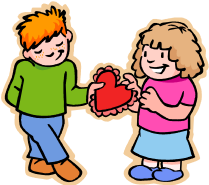




Cross Section



Senior Pastor's Message

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus,

I sincerely hope and pray your life is filled with the joy only Christ can provide. Survey after survey indicates that happiness is what people most fervently wish for in their life. However, the surveys never seem to ask people where exactly they hope to find this happiness they seek. Perhaps the world simply does not know where happiness can be found...but they know they want it! Yes, indeed, we all want to be happy. I wish there were a scripture verse indicating the source of happiness, but sadly for all these seekers, Jesus never dealt with the subject of happiness. He did speak often of joy, but most want that joy to be happiness. As I stated in the Christmas concerts, joy is the true gift of God. Joy has a foundation in Jesus, so it can never be taken from us. My wife defined joy as peace dancing. I believe each of you can picture what that would look like in a person's life. So, my wish for each of you is a spirit of perfect contentment dancing joyfully through every circumstance of life. How can we not smile through that picture, after all, Jesus is our partner in the dance.

The Lenten season begins on February 6, 2008. This day is known by Christians as Ash Wednesday. This solemn day ushers in the forty days of Lent, a time to focus on our Lord's suffering and death for the sins of the world. Doesn't that sound joyful? Honestly, most Christians do not want Calvary, give us Christmas and Easter, those festivals bring us some happiness. Well, there would not be happiness over Christmas and Easter if it were not for the joy of Calvary. Jesus, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross. He came not to make us happy, but to save us. Our salvation creates joy in His spirit. Would it seem to make sense that those who bear the Name of Christ set aside forty days to focus on Jesus our Savior, if Lent were not an important time in our spiritual life?

Each Wednesday during Lent we will hold a dinner from 5:45-6:30p.m. Following the dinner, we will gather for worship. The content of each service will focus our attention on Jesus our Savior. Under the theme, "You Are My Beloved," we will walk once again along the path to the cross. I firmly believe that most of my spiritual formation came from those Lenten services I was required to attend with my parents. It was impossible to escape the awesome and amazing significance of having Jesus in my life.

(continued)

FEBRUARY
2008

PRAYER FOCUS

Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

2 Corinthians 9:13

Inside this issue:

Mission News

Colon Cancer Screening

Need for Benevolence Programs

Upcoming Events

Thank You Letters

Important Dates and Info

Pastor Jon, Continued

“...pray and seek God’s will in deciding on a personal sacrifice during the forty days of Lent. Pray your sacrifice will bless others and draw them closer to Christ. “

May the Lord lead each of us to set aside the time to walk with the One who walked to the cross for us. Through all the pain and suffering, His thoughts of us brought Him joy. I believe we can all find that same joy in our present circumstances if we slow the pace and allow the Spirit of God to bring us once again face to face with our precious Savior. May Jesus keep you growing in His grace.

**Love in Jesus,
Pastor Jon**

The Sanctuary will be open starting at 5a.m. on February 6th, for those desiring the mark of ashes upon their forehead. Please join us in telling the world that we love and belong to Jesus. Also, pray and seek God’s will in deciding on a personal sacrifice during the forty days of Lent. Pray your sacrifice will bless others and draw them closer to Christ. Giving up chocolate may be a supreme sacrifice in your mind, but it probably will have little effect on those far from God.

VICAR THANKFUL FOR TUITION ASSISTANCE

Dear Cross of Christ,

I am once again surprised, amazed, and downright floored by your generosity. Cross of Christ really is a place that reaches outside its “four walls” to take the gospel to others, and I am forever grateful for the love and generosity that you have shown us.

When I think of the kindness you have shown to us and to others preparing for ministry, I am reminded of the church at Philippi. In Philippians, Paul has such heart-warming and encouraging words for them because they were wonderful “partners,” in the gospel, having a passion and a will to spread the life-changing story of Jesus.

