

March 14, 2025

## Living the Gospel: Rejecting Christian Nationalism and Embracing Radical Inclusion



*"Proclaim the Gospel, and if needed, use words."*

This famous quote, often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, urges us to live the Gospel through our actions, not just words. Last week, as I attended an International Women's Day gathering, I was reminded of this truth. Many of the women there expressed their disillusionment with Christianity, having felt alienated by Christian nationalism—the dangerous merging of American identity with Christian beliefs. This ideology seeks to exclude marginalized groups, including women, immigrants, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and people of color.

Christian nationalism distorts the message of Jesus, promoting a version of Christianity that upholds social hierarchies, authoritarian control, and racial boundaries. It focuses on moral traditionalism and power structures that benefit certain groups while others are marginalized. This is not the way of Jesus. The Gospel calls us to love all people, regardless of their identity or background.

As an ELCA pastor, I stand in strong opposition to this harmful movement. The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, along with other Christian leaders, has stated that "whether we worship at a church, mosque, synagogue, or temple, America has no second-class faiths." All faiths are equal under the U.S. Constitution, and in the eyes of Jesus, there are no second-class citizens.

Christian nationalism is not just a theological belief—it's a political ideology that distorts Christian values for power and division. As Christians, we are called to reject this and instead live out the true message of Christ: one of unconditional love, radical inclusion, and justice for all people.

Let us be faithful in proclaiming the Gospel—not just with words, but with our actions, showing love and standing up for justice in a world that so desperately needs it. It's my prayer we show the world the love of Jesus not to earn God's favor. Rather, let's show others how much they are loved as a response to how much Jesus loves us.

-Pastor Karis

## Building Bridges: Pastor Karis' New Call and the Vision for CLC's Future

A Congregational Meeting was held on March 2, 2025, to extend a new term call to Pastor Karis. Pastor Karis was currently with us under a term call that was due to end on January 31, 2026. The Congregation Council approved issuing a new two-year term call for the period of February 1, 2025, until January 31, 2027.

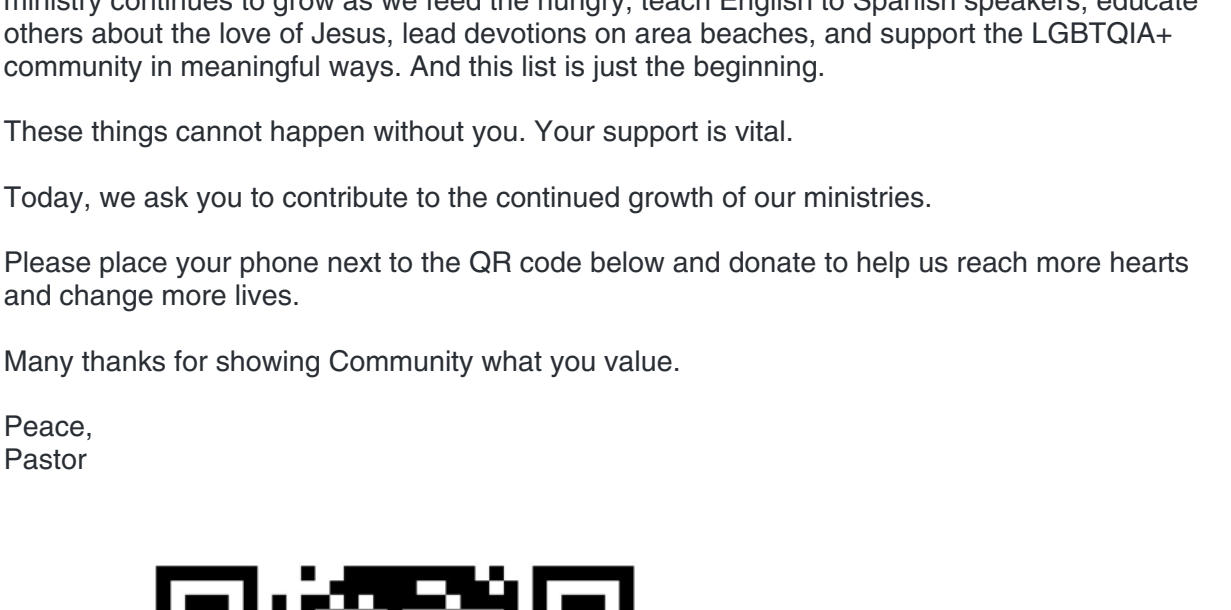
During the meeting, the new call was approved enthusiastically by the congregation and accepted by Pastor Karis.

