

**Signs of the Times... ☺**

Dear Friends in Christ,

As you head west out of Aurora on Ehlen Road, just beyond the railroad tracks and the concrete bridge, there is something new that never ceases to make me smile. And sometimes, this "something new" even smiles back.

We have new speed signs! Not just your run of the mill speed limit signs, nor those radar enhanced signs that angrily blink at you and say "Slow Down!" when you exceed the speed limit. No, these signs provide the driver with a positive affirmation if your vehicle's speed agrees with the posted limit. At first, there were smiley faces. ☺ Then a "thumbs up" emoji. Later, it lit up "Rad!" or "You Rock!". I find myself making sure I am going the right speed just so I can see what new or classic affirmation awaits me when I pass on by.

Now, driving into Aurora has not always been an affirming experience, especially for speeders. For years, Aurora was famous (notorious?) for their speeding tickets. A few years ago, Aurora was given the distinction of being one of the top-ten speed traps in Oregon by speedtrap.org. Pheasant Run Winery in Aurora even had a wine called "Speed Trap Red"!

Now, I was a Psychology Major in my undergraduate studies. I remember my learning theory courses, where I was taught that negative reinforcement of behavior (punishment) usually brought about more rapid change, but that positive reinforcement of behavior (praise or reward) usually brought about more lasting change. Maybe these new signs are an experiment by the City of Aurora and the Marion County Sheriff's Department to try a new way to slow people down. At least I know that these new signs work on me!

So...When I look back over this past year as your pastor, I want to begin my review with some well- deserved affirmations. ☺

This year marks our 125<sup>th</sup> year as a congregation and our celebration seemed to touch just the right combination of remembering our past, celebrating the present and being hopeful for the future. Even though this was not as significant an undertaking as our Centennial in 1999, a lot of work did go into making the weekend of May 4 and 5 a memorable one. Special thanks are due to our musicians, to Jennifer Burns from the Old Aurora Colony Museum and to our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary planning team: Judi Aus, Lonnie Harms, Bonnie Johnson, Eva Nelson, Julie Parelli-Minetti, and Heather Wechter. ☺

As the ELCA celebrated 50 years of their World Hunger Program, the congregation responded to the challenge by the Oregon Synod to help raise \$50,000 throughout the

state by contributing over \$2,000 as a congregation to the effort. At last count, over \$52,000 had been collected by synod. 😊

Our worship attendance is up this year over 10% and we had more people at Easter Sunday Services than we have had in over 20 years. Since July 2023, ten people have joined the congregation by Baptism, Affirmation of Baptism, or Transfer. New green paraments were commissioned and dedicated last summer. Under the leadership of Kaden Christensen, our music team continues to shine and inspire. There is a real positive vibe at Coffee Hour and people are intentionally welcoming of visitors. 😊

Christ Lutheran cares for the health and wellbeing of our local community. Our transitional shelter continues to help families transition from homelessness to housing as it has done since 1990. Backpack Buddies, begun in 2004, provides 140 meals a week to kids who are food insecure at North Marion Primary School. (Over 70,000 meals over the last 20 years). The Giving Tree program supported dozens of local families this year with necessities like food and clothing, as well as presents to brighten the holidays. We partnered with the Oregon Synod and a local farmworkers organization to provide dozens of disaster preparedness packs to Latino families. Our church facility hosts three different AA/Alanon groups weekly and a monthly meeting for the Aurora Emergency Preparedness team. We also host a monthly meeting of the North Marion Services Team, a collaboration of community partners that shares resources and helps families in need. We are known in the community as a church that cares about our neighbors. 😊

We have been faithfully working on a list of projects that we put together in 2022 for facility improvements. As part of that list, sidewalk and concrete repair at the church and parsonage were completed in February. Narthex improvements, including new tables and a cart to store them have been purchased and a hospitality center, including a new cabinet with a fully plumbed sink were completed this spring. New lighting projects in the sanctuary and fellowship hall are being completed this month and new handrails for the east stairs and at the parsonage will be installed soon. 😊

The list of affirmations for the work of our congregation could continue and we are grateful for what we have been able to do, yet I can't help but feel that we are at a place where we might pause and contemplate our mission priorities as a congregation. Five years from now, what ministries do we want to be emphasizing or supporting? How might we be listening to the priorities and pressures experienced by our neighbors? Who should we be inviting to have conversations with us to figure this out?

I was invited this spring by some leaders in Marion and Polk County to attend a Community Health Summit as a representative of our local community. These gatherings are held every three years to look at data about the health and wellness priorities (Community Health Assessment) and to put together a plan to focus on three areas for improvement (Community Health Improvement Plan).

According to the most recent assessment, the three biggest health concerns of our neighbors are Housing, Behavioral Health Support, and Substance Abuse. As I listened to those three concerns be lifted, I noticed two things. One, how we already are supporting work on housing (Transitional Shelter) and substance abuse (Recovery Groups). Two, how might we look for ways to support the Behavioral Health of our neighbors?

