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Lutheran Church of Our Savior

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## FROM THE PASTOR...

### Recently former Facebook product manager

Antonio Martinez called the company a cult, comparing CEO Mark Zuckerberg to Jonestown cult leader Jim Jones. "Facebook is full of true believers who really, really, really are not doing it for the money, and really, really will not stop until every man, woman, and child on earth is staring into a blue-bannered window with a Facebook logo. Zuckerberg founded the church of a new religion." So is Facebook a cult? Don't know, but I do know cults come in many varieties. The thing all cults seem to have in common is they prey on folks who aren't sure who they are and need a cult leader to tell them. "Who am I?" is a question everybody has to ask themselves at some point.

Now we are a couple of weeks into this New Year. Big deal, we're already back to the same old, same old. I woke up January 1 and felt pretty much the same as I did when I went to bed on December 31. When the year turns, along with the resolutions people won't keep, some people tell me, "This year I'm going to reinvent myself." I know that means they're going to try to improve themselves: start new good habits and stop old bad ones. But if you have to reinvent yourself, doesn't that mean you're not happy with who you are? And if you aren't, maybe you're not happy because you don't really know who you are. Or maybe you're not happy because you have forgotten who you are. I understand that. In our modern life, there are always people who want to tell you who you are or who you should be. Maybe Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook are a good example.

It's confusing. So it's understandable we sometimes forget. Who am I? Movies, TV, popular culture are ready to tell you. "You are how you look. You are how attractive you are. Your body is your most important possession; nurture it, love it, show it off." A while back Geraldo Rivera sent pictures of himself to people saying "70 is the new 50." He thought he looked good, but I thought he just looked like a 70-year-old guy without a shirt on. Who am I? Teachers, professors, and lords of academia answer: "You are mostly a brain, mostly a rational, thinking, reasoning being; absorbing facts and figures, going to endless school; living only to learn, not learning to live. It's not who you are but what you know." If you aren't in the know, you're nothing. Who am I? Advertisers and peddlers of capitalism tell you: "You are a maker and spender of money, a doer, a producer, an obtainer, preparing for your first mortgage with a two-car garage and 30-year payments. You are the car you drive,

the clothes you wear, the perfume you put on." Who am I? "You are what social media says you are. You are how many people 'friend' you. You are how many 'unfriend' you, how many 'likes' you have. You are a self-centered, autonomous, self-made being. Nobody will look out for you but you. You are the most important project in your life; nurture, care for, and love your adorable self. Look out for number one, satisfy, soothe, make happy, thrill, care for your lonely little 'me.'"

Who am I? The question carries through life. And like a chameleon changing colors, the answer keeps changing. That's because it's easy to forget who you are and who named you. So we wake up in the morning, look in the mirror, and ask, "Who am I?" The church answers, "You are baptized."

Jesus stands in the Jordan River and gets baptized by John. Jesus stands passively and receives. It's the beginning of Jesus' public ministry and where do we start: with his baptism! The Gospels tell us Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah: the supreme ruler; a divinely sent representative of Almighty God. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John point to Jesus, the Christ, the Anointed One. Immanuel... God with us... Immanuel the Savior who comes to fix all that's wrong with the world and to finally give God's people their rightful place as the most blessed of all peoples. But Jesus' ministry starts in a very "un-Messianic" way. He stands in the middle of the muddy Jordan and lets this strange man John baptize him. Jesus is the passive receiver of this, just like all of us are. But standing there in the water, vulnerable, passive, receiving baptism from John, Jesus is making a statement about God. Jesus is living... modeling for us... what down



religion is all about. Down religion vs. Up religion. Either we try to climb up to God (which we can't) or we realize God has to come down to us if we want to have any kind of relationship with him. Down religion says, baptism is something God does to us; not some ritual that is done by us. Baptism is a gift God comes down to give. We don't grab baptism out of God's hand and we don't claim baptism like it's something God owes us on

account of our faith. We only receive it. We are not active, but passive. Baptism is not about what we do, but about what God does for us.