### *From Church Lay Leadership:*

Prior to the meeting being called to order, Frank Johnson shared a vision of the future for CLC. This is a future that will continue to build bridges to the greater community by continuing to grow our existing outward-facing ministries such as the Food Pantry, LGBTQIA+, Grief Group, English as a Second Language, and starting new and exciting outward-facing ministries that reach out and engage large segments of the community. To bring this vision to reality will require calling a full-time, Jesus-loving, progressive, Senior Pastor with experience as a mission developer. In short, a worthy successor to Pastor Karis.

Bishop Gohl, Pastor Karis, and the Congregation Council share a common view that CLC will bring to the community a multi-point parish with worship and community ministry taking place in satellite locations throughout the beach and surrounding communities. We will be out in the community sharing the love of Jesus and the ministries that are vital to the community. This expected growth will require multiple pastoral support, and the council envisions using the talents of the retired Pastors living in the area. Pastor Karis's call will end in two years; however, she will be building bridges for CLC at one of the other locales and will still be involved in our ministries. This is an exciting time for CLC. As we continue to re-imagine our facilities and their highest and best use, we will do so in the light of building bridges through community ministry done by disciples of Jesus.

## It All Begins, and Ends, With What We Value Spiritually.



*"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*  
Matthew 6:21

"Where Your Heart Is..." It's no mystery that we tend to invest our time, resources, and love into what we truly value in life. It's not different within our spiritual life. In the Gospels, Jesus shares a challenging truth: our hearts walk alongside what we treasure.

So, beloved, what do you value?

It's clear to see what we hold dear by looking at the impact of our ministries in local neighborhoods. We actively serve those who are marginalized and in need. Our inclusive ministry continues to grow as we feed the hungry, teach English to Spanish speakers, educate others about the love of Jesus, lead devotions on area beaches, and support the LGBTQIA+ community in meaningful ways. And this list is just the beginning.

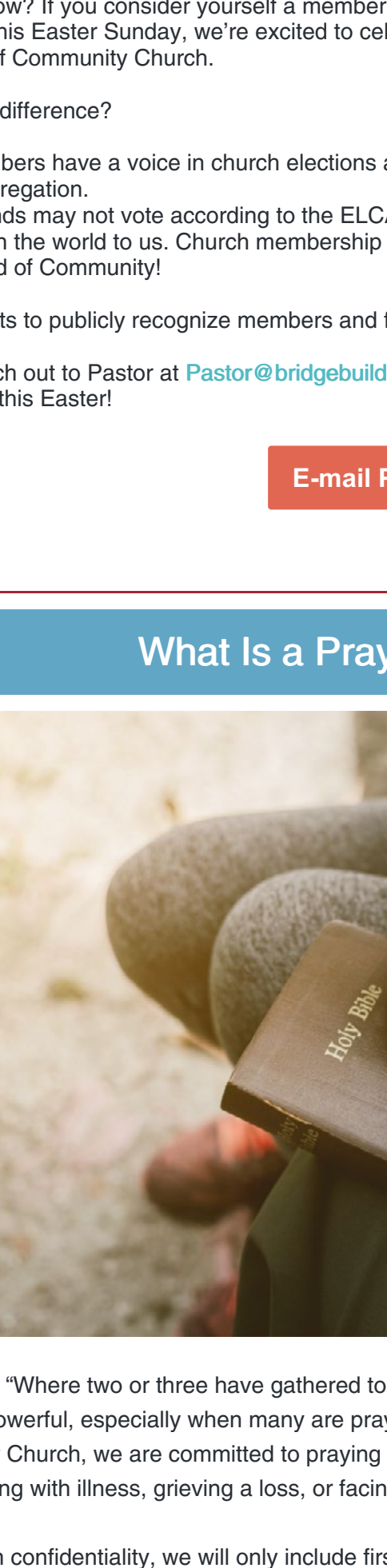
These things cannot happen without you. Your support is vital.