As my vicarage year progresses, I enjoying being a part of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. It is a great place to learn, as well as Colorado is a great place to live. Being that I am a Vicar this year and will return to the seminary next year, paying tuition, Amie and I are setting the money which you gave us aside. We will put it into savings and use it to pay for tuition costs next year. It will be very helpful, as seminary tuition has increased significantly over my time as a student.

Again, I find it somewhat hard to have words for how truly thankful I am. Cross of Christ is a wonderful blessing to us as I am sure to many others as well.

Serving the King,

Ryan Wunningham, Vicar
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Lakewood, Colorado

PARISH NURSING: THE IMPORTANCE OF COLON CANCER SCREENING

Dear Church Family Members,

March is colon cancer screening month. Colon cancer is the third most common cancer in the United States; about 55,000 people die annually. 90% of cases are curable if diagnosed early. (Currently, in Michigan less than 45% of residents are screened.)

Risk factors for colon cancer include: over age 50, family history of colon cancer or polyps; smoking; obesity; high fat diet and physical inactivity.

Early stages of colon cancer have no symptoms, so routine screenings are essential. Later symptoms include: rectal bleeding; anemia; change in bowel habits; abdominal pain and weight loss. By the time these symptoms appear, the cancer may have spread to other vital organs and be incurable.

Colon cancer usually starts as a polyp, a warty, non-cancerous growth in the inner lining of the large intestine. These polyps can turn into cancer as time progresses, but can be removed during a colonoscopy, where a small flexible tube is inserted in the rectum and up the intestine. The doctor is able to look for polyps and remove them.

The American Cancer Society recommends one of the following screening options for people over the age of 50 (with average risk):

- a yearly fecal occult blood test (this test looks for microscopic blood in the stool)
- a flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years
- a colonoscopy every 10 years
- a double-contrast barium enema every 5 years

St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Pontiac is offering FREE occult blood stool tests for any interested adult members of Cross of Christ. It is a simple test which could save your life, and I strongly recommend it for everyone over age 50 or someone who has a family history of colon cancer. I will have the materials and instructions available in early March. Confidential results will be sent directly to your home. Please let me know if you are interested.

God's blessings,

**Mary Lou Temple RN
Parish Nurse**



MISSION NEWS AND NOTES



February, 2008 Plate Offering Recipients

Beginning with this new fiscal year, 100% of the plate offerings will be for mission support. This month's offerings have been designated for miscellaneous mission needs.

From time to time throughout the year various requests are received for immediate mission support. Therefore, we are setting aside this month's contributions so that we might be able to respond to those needs. Criteria will be formulated to assist in this process.

Katrina Relief Mission Trip

The dates for this year's trip will be announced once key construction workers have been identified. The need is still very great.

In 2007 Camp Biloxi worked on over 1932 major and minor projects. Workers came from the Gulf States and from the Midwest. In 2008 there are still over 1,700 houses to be rebuilt, and people's lives need to be rebuilt through spiritual and emotional care.

For more information, and or to volunteer, please contact Ruth LaFontaine at 248/539-8405 or lafontainedoug@aol.com.

Haiti Mission Trip This Summer

Diane & Ed Stanke and Linda & Dennis Toth will serve as coordinators for the mission trip to Haiti. Dates will be June 30- July 8, 2008 and July 7- July 15, 2008. A Haiti mission service will be held in early March. Watch further newsletters for more details, or contact these couples directly.



CROSS OF CHRIST

Katrina Relief Mission Trip 2008

TO EITHER

CAMP BILOXI, MS or CAMP RESTORE, LA

TRIP DATES—TO BE DETERMINED (LATE WINTER OR SPRING)

Right now we need two things:

- Skilled workers from the building trades: licensed contractors, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, heating and cooling, dry walling, etc. We will build our team(s) around the skilled workers, and choose our date based on their availability.
- Donations of frequent flyer miles from members. We would like to fly down and rent a couple vehicles at the airport for transportation.

