THE EXPRESSION

June 2023 ~ NEWSLETTER

CHRIST'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
5330 Old Logan Ferry Road
Murrysville, PA 15668
(412) 795-1212

Pastor Wayne Gillespie
Email: office@christsmurrysville.org
Website: christsmurrysville.org

Services
Saturday Evening – 6:00 pm
Sunday Worship – 10:00 am
Sunday School – 9:00 am

From the Pastor

Life and ministry are about building and maintaining relationships. It's no accident that God said that it's not good for any of us to be alone. It's no accident that the Holy Spirit continues to draw people of faith together and continues to recreate Christ's Lutheran Church as a place where people believe, belong, and become. It's no accident that God calls us to love each other and to even forgive each other when things go wrong, so that our relationships can continue after stormy times. The first verse of my father's favorite hymn says: "*Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; the unity of heart and mind is like to that above.*" (ELW #656)

But times are changing. Many of us have hundreds of "friends" on Facebook that we have not seen or talked with in decades. Many of us know very little about the people who live across the street or the new family that just moved into our neighborhood. The pandemic caused us to withdraw – even from family members – and it changed the very nature of the Church and of Christian worship. But the Good News is that Christ's Lutheran Church has come through the pandemic as a church where people continue to sense that they belong and can continue to build friendships that last a lifetime.

We've restarted the Men's Breakfast and wonderful times of Christian fellowship are being shared on the second Saturday of each month (beginning at 8:30 pm). Children are gathering in our Sunday School rooms to learn about Jesus on Sunday mornings. We are, of course, having two in-person worship services each weekend and are continuing to see many people gather in online worship. Caring Hearts and Hands continues to meet, to send cards, to visit people who are homebound, and to even prepare meals. Our

Confirmation ministry has become a hybrid type of experience that serves as both an opportunity for your people to learn and as a chance for them to enjoy being together as a newly designed type of Youth Group. Pastoral and hospital visits have resumed. The AA and NA groups, the Girl Scouts, and Kindermusik continue to meet.

We have resumed church fellowship events and we have a whole host of ways that we truly are a place to believe, belong, and become. We are stepping out in new ways! While the pandemic forced us to close our church building, it also taught us that the ministry of Christ's Lutheran Church is something that can continue both in-person and online. Last month, the Property Team pulled some Ethernet cable into several parts of our building, so that we can more effectively host Bible studies and Sunday School classes where some people are meeting in-person while others join from their homes. We are laying groundwork, so that we can change some ways that we teach young children about Jesus and take better advantage of expanding technology and different types of Sunday School materials. I recently started a Confirmation Class where I wanted to talk about Jesus and about what it means for us to call Jesus the "King of kings" by sharing a YouTube recording of King Charles III's coronation and then discussing what young people in America think about having someone who is called a "King" in their lives and about some different ways that we can talk about Jesus, so that it's easier for young people to connect with God. And yes, every week, we have people from across America and even from around the world joining us in worship thanks to the continuing efforts of those who ensure that our Sunday morning service is broadcast. The opportunities before us right now are truly immense!

It's an exciting time to be the Church! The blending of in-person and online gatherings is something that presents new opportunities and opens many doors that we are learning to both embrace and utilize. Christ's Lutheran Church continues to be a place to believe, belong, and become. And I'm exciting about where Jesus is going to take us in the coming years together.

Pastor Wayne

CHURCHCOUNCIL

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Council Highlights – May 2023

Treasurer's Report: Dave and Barb Hall indicated that the financial support our of ministry remained strong in April. We currently have a surplus of $5,059 for the year.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Wayne provided a printed report to the Council that included a brief description of how major purchases are made at the church, including the need to secure multiple bids for projects and remember that the Council needs to ask the congregation to approve expenditures that exceed $4,550 in 2023. Pastor Wayne indicated that Jennifer is doing a great job in the Church Office and emphasized that this is a time when we need to allow Jennifer to focus upon familiarizing herself with the way that our ministry operates and upon the more routine tasks that need to be mastered before we ask her to take on additional tasks. Finally, Pastor Wayne described, in detail, the difference between our church database and our membership roster.