Today, we ask you to contribute to the continued growth of our ministries.

Please place your phone next to the QR code below and donate to help us reach more hearts and change more lives.

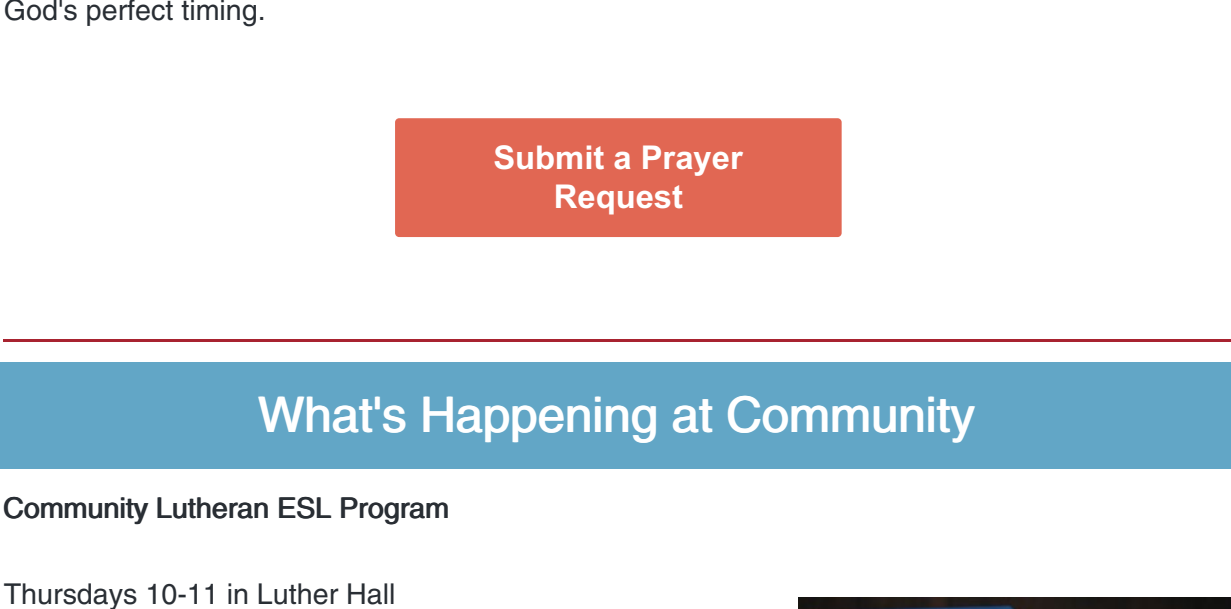
Many thanks for showing Community what you value.

Peace,  
Pastor



Donate Now

## New Member & Friend Recognition on Easter Sunday!



Sunday, April 20, at 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Did you know? If you consider yourself a member of Community Church, then you are a member! This Easter Sunday, we're excited to celebrate all those who identify as new members or friends of Community Church.

What's the difference?

