

April 11, 2025

Navigating Growth in Medium-Sized Churches: Leadership and Ministry Dynamics



On Easter Sunday, Community will recognize a group of 40 new bridge builders- people that love Jesus and make this congregation their home. Our Community of Bridge Builders now exceeds more than 200 active Jesus followers.

Someone recently asked, "When does the growth stop?" I found myself perplexed as Jesus didn't say, "Go and make disciples but don't go beyond 200." No, Jesus calls us to go and make disciples each day as God's table is vast and abundant. There is room for everyone.

With growth, there will exist culture change while we grow spiritually with one another. For example, in smaller churches, members typically know one another well, and the entire church functions as the primary circle of belonging. However, as churches grow into the medium-size range, this dynamic shifts. A sense of belonging happens by creating small groups and focusing in on places of various ministries. These subgroups, typically 10-40 people, form the core of church life and engagement.

Leadership Evolves with Size

Leadership in a medium-sized church (200-400 people) is more complex. This is where we now live regarding the congregation within this Community of Bridge Builders. At our current size, both the Lead Pastor and lay leaders now shift from representing various constituencies (e.g., older members, young families) and overseeing the many ministries and committees. Unlike the smaller church, where leadership is often based on tenure or personality, medium churches prioritize the skills and giftedness of laypeople.

Additionally, leadership becomes more collaborative. Lay volunteers take on more ministry responsibilities, working closely with a growing staff, and often sit with the Council. As a result, the Lead Pastor role transitions from shepherd to "rancher," focusing more on training and organizing laypeople to lead ministry efforts while also supporting staff.

Decision-Making and Change

In smaller churches, decisions often come from the bottom up, with key laypeople influencing direction. In medium churches like this Community of Bridge Builders today- where we now thrive- change happens through key ministry teams, which persuade the congregation to embrace new initiatives. These ministry team leaders are called to be forward-thinking while driving innovation with agility and flexibility. Also, mid-level type leadership styles that once existed to maintain a small congregation now are called to think at creative strategic levels while planning for the future church in the present.

Key to Growth

Medium churches grow by improving the quality of ministries. While smaller churches thrive on intimacy, medium churches focus on making classes, worship, and preaching impactful and high-quality. Growth also involves multiplying groups and services but ensuring that these ministries effectively meet the needs of the congregation.

Crossing the 300 Barrier

To grow beyond 300 bridge builders, our next level of inclusion, a medium church, is called to adapt its internal structures. Key changes include adding more staff, shifting decision-making away from the entire congregation, and formalizing assimilation processes. As the church grows, the Lead Pastor becomes more of an organizer and administrator, moving away from shepherding each individual. Pastoral care is shared with lay visitation ministers.

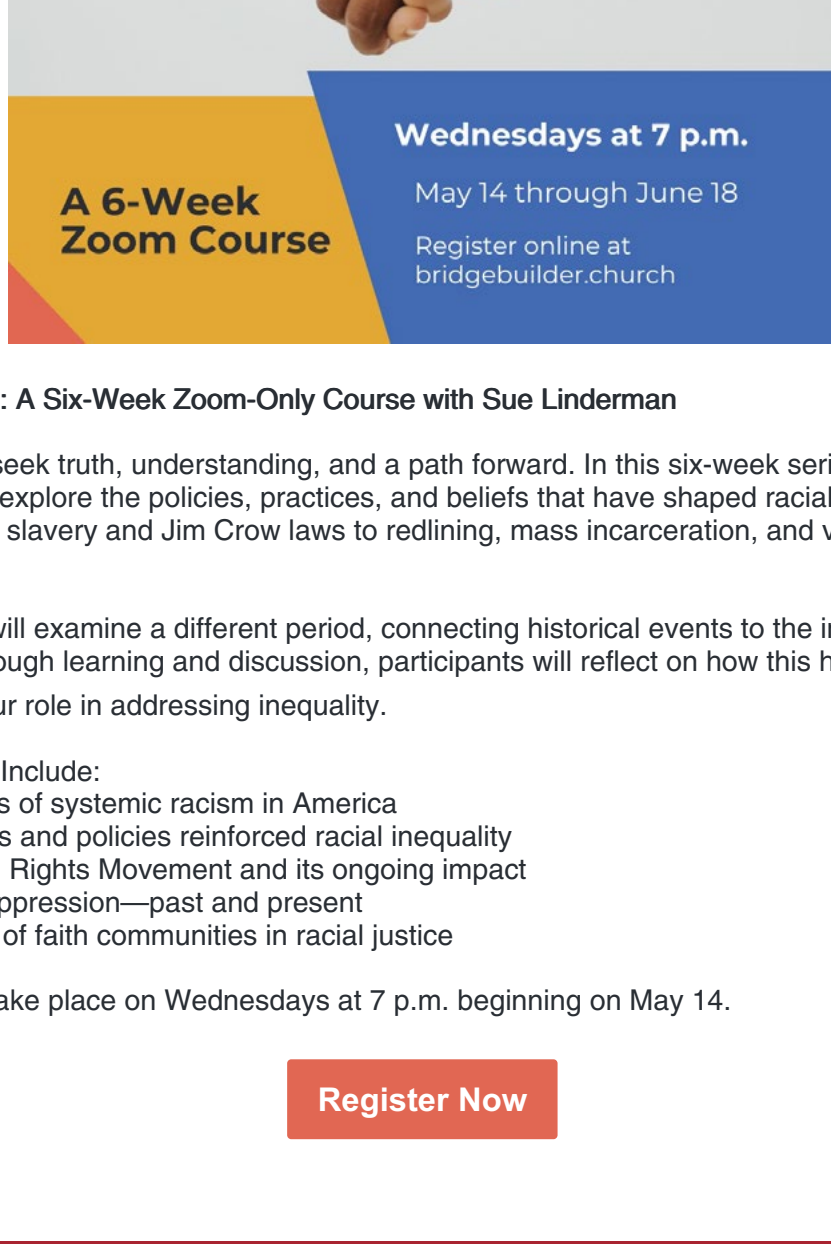
As we enter into a new growth threshold, breaking past the 300-bridge builder mark will require structural changes such as a renewed multi-functional facility upgrade while adding multiple locations to accommodate our expanding congregation.