You don't need to jump on a Harley and hit the road to find out who you are; you just need to come to the font and look into those graceful waters. The reflection you see there is who you really are. Who am I? "You are someone who has been given a name." "How is this child to be named?" the pastor asks as the child is brought to the baptismal font. Water poured, words spoken (I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit), a new life begins. And then our lives become a long journey of growing up in that name; answering to it, giving it meaning by the way we live our lives. At baptism we are given the name "Christian." That name is a gift - unearned, undeserved - like grace itself.

In baptism, God makes a radically different statement about who we are and how we get to be who we are. Through the church God tells the baptized person his identity is a gift, something given by grace. Baptism says not only did God give us his name and adopt us into his family, but also we are children of the King; we are royalty. So the church celebrates baptism to challenge us: never forget who you are.

In the water and promise of baptism God says there is another way to answer the question, "Who am I?" Baptism says you are worthy: worthy, because we have been made worthy - bought, adopted, elevated by the King of kings himself. The Christian message is not we should try hard to "act like somebody." The Christian message is simply, "We are somebody." Jesus thought you were important enough for him to die on that cross for you. How much more powerfully could God say, "You are somebody?" How much wider could he open his arms to embrace you than he did hanging there?

Never forget who you are. And don't forget where you're going. Baptism says you are a child of the great high King and an heir to his glory. People who arrive are people who know where they're going. Sin clouds our priorities and messes with our minds. The danger of forgetting who you are is then you won't know where you're going. But God gives you a promise in Water and Word: I will be your God and you will be my son, my daughter. Nothing will snatch you out of my hand. Yours is the promise of the heavenly kingdom. Baptism calls us to remember home. How easy it is to forget who you are and whose you are. So the church is here to remind you, you have been bought with a price, someone greater than you has named you and claimed you and seeks you and loves you with one reason in mind: so he might love you for all eternity. Remember your baptism and be thankful, for this is who you are. ✿

## february BIRTHDAYS

Feb 01	Gary Lange
Feb 07	Christopher Summers
Feb 09	William Moffatt
Feb 11	Kathryn Pierce
Feb 13	Piper Chaney, Marjorie Hord
Feb 14	Pamela Schofield, Kobe Tate
Feb 15	Robert Barraza, Chantal Morgan
Feb 17	Burnie Slot
Feb 19	Nona Corvi
Feb 21	Colin Barraza
Feb 22	Valeria Keinert
Feb 24	Jedidiah Allred
Feb 28	Michael Foley, Lon Miller, Keith Struve

## february ANNIVERSARIES

Feb 05	Chris & Sarah Allen
Feb 14	Don & Marilyn Benson



Feb 03	8:15 am	Comm. Svc.
Feb 03	9:30 am	SS/Bible Study
Feb 03	10:45 am	Comm. Svc.
Feb 07	7:00 pm	Elders' Mtg.
Feb 10	8:15 am	Worship Svc.
Feb 10	8:30 am	SS/Bible Study
Feb 10	10:45 am	Worship Svc.
<b>Feb 10</b>	<b>5:00 pm</b>	<b>Valentine's Dinner Dance</b>
Feb 11	6:00 pm	Men's Club
<b>Feb 15</b>		<b>March Ministry Schedule Due</b>
Feb 17	8:15 am	Praise Svc./Comm.
Feb 17	9:30 am	SS/Bible Study
Feb 17	10:45 am	Praise Svc./Comm.
<b>Feb 18</b>		<b>Presidents' Day – Church Office/Preschool Closed</b>
<b>Feb 19</b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Tabitha Quilting</b>
<b>Feb 20</b>	<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>March Newsletter Deadline</b>
Feb 21	7:00 pm	Council Mtg.
Feb 24	8:15 am	Worship Svc.
Feb 24	9:30 am	SS/Bible Study
Feb 24	10:45 am	Worship Svc.

