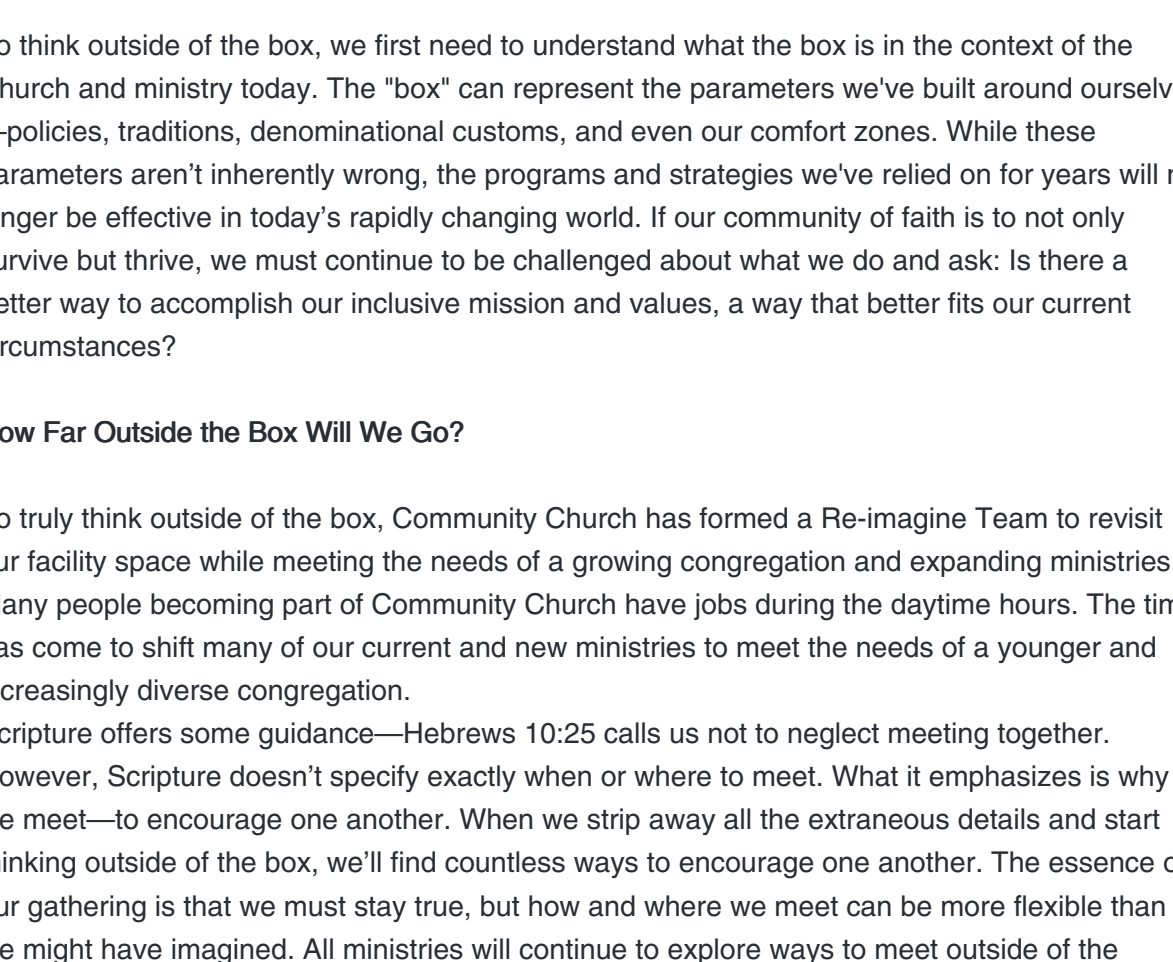


February 28, 2025

## Thinking Outside the Box: Rethinking Community Church



To think outside of the box, we first need to understand what the box is in the context of the Church and ministry today. The "box" can represent the parameters we've built around ourselves —policies, traditions, denominational customs, and even our comfort zones. While these parameters aren't inherently wrong, the programs and strategies we've relied on for years will no longer be effective in today's rapidly changing world. If our community of faith is to not only survive but thrive, we must continue to be challenged about what we do and ask: Is there a better way to accomplish our inclusive mission and values, a way that better fits our current circumstances?