By embracing these shifts in leadership and ministry dynamics, this Community of Bridge Builders -as a medium sized church- will now effectively manage growth while continuing to meet the needs of our people.

These are exciting times as other congregations are shutting their doors and closing. We are a people that reflect God's abundance.

Peace,
Pastor Karis

Racism in America – The History We Didn't Learn in School



Bridge Building: A Six-Week Zoom-Only Course with Sue Linderman

Join us as we seek truth, understanding, and a path forward. In this six-week series, Sue Linderman will explore the policies, practices, and beliefs that have shaped racial disparities in America—from slavery and Jim Crow laws to redlining, mass incarceration, and voter suppression.

Each session will examine a different period, connecting historical events to the inequities we see today. Through learning and discussion, participants will reflect on how this history informs our faith and our role in addressing inequality.

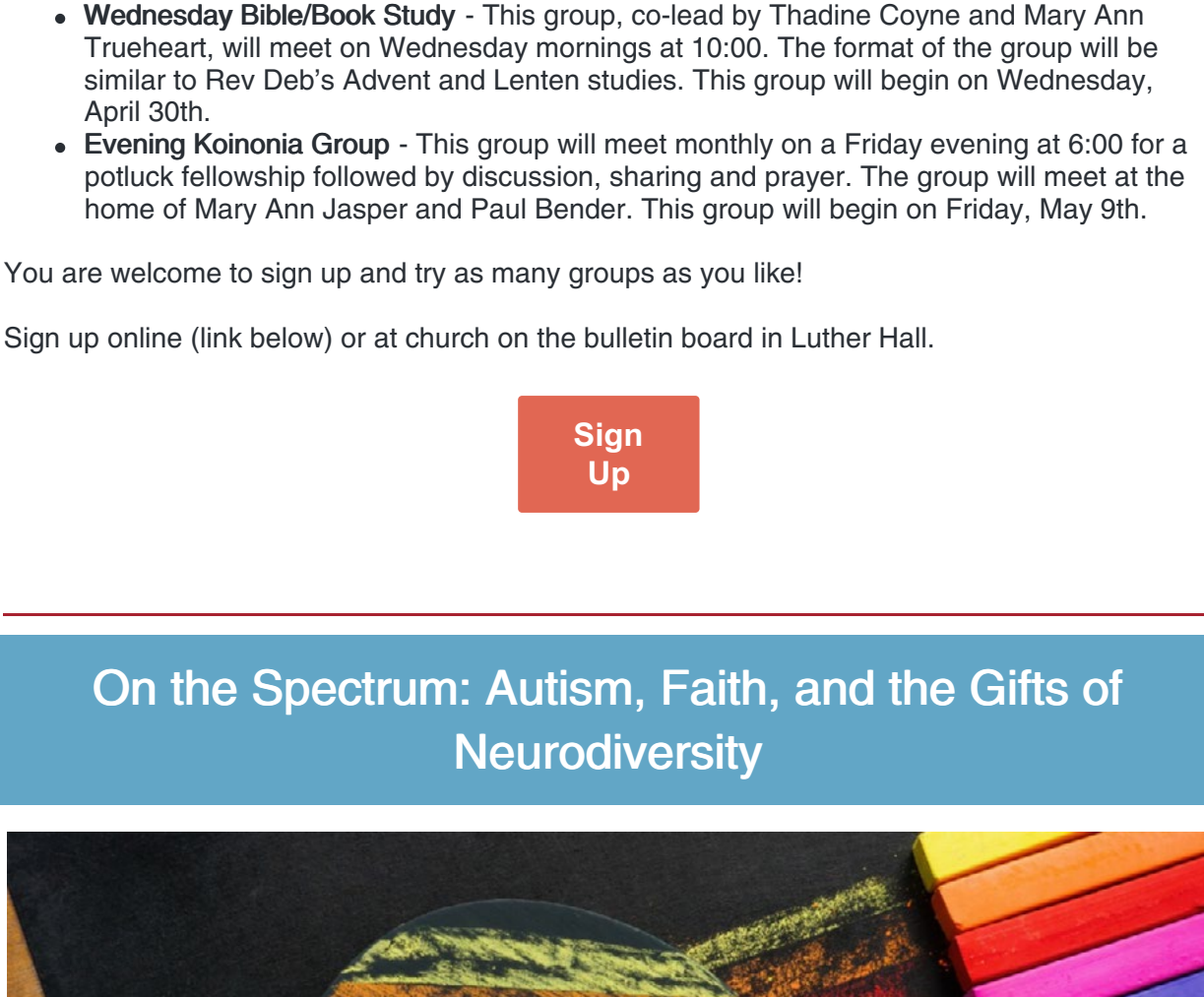
Course Topics Include:

- The roots of systemic racism in America
- How laws and policies reinforced racial inequality
- The Civil Rights Movement and its ongoing impact