Congregational Life: We recognized the continuing ministry of our faithful Sunday School teachers and celebrated Confirmation (with a time for church fellowship after the service) on May 21st. We are in the process of gathering information and will have a time when we recognize our graduates during the worship service on June 4th. Vacation Bible School has been canceled because we were not able to find a person to serve as the coordinator.

Outreach: The Outreach Team met for an in-person meeting on May 8th. The Team suggested using funds raised during the Flea Market and Spaghetti Dinner to help fund the resealing of the parking lot. The Team also discussed the Little Pantry, establishing and deepening partnerships with other organizations, and offering our building as a potential satellite counseling center for the Blackburn Center.

Support Team: A quarterly financial update has been shared with the congregation. George Meade has been exploring some ways that we can save money on our gas and electricity bills. We are searching for four or five people to serve on the newly established Legacy Committee. The Church Library repurposing is underway.

- The Council is continuing to search for four or five people who are willing to serve on the Legacy Committee. We will contact Ryan Ebner and ask him to talk with us about our next step forward after the Legacy Committee has been assembled.

A bid that Rich Bernardini secured for resealing the parking lot was reviewed and discussed. **Motion to approve the $4,500 bid provided by Young Paving, Sealing and Maintenance**

New Action Items:

Gas Lease – David Falcioni from Olympus Energy has contacted the church several times to discuss the renewal of our gas lease. This is a significant issue that we need to address since gas fracking is going to begin soon on property across the road from the Hankey Cemetery. Pastor Wayne looked through a file that we have in the Church Office and indicated that we have three separate parcels of land that were lumped together in the last contract. Pastor Wayne also indicated that we need to look into this issue carefully before we sign any contact. He indicated that he has reached out to several members of the congregation who may have some familiarity with our previous contract, but he has not identified anyone who is willing to work on this project.

Church Data Management – The Council discussed the need to expand our data management in quickly changing times to facilitate communication, volunteering, and pastoral care. Breana Howard recommended that we use Community Church Builder to handle this growing need since that is the software that is being used at Amplify. Pastor Wayne spoke with one of the pastors at Amplify and discovered that Amplify has decided to more to a new system called SubSplash that will offer the same conveniences but at a lower cost. The Council decided that we should explore the option of using SubSplash for two reasons: (1) Breana was the only person who participated in the Community Church Builder training sessions and did not leave any notes behind (meaning that the Church Office is back to square one) and (2) Community Church Builder only offers those who electronically contribute money to our ministry the option of using PushPay (which is charging a fee that is nearly twice what other electronic giving platforms charge).

Voting Membership – Pastor Wayne indicated that he has identified and has discussed a challenge that we could face at our next Congregational Meeting with Bishop Kusserow. According to our Constitution, those who have not communed since the pandemic began are still members of our congregation, but not "officially" voting members. Pastor Wayne placed a short article in the June newsletter encouraging people to attend an in-person worship service and receive Holy Communion.

Council Members for 2024 – The Council discussed the fact that the terms of 5 (of the 7) Council members will expire at the end of this year. The Council is concerned for two reasons: (1) the Council cannot meet if we do not have a quorum as defined by our Constitution, and (2) even if we bring a large number of people onto the Council at the end of the year, those who are elected to serve will not be familiar with what the Council is doing, and the learning curve will be steep. The Council decided that we need to start searching for new Council members now – rather than wait until closer to the end of the year. The Council is also encouraging those who are willing to serve next year to join the Council in the Fall, so that they get a sense of what the Council is doing and can serve more effectively in the coming year.

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:
10: 00 am - 3:00 pm
5330 Old Logan Ferry Road, Murrysville, PA 15668
You can contact the office at office@christsmurrysville.org
or by calling 412-795-1212

The Care Corner

The Care Corner is a place where we can connect with each other and share news about important events in each other's lives. If you have information that you would like to share in the Care Corner, please send it to: office@christsmurrysville.org

Congratulations Pastor Wayne on 35 years of ministry in the Lutheran Church this June. The last 10 years began here at Christ's and you have navigated us through life changing times and kept us focused on our mission. We are all grateful for the support and comfort you have provided during our times of need and look forward to more years of leadership and comfort. May God continue to be with you as you guide us.