### How Far Outside the Box Will We Go?

To truly think outside of the box, Community Church has formed a Re-imagine Team to revisit our facility space while meeting the needs of a growing congregation and expanding ministries. Many people becoming part of Community Church have jobs during the daytime hours. The time has come to shift many of our current and new ministries to meet the needs of a younger and increasingly diverse congregation.

Scripture offers some guidance—Hebrews 10:25 calls us not to neglect meeting together. However, Scripture doesn't specify exactly when or where to meet. What it emphasizes is why we meet—to encourage one another. When we strip away all the extraneous details and start thinking outside of the box, we'll find countless ways to encourage one another. The essence of our gathering is that we must stay true, but how and where we meet can be more flexible than we might have imagined. All ministries will continue to explore ways to meet outside of the building as we live within our greater community. We will explore ways to make the worship space reflective of our openness as a congregation.

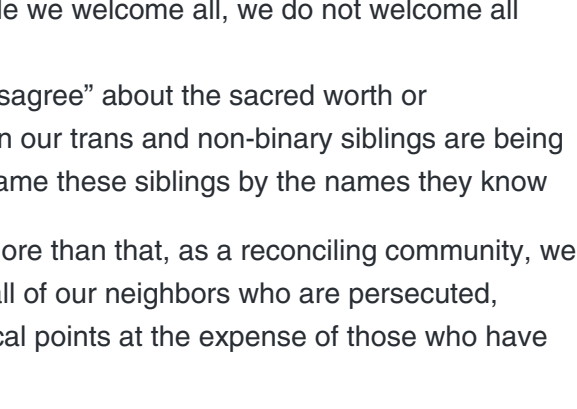
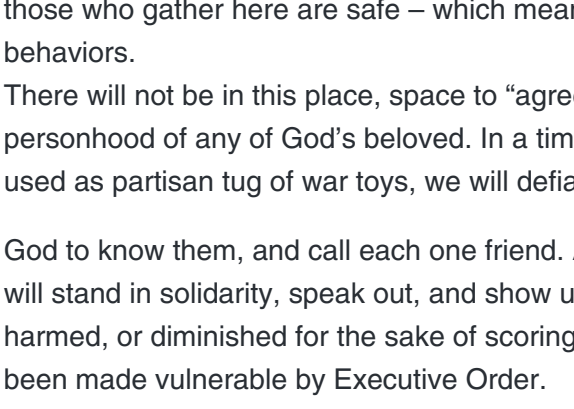
### Moving Forward: Embracing Fluidity and Adaptability

As we think outside of the box, we will remain grounded in prayer, stay true to the radically inclusive nature of Jesus, and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When we do, we'll discover a fluidity that allows us to adapt to new situations without being confined by rigidity.

Thinking outside of the box means constantly evaluating how we can better serve God and others, not just within the walls of our church but beyond them. By focusing on our community and the mission of Jesus, we will continue to create ministries that are both innovative and faithful. It's time to look beyond the traditional and find new ways to live out our calling—one that reaches people wherever they are and meets them in their time of need.

Let's keep challenging ourselves to rethink, adapt, and move forward as a church that embraces the heart of Jesus' mission: love, inclusion, and transformation. Together, we will find new ways to build community, serve others, and share the hope we've found in Christ.

-Pastor Karis Graham



## Catching People: A Call to Inclusive Faith and Bold Solidarity



*Jesus said to Simon [Peter], "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him. —Luke 5.10-11*

Fishing for people isn't about tricking people through these doors only to be disappointed, or worse harmed, by the church. It's about being intentional and public in our commitment to be a progressive voice for Christianity; its about welcoming all people — but also making sure that those who gather here are safe — which means while we welcome all, we do not welcome all behaviors.

There will not be in this place, space to "agree to disagree" about the sacred worth or personhood of any of God's beloved. In a time when our trans and non-binary siblings are being used as partisan tug of war toys, we will defiantly name these siblings by the names they know

God to know them, and call each one friend. And more than that, as a reconciling community, we will stand in solidarity, speak out, and show up for all of our neighbors who are persecuted, harmed, or diminished for the sake of scoring political points at the expense of those who have been made vulnerable by Executive Order.

Not because I say so, but because this is our commitment as followers of Jesus in this place and time — for which we are willing to bear the splendid consequences of integrity, not the easy complicity that comes with silence.