- Voter suppression—past and present
- The role of faith communities in racial justice

The class will take place on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. beginning on May 14.

[Register Now](#)

New Small Groups Forming: Join Us for Fellowship and Study!



Thank you to everyone who participated in the small group survey! After analyzing the data collected, we have created 3 small groups based on the interests and availability of those who completed the survey:

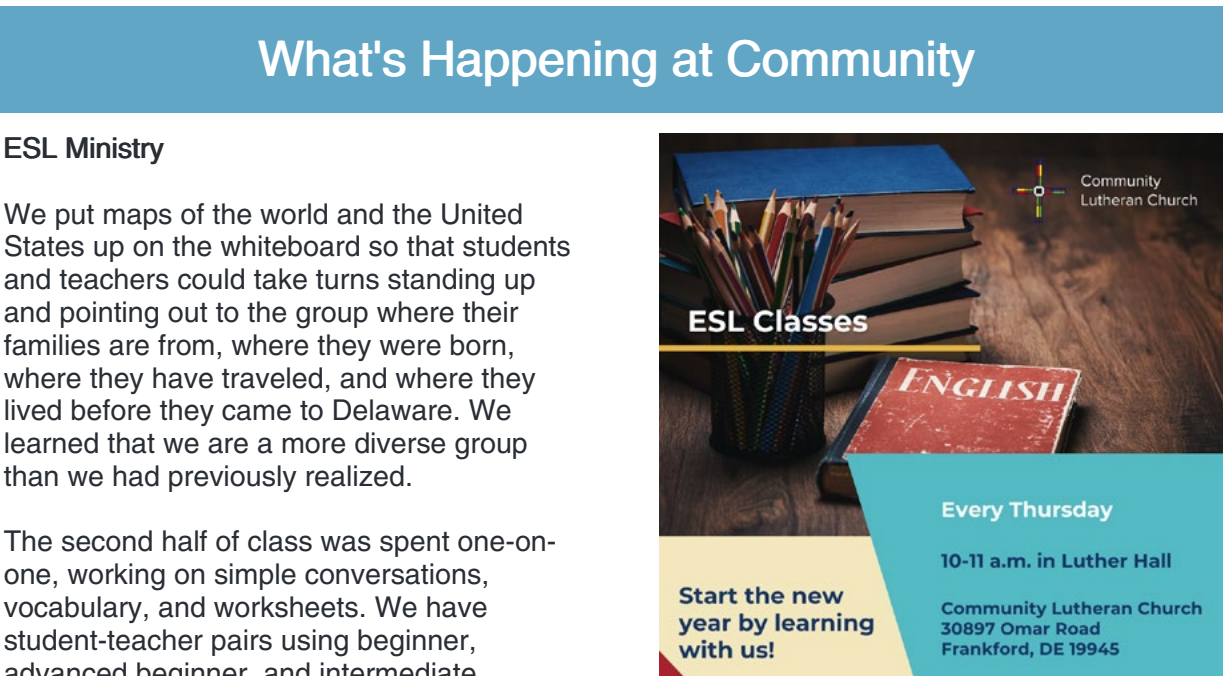
- **Sunday Sermon Discussion Group** - This group, lead by Sandy Cosentino, will meet after the second service to discuss the sermon and how it impacts our lives. This group will begin on Sunday, May 4th.
- **Wednesday Bible/Book Study** - This group, co-lead by Thadine Coyne and Mary Ann Trueheart, will meet on Wednesday mornings at 10:00. The format of the group will be similar to Rev Deb's Advent and Lenten studies. This group will begin on Wednesday, April 30th.
- **Evening Koinonia Group** - This group will meet monthly on a Friday evening at 6:00 for a potluck fellowship followed by discussion, sharing and prayer. The group will meet at the home of Mary Ann Jasper and Paul Bender. This group will begin on Friday, May 9th.