To Volunteer and/or for information contact:

Ruth & Doug LaFontaine
lafontainedoug@aol.com
 Home phone (248) 539-8405
 Cell phone (248) 935-7231



Senior Youth All-Nighter

The Senior Youth is hosting an All-Nighter at our church on Friday, February 9th from 9:30 PM Friday night until 5:00 AM Saturday morning. The cost is \$10 at the door for the kids.

Other local youth groups will be attending and there are four scheduled performances set for the evening.

Many adult chaperones are needed to help keep the evening running smoothly.

Chaperone Schedule optional times:

- 9:00 PM - 1:00 AM (I know this will be the preferred time for most, but please also consider the 1AM time as we will need help then too)
- 1:00 AM - 5:00 AM

Please let us know which time you are able to attend or if you would like to attend the entire time. We'll take that too!

There will be Food, Games and other activities Performances by The C of C Senior High Drama Team, The Stand Strength Team, Music by Altered Paradigm and Foundation 12.

Many Thanks and Blessings in advance,
Scott and Alison Miller
248-670-8450
Senior Youth Program



MOM-TO-MOM SALE

SATURDAY, APRIL 19TH 2008

10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Admission Fee \$1

Cross of Christ Lutheran Church
1100 Lone Pine Road
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302
(NW corner of Telegraph & Lone Pine)

For further information,
visit our website at www.bloomfieldcross.org,
e-mail Mom2Mom@bloomfieldcross.org,
or call Sue (248)375-2332

URGENT NEED FOR BENEVOLENCE PROGRAMS

The number of churches in America with thorough church benevolence programs—meaning they counsel individuals and couples with financial needs, provide them with work projects and income and, if needed with goods and services—is so few that it is almost inconsequential.



As you read *1 John 3:17-18* you can't help to recognize our (us and the church) requirement to help others in need. John uses the lack of concern for the needs of others as evidence of a lack of love. *"This is how we've come to understand and experience love: Christ sacrificed his life for us. This is why we ought to live sacrificially for our fellow believers, and not just be out for ourselves. If you see some brother or sister in need and have the means to do something about it but turn a cold shoulder and do nothing, what happens to God's love? It disappears. And, you made it disappear."*

So, we know that the true purpose of welfare (meeting the needs of others) is to be benevolent (to show kindness) so, that God's love is demonstrated through us. But, the benefits of demonstrating God's love go much further than meeting physical needs. In *2 Corinthians 9:13* Paul wrote, **"Carrying out this social relief work involves far more than helping meet the bare needs of poor Christians. It also produces abundant and bountiful thanksgivings to God. This relief offering is a prod to live at your very best, showing your gratitude to God by being openly obedient to the plain meaning of the Message of Christ.** You show your gratitude through your generous offerings to your needy brothers and sisters, and really toward everyone. Meanwhile, moved by the extravagance of God in your lives, **they'll respond** by praying for you in passionate intercession for whatever you need. Thank God for this gift, His gift. No language can praise it enough!"

As we began to look at teaching God's financial principles at Cross of Christ, we recognized the unique role of the church versus government. Although public schools are responsible for educating the whole person, it neglects to teach personal financial skills—how to live without debt, discourage bankruptcy, avoid home foreclosures; skills that are unmistakably lacking in many lives today. Even if and when the public school steps up to provide personal financial education, it will fall short to reveal God's position about handling money and possessions.

Similarly, while it is the function of welfare to feed people and care for their needs, the Biblical purpose of welfare is to draw people to God by our physical expression of Christian love. Well, the government's goal in welfare is not to draw people to God. Government can control and administer welfare, but it is up to us, the body of Christ, to draw people to the Lord.

As followers of Christ, our task is not to determine if we should embark upon a comprehensive benevolence program. Rather, it is to realize that God is calling us into service; He is blessing us with an opportunity to do something about the welfare of His needing people. If we will start something, others will be drawn to it. **"Meanwhile, moved by the extravagance of God in your lives, they'll respond** by praying for you in passionate intercession for whatever you need. Thank God for this gift, His gift. No language can praise it enough!" *2 Corinthians 9:13*

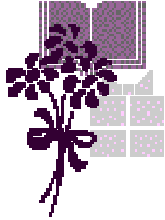
Dear Friends at Cross of Christ,

We want to thank you so very much for the Christmas gifts to our needy here at St. Paul, Pontiac. Thanks to your great help we were able to help give our people in need a special Christmas.