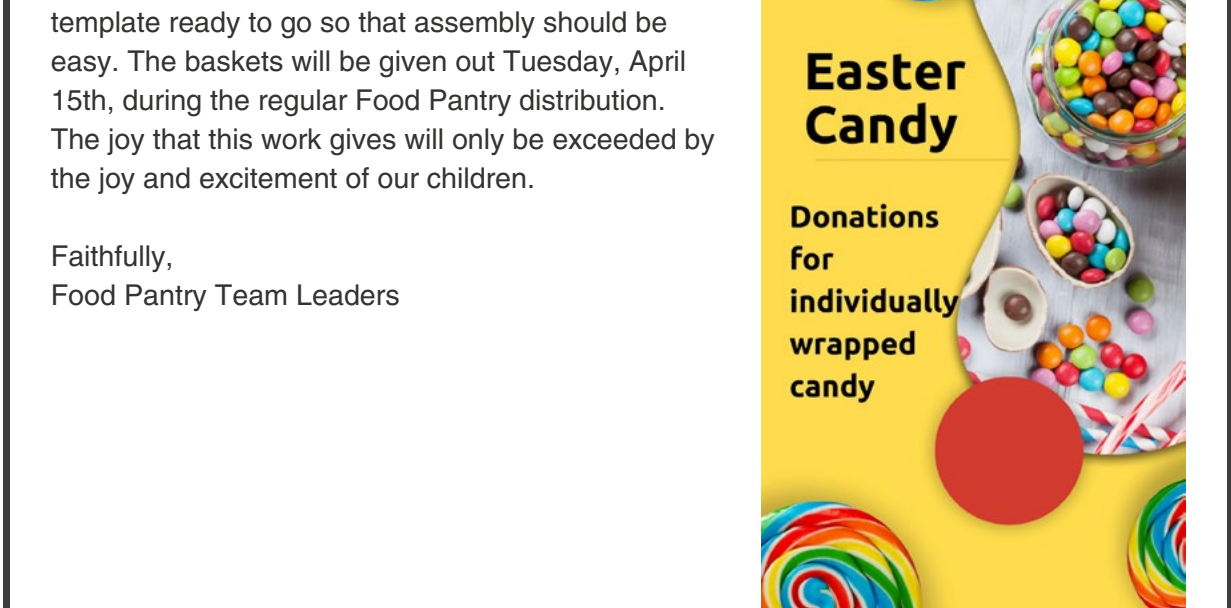
- Members have a voice in church elections and help guide the direction of our congregation.
- Friends may not vote according to the ELCA Constitution, but your presence and support mean the world to us. Church membership isn't for everyone, and we truly value you as a friend of Community!

Pastor wants to publicly recognize members and friends!

Simply reach out to Pastor at [Pastor@bridgebuilder.church](mailto:Pastor@bridgebuilder.church), and we'll make sure you're celebrated this Easter!

E-mail Pastor

## What Is a Prayer Request?



Jesus said, "Where two or three have gathered together in my name, I am there in their midst." Prayer is powerful, especially when many are praying for the same person or situation. 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 life may bring.

To maintain confidentiality, we will only include first names when sharing prayer requests, but you may share your relationship to the person being prayed for. We also ask that you refrain from sharing personal details about someone else without their consent.

How Can We Pray for You?

If you would like to submit an e-newsletter prayer request, whether for yourself or a loved one, please contact: [tech.clc.30897@gmail.com](mailto:tech.clc.30897@gmail.com).