Most of us have become aware of the growing need for mental health support. This includes an increasing awareness of loneliness among our seniors and a growing crisis of depression and suicidal tendencies among our youth. The recent pandemic has only exacerbated these areas of concern. How might we engage this topic and look for ways to support programs or initiatives that take seriously the need? I don't have the answers to these questions, but I would love to have the discussion as a community of faith. How might we be a church that takes seriously our calling to be the earthly expression of the healing power of Jesus?

As our newly elected council gathers later this summer, I hope to begin having discussions about further developing our vision for ministry around the needs of our neighbors, eventually broadening the conversation to include a large sample of the congregation and leaders in the community. As a relatively small congregation, there are limits to what we can do on our own. Collaborating with others, maybe we can do more?

We live in increasingly divided times. So many people are agitated, angry, or afraid. Sometimes all three! In times like these, I believe that it is imperative for the church to be a tangible sign of hope, by walking together in a hopeful way.

Chinese philosopher Lu Xun is credited with saying the following...

*Hope can be neither affirmed nor denied. Hope is like a path in the countryside: originally there was no path—yet, as people are walking all the time in the same spot, a way appears.*

Friends in Christ, let us walk together the path of faith, following Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, as we seek to wear a path of hope in our community.

And, while walking and creating the path of hope, give and receive an affirmation along the way. Thumbs up! Rad! You Rock! 😊

Peace!

Pastor Craig

## July Readings

### Monday, July 1

[Psalm 181-6, 43-50;](#)  
[1 Samuel 2314-18;](#)  
[2 Corinthians 816-24](#)

### Tuesday, July 2

[Psalm 181-6, 43-50;](#)  
[1 Samuel 311-13;](#)  
[2 Corinthians 91-5](#)

### Wednesday, July 3

[Psalm 181-6, 43-50;](#)  
[1 Chronicles 101-14;](#)  
[Mark 914-29](#)

### Thursday, July 4

[Psalm 48;](#)  
[2 Samuel 21-11;](#)  
[1 Corinthians 48-13](#)

### Friday, July 5

[Psalm 48;](#)  
[2 Samuel 31-12;](#)  
[2 Corinthians 107-11](#)

### Saturday, July 6

[Psalm 48;](#)  
[2 Samuel 331-38;](#)  
[Matthew 818-22](#)

### Sunday, July 7

[Proper 9 \(14\)](#)

### Monday, July 8

[Psalm 21;](#)  
[2 Samuel 51-10;](#)  
[2 Corinthians 1116-33](#)

### Tuesday, July 9

[Psalm 21;](#)  
[2 Samuel 511-16;](#)  
[James 57-12](#)

### Wednesday, July 10

[Psalm 21;](#)  
[2 Samuel 517-25;](#)  
[John 71-9](#)

### Thursday, July 11

[Psalm 24;](#)  
[Exodus 2510-22;](#)  
[Colossians 21-5](#)

### Friday, July 12

[Psalm 24;](#)  
[Exodus 371-16;](#)  
[Colossians 42-18](#)

### Saturday, July 13

[Psalm 24;](#)  
[Numbers 1011-36;](#)  
[Luke 157-80](#)

### Sunday, July 14

[Proper 10 \(15\)](#)

### Monday, July 15

[Psalm 6824-35;](#)  
[2 Samuel 66-12a;](#)  
[Acts 2127-39](#)

### Tuesday, July 16

[Psalm 6824-35;](#)  
[2 Samuel 312-16;](#)  
[Acts 2312-35](#)

### Wednesday, July 17

[Psalm 6824-35;](#)  
[2 Samuel 616-23;](#)  
[Luke 731-35](#)

### Thursday, July 18

[Psalm 8920-37;](#)  
[1 Chronicles 1115-19;](#)  
[Colossians 115-23](#)

### Friday, July 19

[Psalm 8920-37;](#)  
[1 Chronicles 141-2;](#)  
[Acts 1716-31](#)

### Saturday, July 20

[Psalm 8920-37;](#)  
[1 Chronicles 151-2,](#)  
[164-13;](#)  
[Luke 1835-43](#)

### Sunday, July 21

[Proper 11 \(16\)](#)

### Monday, July 22

[Psalm 61;](#)  
[2 Samuel 718-29;](#)  
[Hebrews 1317-25](#)

### Tuesday, July 23

[Psalm 61;](#)  
[2 Samuel 81-18;](#)  
[Acts 2017-38](#)

### Wednesday, July 24

[Psalm 61;](#)  
[2 Samuel 91-13;](#)  
[Luke 151-7](#)

### Thursday, July 25

[Psalm 14;](#)  
[2 Samuel 101-5;](#)  
[Colossians 19-14](#)

### Friday, July 26

[Psalm 14;](#)  
[2 Samuel 106-12;](#)  
[Colossians 312-17](#)

### Saturday, July 27

[Psalm 14;](#)  
[2 Samuel 1013-19;](#)  
[John 431-38](#)

### Sunday, July 28

[Proper 12 \(17\)](#)

### Monday, July 29

[Psalm 3712-22;](#)  
[2 Samuel 1114-21;](#)  
[Philippians 410-20](#)

### Tuesday, July 30

[Psalm 3712-22;](#)  
[2 Samuel 1122-27;](#)  
[Romans 1522-33](#)

