry"

## SEPTEMBER • FAITH AND SERVICE TOGETHER

To fill in an **empty spot** sign-up at the Opportunity desk, call / email the office or jump in the day of. Thank you!!!

Dates:	Family & Praise Sunday <b>September 3</b>	<b>September 10</b>	<b>September 17</b>	<b>September 24</b>
Readings	2 Peter 1:1-11	2 Peter 1:16-22, 15-19	2 Peter 3:1-10, 17-18	Proverbs 1:1-7, 3:1-8
Greeters	KIDS			Swanson Family
Ushers	John & Kathryn Parker		Chuck Landgraf	
Reader	KIDS	Don Devine	Anne Barry	Sharon Geldaker
Acolytes	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.
Communion Assistants	1. 2.	1. Don Devine 2.	1. Anne Barry 2.	1. Marta Swanson 2.
Nursery	1. 2.		1. 2.	1. 2.

FELLOWSHIP HOUR — *After Worship everyone is invited to join us for coffee, juice and treats*

Serve & Cleanup	1. 2.		1. 2.	1. 2.
Treats	1. 2.	1. Landgraf 2. Fink	1. 2.	1. 2.

Sound Team	Kenny Holzemer, Pat Carrie Smith, Brian Hanrahan, Jobun Tornga, Harlan Eggleston			
Live Stream Team	Pat Carrie Smith, Rebecca Eggleston, Anita Holzemer, Kevin & Kendra Kennedy, Gina Peterson, Joseph Pestar, Caden DeAtley			
Altar Guild	Gunilla Wold, Grace Boggio, Diane Gusa, Norma Knutsen, Paula Olson, Jenny Remmerden, Karen Tavalero, Caroline Spehar			



ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A WAY TO SERVE? WANT TO BE INVOLVED?

### HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS:

- Altar Guild
- Choir
- Faith And Service Teams
- Men's Bible Studies
- Monthly Property Work Party
- Naomi ministry
- Noon Bible Study
- Outreach Committee
- Prayer Warriors
- Prime Timers
- Sewing group
- Teaching Sunday School
- Ushering
- WELCA
- Women's Bible Circles
- Youth mentors
- and more!



**SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS!**

1 Rich Berentson	12 Jorgina Moore-Larson	23 Kirstin Fors
1 Chris Franulovich	13 Dave Moore	23 David Holzemer
1 Deneva Schultz	13 Polly Meyers	23 Matt Kerschbaum
2 Brooke Geffe	13 Rowen Meyers	23 Chris Long
3 Karen Elling	14 Wanda Rock	23 Lorraine Sund
8 Romany Kerr	15 Maxine Greenfield	24 Rachel Long
8 Mirth Moore	15 Michale Phelan	25 Stan Berentson
9 Tammy Tornga	16 Howie Sorensen	25 Dylan Bolin
10 Caden DeAtley	17 Andrew Ufkes	25 Vicki Long
10 Floyd Dent	18 Linda Millo	26 Geoffrey Thompson
10 Cambria Hixson	19 Silas Venn Anderson - Graves	27 Dillon Piacentino
10 Brian Mavar	19 Hildy Radke	28 Mathew Tracy
11 Ella Flanigan	20 Rory Coyne	29 Roger Pekman
11 Eve DeFrancesco	21 Elyse Etlicher	30 Allison Sherman

**SEPTEMBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES!**



1 Jerry & Jan Woodall	18 William & Patricia Rasar
6 Bryan & Linda Walker	20 Kyle & Romany Kerr
7 Kenny & Anita Holzemer	20 Chuck & Bev Landgraf
7 Jeff & Lori Hrovat	20 Melanie & Bill Sahnou
14 Mike & Kim Trafton	24 Tom & Stephanie Poor
17 Duane & Janey Dent	27 Erin Jacobs & Michael Flanigan
18 Chris & Jeanne Anderson	

