

SPRING 2026

# CROSSROADS

The Official Newsletter of Cross of Christ Lutheran Church

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## NOTE FROM THE OFFICE:

Spring (sorta) at last! This is the fifth Crossroads newsletter I've worked on since starting at Cross of Christ last year. It's always a joy to put together. Thanks to everyone for your kind words and for your helpful feedback along the way.

**Erin Shea**

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**Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 12:30 - 4:30**



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# PASTOR'S COLUMN

If you could be a superhero, what cause would you choose to champion? What would your superpowers be? How would you choose to use your powers? Would you team up with other superheroes? How could your combined powers be used?

These are some of the questions we faced at the New England Synod Deans Retreat. I confess, I was a little stumped at first, maybe even a little confused. After all, what in the world would these questions have to do with our work in the church? Well, after giving the exercise a chance, and after flexing our creative muscles, we ended up having a lot of fun. We determined what our superpowers would be, what our strengths and weaknesses would be - even who/what our nemesis would be. Some were creative enough to come up with a name and motto. We shared with the group and ended up discovering that many of us could be naturally grouped with others and could form a super-team. With the combined strengths of each other, and the way members can balance out each other's weaknesses, we determined that we would be much more powerful together.

For our purposes at the retreat, we used this exercise to begin thinking about conferences, what strengths and weaknesses each congregation has and how we can lean on each other, learn from each other and balance each other out.

Of course, we could use this same exercise to creatively think about our individual roles within Cross of Christ. For each of us, we carry strengths and weaknesses, and we are each passionate about various ideas and goals. However, as one supergroup, we do rely on one another, with each person contributing their valuable gifts in service to God and to the community. We may not call them superpowers, but the Bible does teach us about gifts of the Holy Spirit.

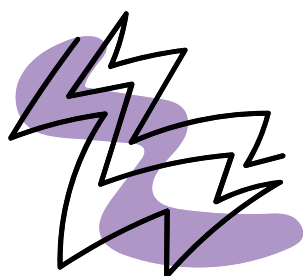
“Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of services but the same Lord, and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of powerful deeds, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.” (1 Corinthians 12: 4-11)

I would encourage you all to think creatively about your own superpowers (or gifts of the Spirit). How can you use them? How can you contribute to the team of our congregation? If you are stumped (because sometimes it can be hard to think about your own gifts), maybe think of the gifts of other members of the congregation and encourage each other to do the same and maybe someone else sees a gift in you that you hadn't considered before! Maybe you have one half of a valuable gift and someone else has the other half. Then we can consider how we can share these gifts together - after all, we receive these gifts “for the common good.”

So, what are your superpowers?

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Sam



# THROWBACK PHOTO!



First Lutheran 50<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary Celebration  
July 2002





# PALM SUNDAY SERVICE

W/ GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

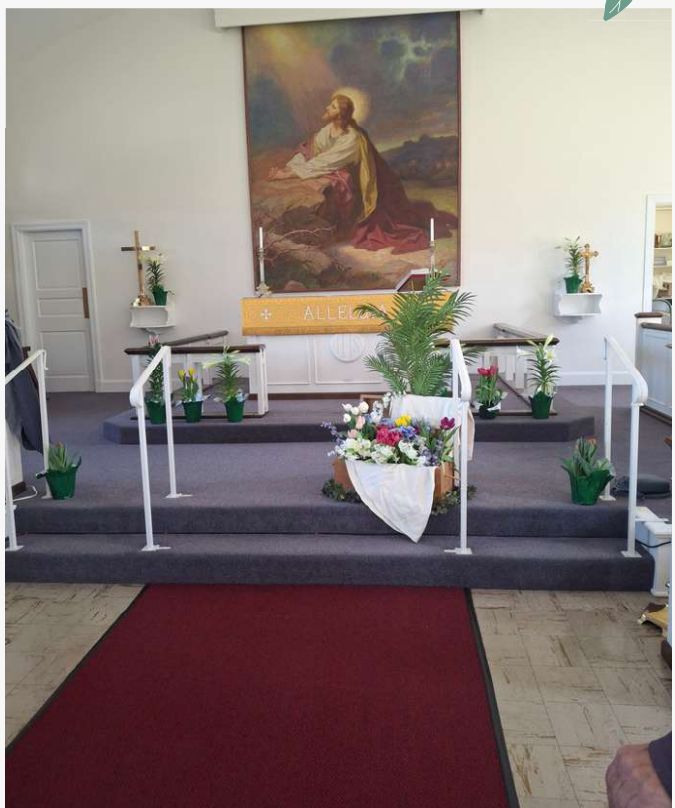


photos by  
Nadia M. &  
Linda N.

