

River of Life Lutheran Church

Chugiak, Alaska

"Ripples" Monthly Newsletter August 2022

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...

It has been nearly 2 years since the fire that burned down our previous church structure. Over the long process towards rebuilding we've learned many things about our relationship to God, church buildings, and our need for one another. Rather than write my own musings, this month I am sharing a wonderful folktale from Burma that I ran across this past month. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did when I first read it.

Long ago a traveler was walking through the jungles of Burma when he came upon a small village. As the sun was going down, he decided to just sleep along the roadside and enter the village in the morning. Taking his coin purse from around his neck, he found a stone nearby and hid his purse so no one would take it as he slept. As it turned out, a villager had spotted him hiding the purse. Late at night as the traveler slept, the villager returned and stole the purse. When the traveler awoke, the money was gone. The traveler sat down beside the road and began to weep. A crowd began to gather curious about this traveler weeping on the edge of the village. Before long the mayor joined the crowd and inquired about the situation. He listened to the traveler and then asked to see the stone. The traveler walked a short distance to a round stone about the size of a man's head.

The mayor ordered, "Arrest that stone. Bring that thief to the town square where I'll convene a court." The villagers followed the mayor and the traveler to the town square. Once the village elders were in place, the mayor convened the court. The mayor

asked the stone, "What is your name?" The stone was silent.

The mayor leaned forward closer to the stone and demanded, "Where did you come from?" More silence. "Well at least tell me your age." By this time some of the villagers were casting glances at each other. Small smiles and puzzled looks were on the faces of the villagers.

The mayor pushed his face closer to the stone. "So, you don't want to speak up? Tell me, why were you loitering outside our village?" The villagers began to cover their mouths to muffle their laughter. "So, were you looking for trouble?" Some of the villagers could not contain themselves any longer; they let out a laugh. The mayor turned to the crowd and declared, "Show some respect. This is a court of law."

The mayor turned back to the stone. "You will not answer my questions, so I hold you in contempt of court. In punishment, you will receive thirty lashes with a stick." The crowd could no longer contain themselves. They let out uproarious laughter. The mayor turned to the crowd, "Have you no respect for this court? I fine every one of you a coin a piece."

One by one the villagers came forward and dropped a coin in a bowl in front of the mayor. The mayor then gave the coins to the traveler and apologized for the crime that had been committed outside of the village. The traveler's eyes filled with tears, for what he had lost had been restored.

The mayor wished the traveler well and ordered the stone to be returned to the place where it was found. People talked about this trial for some time. Some thought the mayor acted foolishly, but most admitted the mayor acted with great wisdom. Every time the villagers walk past the stone, they are reminded that they share the burdens of one another and all who pass their way.

Over the course of the rebuilding these past two years we've certainly come to appreciate the importance of sharing one another's burdens. Everyone has found a place to help, and as the building nears completion it is obvious that we are more connected to one another in our serving and our fellowship as a church. Thanks be to God for the challenges that we have come through, and for God's ongoing hope in us. May we never forget that we are in this together.

Peace, Pastor Bill Ottum

Sunday Worship Service

We worship at 11:00am
in the downstairs fellowship hall of
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
18444 Old Glenn Hwy., Chugiak, AK

Drive around to the right side of the church and park in the lower parking lot.

Enter through the kitchen door! You're welcome to bring your own seat cushion!

Construction Update

Building Construction Update

This past month there has been much progress on the interior. The cabinets have been installed in the kitchen, sanctuary and back room, and lighting fixtures are in. Flooring is also scheduled to be installed soon, as the final touchup painting nears completion. The kitchen appliances are delivered and the sanctuary chairs are ordered but are still being made.

We are still hoping for occupancy in Fall, although we still haven't received a final completion date. We are grateful to our project manager Terry and our Building Committee for all their hard work as we continue to move forward.

The Children' S Lunchbox

River of Life Lutheran Church is collecting food for **The Children's Lunchbox**, a family food program through Bean's Cafe in Anchorage.