### FEBRUARY SUNDAYS

<b>Feb 03</b>	<b>– Christian Education Board</b>
<b>Feb 10</b>	<b>– Lee Family</b>
<b>Feb 17</b>	<b>– Linda Bornhoft/Vicki Amaral</b>
<b>Feb 24</b>	<b>– Doreen Fasig/Art Atrops</b>



## ELDER'S CORNER

### 4-Letter Word

**As you read this Elder's Corner**, I want you to use your mind's eye and form a picture of a four-letter word. Take your time, there are 459,976 four letter words in the English language from which to choose. I'll wait.....("Jeopardy" tune is playing)..... Did you come up with one? Well hold on to it, because I want to see if you're thinking of the same one that I have in mind (what are the chances!). The word I'm thinking of is common in today's language and most people use it without giving it much thought at all. It comes easily to most peoples' lips



at times of anxiety, at times of need, at times of excitement, and even in times of joy. Do you still have your word pictured in your mind? Good, let's see if our words

match. The word I have in mind is *HOPE!*

Many of you may not have pictured that word and that's okay, but it is 'hope' that I would like us to consider. The dictionary defines hope as: a wish, or a want (a desire) for something to happen (immediately or in the future), for something to be true. You might hear the word hope used in many ways: "I hope to win the lottery"; "I hope the Rams win the Super Bowl" (I put that one in there specifically for Pr. Eckert); "I hope I don't get cancer". Hope when used in this way is nothing more than an uncertain desire for a future action to work in our favor. Many people in the world deal with this kind of hope and this kind of hope only.

We who are called Christians also deal with hope. However, the hope we have is not centered on an unfinished, uncertain future act. The hope that Christians have is grounded in the completed acts of Jesus of Nazareth - the Christ - in **His life**, in **His death**, in **His resurrection** and in **His ascension**. It is the work of Christ that brings us to a new life and a *living hope*, which begins with His Word and is found in the waters of our baptisms. Because of what Christ has accomplished, Peter boldly proclaims, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a *living hope* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you." (1 Peter 1:3-4) Our hope is not weak or wimpy. *Our hope is sure....our hope is solid....our hope is certain.* Because of what Christ has done for us, we know for certain that whatever hurt or pain, joy or gladness we experience, tomorrow will not keep us from the eternal life that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Dear church family confidants, it is in *hope*, and it is through the love of God, that we are brought together. I look forward to the work that the Lord has called us all here to do and pray that we grow deeper in our faith and closer together as sons and daughters of the One True God.

Respectfully submitted in *hope* by your elder, ✨

...Dennis Payne

## SIGN UP FOR ALTAR FLOWERS

**If you would like to donate altar flowers**, the 2019 Altar Flower chart is posted in the church narthex. Now is a good time to sign up, especially if you would like to remember a special day that is important to you. **Remember, only one flower arrangement per Sunday and Christmas.** Please call Connie Hathaway (937-9675) if you have any questions. **Cost: \$25 payable to Altar Guild.** ✨



## VALENTINE'S DINNER DANCE

**Save the Date for the Annual Valentine's Dinner Dance, February 10 – 5:00 PM—** Join us for a magical evening of food, fellowship, dancing, and fun! Our Junior Youth Group will host the dinner-dance, serving pasta and meatballs with salad, garlic bread, and dessert. There will be music and dancing for people of all ages at personally decorated tables for your dining enjoyment. Sign up to attend, adopt a table, bring desserts, or help in a variety of other ways. There will be a sign-up sheet in the courtyard after services on Sundays, or you can contact Deborah Maddison 937-1116 ext. 15. ✨



### MOWING IN FEBRUARY

**Feb 02 – Art Atrops, Nathan Vandrey, Sam Vandrey**

**Feb 16 – Mark Hathaway, Terry Morgan, Dick Scholar**

## OPERATION SHOE BOX



**The 2019 National Collection Week** is slated for the third week of November. Although this event seems far in the distance, prayer is not.

Please pray for an increase in gospel opportunities, safety and guidance for teams in receiving countries, and especially for the child receiving your gift. During the remainder of January and for the month of February, please bring in hygiene items (e.g., combs, hairbrushes, toothbrushes) and place them in the designated box in the narthex. ✿

## LOVE MAKES US DO IT

### *Stewardship Minute*



**A young girl was dying.** Her only hope lay in a complete blood transfusion, but she had a very rare blood type. Only her brother, even younger than she, had the same type blood. His parents and doctors explained the situation to him, giving him time to ask questions. He agreed and, without delay, he was laid on a bed, the needle pushed into his tiny vein, and slowly his blood seeped from his small body into the bag hanging from his bed. He lay quietly as the nurse stood next to him ready to attend to any need he might have. “How do you feel?” she asked. “Ok,” he answered, “but, Nurse, when do I die?”

