

River of Life Lutheran Church Chugiak, Alaska

"Ripples" Monthly Newsletter April 2023

Our Purpose Statement:

We are a community of faith called to - glorify God - grow in faith and love, and - go into the world with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ.

[Visit our Website](#)

From the Pastor's Desk...

"Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you." (II Corinthians 13:11 - NRSV)

The final words of Paul to the church in Corinth have so much good advice that is universal for the church. Within context, Paul was addressing fellow believers with some final words of advice, knowing that his death was near. But as I write this article, Holy Week approaches, and I find that these words might just as well have been spoken by Jesus to his disciples before his arrest and crucifixion. And, these are also the perfect words I would like to say to River of Life before I retire as your pastor at the end of May!

I confess that I don't enjoy "farewells." Yet I know that we, each in our own way, will soon be saying "farewell" to each other. I also know that before our final farewells there will be some work to do in which we "put things in order." The Bishop will be working with our council president and the congregation to schedule fill-in pastors and to start the process that will eventually lead to calling a new pastor.

It has been a joy to serve our Lord together with all the members and friends of River of Life over the past 12 years. Our ministry together started out as an interim ministry, but God had other plans. Part of our time together has been a greater understanding of what Paul means by the phrase, “agree with one another” ... which is often translated as “be of one mind.” What does it mean for believers to “be of one mind”, or to “agree with one another”? You don’t know? You must be Lutheran! Should Christians even be one-minded? Well ... YES ... but agreeing with one another ... that’s almost too much to think about!

Within the Christian church today the phrase is translated in two ways: first, as though it means for us to have the same opinions or viewpoints on issues like homosexuality or abortion or the death penalty. But the other way the phrase is understood refers to (along with such other scriptural references such as Romans 15:6, Philippians 1:27, or I Peter 3:8) having one single devotion, proclamation and service to God and one another, modeled after Christ’s life.

What does it mean, then, to “be of one mind”, or “to agree with one another”? It would be untrue to believe that it means simply to share the same opinions on every matter. Imagine what it would be like to have a musical score with only one single note - the “right” note. Or a musical score with each person playing a different note, but with no conductor. Although everyone knows their note ... no one knows the phrasing or tempo. So every note would begin to suspect that it must be the “other” notes that are out of tune! But each note is different so that there may be harmonies and dissonance in God’s symphony.

A second way to understand this “one-mindedness” is to imagine a musical score with different notes, or the addition of the conductor. When we have one mind among us, agreeing together to worship God and love one another, then we are like a musical score comprised of individual notes (us), but ultimately following (having an open mind to) the leading of the conductor (God). The conductor has final say as to the playing of the work, will decide who’s in tune and who’s not, will enable all parts to blend, and will lend interpretation to the music itself (God’s word). The church, as the body of Christ, bears witness to this truth throughout it’s history and even today, as it represents a wide range of “mindedness” on all kinds of issues. Yet, when the notes are played, it is a symphony.

For Paul, to “agree with one another” was a call to stop arguing with one another as to who’s right and who’s wrong - as though each note has that authority! “To be of one mind” is a call to find our unity in God. The single-mindedness of the Christian church can be plainly evidenced in the confession of the Apostles’ Creed, in worship, the practices of baptism and Holy Communion, and the emphasis on mission work and evangelism. And when we come together in these ... we find that we are living in peace, and that the God of love and peace will be with us, as Paul suggests.

Let’s quit worrying about the “other notes” and tune ourselves (read Matthew 7: 1-5). Otherwise we will simply be sour notes! Let our lives give praise to God. Sola Deo Gloria! To God be the glory! And God only! For Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

May the God of love and peace be with you all,

Pastor Ottum

Sunday Worship Service

We worship at 11:00am

21301 Voyles Blvd., Chugiak, AK. 99567

PIGSS - Pretty Interesting Guys Studying Scripture

**Our next breakfast and work party is *Saturday, April 15*
9:00am - Noon**

Office Hours Change

Jan Deering, our Administrative Assistant, has accepted a full-time position outside the congregation. At the February Church Council meeting it was moved, seconded and passed that we accept Jan's proposal to continue working as our Admin. Assistant, on the condition she comes in on a week night and on Saturday to complete the work. Two persons have volunteered to spend time during the week in the office to answer phones and do other tasks as needed. A schedule with volunteer hours will be posted at a later date.

