

# The *Celebration!* Connection

Celebration Lutheran Church

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2024

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## From the Pastor

### An October Surprise

You know what that is, right? An “October Surprise” is now defined as an unexpected political event or revelation in the month before a presidential election, especially one that seems intended to influence the outcome,” according to The Oxford English Dictionary.

But that is only its most recent definition.

Originally, it didn't actually have a political meaning. Originally it came out of advertising, when department stores would give a sale. We now might call it more like Black Friday.

It wound up taking on a political meaning in 1980, when President Reagan's campaign manager was fired right in the eve of the election, and then he ended up beating President Carter anyway. That was considered to be the first “October Surprise.”

Sometimes we love surprises...and sometimes we don't.

It's kind of like the time a man was just stepping out of the shower one evening when his wife called and asked him to run down to the basement and turn off the iron she had accidentally left on. Without bothering to grab a towel or robe, the man headed down to the basement. Just as he reached the bottom stair, the lights came on and a dozen friends and colleagues jumped out and shouted “Surprise!”

His wife had planned a secret party for the man's 40th birthday.

Not all surprises are good ones, at least at first glance. Jesus had an uncanny ability to take people by surprise--and they weren't always pleased about it. Take, for instance, the surprise Jesus sprung on the Nazarene congregation in Luke 4. Jesus had returned to his hometown in Nazareth. That Sabbath day, he went to the synagogue, as any observant Jew would. The synagogues of Jesus' day didn't usually have paid or appointed preachers and teachers. Any adult male might be called upon to preach or teach on any particular Sabbath. (Can you imagine if we ran our churches that way? If any adult could be called upon at any time to preach or teach the Scriptures each Sunday? I think if that happened, either there would be an explosion of Bible study here at Celebration, or there would be a stampede of members leaving our church.)

So, anyway, Jesus stepped up, was handed a scroll from the book of Isaiah and was asked to preach on it. He went right to Isaiah 61 and read these words:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

And then, when Jesus was sure he had everyone's attention, he closed the scroll, sat down,

and announced very simply, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

SURPRISE! Say that again? The prophet Isaiah had been inspired to write those words more than 700 years earlier. For seven centuries, preachers and teachers of the holy word had preached on a soon-coming Messiah who would turn the world's systems upside-down. He would lift up the hurting, the oppressed, the blind. The Hebrew people knew only too well what it was to suffer, to be held captive. They had waited hundreds of years for the fulfillment of this prophecy and were prepared to wait hundreds more if necessary. And now a poor, no-name carpenter claims to be that Messiah who would “proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord”. How would you react if you were in their shoes? Is it any wonder that later on in the chapter we discover that the men of the synagogue tried to kill Jesus? Of course, he got away. But we can't blame the Nazarene congregation for their reaction.

He didn't explain, argue, pontificate he just announced this mind-blowing piece of information and let the worshipers make up their own minds. Still today, if we take this passage seriously, it has the same potential to blow our minds too. Jesus' announcement tells us some important things about God.

First of all, that our God is a God of hope!

Wherever Jesus went, he brought hope. It was his calling card.

He brought hope to the leper, exiled from his home and his community. He brought hope to the paralyzed man who was unable to care for his family. To people who felt worthless, or lost, or broken, or rejected, or beyond saving, Jesus brought the message that God loved them--that they had a purpose in life.

Another thing Jesus tells us is that our God is a God of Freedom!

In Jesus' day, there were slaves who surely thought that they were made to be slaves, that God had ordained them to be inferior; their oppression was inevitable. But Jesus continually demonstrated that God is a god of freedom, not bondage. When Jesus walked this earth, He rebuked the power structures that oppressed people. And Jesus made it a regular practice to set people free. He freed sick people of their diseases. He freed disabled people from their handicaps. He freed sinners from the burden of their sins. He freed demon-possessed people from their torment. He broke the chains of fear, confusion, and anxiety in the lives of the people he touched.

Our God is a God of freedom.

Yes, always remember that our God is about hope and freedom. Surprising to Jesus' listeners 2000 years ago, and, really, a surprise to us today. Jesus came to share the good news that God cares about our hopelessness, our oppression, our bondage.

And we know that Christ will return to establish a kingdom where those things don't exist!