What love this little boy had for his sister. What must he have thought when his own parents seemingly agreed, even asked him to sacrifice his life to save his sister’s?

The boy’s love for his sister can help us see how much Jesus loves us. Jesus suffered abuse, torture, persecution, and death for all of us. “*Greater love has no one than this, that He lay down His life for His friends*” (John 15:13). He demonstrated His tremendous love not because of our worthiness, but because He is a God of tremendous love. Jesus’ love for His heavenly Father and for us changed the world. Through His death and resurrection from that death, we through faith have received the forgiveness of our sins and life eternal. God’s love to us in Christ is that power that enables us to love Him. “*We love because He first loved us*” (1John 4:19)

The love of Jesus empowers us to be His stewards. Because of Jesus’ love, we change from people giving to a need to people responding out of love. Certainly, we give to needs such as our church budget, Christian causes, and people, but our primary reason for giving is out of love and commitment to Jesus. When needs arise, Jesus opens our eyes and hearts so we can respond to those needs. However, our primary reason for giving is a desire to express our gratitude and thanksgiving for our Lord and the love that He shows us every day. Because our love for Jesus is our motivation for giving, our giving becomes joyful. Love changes our giving from an obligation to a privilege.

We live in difficult and changing times. How wonderful it is that, as Christians, we know that there is the certainty that Jesus always reaches out to us and loves us. May our lives and our giving genuinely reflect His love for us. ✿

## NEIGHORLY LOVE



LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR  
AS YOURSELF.

MATTHEW 22:39

**As an ordained minister,** Fred Rogers harnessed the power of television to tell children they were loved — and to show them how to love others. In *You Are Special*, he writes, “When we love a person, we accept him or her exactly as is: the lovely with the unlovely, the strong along with the fearful, the true mixed in with the façade, and of course, the only way we can do it is by accepting ourselves that way.”

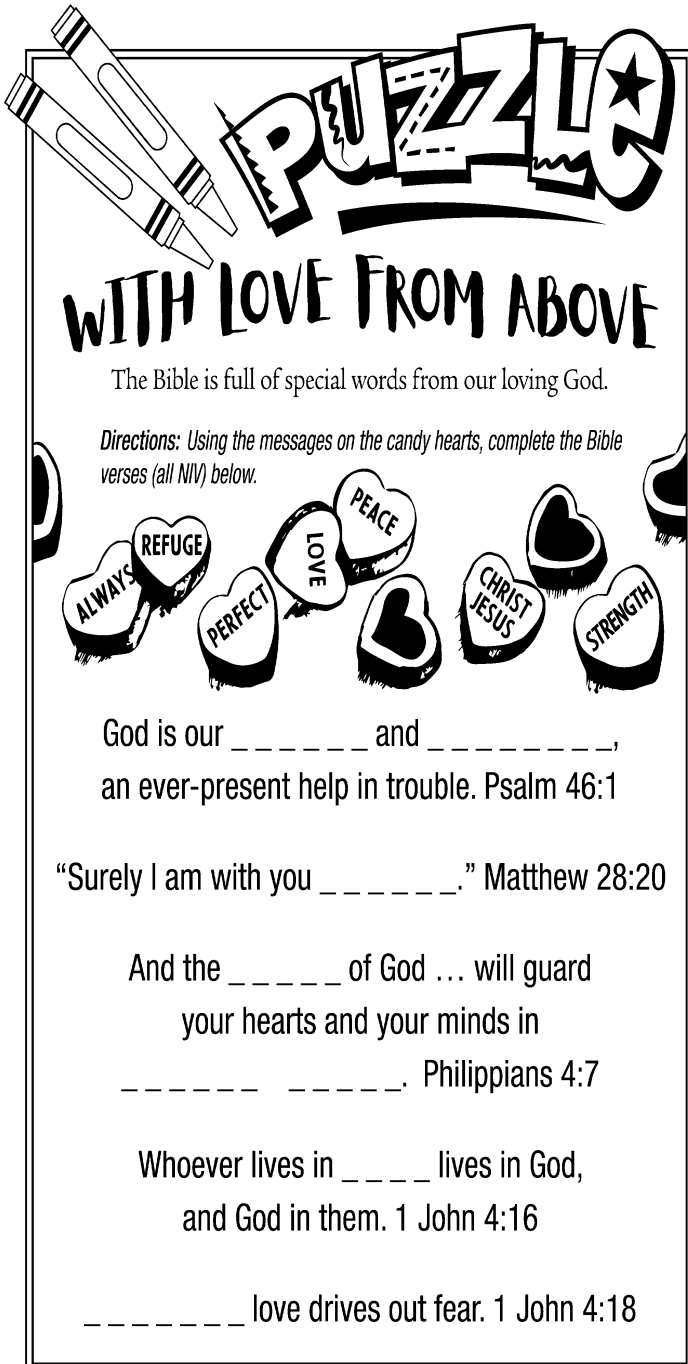
In a review of the touching documentary *Won’t You Be My Neighbor?* a writer for *Variety* notes: “Rogers’ real secret was ... that the call to love your neighbor as yourself isn’t a slogan to hang in your kitchen with flowers around it — it’s a decision you make at every moment, to view every man, woman and child on earth as your neighbor. If you don’t see and feel that, and act on it, then you’re just another narcissist with a kitchen slogan.”