Jesus tells Peter to not be afraid and I suspect that's what I'm hoping you are hearing from me, too. Peter tells Jesus to leave him; but in the end, Peter ends up following Jesus. Will we trust and believe that such a call to faith is the same—just as true—for us?

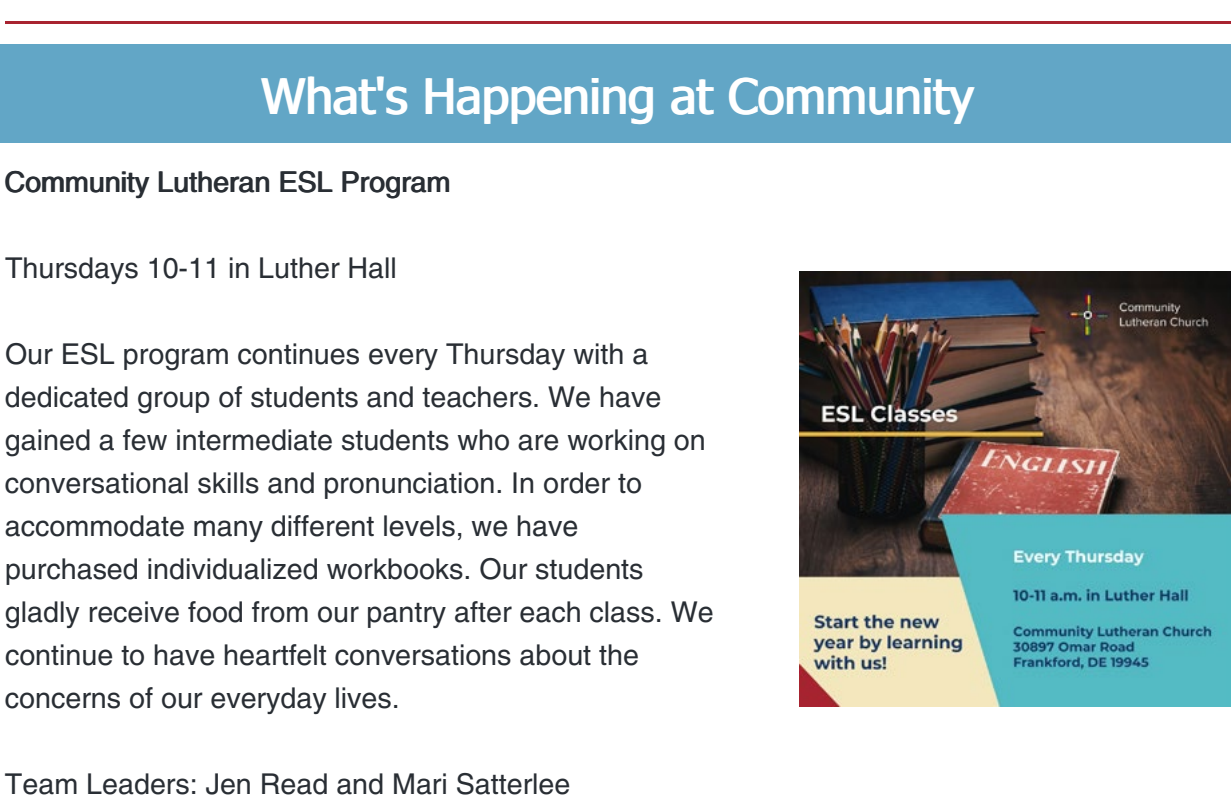
In her blog, [The Painted Prayerbook](#), Jan Richardson writes "Fish weren't the only catch of the day; Simon and his companions were hooked. Captivated. Called. And that's what miracles are meant to do: they meet us at our point of need, but they do not leave us there. They call us to move from being recipients to being participants, to share in the ways that God pours out Godself for the life of the community and the healing of the world."

As Richardson helps remind me, when we're "caught," that is captivated by grace and given to being co-workers with God, we become "fish out of water!" And, we discover that, impossibly, we breath even better, live even freer, become even more whole than we were before; in Jesus' name.

The Rev. William (Bill) Gohl, Jr., Bishop  
Delaware-Maryland Synod, ELCA

*This is a portion of Bishop Gohl's Sermon from St. Mark's (Baltimore) on Sunday, February 9, 2025*

## Bridges of Belief Podcast: Coming Soon to Connect, Inspire, and Engage!



Coming Soon!

