



ALMA LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

March 2018

A geography of hope by Elizabeth Hunter

Have you ever ended up somewhere with no clear idea of how you got there? Maybe not just on a road, but in your family, congregation, career or community? While rolling through routines, the landscapes of home, office, school, church, forest, city and towns can blur around me. The familiar topography includes hills of to-do lists, but I tell myself it's manageable. I'm on automatic. And I forget that it's all holy terrain.

Then there's a day—much like Ash Wednesday—when I go to microwave my tea, which cooled while I was typing. I'm thinking of a fractured relationship with someone I don't often see, someone I care about deeply, but whose barbed comments hook me. Regardless of my response, I always feel stunned and slow, gills open, stuck, doubting that this can ever work out. That day, without looking, I open the refrigerator for a bagel, expecting the usual. Unbeknownst to me, the hinges have cracked. Suddenly I'm unsure of my location. I realize that I am crouching, holding up two surprisingly heavy freezer and refrigerator doors, and my thumb is swelling.

Later, in my car, I find a bookmark with words a wise woman offered me months ago: "Every challenge is an opportunity for growth." I let her words soak in. Doubt is my biggest challenge, I realize. Could I "listen to the voice of doubt in Easter, too," as Liv Larson Andrews suggests (p. 21)?

Doubt is an obstacle. Consider the inventions not made, the books not written, the phones not dialed, the emails not sent. We didn't think we could, or we didn't think it would help, or we stopped hoping—because doors that should open, fall on us.

Two years ago, my youngest son, Jacob, a soccer player, was chosen to be goalie for the first time. He protested: It was his birthday; he'd never done it before; he was afraid. But they still needed him to serve. At the end of the game, Jacob said mournfully, "But I prayed! And I still got scored on! Does God not love me?"

As we walk through life, from Lent to Easter, we often doubt God's purpose. We keep tally of goals made and lost. We measure the latitude and the longitude of our positions, relative to those of others. But it is not about measurements or keeping score. For God, it's more about what we're becoming. We don't grow into better goalies without some balls coming at us, some doors falling off, some sideways comments.

Now Jacob is no longer afraid to be goalie. Someday the rest of us will get there, too, to a point where we can say, "It's OK. It's just balls coming at me. It's just a statement someone made. It's cool, even if I didn't block it the way I wanted to."

"In vulnerable times and places, we have the choice of being a light for others—or crumbling," writes Lindsay Hardin Freeman (p. 32).

Doubt goes with us on our journey. Often, it doesn't leave us even when we get to Easter. But doubt isn't strong enough to keep Jesus in the grave. Jesus is risen, even though those closest to him denied him, doubted him and locked their doors.

Even if we lock our doors, Jesus shows up. And he doesn't just show up. He lets us, with Thomas (the Doubter), feel how his wounds connect with our pain and doubt.

As Liv Larson Andrews (p. 23) puts it, "we see that no brokenness of our own—no darkness, pain, distance or loneliness—can ever sever our connection to God."

Elizabeth Hunter is editor of Gather.



Lord Jesus, we pray for our congregations during this call process and for the pastor you will send us. We pray for our congregation's future and for the leaders you will call forward to guide us. Embolden us to invite those in whom we experience gifts for these ministries to prayerfully consider your calling, and give us generous spirits to support them. God of mercy. Receive our prayer.

ACTIVITIES

Childrens Sunday School -

9:15am every Sunday except the 1st Sunday of the month. Ages 3 years old through 8th grade. Meets in the basement of the church. Contact Moriah Nygren for more information.

Adult Bible Study -

Meets at 9:30am every Sunday except the first Sunday of the month. Meets in the room behind the altar. Contact Doug Gustafson for more information.

Youth Group -

For 7th grade through 12th grade. Contact Megan and Weston Engel for more information.

Hope Circle -

Meets the fourth Tuesday mornings of the month at 9:30am. Location varies. Contact Janice Gustafson for more information.

Faith Circle (MGM) -

Meets the fourth Thursday at 1:30pm @ Bethlehem in Wahoo.

Chat & Sew -

Meets the 1st Tuesday at 8:30am. Contact Sharon Hollst or Lana Krumpus for more information.

Prayer Shawls -

Meet the second and fourth Saturday mornings from 9-11am. Contact Viki Miller for more information.

Book Club -

Location and date varies. Contact Viki Miller for more information.



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BUDGET

Treasurer's Report As of 2/28/18

Income: \$16,187.35
Expenses: \$13,353.66
Balance: \$2,833.69

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lenten Schedule

3/7 7pm worship @ Alma
3/14 7pm worship @ Edensburg
3/21 7pm worship @ Alma
3/29 7pm Maundy Thursday @ Edensburg
3/30 7pm Good Friday @ Alma
4/1 10:30am Easter worship @ Alma

Soup Supper

Before Service on Wednesday March 7th, we will have a soup supper at 6:00pm at Alma. Council will be making soup. There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex for a few people to bring dessert. Worship will follow at 7:00pm.



Thank you to my Alma family for the beautiful gifts you gave me upon my retirement as church treasurer. The "Faithful Servant" cross is beautiful and the donation to SCLP Pet Rescue is very much appreciated. The rescue is very important to me as I love to volunteer and help all of the dogs and cats waiting for their new homes. None of this was necessary - you have thanked me numerous times. I enjoyed working with Pastor Andrew and Pastor Alena, the members of the church council and for you, as a congregation. I have to admit when I come home from church or at the end of a work day, I miss having to work on the financials. Again, thank you from the bottom of my heart. I love you all.

Sincerely, June

ANNOUNCE. CONT.

Inter-religious policy statement draft released

The draft of the ELCA policy statement "[A Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment](#)" has been released for a public comment period. The ELCA Inter-Religious Task Force is receiving feedback via an online survey through June 30. The draft will then be revised before it goes to the ELCA Church Council for possible recommendation to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton announced at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly that she had appointed a task force to develop the draft. Learn more at ELCA.org/draftpolicystatement.

Dietzels' new address & contact

Pastor Andrew, Brandy, Aidan & Grayson Dietzel
1710 Atlantica
Cedar Park, Texas 78613
email:revdrew@me.com
cell:(713) 591-1447

Middle School Lock-In - March 9-10, 2018

Carol Joy Holling Camp is hosting another Middle School Lock-In this spring! Come join in the fun of all night camp activities, fellowship, and learning more about God. This event also serves as a preview to our 2018 Summer Camp theme and bible study, This Changes Everything, which is also the theme of the 2018 National Youth Gathering.

INFORMATION

Council Co-Chair Contact

Tyler Munter
trmunter@gmail

Lana Krumpus
klkrumpus@windstream.net

Secretary's Email

almaalutheran@gmail.com

Website - almaalutheran.com

Facebook - Search for "Alma Lutheran Church" and "Alma Lutheran

MISSION STATEMENT

Disciples by grace, Growing in faith, Living our hope, Sharing God's love.