See You in Church!

**Pastor Fogle**

## Living Out Grace

Talk is cheap, especially when it comes to biblical concepts such as grace. How can people grasp the meaning of unmerited favor unless they experience it firsthand?

That happened to Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan and grandson of Saul, in 2 Samuel 9. After his father was killed in battle, the disabled Mephibosheth hid in fear. Why? In Old Testament times, a new king killed the previous ruler's bloodline. But David, keeping a promise he'd made to his friend Jonathan, showed Mephibosheth "the kindness of God" (v. 3). Imagine the impact that had on Mephibosheth's life.

By contrast, failing to live into God's grace and failing to give it out to others leads to many struggles, according to pastor David Seamands. "We read, we hear, we believe a good theology of grace," he wrote, but "that's not the way we live. The good news of the Gospel of grace has not penetrated the level of our emotions." Instead, may we make a point each day to treat others with God's kindness and mercy.



## Out-Wayne County

### Winter Clothing Distribution

**Here at Celebration Lutheran Church**

**October 18-19**

**Setup October 17**

**Sponsored by:**

**Out Wayne Collaborative**

**Celebration Lutheran Church**

**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**

### **VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!**

Join us in bringing warmth and comfort to the community by sorting and distributing winter clothing and boots Oct 17-19.

We will need help unpacking, sorting and setting out 50+ bales of coats, clothing and boots for free distribution to the community on Thurs, Oct 17.

On Friday and Saturday, we will also need people who welcome community members and direct traffic, who help community members find items they need, and who continue to unpack and restock the items available in distribution rooms.

Please input this Signup Genius link [Volunteer Sign Up: Out-Wayne Winter Clothing Distribution 2024 at Celebration Lutheran Church \(signupgenius.com\)](#) and tell us when you might be available to help. (This link is being distributed throughout the conference, so this will also give you an opportunity to work with your Lutheran siblings throughout the area!)

**IF THIS LINK DOESN'T WORK FOR YOU, A PHYSICAL SIGNUP SHEET WILL BE ON THE COMMUNICATIONS BOARD!**

If you are unable to serve for the entire time slot, please make a note of what time you can arrive and when you will leave so we know when we can expect you.

Thank you again for helping to show how much Celebration cares for others!



Coats for the Cold

## **“Opportunity Palestine” Chosen as October Project**

The Social Ministry fundraising event for October is “Opportunity Palestine.” It's our opportunity to provide funds for the Lutheran schools in the West Bank.

We have been doing this for the past number of years but currently the situation in the West Bank is far more urgent.

The financial situation in the West Bank has gotten much worse due to tourism being at a standstill and unemployment widespread. ELCJHL schools did start in mid-August and the students are, as of September 21st, in the classrooms .

“Opportunity Palestine” is launching a \$50,000 fundraising goal this fall and Celebration members can participate. As usual, George Evalt will match all funds donated.

Continued next column



## Have Trouble Talking About Tough Topics?

What happens when you don't know how to talk about tough topics?

Our conference congregations have been working with MOSES and The Institute of Othering and Belonging to create a pilot program with the goal of helping people find common ground while having difficult conversations. This style of conversation is called Long Bridging.

On **Thursday, October 10 from 6-8:30 p.m.**, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church will host a dinner to formally roll out this program.

The purpose of these conversations is **NOT** to change people's minds or get them to adhere to any kind of political or theological belief. It is to help us learn more about each other and see our common goals and humanity. **No political or theological questions** will be asked during the program and a trained facilitator will be at each table to help create a conducive environment for conversation.

This program could help you have tough conversations with family, friends, and even with others in your congregation. The skills we will practice are vitally important as we work to create a more united and less divided culture both at church and in the world.

We'd like to have at least five participants from each congregation and there is no financial cost to use your willingness to wade into the waters of conversation with compassion and grace, all while knowing that each person is a beloved child of God, created in the Divine image.

Please let Pastor Fogle know as soon as possible if you might be interested in participating in this wonderful event!

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## **HOW SOCIAL MEDIA WORKS**

Me:

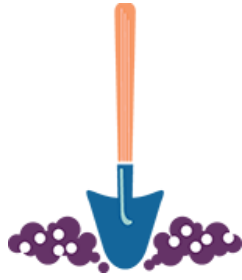
"I prefer mangoes to oranges..."

