

# The Echo

October 2020



## Spiritual Practice

*“I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:1-2).*

“Dusty.” That was the honest answer I had to give the other day when a retired pastor asked me, “how’s your spiritual life?” “Dusty. Not broken or decaying, but not fresh and vibrant. Just in need of a good dusting,” I told her.

“I don’t know about you, but my life is a mess.” This was the answer a friend gave me when I asked a simple, “how are you?” And I think they spoke a truth we all feel. The world feels really messy right now and piecing our lives together can feel like washing our clothes outside in a sandstorm.

*So, why is spiritual practice important?*

Spiritual practice is essential for our lives because it connects us to the unchanging God in our rapidly changing world. Spiritual practice is more than just attending church. There are many spiritual practices that draw our attention to the activity of God in the world. It includes (but isn’t limited to) reading scripture, meditation, prayer time, reading devotions, prayer walks, daily conversation asking, “Where did you see God today?”, attending Bible studies, and, yes, attending church. Only when we engage in spiritual practice regularly, can we truly be “transformed by the renewing of our mind” so we can “know the will of God.” Remember, “this is our spiritual worship.”

*But spiritual practice is hard. How can I get better at it?*

- **Practice.** There is a reason they call it spiritual *practice*. Getting a consistent routine takes training and diligence, just like preparing for a race or sporting event. Like any other skill, the more we do it the easier it becomes.
- **Make it a regular part of life.** The best routine for you might be daily, every other day, or weekly. I am always in awe of the folks who start every day with “quiet time.” Personally, I aim for three or four, 10-15 minute sessions each week just before bed. This works best for me and feels achievable, especially when first establishing a routine.
- **Try a variety of practices.** There are many wonderful ways to connect with God because all God’s people are different. Try a few out. Not everyone is well suited to meditation. Not all people desire a prayer walk. Whichever you try, give it a few tries. It may take some time to feel comfortable.

So, how is your spiritual life? Whether it be rich and vibrant, dusty as an old closet, sparsely planted, or a pile of rubble, today is always a great day to dig deeper into the presence of God. My prayer is that you grow closer to God as you learn to communicate well with him.

Peace, *Interim Pastor Meggie*



**Galchutt-Emmanuel Ministry Office: (701) 553-8546**

Interim Pastor Meggie Bjertness; cell (701) 205-6803

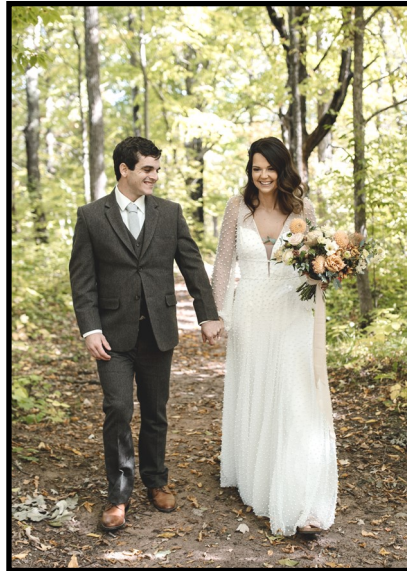
Admin. Asst. email: [emmanuelgalchutt@gmail.com](mailto:emmanuelgalchutt@gmail.com); Admin. Asst. cell (701) 640-7074

Website: <http://galchuttemmanuel.weebly.com/>

# EVENTS and ANNOUNCEMENTS!



The Lucky Leaf 4H Club of Colfax assembling LWR school kits. Thank you kids for helping LWR. (left & right)



Congratulations to Sophie Syvertsen and Logan Smith who were married on September 18th. Sophie is the daughter of Craig and Deb Syvertsen. (left)



Services on Sunday, September 27th, were at the Abercrombie Park Pavilion. The kids attending the mini-VBS days (above) sang at services along with us celebrating two baptisms and the conclusion of Pastor Meggie's internship (below).



Huxton Charles Leinen, son of Jim & Mardee Leinen, was baptized into the Emmanuel faith family. Welcome Huxton! (left)



Tate Thomas Besette, son of John & Kylie Besette, was baptized into the Emmanuel faith family. Welcome Tate! (above)





How many of you start each new year with resolutions to deepen your faith and wanting to become more diligent about reading devotions or scripture on a daily basis? Most of us know the basics from our years growing up in church and Sunday School. We often have good intentions to start new habits that



will improve our physical and spiritual well-being. We know we should commit to prayer more often, read the Bible, and share our time and talents with our church but, somewhere along the way, life intervenes and all our good resolutions slowly fade away. Honestly, all too often my faith walk happens only on Sundays or in trying times. Devotionals and prayer books work for some people, but not everyone. Everyone is different and I seem to need something that literally pops up on my phone in the morning and reminds me to take a couple minutes to stop, breathe, and read. There are apps for audio Bibles, reading plans, and devotions for those who rely on their smartphones or the internet. This past year should have given us the time and opportunities to try out either new methods or go back and rely on the past methods of just sitting down and taking a few minutes alone to gather our thoughts for the day. Unfortunately, that didn't always happen.