**WORSHIP SERVICE - ATTENDANCE JULY-AUGUST**

Date	Events	In-Person	Nursery	Live-Stream
June 25		86	7	82
July 2	Family & Praise	107	6	N/A
July 9		112	0	84
July 16	Trad. Luth. Hymns	112	5	66
July 23		130	5	72
July 30	Hymn Pick	112	6	86
Aug 6	Family & Praise	120	6	74
Aug 13	Gospel	130	1	84
Aug 20		105	3	74



Jerry Pollard  
 July 17, 2023—August 2, 2023  
 Funeral - August 10, 2023  
 2:00 pm at ALC

**Attendees:** John Parker, Pastor Scott, Anita Holzemer, Lane Phelan, Don Devine, Dave Bjornsen, Anne Barry, Dave White, Jeanette Christensen, Special Guests: Maggie Santos, Heather Harrington, and Pat Carrie Smith

The meeting was called to order and opened with prayer. June minutes were approved as submitted.

**Special Guest Report:** Maggie Santos attended representing the preschool. The school is full for the fall. School begins Sept 13 with parent orientation on Sept 8. One of the teachers was overpaid on her last check. Maggie will follow-up with Rachel to resolve this. Don has removed the old playground equipment. The new replacement equipment for the 3 yr olds has been shipped. The preschool has investigated new equipment for children that would work both for the preschool and the church youth. MSP to purchase the new equipment as proposed. **ACTION ITEMS:** (1) A finance group needs to be established to discuss financial/payroll procedures for the preschool, and (2) a group needs to meet to discuss funding source options to pay for the new playground equipment.

**Treasurer's Report:** Lane went over the current budget status. July giving was right on track. We continue to take in more than what we are spending. That is great news. The report can be confusing to read at times. Lane will meet with Don soon about tweaking the report format going forward.

**Council Roundtable:**

**Education:** Heather is the new chair. She will work with her committee to look for a new Sunday School curriculum. She is looking to recruit teachers. Rally Day is tentatively scheduled for the first Sunday in October with a breakfast. Class kick-off will be the second Sunday in October.

**Fellowship:** Report was submitted. She needs volunteers. Music jam nights will begin again next week.

**Outreach:** Report was submitted. Dave suggested that we start a childcare program for some of our young families utilizing adult and youth volunteers. This would be offered twice a month.

**Preschool:** Many thanks to Maggie for her work with our preschool. The preschool committee will meet later in September to discuss state licensure.

**Property:** Island Hospital Billing department is currently using the old Sleep Center clinic. Employees are using our parking lot for about three months until their offices at the hospital are repaired. If a large event is happening at the church, they have agreed to move the cars. Nursery lights have been replaced with LED lights. It was suggested we phase out all the fluorescent lights in the church and replace them with LEDs as they need replacing. Church work party will be scheduled for Sept 2. We hope to begin first Saturday monthly work party days again soon.

**Stewardship:** Financial review was conducted. The audit committee concluded the procedures we currently have in place are working well. They did suggest we look at the amount we have in our checking account and look at investing in a higher interest product.

**WELCA:** WELCA picnic luncheon will be Aug 29. Sewing continues. Thanks to the congregation for all of the donations of blankets, school supplies, etc. Thank you to the ushers that served at the funeral.

**Worship:** Report was submitted. Passing of the Peace will start happening on the first Sunday of the month. A replacement chair has been ordered for the chair lift. God's Work, Our Hands will be highlighted on Sept 10. Sunday School will resume on Oct 1.

**President's Report:** Report was submitted.

*Continued on the next page...*

**Pastor's Report:** Report was submitted. One additional item to add was regarding re-activating the Care Team. It is the hope to reestablish visitation of some of our shut-ins. Perhaps this would include use of Bill LeDuc and Linda Myllo who have already been trained as chaplains through Josephine. Volunteers are needed. Pastor will present the need on Sept 10 at the "God's Work, Our Hands" program kick-off.

**Old Business:**

John reported on open items still needing action.

Fire alarm inspection status: Fire Chief is our new monitoring company. John is working on contacting them for follow-up.

COVID period Employee Retention Credit (ERC) – John has contacted Ministry Works. We are still waiting to hear back from the IRS before potentially receiving our credit.