It began when schools closed as a result of COVID-19 to help families, but even now *The Children's Lunchbox* is distributing or partnering with other agencies to distribute pantry boxes to food-

insecure children and families. With school not in session and a record increase in unemployment, the need to feed hungry kids (and families) continues to grow. We know many of our families are already on the edge or barely making it.

The Children's Lunchbox stepped up in March 2020, to make sure no child went hungry in Anchorage and we're still hard at work. We have distribution sites for prepared meals for kids (dinners and a snack) as well as pantry pack boxes. The pantry pack boxes provide a shelf-stable meal for a family of four.

Pantry boxes are preassembled and provide a breakfast, lunch or dinner meal for a family of four. They are given out in multiples to feed entire families, no questions asked. Distribution sites are open to **anyone**.

Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap estimates in 2020, 32% more Alaskans needed food assistance than before – that's 125,650 people, including 47,800 children (an increase of 44%). This brings our estimated food insecurity rate in Alaska to 17% overall, or 1 in 6. For Alaska's children, the estimated food insecurity rate is now just over 26%, more than 1 in 4.

[To learn more, click here to visit The Children's Lunchbox program's website.](#)

[Click here for a list of needed food items for The Children's Lunchbox.](#)

You are welcome to deliver foods directly to Bean's Cafe (see their website for delivery location and drop-off times). You may also bring your food donations to church on Sundays and we will deliver it to Bean's Cafe.

Thank you for your generosity!

Kentucky Floods

Beginning on July 27, a line of severe storms dumped record amounts of rain on eastern Kentucky, overflowing rivers and creeks onto streets and neighborhoods. The death toll in Kentucky is expected to rise as search and

rescue efforts continue. Though hundreds of people have been rescued, the number of people missing is still unknown. Rising waters are damaging infrastructure, including roads, bridges and power lines, which hinders rescue efforts. The flooding has destroyed hundreds of homes and other buildings and left families with nothing. These severe floods are not limited to Kentucky; there has been flooding in Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, West Virginia and other states in the region.

As the waters recede and the full scope of the damage is assessed, Lutheran Disaster Response will work with the Indiana-Kentucky Synod and local communities to focus on long-term needs. We anticipate that the response will include rebuilding homes, replacing lost household items and providing emotional and spiritual care to survivors. This is in addition to our ongoing response to the December 2021 tornadoes in western Kentucky.

Gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response designated for "U.S. Flooding" will be used entirely (100%) to assist those affected by floods. Together, we can support those who are on the long road to recovery. Please give today.

[Click HERE to donate online.](#)

Summer Yard Sale Recap

Thank you to all whom helped make our **Summer Yard Sales** a success!

In June we earned **\$1,787**, and **\$1,271** from our July sale.

Thanks also to everyone who helped with the final clean-up. Heavy wind and rain collapsed our sale tent, and it was a lot of work! We appreciate your generous donations and help!

Sunday Morning Adult Studies are on vacation for the summer and will resume in Fall.

Thursday Morning Bible Study Continues

From 10am – noon Pastor Ottum leads a study of the Bible readings for the next

Sunday worship.

Coffee and refreshments are served. The class is held upstairs at Our Redeemer in the room across from the Sanctuary. **Everyone is welcome!**

Note: There will be no Thursday Bible Study August 11 and August 25.

August Calendar

- **Thursday, August 4** - 10:00am - **Bible Study**
 - **Sunday, August 7** - 11:00am - **Worship**
 - **Tuesday, August 9** - 6:30pm - **Church Council Meeting**
 - **Sunday, August 14** - 11:00am - **Worship**
 - **Thursday, August 18** - 10:00am - **Bible Study**
 - **Saturday, August 20** - 5:00-7:30pm - **Tri-tip Steak Fundraiser**
 - **Sunday, August 21** - 11:00am - **Worship**
 - **Sunday, August 28** - 11:00am - **Worship**
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Noisy Offering

This quarter's "Noisy Offering" goes to the **Alaska Fisher House** on JBER. The Alaska Fisher House is a "home away from home" for service members, veterans, and their family members. It provides a warm and compassionate environment for families to heal and support each other while receiving medical care in the Anchorage area.