# July

# 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 6 pm AA	2 6 pm AA	3 Independence Day	4 6 pm Wellbriety Recovery Support Group	5 6-8 pm Wellbriety Recovery Support Group	6 5:15-6:15 pm AA Speaker Series
7 10 am Worship	8 6 pm AA	9 6 pm AA	10 3-5 pm Marion/ Polk Food Share Pythian Hall	11 6-8 pm Wellbriety Recovery Support Group	12 6-8 pm Wellbriety Recovery Support Group	13 5:15-6:15 pm AA Speaker Series
14 Undie Sunday 10 am Worship 11:15 am Council	15 6 pm AA	16 6 pm AA	17 3-4 pm North Marion Services Team	18 6-8 pm Wellbriety Recovery Support Group	19 6-8 pm Wellbriety Recovery Support Group	20 6-8 pm Wellbriety Recovery Support Group
21 10 am Worship	22 6 pm AA	23 6 pm AA	24 3-4 pm North Marion Services Team	25 6-8 pm Wellbriety Recovery Support Group	26 6-8 pm Wellbriety Recovery Support Group	27 6-8 pm Wellbriety Recovery Support Group
28 10 am Worship	29 6 pm AA	30 6 pm AA	31 6 pm AA			9 6 pm AA

## Annual Meeting Recap

Thanks to all who attended our Annual Meeting. We approved a budget, adopted an updated constitution, and elected new members to the council and to the endowment team.

New to council are Kevin Baker, Sonya Johnson, and George Will. New to endowment are Lance Lyon and Carrie Pinto. Going off council (term limits) are Lynn Ries and Dale Williamson. Thank you, Lynn and Dale, for your service to the congregation. Copies of the Annual Report are available in the Narthex.



Mike Boonstra	3
Jeanne Brown	4
Denise McPherson	6
Victor Roberts	8
Sophie Will	8
Lynn Bloomfield	9
Colin Brown	16
Marlene Gooding	22
Marie Gunther	26
Lorrie Dyrdaahl	27
Randy Beyers	30
Joyce Colvin	30
Larry Marnella	30



Chris & Meghann Fisher	4
Bob & Barb Bannister	7
Sasha & Andy Shepherd	7
George & Kiera Will	7
Greg & Amy Elliott	9
Brenda & Charlie Eggert	10
Mary & Lance Lyon	15
Lance & Mary Lyon	15
Kimberly & Conrad Pearson	18
Evie & Ron Berg	29
Troy & Gina Bayless	29
Norman & Joyce Colvin	31

## In Our Hearts & Prayers

Prayers for	Requested by
Abraham	Barb B.
Ann Musgrove, Family of	PC
Anna (Grider) Westcott	Jim & Doris Grider
Bankhead Family	Wyatt Akin
Beth Brandt	Mary W.
Betty Gerhardt	Kenton and Mary Wolfe
Bob and Sally Boonstra	Doris Grider
Brian Wolfe	Kenton & Mary
Brooke	Heather W
Bruce Baker	Kevin Baker
Burt Aus	Judi Aus
Carol Smith	Helen D
Charles G.	PC
Colin Brown	Heather W
Conrad Pearson	PC
Cyndy Caufield	Susan W
Dennis Ormseth	Mary W.
Doris and Jim Grider	Susan W
Ed Lapsley	Sharon G.
Ellen Paulson	Lorrie Dyrdaahl
Eric Wechter	PC
Evie Berg	PC
Heather Wechter	PC
Heidi Belew	PC
Heide Hendrick	PC
Heidi Daniel and family	PC
Howard & Kathy Brandt	Mary W.
Jan G	PC
Jeff Becker Family	Doris Grider
Jerry McKenzie	Sharon G.
Jo Miller	Kinberly Macklin
JoAnn Caufield	Cindy C
Joanna Painter	Dixie
Joyce Colvin	Susan W
Kate	PC
Kim	Lisa
Kimberly Kyser	Cindy C
Larry Marnella	Ilene Marnella

Laurie Boyce	PC
Lawson Roberts Family	PC
Linda Fender	Dan and Lonnie Harms
Lorrie D	PC
Lynn Bloomfield	Lonnie and Dan Harms
Margaret Schultz Family	Marie Gunther
Mary Wolfe	PC
Matt H	PC
Micah Akin	Wyatt Akin
Mike and Dixie Harms	Dan and Lonnie Harms
Mike McCue	Heather Wechter
Nora Baker	Lynn R
Norman Colvin	Nancy
Oscar D	Sam D
Piper	Heather W
Richard Dyrdaahl	Lorrie Dyrdaahl
Robert	Jordain
Roy Steven	Joyce
Shirley Ann Andreason	Ilene Marnella
Sylvia Peter	PC
Tom Haskins	Kim M.
Traci	Barb B.
Vi Anderson	Judi

- Those with memory care issues and those who care for them.
- Those receiving radiation or chemotherapy.
- Those who are in hospice care.
- Our loved ones serving in the armed forces especially those serving overseas.



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# COURIER



July 2024

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AURORA