# EASTER SUNDAY



PHOTOS BY LISA RAPISARDA  
& LINDA NIDO



## **Crossroads—April 2026**

### **From the Sister, ELCA Deacon**

Greetings Cross of Christ! We are in the 50 days of Easter with all the resurrection stories; giving us hope and love going forward in these challenging times. My Deaconess Community is engaged in justice ministries, particularly with **The Poor Peoples' Campaign**, keeping our love and hope active in ministry. The **diaconal** path is always to follow Jesus in caring “for the least of these,” here and in the world. Quite a challenge!

As the commentary for Micah 6:8 reminds us: “We are not obligated to complete the task, but neither are we free to abandon it.” I am blessed to be in this congregation to hear the Word, care for the hurting and wounded, celebrate the faith we share in fellowship, worship, and service ministries here in Waterbury.

I am also called to be in the **Deaconess Community** and to support **ELCA advocacy** which requires fervent prayer and time for hard work in community as well. “**Justice** is what love looks like in the public square.”

Let me close with an important, brief essay definition which is the foundation for my call to ministry. This is **PROPHETIC DIAKONIA**, sending a strong warning message but not without hope and direction for the future of our church.

### **PROPHETIC DIAKONIA:**

“Within the Lutheran tradition there has always been consensus that preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments are the decisive marks of the church. Even though the love of one’s neighbor has been considered an indispensable fruit of justifying faith, its meaning for the understanding of the church has not always been clear. This ambiguity has been further aggravated by current trends to separate diaconal institutions from the churches, so that they might more successfully compete in the global social market. In light of past ecumenical insights the consultation however came to recognize **diakonia** as a core element of what the church is all about. In other words, **a church that refuses to bear witness to God’s love for all creation not only in terms of preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments but also in carrying out its diaconal ministry as a key component of its vocation, is no longer the church of Jesus Christ.**”

**“For the Healing of the World”  
Johannesburg, South Africa  
The Lutheran World Federation  
November 2002**

How much longer do we have to wait to see this become a more essential and thriving theological reality? Movement is happening...as my nephew told me years ago, “The Holy Spirit is alive and active. Let him/her mess you up! And hold on tight because you’re in for a crazy ride. God be with you.” And so I plead with you: pray for our church and our leaders.

**AMEN**

**Love in Christ always,  
Sister Carol Weaver, she/they  
Benji and all my angel dogs**



**GRACE HAPPENS**

# WHERE ARE YOU, WILL YOU COME, WILL YOU STAY, WILL YOU WALK WITH ME?

*by Sharon L. Samoska*

Where are you walking this day?  
Why are you alone in my forest this day?  
What do you seek to find this day?

I send the wind to speak to you  
In its embracing whispers.  
I send you air to breathe this day  
To refresh your body and more.  
I send you sun rays for comfort this day  
With their warmth and light.  
I send you light from the moon and stars  
For hope even in the darkest night.  
I give you tools to make a shelter  
To protect you from the storm.

I give you songs of critters this day  
So you will not feel alone.  
I give you flowers of many colors this day  
To bring you moments of joy.  
I give you stillness and calm this day  
So you can open your soul to my words.  
I give you remembrance this day  
To know –yes, I am here with you.  
I give you knowledge this day  
To know you can reach the mountain top.

I send you memories this day  
To hold for hope of those you love.  
I send you memories this day  
To help you remember me.  
I send you my hand this day  
To chase the clouds of fear away.  
I send you my words this day  
To guide each step you take.  
I send you strength this day  
That you will know I am the way, the truth, the life.  
Can you feel me in this place this day  
I am calling to you to walk with me.

# NEWS + NOTES

**Care Card Ministry:** First Thessalonians 5:11: “Therefore encourage one another and build up each other...” Cards sent: February 2026: 17, March 2026: 67 (includes special Easter mailing). Thanks to our volunteers. Good News: These sharing and caring moments are not small—they carry hope and support, and we are honored to outreach. These cards are rays of sunshine for a lonely day and in a world where time can seem so long when the phone does not ring, and the mailbox is empty. They send smiles back to us—the world changed by a smile shared. from our ELCA---“God’s Work. Our Hands.”



**GWIM:** Thanks to Barbara Dublin for her remarkable service to those in need. Barbara sends thanks to us for our support of GWIM. Statistics: January 2026—Soup Kitchen 18,456. Food Pantry 9256. February 2026—Soup Kitchen 17,164 Food Pantry—10,322. March 2026—Soup Kitchen 17,369. Food Pantry: 19,734. **Donations to Food Pantry:** January 2026—none. February 2026—17. March 2026--67. April 2026 so far is quite low. **Food Pantry needs:** Especially needed—Chili powder, Alfredo sauce, spaghetti sauces, canned chicken, gravy in jar or can, garlic powder, regular salt, Montreal Chicken spice, Montreal Steak spice, Kinder spices, canned hash, barbecue sauce, granola bars, prepackaged fruit snacks for children.