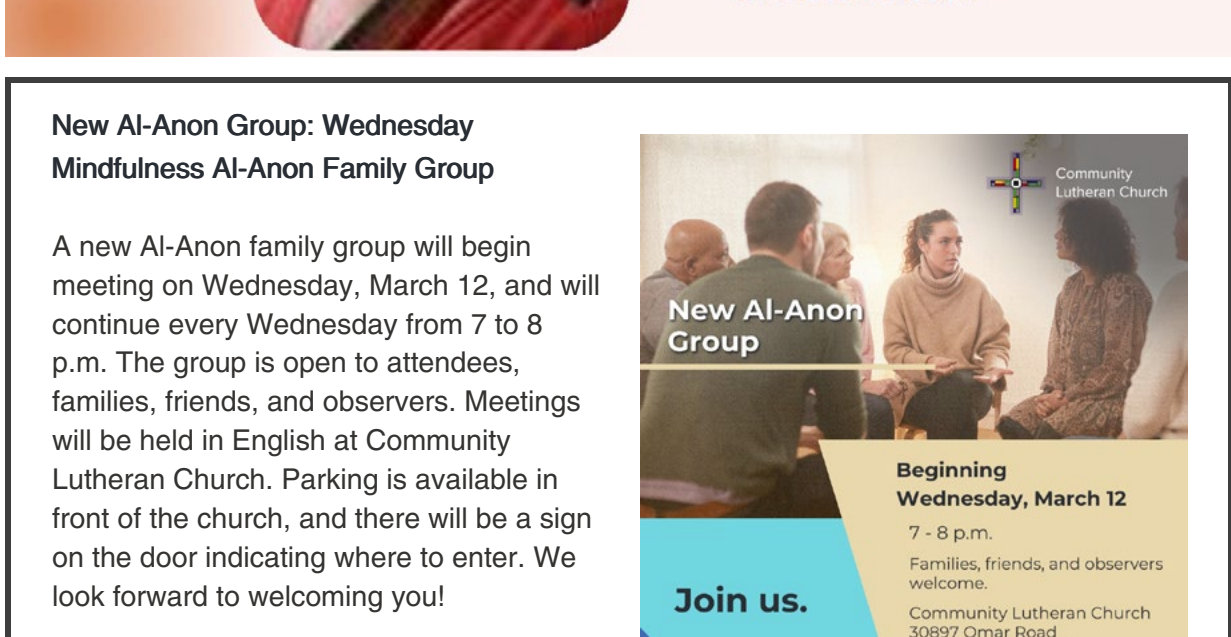
The Community Lutheran Church podcast, Bridges of Belief.

The first episode will be recorded this week with Pastor Karis as the guest and Lee Trueheart as the host. It will be posted to the CLC website next week. Be on the lookout for it!

The podcast will extend CLC's mission as an open and affirming church into the digital space, reach those who may feel hesitant to walk through our doors and foster deeper spiritual connections with current and potential members. Episode topics will include personal faith journeys, exploring inclusivity in faith, seasonal and liturgical themes, Q&A with pastors, faith in action, and much more. Our goal is to have monthly podcast episodes - or more frequent, depending on the availability of the guests.

Next month's episode is a conversation with Pastor Earl.

## Help Shape Our Small Groups Ministry



We have put together a survey to help us begin forming a small groups ministry based on the needs of the congregation. The survey was sent out by email last week, and hard copies can be found on the shelf in the narthex.

Place your surveys in the completed folder on the shelf, or email your responses to Randi at [randi22043@gmail.com](mailto:randi22043@gmail.com). Your survey will give us the information we need to begin forming groups. We look forward to your response! The sooner we get your input, the sooner we can start meeting for fellowship, study, and prayer!

Thank you to everyone who has already completed a survey!