We also want to thank you for the wonderful donation from the proceeds of the Antique Show! This donation will literally help us to keep our doors open. We are the only Lutheran Church in Pontiac. The needs are so great! Everything you do, helps more than you know. God bless you all!

In His Service,
Dietrick & Becky Gladden



Pastor Jon & Staff,

Thank you to everyone who helped with Frances Walter's service. It was so lovely. The luncheon was so nice. All the girls in the kitchen worked so hard. I know Frances was looking down upon us smiling. I know she would have been pleased.

God Bless,
The Walter Family

Dear Pastor and Saints of the Cross of Christ Lutheran Church:

Advent greetings from the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary. This is a small note to express a large thank you for your recent gift in the amount of \$787.11 to our student Food Co-op. Such support simply makes all the difference for some of our students. I sincerely thank you.

May the peace of the Christ Child fill each of your homes and lives.

Yours, in Him,
Dean O. Wenthe
President

P.S. Please visit our campus and be my guest for a tour and luncheon to see the students whom you are helping so significantly.



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A CHRISTMAS COP STORY

This article appeared in the Rockville Centre Herald. The writer is a former Police officer and village resident.

In 1974 when I first joined the police department, I knew there would be special occasions my family would spend without me. Knowing that fact didn't make the task any easier. The celebrations I missed those first year's depressed me and sometimes made me feel bitter. Working on Christmas Eve was always' the worst.

On Christmas Eve in 1977, I learned that blessing can come disguised as misfortune, and honor is more than just a word.

I was riding one man patrol on the 4 x 12 shift. The night was cold. Everywhere I looked I saw reminders of the holiday; families packing their cars with presents, beautifully decorated trees in living room windows and roofs adorned with tiny sleighs. I all added to my holiday funk. The evening had been relatively quiet; there were calls for barking dogs and a residential false burglar alarm. There was nothing to make the night pass any quicker. I thought of my own family and sunk further into depression.

Shortly after 2200 hours I got a radio call to the home of an elderly, terminally ill, man. I parked my patrol car in front of a simple cape cod style home. First aid kit in hand, I walked up the short path to the front door. As I approached, a woman who seemed to be about 80 years old opened the door. He's in here she said, leading me to a back bedroom. We passed through a living room that was furnished in a style I had come to associate with older people. The sofa has a afghan blanket draped over it's back and a dark, solid queen Anne chair say next to a unused fireplace. The mantle was cluttered with an eccentric mix of several photos, some ceramic figurines and an antique clock. A floor lamp provided soft lighting.

We entered a small bedroom where a frail looking man lay in bed with a blanket pulled up to his chin. He wore a blank stare on his ashen, skeletal face. His breathing was shallow and labored. He was barely alive. The trappings of illness were all around his bed. The nightstand was littered with a large number of pill vials. An oxygen bottle stood nearby. Its plastic hose, with face mask attached rested on the blanket.

I asked the old woman why he called the police. She simply shrugged and nodded sadly toward her husband, indicating it was his request. I looked at him and he stared intently into my eyes. He seemed relaxed now. I didn't understand the suddenly calm expression on his face.

I looked around the room again. A dresser stood along the wall to the left of the bed. On it was the usual memorabilia: ornate perfume bottles, a white porcelain pin case, and a wooden jewelry case. There were also several photos in simple frames. One caught my eye and I walked closer to the dresser for a closer look. The picture showed a young man dressed in a police uniform. It was unmistakably a photo of the man in bed. I knew then why I was there.