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

Submit a Prayer Request

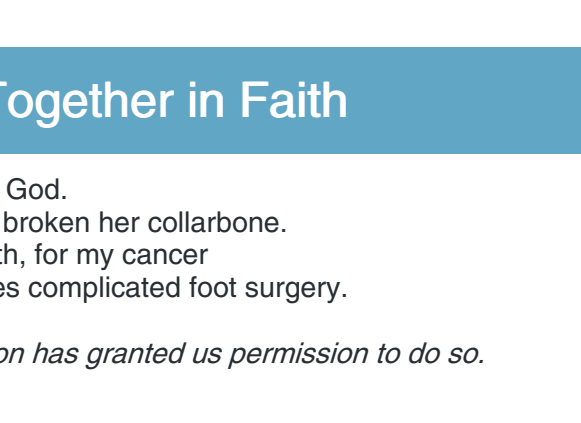
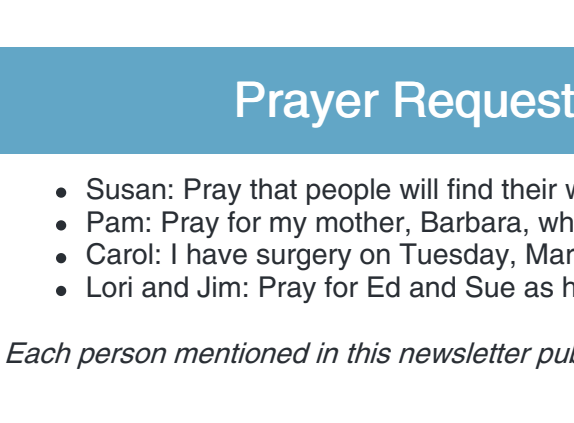
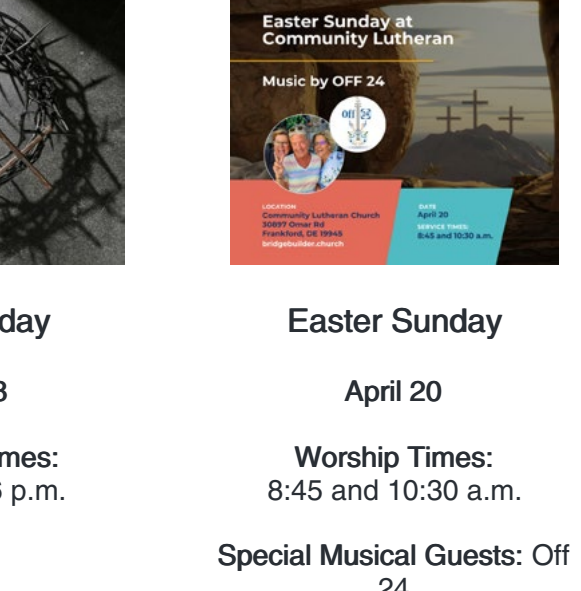
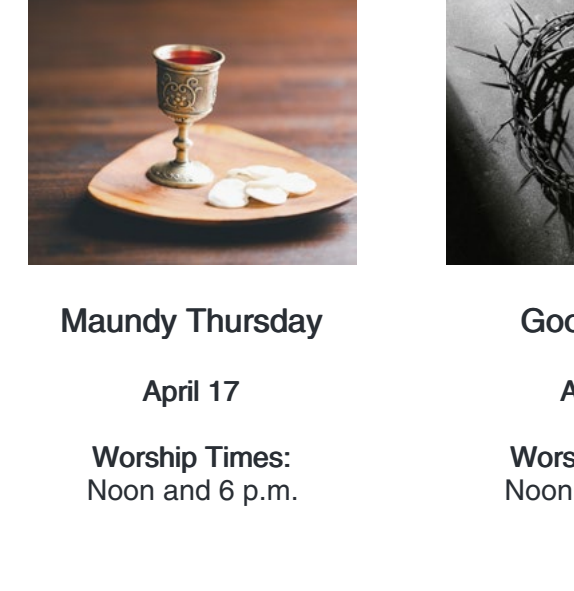
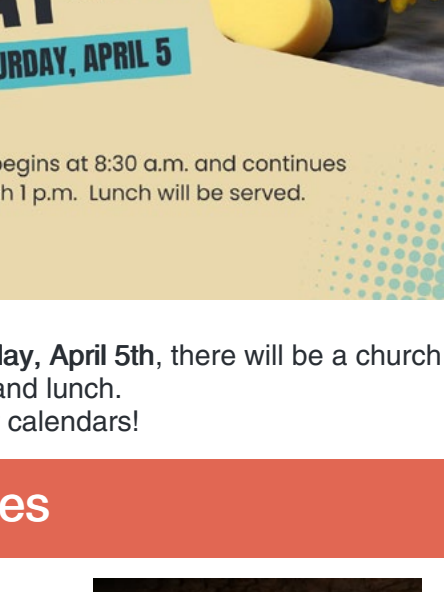
## What's Happening at Community

### 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



## Holy Week Services



Maundy Thursday

April 17

Worship Times:  
Noon and 6 p.m.



Good Friday

April 18

Worship Times:  
Noon and 6 p.m.



Easter Sunday

April 20

Worship Times:  
8:45 and 10:30 a.m.

Special Musical Guests: Off 24

## Prayer Requests: Together in Faith

- Susan: Pray that people will find their way to God.
- Pam: Pray for my mother, Barbara, who has broken her collarbone.
- Carol: I have surgery on Tuesday, March 11th, for my cancer
- Lori and Jim: Pray for Ed and Sue as he faces complicated foot surgery.

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