ELCA NW Synod grant request: We received grant approval for money to help with our Youth Ministry expenses. No money has come through yet, but is expected. Pr Scott will follow up.

Oyster Run breakfast: Pastor will head up this project. It will take volunteers from across the church. Breakfast burritos might be easier to manage over pancakes.

**New Business:**

Education Chairperson nomination/vote: Heather Harrington has stepped forward to take over as Education Chair. She was unanimously approved and appointed as the new chair. She will be voted on at the annual meeting.

Recruitment and nominations for council positions: Individual contacts are needed. All council members are encouraged to reach out to members they feel might be good prospects. Please feel free to share names with Pastor Scott so he can also reach out.

Our next regular council meeting will be held September 14 at 6:30 pm. Please have committee reports in to Anita no later than noon on September 13<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Holzemer, Council Secretary

I went to the musical *1776* a few nights ago where I learned some new things about how the Declaration of Independence came to be written. As I watched, I felt proud to be an American – to be part of a group of people who wanted freedom from tyranny, freedom to vote, freedom from an empire far away.

There were also moments in this play when I was horrified at some decisions made. At the last minute, the clause to abolish slavery was removed so that all of the representatives would sign the document. The most powerful song in the musical, *Molasses to Rum*, reminds the audience how all the colonies were complicit in the selling of humans – not just the south. (<https://genius.com/John-cullum-molasses-to-rum-lyrics>)

As an American, I hold two realities. First, I rejoice in the wonder and aspiration of the United States of America. I am grateful for this country and I love what it is striving to be. At its best, it is a country where freedom and liberty are supreme. It is a place where care is given to those arriving on its shores. It is a place where people can freely go to church and other places of worship (or not go at all). In short, the United States is a promise of what can be.

At the same time, I hold the truth of this country's sins. Enslaved men built the White House, the U.S. Capitol building, and others. Homes of former presidents including George Washington's Mount Vernon and James Madison's Montpelier were built by men "owned" by them. The land that we in the Northwest Washington Synod are living on was once land that belonged to Samish and Duwamish, Lummi, and Muckleshoot and many others. Japanese people were unjustly imprisoned during World War II. Sundown laws and redlining laws were written throughout this country. As a white woman, I know that I could not vote until 1919. For women of color, the right to vote did not come until later. People who are part of the LGBTQIA+ communities have been harassed and discriminated against, beaten up and killed in this country. And discriminatory practices and violence continue to this day. In short, the systems in this country have violated and harmed people since its inception.

This is what it means to be an American: to vote, to engage in civic society, to appreciate this country, to grieve past and present sins, and to truthfully stand up and speak when it falls short of its ideals.

But what about those of us who are American and also Christian? Unequivocally it means that as much as one might love this country, this is not where our ultimate allegiance lies. For we are part of the body of Christ that extends beyond the borders of any country. As Lutheran Christians, we know that we are named, chosen, and called by God through Jesus. We hold deeply the joy that we are freed from sin, and, because of this, we are called into radical love, acceptance, and welcome – far beyond being a citizen of any country. We are freed to live beyond racism, injustice, and bigotry. Martin Luther wrote that freedom is a gift from God, not just for our sake, or our country's sake, but for the sake of the world.

Tragically, there are those who want to distort this freedom. To somehow merge Christian and American identities. Rather than freedom, conflating religious authority with political authority leads to tyranny and marginalization - especially of minority groups. Christian Nationalism is neither patriotic nor is it faithful. You do not have to be Christian to be a "true" American. And you do not have to be American to be Christian. At its heart, it is idolatrous. As the First Commandment states, "You shall have no other gods." Together, as faithful Christians, let us live into Jesus' words –into radical love, acceptance and welcome. Let us speak truth to power and stand with those without power. Let us follow Jesus who commands us to love everyone as our brothers and sisters and siblings including our fellow citizens, those of other belief systems, and those of other nations.

Together, as faithful Christians, let us stand up and speak out against Christian Nationalism and any system that marginalizes, harms, and subjugates another. As Jesus announces in the gospel of Luke, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'

For freedom Christ has set us free. May we live and dance and revel in the freedom of Christ.

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