***Join us for Sunday Morning Adult Studies at
10:00am***

"II Peter"

All are invited to our study of the book of II Peter ... a straight "read-through" type of study. We meet Sundays, 10:15am in the fellowship hall. -Pastor Ottum

Pastor Ottum is leading the class through the various sections of The Small Catechism, written by Martin Luther. The class is currently studying the Lord's Prayer, and will conclude with the Sacraments. Calvin Twohy is our current confirmand. Please keep him and his family in your prayers. *(All classes are held on Sunday afternoon, 12:30-1:30pm at the church. Check with the office, or Pastor Ottum, for a complete schedule.)*

Calvin will be confirmed during worship on April 23rd!

April 2023

Holy Week:

Thursday, April 6 – Maundy

Thursday, 7:00pm *(First Presbyterian in Wasilla)*

Friday, April 7 – Good Friday, 7:00pm
(ROL)

Easter:

Sunday, April 9

9:30am – Easter Breakfast (potluck)

11:00am – Worship

Prayer Concerns and Celebrations

Prayers for Our Congregation

We pray for the health and vitality of ROL's Ministry & Mission.

Prayers for Family and Friends

We pray for continued healing, encouragement, and strength for: Padi's cousin's husband **Jon** (prayers for healing & better health); Elaine's

friend **Larry** (healing from stroke); Elaine's friend **Eve** (recovering from surgery); Padi's friend **Lorraine** (cancer treatment); **Liam** (Cindy's nephew); **Bob Reupke**; **Stewart Mee**; Joel & Padi's friend **Jack** (cancer); Paul Krauszer's friend **George Gillis** (cancer); **Terry** (healing); Terry's friends **Dave** (support and encouragement) and **David** (recovery from surgery); Linda H.'s sister **Susie** (healing and comfort); prayers of healing and direction for Ladonna's daughter **Danielle**; Eldred's friend **Marlene** (healing); Diane's sister **Susan** (recuperating); Bob Kelly's brother **Ron** (healing); Carol Baker's husband **Scott** (hospice); Kimberly's sister **Sherry** (broken foot); peace for **Wayne Fredeen's family** upon his death; and, **Kaitlin** (cancer diagnosis).

Prayer Partners

We pray for the health and vitality of the ministry of our other Knik Cluster congregations and their pastors: **Joy, Eagle River; Trinity, Palmer; Good Shepherd, Wasilla; Table of Grace, Bethel;** and our **April Prayer Partner Good Shepherd Lutheran Church** in Wasilla.

Emergency Food Bags Are Available

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Everyone is encouraged to take one or more to keep in the car and give to someone in need.

April Birthdays

10 - Keira Twohy
22 - Logan Eldred

April Anniversaries

11 - Joel & Padi Wallace
18 - Scott & Carol Baker

Friendly Reminder:

Don't Forget to notify the church office of any address, phone or email changes!

Need pastoral care?

Please remember to notify the church office if you are ill or hospitalized so that we can offer prayer and support directly to you. If you have a pastoral emergency (death in the family, hospitalization, etc.) contact Pastor Bill at 907-223-7042.

2023 Church Council Members

President: Gerry Cronquist

Vice President: Dotty Eldred

Secretary: Mary Ann Hartzog

Treasurer: Bob Norton

Committee Liaisons:

- Building – Terry Durst
 - Worship – Dotty Eldred
 - Fellowship – Linda Heinzelmann
 - Outreach / Discipleship – Bob Kelly
 - Mission – Church Council
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