-The Council and your grateful congregation-

**We will have a followship following the Saturday Service June 10th and Sunday Service June 11th **

We are both pleased and excited to congratulate our recent confirmands :

Emma Beveacqua

Amber Grabowski

Tess Van Orden

Congratulations 2023 High School Graduates!

As you graduate and celebrate your achievements, new opportunities and experiences await you. May God bless you and guide you on your way. Congratulations and prayers to all graduates for your future plans and the exciting experiences to come your way!

Elizabeth Borgia
Miranda Crofutt
Kate Kelly
Jacob Zimmerman

Please visit the information posted in the church entryway to see photos and future plans for some of our graduates.

We are excited to announce that Sheri Seigel's daughter, Kasey gave birth to a beautiful little girl, Riley Laura.

We are saddened by the need to share the news about the death of James Bishop, one of our long-term partners in ministry at Christ's Lutheran Church. Our deepest sympathies are extended to Jim's family and friends.

We are also saddened to learn about the death of Robert Walter's brother, Chuck. We extended our deepest sympathies; we hope and pray that Robert will be comforted by the promises of Jesus during this challenging time.

We kindly ask that you continue to pray for our CLC members, family, and friends of members who are included in our weekly prayer list:

Tristan and Sparrow Apple	John Magnus
Megan Bichsel	Amy McDade
Narhorie Brown	Taylor Niemetz
Brian Busch	Rick Parr
Debbie Faust	Riley
Helen	Tim Schall
Linda Hill	Dan Sheehan
Tom Hummel	Jack Tjaden
	Rev HB West
	Donna Yoder

Audrey Ferris, the Prayer Circle coordinator, at: (724) 327-3738 or audrey.m.ferris@gmail.com
(Please indicate on the subject line that it relates to the prayer circle).

As you look at the prayer list this month, please take note of any changes or updates that should be made. Inform the church office by emailing office@christsmurrysville.org

***WE PRAY FOR OUR MISSION PARTNERS*:**

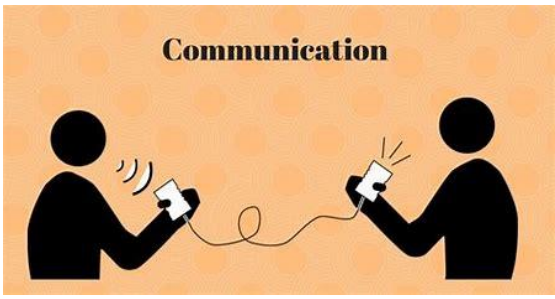
June 4th-
George and Kris Meade
Romaine Miller
Molnar Family
Mike and Mikie Mondale

June 11th
Michelle Monroe
Derwood and Jane Montgomery
Kimberly Moore
Kip and Cathy Mostowy

June 18th
Steve and Patti Myers
Henry and Tiffany Nazak
Nicolette Family
Dan O'Block

June 25th
Michael and Marion O'Donnell
Linda O'Malley
Carol Oliver
Thomas Oliver

Communication and Caring



I often talk about the fact that communication is easier now than it's ever been in human history; and yet, we still can't seem to communicate. We have started to be much more intentional about sharing information with you at the church, and we've even started posting a copy of our Council Minutes on our Entryway bulletin board, so that you know what our Council is doing and about the important decisions our Council has made. In the last three months, we've spent many hours going through our church database with a fine-toothed comb and have updated home and email addresses and even telephone numbers that you have sent to us, so that we can continue to remain in contact with you. But a big shift has occurred in America that can present significant challenges when you need pastoral care.

Do you know that the hospital no longer contacts the church when you are admitted for needed care? Several weeks ago, I attempted to visit someone in an Intensive Care Unit at a local hospital, and I needed to give the nurse's station a four-digit code before I was allowed to enter the unit. I'm simply told that you have been discharged when you leave the hospital; and no one will tell me whether you've gone back home, to a nursing home or rehab center, or have even died. I continue to be committed to offering pastoral care to those who are moving through both good and challenging times; but, without your help, offering that care has become difficult.