You are welcome to sign up and try as many groups as you like!

Sign up online (link below) or at church on the bulletin board in Luther Hall.

[Sign Up](#)

On the Spectrum: Autism, Faith, and the Gifts of Neurodiversity



In this ELCA article, author and poet Daniel Bowman, Jr. shares his personal journey with autism and faith. In his memoir, *On the Spectrum: Autism, Faith, and the Gifts of Neurodiversity*, Bowman debunks myths and offers a hope-filled perspective on living with autism. His award-winning book reveals how neurodiversity is a gift, emphasizing authentic ways to love and understand those on the spectrum.

Read the full article from the ELCA here to explore Bowman's powerful insights on neurodiversity, relationships, and faith.

[Read the Article](#)

What's Happening at Community

ESL Ministry

We put maps of the world and the United States up on the whiteboard so that students and teachers could take turns standing up and pointing out to the group where their families are from, where they were born, where they have traveled, and where they lived before they came to Delaware. We learned that we are a more diverse group than we had previously realized.

The second half of class was spent one-on-one, working on simple conversations, vocabulary, and worksheets. We have student-teacher pairs using beginner, advanced beginner, and intermediate workbooks. First, they check the homework (tarea) from the previous week and then review the next lesson together. Teamwork!



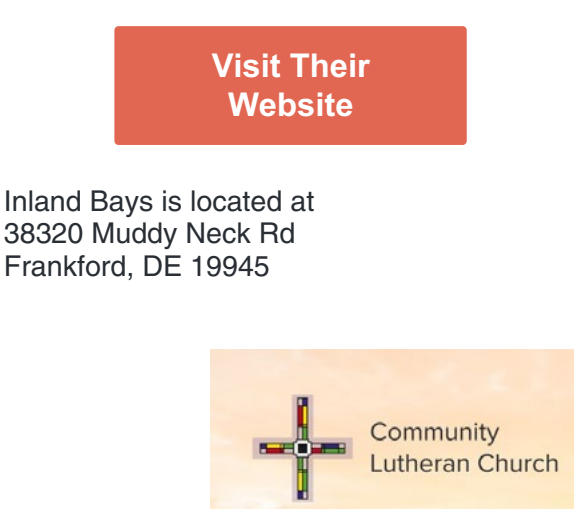
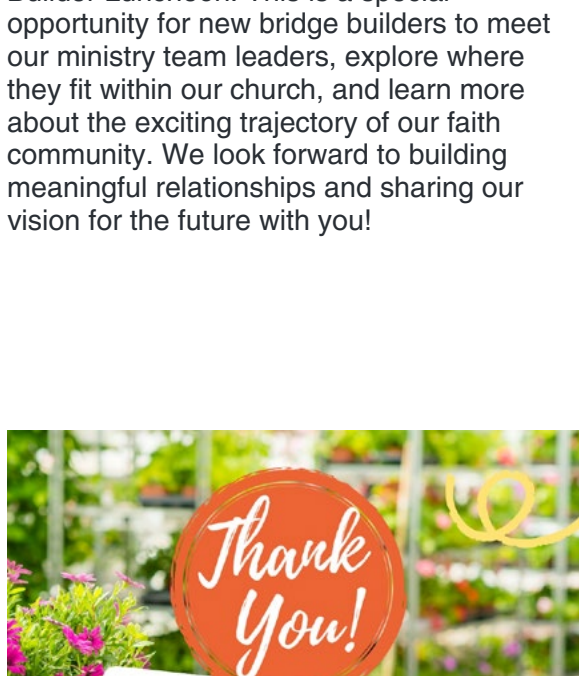
- **No Class on Apr. 17** in observance of Maundy Thursday.
- **Our last class** for the season will be on **May 22**.
- We will resume classes on **Sept. 4**.