On the ELCA website there is an article entitled "Recommended Practices for Lifelong Faith Formation" where you can find practical resources to help you with your faith journey whether you are an individual, a household, a congregation, or a faith-filled community. They list recommended practices for all age levels from birth to seniors but are only suggested practices and are meant to be adapted as needed. The following four central faith formation components stand out:

- **Spiritual Practices** are activities undertaken with intentional awareness of the presence of the Holy. Individuals and communities use these practices to revere and rest in the mystery of the Divine. Used repeatedly, they foster a habit of attention to oneself, God, and neighbor.
- **Respectful Relationships** can be formed with family, friends, church staff, lay mentors, spiritual directors, and coaches. Healthy relationships always include trust, listening, challenge, compassion, and commitment to one another. Each person's location on her faith journey (e.g., wilderness or mountaintop) guides the interactions.
- **Guided Learning** happens when we visit and revisit Biblical stories, or hear and share each other's faith stories, with a sense of wonder and discovery. Guided learning is not simply about garnering knowledge, but also about wrestling with how to live faithfully each day.
- **Faith-filled Service** recognizes the need to act on behalf of one's beliefs. Whether or not the work is done outwardly in Jesus's name, the faith underlying the service makes it a demonstration of love for God and neighbor.

Found at <https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/ELCAfaithformation.pdf>.

Hopefully some of the suggestions in the above resource or some of the many apps found online or devotional books found in the churches can help you start a new habit. I am sure Pastor Meggie can direct you in other ways if you are interested in getting her assistance. Enjoy the fall and have a safe harvest season!

Lou Ann Lee



Due to COVID-19, the Colfax Community Center has lost revenue from building rentals. The Board of Directors feels the ability of having fundraisers is also compromised with the virus. We are asking community members to consider making a donation to the center for heating expenses this winter. The address is Colfax Community Center, PO Box 284, Colfax, ND 58018. Thank you

## SPIRITUAL PRACTICES



I get asked a lot: “What is a spiritual practice? I’ve never done much more than attend church.” As I mentioned in my opening devotion, spiritual practice is about connecting with God. Most involve some combination of reflecting on your own life and who God is and drawing connections between the two. Here is a list of some of my favorite spiritual practices:

- **Start the Day in Devotion or Prayer.** Many people prefer to start their day with God. Some use a daily devotional, such as “Jesus Calling” by Sarah Young, “Living Lutheran”, or other devotionals (available at your church). Some read and meditate on scripture. For myself, the morning has never worked. Rather, I spend the last 15 minutes of my day this way. There is no right or wrong. Any time of day can help encourage a peaceful, grateful mindset to engage a day in line with God.
- **Go for a Prayer Walk.** Spiritual practice doesn’t have to be stationary. Walking in a purposeful and conscious way can also become a spiritual practice. This is a favorite of mine. When the weather is nice, I choose a route I’m familiar with and pray as I walk: reflecting on my day, conversations I’ve had, people I’ve met, and news I’ve read while asking God to help me view the day through his eyes. I have also known people to do this when running, biking, snowboarding, or even from the seat of their tractor.
- **Take Short Spirit Breaks Throughout the Day.** Regular breaks throughout the day are terrific for short, calming meditations or prayer. That can mean a simple yoga stretch with deep breathing, sitting outside of the office in the sunshine for 5 minutes, or saying a prayer. Set a timer on your phone. Each time the alarm sounds, it’s time for a Holy Break!
- **Start a Prayer Journal.** Sometimes, I feel like I have too little or too much to pray. Writing it down is tremendously helpful! It can be a great time to count your blessings or to list the many people and events you wish to pray for. I recently started a prayer journal which I use each week. On Monday, I write down all the prayers I can think of. Then, each subsequent day I review the list, praying for each item and adding to it as new things come up. I also put a mark or note each time a prayer is answered. It is also fun to look back through time to see what you have prayed for and how God has been answering prayers!
- **Prayer and Art.** Many people find art helps them connect with God. Personally, I enjoy meditating on various icons from the Eastern Orthodox Tradition. The Catholic church and others also have many pieces of art that help imagine God’s work in the world. Even a simple Google search can help you find beloved, divinely-inspired art. Music is another treasure. I find that listening to Christian radio or a favorite music group gives me words of faith that get stuck in my head. Drawing, painting, singing, or even coloring books can all help us meditate with God.
- **Find a Spiritual Community.** Many of you already do this. Awesome! Asking spiritual questions with others keeps your head from becoming an echo chamber. God is too infinitely wonderful for any one mind to grasp, so it is important to seek God’s wisdom together. This might involve attending a church near you or digging deeper in the form of a small group or Bible study.
- **Ask each other, “Where did you see God today?”** This is a fun one, but particularly challenging. When you first begin, the answer might be “nowhere.” And this is normal. It takes time to train your eyes to see where God is active in the world. But God is out there. Keep looking! This is a fun one to do with kids too. They see God in all sorts of wonderful places!

Let me know if you need some other tips for increasing your spiritual life. Remember, spiritual practice is essential for our lives because it connects us to the unchanging God in our rapidly changing world.