Here are some things you can do:

1. Please make sure that the Church Office has your current address and the best telephone number and email address where you can be reached. I recently went to a home to bring someone Holy Communion in the middle of the afternoon and was surprised when I didn't know the person who answered the door. It turns out that the person who was expecting my visit (because I always call first) had moved and had not shared updated information. Imagine ringing a doorbell in the middle of the night (in these scary days) because you've been asked to provide pastoral care during an emergency and being confronted by a stranger who isn't expecting you and who doesn't want to be bothered by you. Please be sure that the Church Office has your updated contact information.

2. Please be sure that you or one of your family members contacts the Church Office, or calls me directly, when you are going to the hospital. I regularly visit people in local hospitals, and I am available to offer 24/7 pastoral support in emergencies. All that you need to do to get in touch with me is call (724) 961-0433. If I don't answer the call immediately, please leave a message knowing that I will get back to you as soon as possible. And please don't forget to share your room number and any code that I will need to use to enter the section of the hospital where you are being treated. Hospitals don't call pastors when members of the congregation that they serve are admitted, even if you are asked what church you attend. We have even faced situations where somebody was hospitalized for several weeks, and we didn't know. We can do better together.

3. Please remember: I regularly visit people who are having surgery and sometimes even stay with families during major procedures. It's best to let me know when you are having surgery, so that I can set aside the time in my schedule. You can let me know what time you have been told to arrive at the hospital on the day before your procedure if you would like me to say a prayer with you before surgery.

Constitution Corner

Our Church Constitution, which was last updated in 2018, is a document that guides and directs our ministry. Our Constitution clearly states what we believe about God, and it also codifies things like who owns our building and church property. Our Constitution describes the authority of the Council and also describes the duties and responsibilities of the pastor. A very important part of our Constitution defines several different types of membership in our congregation that include: Baptized, Confirmed, Voting, Associate, and Seasonal.

A significant challenge has emerged as we have come out of the Pandemic and as we are journeying through changing times when many people join us in worship online. Voting membership at Christ's Lutheran Church, according to our Constitution, includes only those who both financially support our ministry and who continue to regularly gather with us in Holy Communion.

Constitutions are not easy to change (and they shouldn't be). In fact, there are parts of our Constitution that we are required to include. I have spoken to a representative of the Synod who specifically works with church Constitutions and he has said: (1) we do not have authority to change Chapter 8 (where membership in our congregation is defined) of our Constitution as a congregation, (2) the Synod does not have the authority to give us permission to change Chapter 8, and (3) Chapter 8 of our Constitution can only be changed after a motion is presented and approved by the delegates at a Churchwide Assembly (which is not going to occur for 3 years).

Fortunately, there is an easy way to address this challenge.

If you join us in worship online and financially support our ministry, all that you need to do is come to in-person worship and receive Holy Communion. I'm sure you will enjoy seeing some of your friends and renewing some acquaintances. But even more than that, you will be gathering at the Table where our Lord Jesus Christ has promised to be with us in broken Bread and shared Wine – Christ's living presence among us and a sign of God's continuing good will toward you and the people that you love.

Pastor Wayne

Mission Corner

Because we BELIEVE in Christ and the mission to help those in need, we want you to BELONG with us and BECOME life changing disciples. We are moving in the right direction. as summer vacations begin, please continue your increased giving to keep us moving forward.

THANK YOU to all who helped pack 1500 Food Boxes for Seniors on Saturday, April 22nd. We are hoping to sign up for the same event in the fall.

HOPE IN EVERY BOX.
For individuals and families facing food insecurity or choosing between necessities to make ends meet, there's hope. Through innovative food programs and a network of community resources, we're working to win the fight against hunger by providing nutritious food, comfort, and confidence to our neighbors and friends throughout Westmoreland County.