Random Person:

"So basically what you're saying is that you hate oranges? You also failed to mention pineapples, bananas and grapefruits. Educate yourself."

## Garden Plans

The garden team has received the plans from the landscape professional and has posted pictures and information in the lobby. As we received cost estimates as well, the team will deliberate for a while before really digging into the project.



We're thinking that we will begin this fall by preparing the bed on the east side of the walk, and possibly planting the boxwoods. The rest of the preparation will be put on hold for the winter.

Garden team members are Carole Hakala, Trudy Beulow, Marge Ross, Chris Snowden, Luan Purcell and of course, Diane Yagerlaner.

## Crafty Connections

The fall brings so many opportunities to create cute crafts; felted pumpkins, acorns, and leaves, knitted or crocheted warm sweaters and blankets. Not to mention thinking about the warming tree at the end of November which will need hats, gloves, and scarves. No matter what your project is, bring it to Crafty Connections



**Monday, October 14, 7:00pm**

**AND**

**Wednesday, October 30, 10:00am.**

We would love to see what you are working on and enjoy fellowship with you.

Also, Katie Frank's daughter-in-law has donated yarn for people wanting to contribute to the warming tree. The yarn basket is located under the mailboxes.

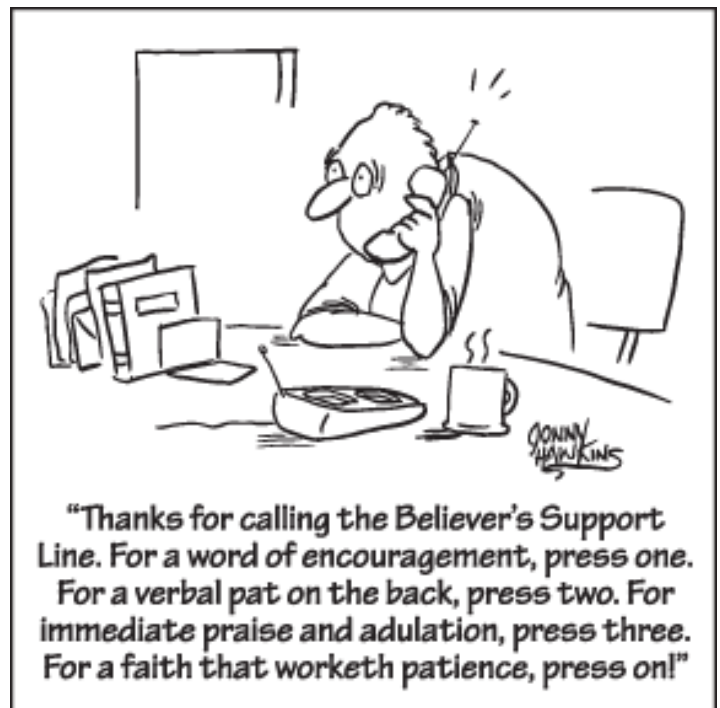


## "Bring One Sunday"

(aka Support your local food bank )

Our non-perishable food items are now going to the First United Methodist Church Food Pantry (6443 Merriman Rd.) in Garden City. Please bring your non-perishable food donations to church on Sunday, October 13.

If you would like to make a donation, please make your check out to "First United Methodist Church". Please be sure to put on the memo line "Food Pantry". If you have any questions about this ministry, contact Greg or Gloria Tapper.



## Women's Bible Study October 16th @ 1pm

Receiving Grace:  
A Study of Ephesians

What's the first thing you think of when you hear "St. Paul"? Just a guess: probably not his prison time. However, we know from the book of Acts and Paul's letters that the apostle was arrested and went to jail many times. Paul regularly got into trouble with authorities for his beliefs and what was considered troublesome behavior--much like Martin Luther King, Jr., Dietrich Bonhoeffer and many protesters today. And as with King and Bonhoeffer, jail didn't stop Paul from writing.

One description the writer of Ephesians has "Paul using for himself is "a prisoner of Christ Jesus." Being a prisoner then--as now --was not something most people would have been proud of. But this writer considered Paul's identity as a prisoner to be just as important as being a Christian, preacher, apostle and saint. It is key to Paul's "job description" in Ephesians at the very start of the letter's famous, beautiful call to unity in the Body of Christ.