THIS SUNDAY!

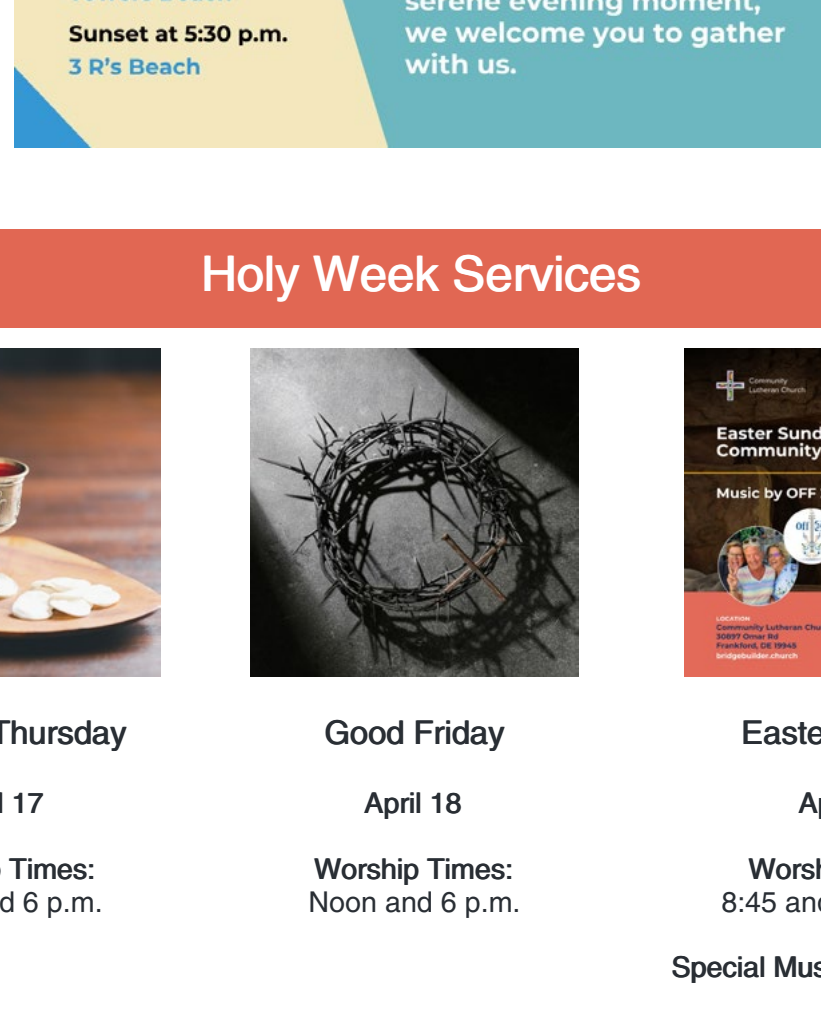
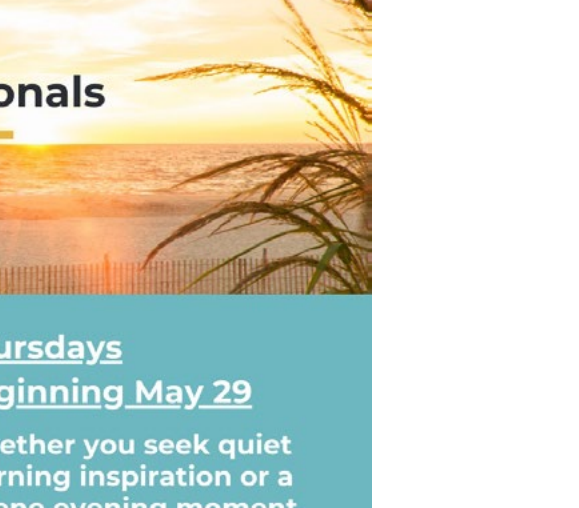


We will not meet Grief Group on Apr. 17 in observance of Maundy Thursday. We will meet again on May 1.