(continued on next page)



Reminder: The deadline for the Cross Section is the 10th of the preceding month. Submit your information via email to newsletter@bloomfieldcross.org

(Continued from page 8)

I looked at the old man and he motioned with his hand toward the side of the bed. I walked over and stood beside him. He slid a thin arm from under the covers and took my hand. Soon, I felt his hand go limp, I looked at his face. There was no fear there. I saw only peace.

He knew he was dying; he was aware his time was very near. I know now that he was afraid of what was about to happen and he wanted the protection of a fellow cop on his journey. A caring God had seen to it that his child would be delivered safely to him. The honor of being his escort fell to me.

When I left at the end of my tour that night, the temperature had seemed to have risen considerably, and all the holiday displays I saw on the way home made me smile. I no longer feel sorry for myself for having to work on Christmas Eve.

I have chosen an honorable profession. I pray that when it's my turn to leave this world here will be a cop there to hold my hand and remind me that I have nothing to fear.

I wish all my brother's and sister's who have to work this Christmas Eve all the Joy and warmth of the Season.

Asking for Ice Cream

Last week, I took my children to a restaurant. My six-year-old son asked if he could say grace. As we bowed our heads he said, "God is good, God is great. Thank you for the food, and I would even thank you more if Mom gets us ice cream for dessert. And Liberty and justice for all! Amen!"

Along with the laughter from the other customers nearby, I heard a woman remark, "That's what's wrong with this country. Kids today don't even know how to pray. Asking God for ice cream! Why, I never!"

Hearing this, my son burst into tears and asked me, "Did I do it wrong? Is God mad at me?"

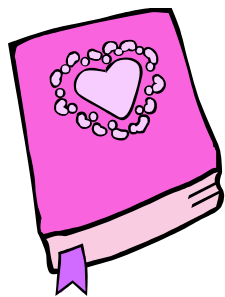
As I held him and assured him that he had done a terrific job, and God was certainly not mad at him, an elderly gentleman approached the table. He winked at my son and said, "I happen to know that God thought that was a great prayer."

"Really?" my son asked.

"Cross my heart," the man replied. Then, in a theatrical whisper, he added (indicating the woman whose remark had started this whole thing), "Too bad she never asks God for ice cream. A little ice cream is good for the soul sometimes."

Naturally, I bought my kids ice cream at the end of the meal. My son stared at his for a moment, and then did something I will remember the rest of my life. He picked up his sundae and, without a word, walked over and placed it in front of the woman. With a big smile he told her, "Here, this is for you. Ice cream is good for the soul sometimes: and my soul is good already."





LIBRARY CORNER

The library is offering several books about improving relationships for February. *The Secret of Staying in Love* and *Unconditional Love*, both by Professor John Powel, have a psychological and religious approach to understanding love relationships. Here is a short sample of the text. "Love rejects the question, 'What am I getting out of this?' as the only criterion of fulfillment. Love understands by direct experience those often quoted words of St. Francis of Assisi. 'It is in giving that we receive' Egotistic concern and concentration on self can only lead to the loss of self. It is a strange and painful paradox that we must all learn." *Unconditional Love*, p.56.

52 Simple Ways to Say I Love You is a book about how to express love to your spouse in unexpected and unusual ways; some of them are really outlandish, some are easy to do and fun. *To Have and to Hold* is an older book about marital adjustment, but it still offers insights about what it takes to stay together. *Romantic Lovers* by David and Carole Hocking studies *The Song of Songs* in Song of Solomon 1:1 and teaches readers about biblically solid ways of strengthening their marriages.

Surviving a Spiritual Mismatch by Rev. Lee Strobel is a Focus on the Family audio cassette tape which deals with the special challenge of being married to a non-Christian. *Marriages That Have Been Restored* is a Focus on the Family CD featuring stories about marriages put at risk because of extremely painful situations, which are never-the-less overcome through forgiveness and faith. For older teens or college-age students *The 10 Commandments of Dating* by Ben Young and Dr. Samuel Adams has a Christian perspective on dating and courtship. It also talks about setting boundaries and the significant risks to the future marital relationship associated with living together prior to marriage.