-Small Group Ministry Team

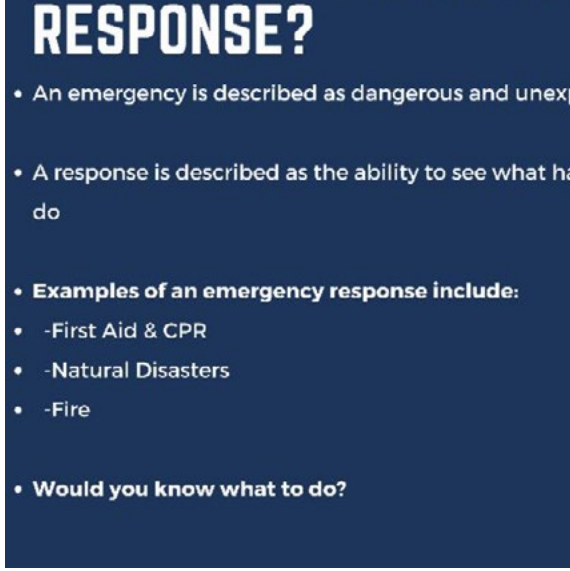
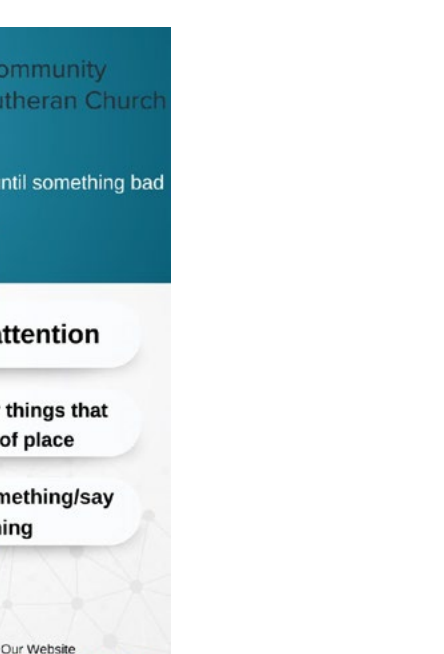
## What's Happening at Community

### Community Lutheran ESL Program

Thursdays 10-11 in Luther Hall

Our ESL program continues every Thursday with a dedicated group of students and teachers. We have gained a few intermediate students who are working on conversational skills and pronunciation. In order to accommodate many different levels, we have purchased individualized workbooks. Our students gladly receive food from our pantry after each class. We continue to have heartfelt conversations about the concerns of our everyday lives.

Team Leaders: Jen Read and Mari Satterlee



**Food Pantry Ministry**

The Community Food Pantry Ministry is dedicated to providing food and support to those in need within our community.

We serve on the **first and third Tuesday** of each month, with volunteer set-up beginning at **8:30 a.m. and concluding by noon**. Volunteers are always welcome to help with organizing, distributing, and supporting our neighbors. Whether you're looking to give back or need assistance, we invite you to join us in making a difference and spreading kindness.



**New Al-Anon Group: Wednesday Mindfulness Al-Anon Family Group**

A new Al-Anon family group will begin meeting on Wednesday, March 12, and will continue every Wednesday from 7 to 8 p.m. The group is open to attendees, families, friends, and observers. Meetings will be held in English at Community Lutheran Church. Parking is available in front of the church, and there will be a sign on the door indicating where to enter. We look forward to welcoming you!



**Congregational Meeting**

**Sunday, Mar. 2**

**Topic of Discussion**

**Luther Hall** immediately following the 8:45 a.m. service. Refreshments will be served.

To approve a two-year term call for Pastor Karis Graham. Vote by voting members only. A two-thirds majority vote is required for approval. A vote on approval is the only item on the agenda.



**Ashes & Worship**

**Wednesday, March 5**

**Inposition of Ashes**

**7:9 a.m.**

**Kissa Coffee in Dagsboro**

**Worship Service**

**12 p.m.**

**Community Lutheran Church**

**30897 Omar Road**

**Frankford, DE 19945**

**Join us.**



**Grief Group**

**BETHANN MCINTOSH**

**CERTIFIED GRIEF RECOVERY METHOD SPECIALIST**

**LUTHER HALL**

**1:00 pm to 2:30 pm**

**Thursday, March 6th**

**THIS GROUP WILL MEET THE FIRST AND THIRD THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH.**

**Join us.**

**Stay Ahead of Threats**

**Don't wait until something bad happens.**

**pay attention**

**look for things that are out of place**

**see something/say something**

**CONTACT Linda Miller**

**beachbum82@verizon.net**

**VISIT Our Website**

**https://bridgebuilder.church/**

**WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE?**

**An emergency is described as dangerous and unexpected things**

**A response is described as the ability to see what happens and know what to do**

**Examples of an emergency response include:**

**First Aid & CPR**

**Natural Disasters**

**Fire**

**Would you know what to do?**