The Food Bank has many volunteer opportunities from packing food boxes, delivering food boxes to seniors, hosting food drives, fresh food express delivery, picking produce, administrative help, warehouse help, and more. The Food Bank has many volunteer opportunities from packing food boxes, delivering food boxes to seniors, hosting food drives, fresh food express delivery, picking produce, administrative help, warehouse help, and more.

You can access their website at https://westmorelandfoodbank.org for more information or contact Kris Meade at 412-580-7872.

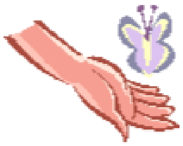
1.5 MILLION LBS OF PRODUCE DISTRIBUTED IN 2022

5.5 MILLION LBS OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED IN 2022

8,000 HOUSEHOLDS SERVED MONTHLY

You can access their website at https://westmorelandfoodbank.org for more information or contact Kris Meade at 412-580-7872.

<u>Christ's Little Pantry</u> Preparing for Summer and additional items currently needed: With warmer weather here, items for children would be a great contribution. Sidewalk Chalk, Bubbles, Coloring Books, Colored Pencils, Watercolor paints… are some suggestions. Fruit, Cereal, and Soup continue to be needed. Our members have been so generous (we have plenty of pasta and canned vegetables!) by bringing one or two items when coming to worship and putting them in the collection box in the Entryway or directly into the pantry. Your kindness is truly appreciated. If you have any questions, please see Sandy Buehner or contact the church office. Thank you!"



Caring Hearts and Hands will meet on Thursday, June 8th in the downstairs fellowship hall at 9:15 am. We will be packing and delivering lunches to many on our Caring List. Please let us know if you, or someone you know, could benefit from our caring mission. If you have any questions, please contact Romaine Miller at 412-996-4915.

-The Church office will be Closed Monday May 29 2023 in observance of Memorial Day

- Council Will meet Sunday, June 25 2023 at 11:30
- The Sewing Group will only meet June 13th and June 20th

Join us on Saturday, June 10th at 8:30 am in the lower social hall for a traditional breakfast and fellowship. The only thing you need to bring is a hearty appetite!

<u>MAKE **NOISE** FOR MISSION!!!</u>

We celebrate <u>the first Sunday of each month</u> by putting change in two cans – one located on the offering table and one up front by the baptismal font. The donations benefit our sister church, Trinity Lutheran on the North Side, so let's all make some **<u>NOISE</u>**!!!

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

Our congregation donated $800 to Heifer this Lenten season. I want to thank everyone who was kind enough and able to give to this worthy cause. Your generous gifts will be put to good use to help many people as they work to become self-reliant and to achieve living incomes. I also want to thank Pastor Wayne for having me speak at both services early in Lent and also after Easter. It truly was a team effort as we continue our ministry here at Christ's Lutheran Church.

Sincerely, *Eric Waxbom*

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To our Sunday School Teachers:

Sarah Borgia, Rebekah McKenzie, Sharon Pfeiffer, Harry Replogle, Fran Spagna, Amy Wineman

Thank you for your time and commitment to our children, teens and adults that attend Sunday School.

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PROPERTY – GROUNDS

The bulletin board is up in the church entryway to the right of the front entrance. The flower beds are marked and there are twelve to be "adopted." We hope we can find twelve families to adopt and care for each one during the summer and into the fall. June 11th is the tentative Workday to cut back all the beautiful flowers and to weed & possibly apply some mulch (away from the building). During this day, we can decide if we want to meet monthly through October to keep the weeds at bay and to water, if we have a dry summer. We can then have a picnic lunch. We have grass cutters and someone to trim the bushes. We would like to start a garden club to help bring already very busy families back to church for fellowship and purpose --- especially families with school age youth.

Westmoreland County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is once again offering a **Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program** to assist people in our community who are 60 (and older) and who meet their household income guidelines. We have placed the application that you need to complete to qualify for the vouchers in the Information Center and on the bulletin board in our Entryway. We are more than happy to help you to complete the application. If you would like some more information, or if you need someone to help you to complete the application, please contact the Church Office at (412)-795-1212

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Find more information at [Summer Camp Home (lutherlyn.com)](lutherlyn.com)

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