**Learning Committee--For Children:** Children (toddlers through teens) were provided materials for Lent. Camp Calumet—Registration is now in progress and first week starts June 28. Check the website for details. Pollinator/Memory Garden areas: Projects--painting rocks and planting flower bulbs, weather permitting. **Good News: Children joining in worship.** Pastor Sam’s sermonettes touch the hearts of all of God’s children (adults too), and thanks to children for sharing closing of worship. Mark 10:14-16: “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.”

**Social Advocacy:** “We are called to be a voice and spirit for the voiceless.” (These words of outreach capture so well our feelings and our ELCA words “God’s Work. Our Hands.”) Notes of some of the many outreaches of our team: sharing web sites, helping neighbors and members, advocating for what we know God asks us to do—protect our air and water, supporting Creation Care. It is true that a problem can’t be solved until we know there is a problem and unless we speak, no one can hear us.

**Good News—YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THANKS IN OUTREACH of a thankful “something/someone moment.” Send me a note to share here or to put on our bulletin board.** God speaks of justice and equality, God speaks of loving your neighbor—Thanks for this outreach to do those things and more.

**Webinars and Zoom meetings:** Waterbury Environmental Control Commission is scheduling guest speakers from the local, state, and federal levels to speak at WECC meetings on environmentally important topics. The City’s plans for conservation and planning for the next ten years will soon be released. Contact me for details. Weather changes are affecting our nation, and several of the webinars by Christian groups (especially Lisa Brenskelle from Texas) support that in following the words that God gave us to be stewards of this environment, there is hope—there are ways to use better power sources, there are ways to conserve water and resources, maintain nutrition, address health and safety, and much more. No step is too small—a lot of little steps add up to big steps. LRC webinars are very good and can be viewed on their website. The webinar on the needs of AI was quite revealing.

**Pollinator Garden:** “One is nearer God’s heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth.” (Dorothy Gurney). Updates: Several plants due to the harsh weather and emergency digging in the area were lost. Surprise—Some flowers are blooming—miracles of color and hope—our Prairie Smoke has flowers, pansies and daffodils and even a lily from last year are blooming. Help please if you have talents with small container/raised bed gardening. We thank Barbara Schmollinger for donating the lovely garden flags for Easter. PHOTO TIME—help us start a 2026 photo journey of the pollinator garden. Praises to God the Creator triumphantly raise...”

We give thanks for creation moments-- the colors of pansy faces, daffodils sending rays of light on a rainy day, bees and birds that have returned to God’s garden. Amen.



**NE Synod: Green Team: EcoSpirituality Zoom meeting** 7:00 p.m. the second Sunday of the month. Beth Norcross’ book, Start Singing (SING short for Spirituality in Nature Group), leads to a deeper excursion into relationship with and as part of God’s creation. Green Team magazine—April edition is on the synod website. Upcoming Event and Art Exhibit (open to the public, including youth and adults Sunday, 12 April through Friday, 15 May, “Noah: A Future Hope at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace. Visit the exhibit site and find the answer.” The Duncan Black Macdonald Center & The Center for Transformative Spirituality at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace, and the John P. Webster Library are sponsoring this. **Monthly planning meeting**— May 19, Weds, 2 pm. **Camp Calumet:** Summer camp starts June 28; see their calendar for upcoming events and info: [www.calumet.org/programs/quickglance](http://www.calumet.org/programs/quickglance).



# ALTAR CARE SCHEDULE



**5/3: Janine & Seita**  
**5/10: Sr. Carol & Charmaine**  
**5/17: Delphine & Seita**  
**5/24: Janine & Sr. Carol**  
**5:31: Charmaine & Delphine**

**6/7: Tish & Seita**  
**6/14: Janine & Sr. Carol**  
**6/21: Delphine & Charmaine**  
**6/28: Tish & Seita**

## Council Members:

Becky Armington,  
President

Charmaine Lawton, VP

Blanche Feero/Lisa  
Rapisarda - Secretary

Pat Huesch, Financial  
Secretary

Arnold Arnajallum

Dolly Caldwell

Bob Melnick

# Happy Birthday!

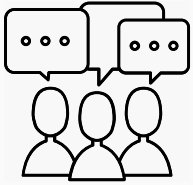
## **APRIL:**

EILEEN KASSHEIMER  
MATTHEW PERRET  
SEITA GLASGOW  
ELIZABETH SEMERARO  
RICH PIEL

## **MAY:**

JAMES RAPISARDA  
BONNIE CRAFA  
ANDREA CARON  
DELPHINE BLEWITT

# ANNOUNCEMENTS + GRATITUDE



**There will be a Congregational Meeting & Town Hall Discussion on Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, directly after worship.**



Thank You ALL, for your food donations, for your gift cards, & for your unconditional love!  
'Wow... thank you FOR Everything!  
We so appreciate everything you do for our GWIM community.  
♡

Dear Cross of Christ LUTHERAN CHURCH  
♡

Thank you for your kindness and for making a difference.