We often try to hide the terrible things that have happened to us. But what if grace invites us to name some of those terrible things as sources of strength and wisdom in our lives? Some of the most miraculous stories in Acts are of Paul escaping from prison or converting his jailers. His imprisonment was proof of his fearlessness and determination, showing that what was most important to him was not his own honor or safety, but the gospel of Jesus Christ. For Paul, identifying a prisoner was marker not of shame, but of honor and great love.

Copies of the Bible Study are available in Lauren Preston's mailbox. All women are invited to participate in the bible study sessions. Please don't be intimidated. If you have missed a session, that's ok. You won't be called upon to read or say anything if you are not comfortable doing so. However, we can learn from hearing different opinions.



**October 12 at 5:00 – 8:00 pm**

Pretzel Appetizer  
Bratwurst and Knockwurst  
Roasted Chicken  
Sauerkraut  
German Potato Salad  
German Chocolate Cake  
Beverages (including beer)

Music

Adults: \$15.00  
Children 6 and over \$6.00  
Children 5 and under – free

Tickets are available before and after worship services.



You can sponsor a vase for the altar for \$25 per vase. We can have up to two vases each week. These can be in memory or celebration of a person or event

This month's sponsors are:

**October 6**

Vases 1 and 2 : Devonna Snowden

**October 13**

Vases 1 and 2 : Available for Sponsorship

**October 20**

Vase 1: George and Sally Evalt

Vase 2: Margaret Grasley in memory  
of Joe Grasley

**October 27**

Vase 1: Tim and Debby Hoepner in  
celebration of Debby's birthday

Vase 2: Rick and Jodi Reed in celebration of  
Jodi's birthday

**Live-Stream Broadcasts**

Please consider sponsoring a week or more live-streaming for \$15 per Sunday. The live-stream broadcast may be in honor, memory, or in celebration of someone or some event.

This month's sponsors are:

**October 6:** Steve and Andrea Kolhoff

**October 13:** Gerald and Roberta Schmucker

**October 20:** Jim and Susan Hardy

**October 27:** Marge Ross



Each week on a rotating basis, we lift up in prayer members of the congregation.

**October 6**

Katie Frank

John Gambotto

Julia Gardner

Marjorie Gask

**October 13**

Brian and Kathy Goodykoontz

Margaret Grasley

Carol Anderson-Gregg

Kathy Groff

**October 20**

Carole Hakala

Vi Hakala

Jim, Susan, Jenna, Rowan, Reece  
Hardy

Bill and Laura Harrison

**October 27**

Larry and Georgia Hartsell

Steve Hartsell

Barb Heidmann

Anne and Peter Heikkinen





## What do we REALLY own?

6 Gregg Droste

8 Leo Albert

9 Mike Sweier

10 Marge Gask

12 Esther Bowers

Ericka Williamson

13 Catherine Holt

14 Marian Pye

16 Oliver Hoste

17 Michael LePine

20 Benjamin Holt

21 Julie Livingston

22 Kristina Wommer

25 John Gambotto

27 Jodi Reed

28 Debby Hoepner

31 Katie Reid

Dennis Bramigk



1 Justin and Michelle Lair

4 Julie and Jeremiah Livingston

9 Terry and Glenda Tarr

Dave and Deanna Holt

11 Chris and Kristina Wommer

13 Tom and Beth Codd

17 Gerald and Roberta Schmucker

‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.’ --Job:1:21

There’s the joke about the nosy neighbor attending a rich woman’s funeral. Peering into the coffin with a friend, he asked, “How much money did she leave?” The friend smiled and replied, “All of it, of course!”

As Job laments, we come into the world naked and leave the same way. We may be dressed in our best clothing on our way out, but we take it to the grave, not the afterlife.

The joke and Job reveal a basic concept of stewardship: We don’t really own anything. We may take possession of it for a period of time, but we eventually leave it for others.

Yet we spend so much of our energy and life accumulating more and more – as if we were going to have it forever, as we were going to live forever. The danger is that absorbed with accumulating wealth, we shortchange the most valuable treasures – loving the Lord our God with all our being and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

That’s why the Bible consistently warns us about wealth. Jesus repeatedly points out the pitfalls. Money and possessions can turn us inward, stunting our growth and preventing us from being the people God created us to be.