The historical fiction additions for this month are *A Bride Most Begrudging* (1640's Colonial Virginia setting) by Deeanne Gist, *Light to my Path*, *Candle in the Darkness* and *Fire by Night*, (three Civil War Era novels) by award winning author Lynn Austin. These books are from Bethany House Publishers and have a Christian perspective.

Please remember to help yourselves to any of the Valparaiso University pamphlets on the table in the library if you or your teen is curious about this Lutheran University option. These materials may be kept, no need to sign them out or return them.

Heather Sherk



Cemetery Plots Available

4 plots available at White Chapel Cemetery in "The Garden of the Brotherhood" section.

Call Betty or Dave Bradbury for more information at (248) 626-2510

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Pastor Jim & Justine Ackerman
2/8/1952
Kenneth & Irene Burchill
2/16/1957
Bill & Lucy Grafe
2/9/1952

Stan & Jacquie Pifer
2/1/1964
Harold & Annette Stieg
2/10/1951



MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: PRAY, SEND CARDS

New Member

Jonathan Pechta (brother of
Laura and Beth Kalusniak)
1943 Graefield
Birmingham, MI 48009
248-514-1077

Transferred

- Kamseh family
- Kesh family
- Sutter family

SHUT-INS

Florence Arendt
Fox Run Village
41120 Fox Run, #114
Novi, Michigan 48377-4804

Edna Foss (Edna is mother
of Lois Casey)
Waltonwood Retirement
Living
3450 W. Thirteen Mile Road
Royal Oak, MI 48073
(248) 549-6400

Kathleen Kaiser
Elizabeth Briarbank Assisted
Living for Women
39315 Woodward
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304
(248) 203-2728

Bettye Kelsey
50 Merrimac Court
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
48304-3339

Mrs. Jane Lindh
3128 Hartslock Woods Drive
West Bloomfield, Michigan
48322-1843

Mrs. Mary Rakolta
1800 Rathmore Road
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
48304-2145

Lillian Spellicy (Lillian is
mother of Doug LaFontaine)
c/o SunRise of Bloomfield
Hills
2080 South Telegraph Road
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
48302

Mr. and Mrs. Robert
(Delores) VanNorman
8610 Perry Lake Road
Clarkston, Michigan 48348-
2955

Mrs. Betty Wright
c/o Woodward Hills Nursing
Center
39312 Woodward Avenue
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
48304

Johanna Wurst
1010 Argyle Avenue
Pontiac, Michigan 48341-
2303

St. Ann Meade Nursing Home
(Elaine Krueger works here-
Jon & Pastor Steve do
worship services on Tuesday)
16106 West Twelve Mile Rd.
Southfield, MI 48076
(248) 557-1221

MILITARY:
LCPL Gruits, M.W.T and Jena
1919 Swamp Fox Trail
Beaufort, SC 29906

Doug Quitmeyer
(do not include a rank)
Unit # 931003
TF TR (1)
APO, AE 09391
Email: rgrdoug@gmail.com

FEBRUARY CHURCH CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

ONGOING EVENTS

SUNDAYS

8:15 Worship
9:45 SonLight City
9:45 Worship
11:15 Worship

MONDAYS

10am Adult Bible Study

TUESDAYS

7am Men's Bible Breakfast
10 am Adult Bible Study
11:45 Primetimers (2/5)
12 pm Intern'l Friends
5:45pm Prayer Time
7pm Volleyball

WEDNESDAYS

10 Mom's Group
4:45-4C's
5:30-Dinner
6:30-Classes

THURSDAYS

12:30 Int'l Friends

FRIDAYS

6:00 Scrapbook Crop
(2/1)

