

## Interim Pastor Dave's May Message

Pastor John Horner– Ibler at Unity Lutheran Church in Brookfield, where my wife and I are members, wrote the following two inciteful comments that I felt worthy of passing on. The first deals with “Giving”, and the second addresses the ELCA Call Process”. I hope they will give you some thoughts to ponder and to pray about.



## From Pastor's Desk

#1. Pastor John wrote: “One of the things I appreciate the most about UNITY is that we don’t go small when it comes to sharing. Going small is killing lots of churches. Costs keep going up and fewer people are involved. One of the impacts of being economically challenged is that churches go small on sharing. Benevolence budgets get cut. Long-standing partnerships with affiliated ministries (the local food pantry, or shelter or medical or legal aid program, etc.) wither. The hope is that going small on sharing will allow the congregation to survive, but it doesn’t work out that way. One of the big reasons people get involved in a church is to be there for others, and when a congregation goes small on doing that, the spirit of the place is diminished. There is less reason to stay. Less reason to join. It becomes a downward spiral.”

#2. Pastor John included the following thoughts in his Annual Report: “Challenge. This one is longer-term but should be articulated. Your three pastors have been here 52 years between us. We won’t stay forever. In my case, given my long tenure here I will try to give you a lot of lead time. UNITY is strong and none of us irreplaceable. If it was just that, I’d have no worries. The challenge? Our larger church’s call process doesn’t work. Two comparable congregations to ours, Fox Point Lutheran and St. Matthew’s In Wauwatosa have been in the call process over the past few years. Fox Point is very similar to UNITY in almost every respect and tried to call a third pastor. After 7 candidates, they gave up and went the route of hiring secular specialists in areas like youth and education. St. Matt’s has been in the call process for a Lead Pastor for 2 years and has interviewed 13 candidates and still hasn’t found a fit. The problem with the process is that in an age of information, congregations and candidates have virtually no way of knowing the other exists. And, our denomination still labors under a decades-obsolete idea that long gaps in pastoral leadership are somehow advantageous to a congregation. As a congregation, we need to get involved in pushing for a rapid and major overhaul of this system. Our long-term viability depends on it almost more than anything else we do right now.”

We give thanks that St. Luke is not alone in its challenges, hopes and frustrations.

Interim Pastor Dave Patterson



### Biblical Guidelines to Meaningful Giving

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.” Malachi 3:10

Below are twelve biblical principles that offer guidance as to how we should give back unto the Lord.

- **Obediently** - “Honor the Lord with your substance.” Proverb 3:9
- **Gratefully** - “What can I offer the LORD for all he has done for me?” Psalm 116:12
- **Cheerfully** - “God loves a cheerful giver.” II Corinthians 9:7
- **Proportionately** - “Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD has blessed you.” Deuteronomy 16:17
- **Sacrificially** - “The righteous gives and spares not.” Proverbs 21:26
- **Wisely** - “One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds, and only suffers

want.” Proverbs 11:24

- **Humbly** - ”But when you give, do not announce it with trumpets, to be honored by others.” Matthew 6:2
- **Expectantly** - “Give, and it will be given to you.” Luke 6:38
- **To support the ministry** - “Do not look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.” Philippians 2:4
- **To support the needy** - “Contribute to the needs of the saints.” Romans 12:13
- **To bring glory to God** - “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.” James 1:17
- **To inspire others** - “Story of the Widow’s Offering” Luke 21:1-4

### **A Garden of Blessings**

After a snowy winter, Spring has come. We are thankful that the farmers have been preparing their fields and equipment for planting their crops. Perhaps like my wife, you are also planning your seasonal garden. Below is a spiritual garden (that someone wiser than I wrote), that I shared when I first came to St. Luke, the seeds of which I would encourage you to sow, which will surely bring forth a bountiful harvest of blessings for you as individuals, and the people of St. Luke Lutheran Church.



First, plant a row of “**Peas**” – **P**ray, a **P**ositive outlook on life, **P**atience and **P**artnership.

Next plant some “**Lettuce**” - “**Let us**” love one another; “**Let us**” rededicate ourselves to growth and learning; “**Let us**” seek ways to share God’s love with others.

Third, add a row of “**Squash**” – “**Squash**” backbiting; “**Squash**” gossip; “**Squash**” self-centeredness.

No garden is complete without some “**Berries**” – “**Bury**” the hatchet; Be the “**Berry**” best you can be; “**Bear ye**” one another’s burdens.

Add a row of “**Turnips**” – “**Turn up**” for fellowship events; “**Turn up**” the volume when you sing; “**Turn up**” your nose to the temptations to sin.

Finally, pull up and get rid of these “**Weeds**” - “**We’d**” rather sleep in than attend worship; “**We’d**” like it my way, or no way; **We’d** prefer to keep things the way they always have been.

“Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow”. Galatians 6:6

### **Holy Week Thank You**

Thank you St. Luke staff, Special Choir, those who donated Easter flowers and Love Offering Gifts, those who decorated the Church, those who ushered, read the lessons, did the videography, and those who invited others to come and worship. Together, our crucified and risen savior was glorified. Alleluia!



### **Exciting Sundays Coming Up!**

- April 30th - Affirmation of Baptism for Miranda and Carter.
- May 7th - Tanzania Partnership Service: The Sunday School will provide special music. Parts of the Service will be in Swahili. Members with a Tanzania connection are being asked to say a few words about how this partnership has been a mutual blessing.
- May 14th, worship will focus on the God’s gift of motherly love. A small gift will be provided to those in attendance.
- May 28th is Pentecost/Memorial Day weekend Sunday.