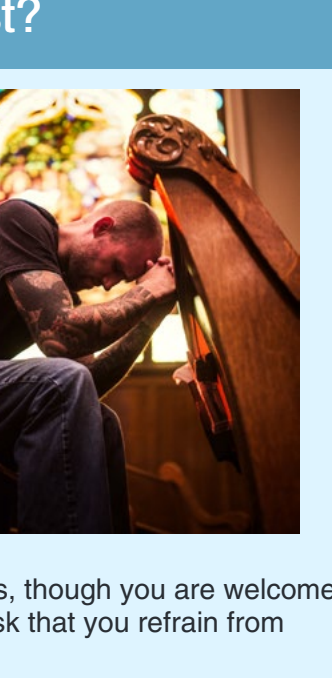
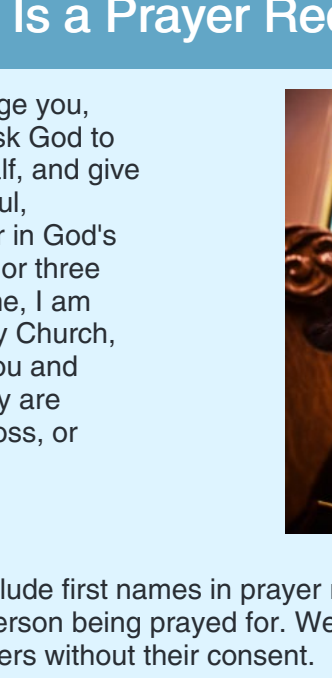
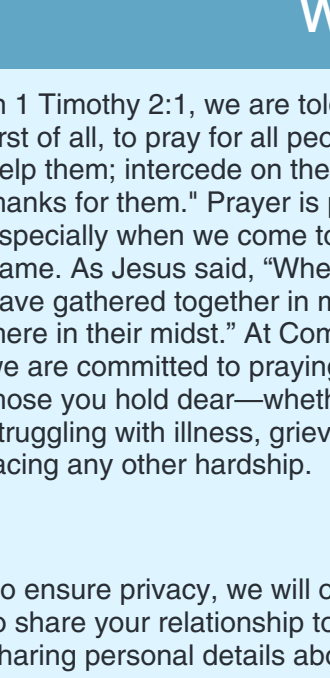


A big thank you to Inland Bays Garden Center for generously donating earth's treasures to Community and the Garden Ministry Team. Let's show our support for those who support Community! Inland Bays Garden Center is the largest supplier of native plants in the Delmarva area.

[Visit Their Website](#)



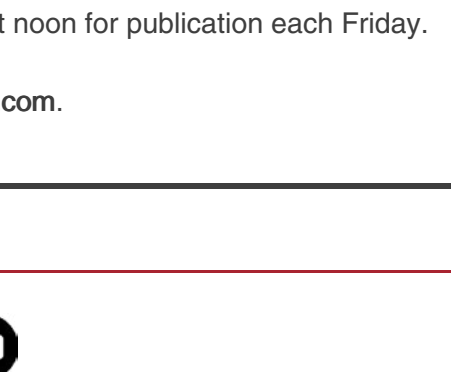
Holy Week Services



Special Musical Guests: Off 24

What Is a Prayer Request?

In 1 Timothy 2:1, we are told, "I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them." Prayer is powerful, especially when we come together in God's name. As Jesus said, "Where two or three have gathered together in my name, I am there in their midst." At Community Church, we are committed to praying for you and those you hold dear—whether they are struggling with illness, grieving a loss, or facing any other hardship.



To ensure privacy, we will only include first names in prayer requests, though you are welcome to share your relationship to the person being prayed for. We also ask that you refrain from sharing personal details about others without their consent.

How Can We Pray for You?

If you would like to submit a prayer request for yourself or a loved one, please contact tech.clc.30897@gmail.com.

We are here to support you in prayer, trusting that God hears and answers in God's perfect timing.

[Submit a Prayer Request](#)

Prayer Requests: Together in Faith

No requests this week. Continue to lift one another in prayer this week.

Each person mentioned in this newsletter publication has granted us permission to do so.

Team Leaders

Please submit e-newsletter articles every Tuesday at noon for publication each Friday.

Articles should be emailed to tech.clc.30897@gmail.com.



How did you like this email?