SATURDAY

5:30 Worship

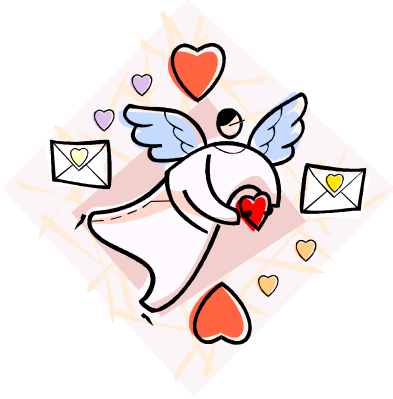
FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Chris Valente	2/2	Justine Ackerman	2/15	Kyle Markel	2/26
Emily Kirschbaum	2/3	Bob Harrison	2/15	Meredith Daly	2/27
Neil Strohmaier	2/3	Chrystal Jendrowski	2/16	Erin Spencer	2/27
Terri Winchester	2/3	Lucas Ewing	2/17	Dakota Ulmer	2/27
Rachel Kalusniak	2/6	Bethany Gruits	2/17	Carol Seelbinder	2/28
Christina Marchione	2/6	Aaron Poteete	2/17	Justin Summers	2/29
Rosemarie Curtis	2/7	Alexia Barnes	2/18		
Matt Hammarlund	2/7	Steve Miller	2/18		
Linda Schaible	2/7	Steven Balagna	2/19		
Louis Skrzypczak	2/8	Cindy Nyquist	2/19		
Kelsey Summers	2/8	Matthew Ofiara	2/19		
Clem Wolfrom	2/8	David Smith	2/19		
Jake Grunewald	2/9	Scott Walter	2/19		
Jordan Mason	2/9	Jennifer DeBrincat	2/20		
Michael Romanko	2/9	Crystal Stoup	2/20		
Daniel Settecerra	2/9	Perry Greene	2/22		
Clare Kostizen	2/10	David Hamada	2/23		
Mary Ridenour	2/12	Karen Valenti	2/23		
Paul Plunkett	2/14	William Beslock	2/24		



CALENDAR ON THE WEB!

Go to
www.bloomfieldcross.org and
click on the
"Calendar" link to
the right side of
the home page.



Christ's Love Compels Us

"For Christ 's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him Who died for them and was raised again" (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

Some sons disobey their fathers. Others obey unwillingly with arguing and complaining, resentful of their fathers' authority. Still others are compliant, but are there any who would be as submissive as Jesus was to His Father's will? "... yet not My will, but Yours be done," Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:42). Carrying out His Father's will was no easy task, but, because His love for us is as great as the Father's, He was willing to win our salvation for us by carrying out the plan the Triune God had established before the foundations of the world were laid. It was His love for us that caused Christ to give His very life so that we, who were dead in sin, might be alive forevermore in Him.

There is nothing we can do to earn this love; there is nothing we can do to "pay Him back." The Christian life of stewardship is a response to His love. His love compels us to respond by loving Him first and best and loving others as ourselves. His love compels us to provide for our pastors, teachers, and missionaries who work to bring the Gospel to the world for which He died (1 Corinthians 9:9-12). His love compels us to look after the widow and the orphan (James 1:27). His love compels us to feed the hungry, extend hospitality to the homeless, clothe the destitute, and visit the prisoner (Matthew 25:37- 40).

Stewardship is the use of life and all of life's resources in response to the grace of God in our lives, poured out in service to others, even as Christ poured out His lifeblood for us. The prophet Micah clarifies to us what God requires of us: *"To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God"* (Micah 6:8b). These are not attitudes we can work up of our own accord. Only as we are renewed daily through Word and Sacrament can we respond to this great love of Christ and respond in joyful service and generous giving that please God.



**Reaching Beyond
Our Walls**

Cross of Christ Lutheran Church

1100 Lone Pine Road
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Phone: 248-646-5886

Fax: 248-646-5968

Email: info@bloomfieldcross.org

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SENIOR PASTOR
REV. JAMES ACKERMAN,
ASSISTANT PASTOR
REV. STEPHEN GRAFE,
ASSOCIATE PASTOR
KAREN MILLER, EDITOR
DIANN RICHARDS, DISTRIBUTION