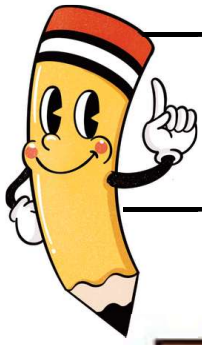
Love, Barbara Ann  
Dublin MS  
Executive Director



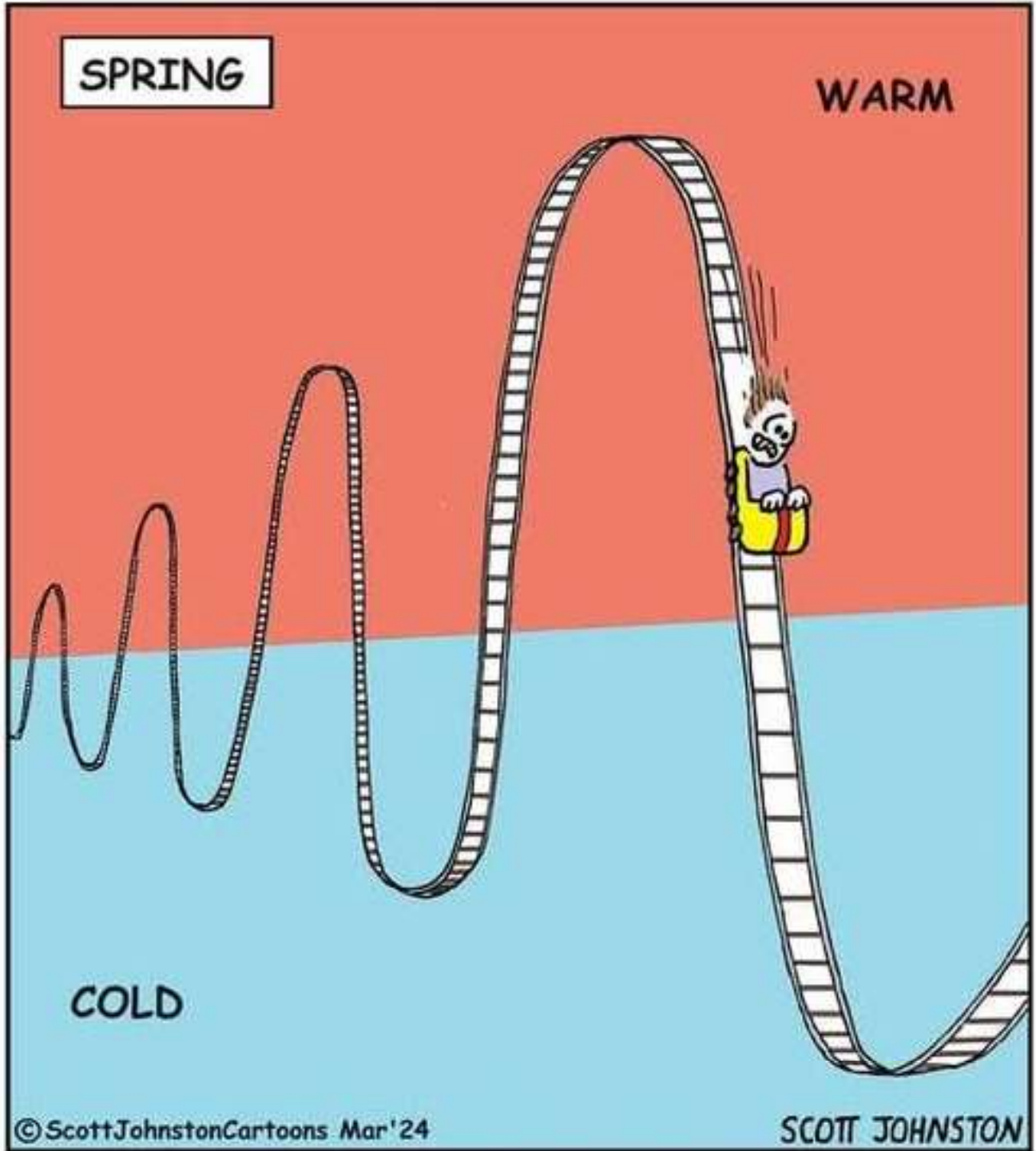
Rev. Mark Lingle, Assistant to the Bishop, will be our guest preacher on Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>

Photo by Lisa R.





# FUNNY PAGES



Cartoon by Scott Johnston