The *Noisy Offering* is the fourth Sunday of each month. Each quarter we collect for a different local community need.

Prayer Concerns and Celebrations

Our Congregation

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

Family and Friends

We pray for continued healing, encouragement, and strength for: Elaine's friend **Eve** (praise for being declared cancer free/prayers for returning strength); Elaine's friend **Larry** (healing); Elaine's friend **Bob** (gratitude for successful surgery, prayers for healing); Padi's friend **Lorraine** (cancer treatment); **Liam** (Cindy's nephew); **Bob Reupke**; **Stewart Mee**; Joel & Padi's friend **Jack** (cancer); **Wayne Fredeen** (healing); Jai's nephew (head injury); Paul Krauszer's friend **George Gillis** (cancer); and, **John Copenhaver** (heart issue).

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 August Prayer Partner church, Resurrection Lutheran Church in Seward.**

Compassion for Others in Our Community

Dear Father in heaven, Creator of what is good, beautiful, and full of joy, so that all may work in harmony with you - we thank you for all the good that comes to us. May we be your children, joined together to serve you. May our life bring joy to others, and may we do good without ceasing through your great, strong love, which moves us, strengthens us, and helps us every day, however hard life may be. May your name be praised throughout the world. May your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as in heaven. Amen.

Thank you, God, for the body of believers who are called to serve you, who are proclaiming the Good News to all who will hear. From those who minister across the country to the men, women, and youth here at home, send us out to

be a light in the dark. Send us out to speak life, to extend grace and mercy, to feed the hungry, to befriend the lonely, and to find the lost. Open the doors of this church and fill it with the broken, the angry, the hurting. Let them find forgiveness and comfort here in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Chugiak Eagle River Food Pantry

We accept food donations for the Chugiak Eagle River Food Pantry every Sunday. Please consider a donation of non-perishable food to benefit our local community. We will deliver our food offerings each month to the Food Pantry. **The number of families served has increased 60% in the past 2 months.** Thank you for any and all food and cash donations!

Updated List of Needs for July and August:

- Household Cleaners: especially dish soap, laundry soap
- Personal Toiletries: hand/body soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes (especially multi-packages)

- Peanut Butter (16-18 oz.)
- Crackers: Saltines, Ritz, etc.
- Breakfast Cereal (esp. Gluten free and low sugar)
- Plain Pasta: spaghetti, macaroni elbows, other shapes
- Tomato Paste, Tomato Sauce, Pasta Sauce (**NO diced tomatoes)
- Pasta/Rice Mixes: Hamburger Helper, Pasta Roni, Rice-a-Roni, Pasta Sides
- Refried Beans, Pork-n-Beans
- Soups: Cream of Mushroom, Cream of Chicken, Vegetable, Beef Stew
- Broth: Chicken, Beef, Vegetable
- Condiments: Ketchup, Mustard, Mayo, Relish, BBQ, etc.
- Beverages: Coffee, Tea, Hot Chocolate
- Portable Back to School Lunchbox Foods

August Birthdays

1 - Elise Budin
19 - Allen Durst
26 - Gerry Cronquist

August Anniversaries

2 - Jeremy & Sarah Ottum
5 - John & Ann Copenhaver
12 - Dave & Charlene Howe
13 - Bob & Kay Norton

2022 Church Council Members

President: Padi Wallace

Vice President: Dotty Eldred

Secretary: Mary Ann Hartzog

Treasurer: Bob Norton

Committee Liaisons:

- Building – Terry
- Worship – Dotty
- Fellowship – Linda H.
- Outreach / Discipleship – Bob K.
- Mission – Church Council