Generosity is the preventative cure for this malady. The Bible counsels that tithing – giving away 10 percent of our income – is a good benchmark for faithful giving (although on several occasions Jesus told his disciples to give away ALL their possessions).

Giving 10 percent, or any amount substantial enough to be sacrificial, is a declaration that you are free from the power that money might have over you. Because however much money you can accumulate in life, you will be like the rich woman in the joke: You will leave it all.

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## October Daily Devotions

Tuesday, October 1  
Psalm 5  
Zechariah 8:18-23  
1 John 2:18-25

Wednesday, October 2  
Psalm 5  
Zechariah 10:1-12  
Matthew 18:6-9

Thursday, October 3  
Psalm 8  
Genesis 20:1-18  
Galatians 3:23-29

Friday, October 4  
Psalm 8  
Genesis 21:22-34  
Romans 8:1-11

Saturday, October 5  
Psalm 8  
Genesis 23:1-20  
Luke 16:14-18

**Sunday, October 6**  
**Genesis 2:18-24**  
**Psalm 8**  
**Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12**  
**Mark 10:2-16**

Monday, October 7  
Psalm 112  
Deuteronomy 22:13-30  
1 Corinthians 7:1-9

Tuesday, October 8  
Psalm 112  
Deuteronomy 24:1-5  
1 Corinthians 7:10-16

Wednesday, October 9  
Psalm 112  
Jeremiah 3:6-14  
Matthew 5:27-36

Thursday, October 10  
Psalm 90:12-17  
Deuteronomy 5:1-21  
Hebrews 3:7-19

Friday, October 11  
Psalm 90:12-17  
Deuteronomy 5:22-33  
Hebrews 4:1-11

Saturday, October 12  
Psalm 90:12-17  
Amos 3:13—4:5  
Matthew 15:1-9

**Sunday, October 13**  
**Amos 5:6-7, 10-15**  
**Psalm 90:12-17**  
**Hebrews 4:12-16**  
**Mark 10:17-31**

Monday, October 14  
Psalm 26  
Obadiah 1-9  
Revelation 7:9-17

Tuesday, October 15  
Psalm 26  
Obadiah 10-16  
Revelation 8:1-5

Wednesday, October 16  
Psalm 26  
Obadiah 17-21  
Luke 16:19-31

Thursday, October 17  
Psalm 91:9-16  
Genesis 14:17-24  
Romans 15:7-13  
Friday, October 18  
Psalm 91:9-16  
Isaiah 47:1-9

Revelation 17:1-18  
Saturday, October 19  
Psalm 91:9-16  
Isaiah 47:10-15  
Luke 22:24-30

**Sunday, October 20**  
**Isaiah 53:4-12**  
**Psalm 91:9-16**  
**Hebrews 5:1-10**  
**Mark 10:35-45**

Monday, October 21  
Psalm 37:23-40  
1 Samuel 8:1-18  
Hebrews 6:1-12

Tuesday, October 22  
Psalm 37:23-40  
1 Samuel 10:17-25  
Hebrews 6:13-20

Wednesday, October 23  
Psalm 37:23-40  
1 Samuel 12:1-25  
John 13:1-17

Thursday, October 24  
Psalm 126  
Jeremiah 23:9-15  
Hebrews 7:1-10

Friday, October 25  
Psalm 126  
Jeremiah 26:12-24  
Hebrews 7:11-22

Saturday, October 26  
Psalm 126  
Jeremiah 29:24-32  
Mark 8:22-26

**Sunday, October 27**  
**Jeremiah 31:7-9**  
**Psalm 126**  
**Hebrews 7:23-28**  
**Mark 10:46-52**

Monday, October 28  
Psalm 119:17-24  
Exodus 4:1-17  
1 Peter 2:1-10

Tuesday, October 29  
Psalm 119:17-24  
2 Kings 6:8-23  
Acts 9:32-35

Wednesday, October 30  
Psalm 119:17-24  
Jeremiah 33:1-11  
Matthew 20:29-34

Thursday, October 31  
Psalm 119:1-8  
Exodus 22:1-15  
Hebrews 9:1-12