Last October, when a synagogue shooting shattered the peace of Rogers’ real-life former neighborhood, residents of all religions embraced one another as neighbors. Afterward, the Fred Rogers Center stated, “We long for a day when there is no more tragedy born from hatred.” ✿

**PRESIDENTS’ DAY – FEBRUARY 18, 2019**

**CHURCH OFFICE/PRESCHOOL CLOSED**

# CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

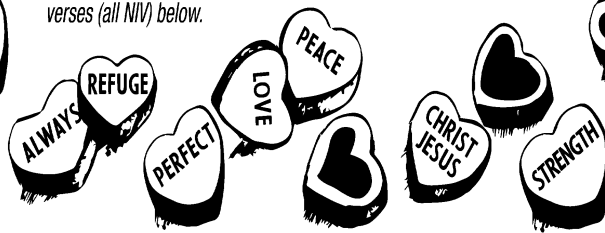


**PUZZLE**

**WITH LOVE FROM ABOVE**

The Bible is full of special words from our loving God.

*Directions: Using the messages on the candy hearts, complete the Bible verses (all NIV) below.*



God is our \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,  
an ever-present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1

“Surely I am with you \_\_\_\_\_.” Matthew 28:20

And the \_\_\_\_\_ of God ... will guard  
your hearts and your minds in  
\_\_\_\_\_. Philippians 4:7

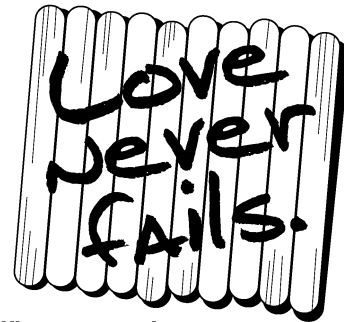
Whoever lives in \_\_\_\_\_ lives in God,  
and God in them. 1 John 4:16

\_\_\_\_\_ love drives out fear. 1 John 4:18

Answer: refuge, strength, always, love, perfect, Christ Jesus, peace, love, perfect

## A MESSAGE OF *Love*

Make this valentine for a family member or friend.



### What you need:

- 10 wooden craft sticks
- Painter's tape
- Markers
- A photo and glue (optional)
- Craft knife (and adult help)
- Ribbon or a rubber band

### What you do:

1. Set the sticks side by side. Secure with two tape strips.
2. Flip the sticks over. Draw (or glue on) a picture or write a message or Bible verse. If using glue, let dry.
3. Flip the sticks again and remove tape. If you glued on a photo, have an adult help cut the sticks (and photo) apart.
4. Secure the sticks with ribbon or a rubber band.
5. Deliver the gift and invite the recipient to assemble the puzzle.



### **Our Mission**

"Responding to God's love, Lutheran Church of Our Savior desires to reach more people for Christ by proclaiming Him, by growing in faith, and by caring for all people."



**Sunday Worship – 8:15 AM & 10:45 AM**  
**Sunday School & Bible Class – 9:30 AM**

*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that  
whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.  
John 3:16*