*Interim Pastor Meggie*

# LWR News

## ***Packed and Ready to Go***

On Saturday, September 19th, the Lucky Leaf 4H Club headed by Cody Boehm collected school items, including those donated through the churches, and packed them into 42 kits for Lutheran World Relief. We really appreciate the efforts of this group of young people because every year they get together in the fall to make sure Lutheran World Relief school kits are ready to go out. We know that COVID-19 has made it much more difficult to collect kit items and yet, they are much needed throughout the world. For example, in northern Iraq, Lutheran World Relief reports that many families were unable to buy school supplies for their children because of the ISIS conflict. As a result, many students couldn't complete their schoolwork or had to skip school completely due to a lack of supplies. Your donations, the 4H club's donations, and the club's endeavor to pack the kits really make a difference in many children's lives. Check out the photos on page 2. *Linda Kuruc*

## ***LWR News re: Beirut Explosion***

On August 4th, an explosion from a warehouse storing explosives rocked the central district and port of Beirut, Lebanon, killing almost 200 people and injured 5,000 people. The LWR Quilters and Kit Maker Community Facebook page recently provided the following information:

### **BEIRUT BLESSING!!**

There is an update about the explosion last month at the port in Beirut, Lebanon. It appears that the three LWR containers were in a place at the port that provided some protection from the blast. The containers were damaged – but not completely destroyed, as initially believed.

This incredible news is still evolving. As we learn more, we will continue to keep our quilt and kit community updated. We will also continue to pray for the families who lost loved ones in the explosion.

The congregations directly involved are being contacted, but we know many churches are still closed -- so we also wanted to share the news here. Our hearts are overjoyed by your dedication and generosity in the face of tragedy. THANK YOU so all you do!

### **FAQ's**

1. When did LWR learn that some quilts and kits survived the explosion? **Answer:** On August 26, 2020, our partners on the ground in Beirut, finally got access to the port. Each carton of kits and each bale of quilts still needs to be assessed for damage.
2. How many quilts and kits survived the explosion? **Answer:** We don't know yet, but we know there will be enough for at least a modified distribution to take place.
3. How many quilts and kits were in the shipping containers? **Answer:** There were 22,500 quilts, 3,500 school kits, 19,500 personal care kits and 2,250 baby care kits included in those three containers.
4. Can we make Quilts and Kits to send to Beirut? **Answer:** The quilts and kits you make go to communities in need and some of them may go to Beirut. We are still assessing the situation to determine when another delivery of quilts and kits can take place.
5. Why was the container just sitting there full of supplies? **Answer:** The LWR containers had only arrived 6 days prior to the explosion and needed to be inspected, documented, and items prepped for distribution. This would be the same process for containers arriving here in the U.S.

**THANKS FOR ALL YOU DO TO SUPPORT OUR LWR WORK HERE AT HOME!** *Ellen Rittenhouse*

## Galchutt Lutheran Council Highlights—September 8, 2020



Galchutt Lutheran Church Council met on September 8th at 6:30 PM. Members present were Pamela Krump, Doug Johnson, Alex Paczkowski, Marissa Moxness, and Pastor Meggie. Pamela called the meeting to order. Pastor Meggie started with a devotion, scripture reading, and prayer. Alex read last month's minutes, Doug made motion to accept and Marissa seconded the secretary's report. There was no treasurer's report. **OLD BUSINESS:** Communion class will be held at Galchutt Church on September 10th with 4 students, possibly 6. Rally Sunday will be held September 13th at 10:30 AM at Galchutt. There will be no potluck after, instead one family will be providing the meal of scalloped potatoes, ham, and corn. Meal will cost around \$100 and they are asking for a free will donation to help cover the costs. Sara and Pastor Meggie are setting up the first communion during Rally Sunday service. There will be a joint service at the Abercrombie Park Pavilion on September 27 in honor of Pastor Meggie. There will be no communion that day. **NEW BUSINESS:** Pastor Meggie had 1 baptism and 1 funeral last month. Confirmation will start September 23rd. Live streaming on Facebook will continue. Discussion on the children's message during worship was held and a decision will be made at a later time if the children's message will start back up. Synod assembly was held on Zoom and a new bishop was elected. The church has a possible bat issue, Pamela bought a bat house and Doug will install. We will see if bat house works before calling the bat man. September 20th coffee after worship will start back up. Food will be allowed if it is store bought. Discussion was held if Pastor Meggie ever becomes ill or has to quarantine, at that time, pulpit supply will be found but if cancellation needs to occur, announcement will be made on Facebook and word of mouth. Alex made a motion to adjourn meeting and Pamela seconded. Meeting ended with Lord's Prayer. Next meeting is October 12th at 6:30 PM at Galchutt Church.

*Alex Paczkowski, Secretary*



World Communion Sunday offers congregations a distinctive opportunity to experience Holy Communion in the context of the global community of faith. The first Sunday of October has become a time when Christians in every culture break bread and pour the cup to remember and affirm Christ as the Head of the Church. On that day, they remember that they are part of the whole body of believers. Whether shared in a grand cathedral, a mud hut, outside on a hilltop, in a meetinghouse, or in a storefront, Christians celebrate the communion liturgy in as many ways as there are congregations. World Communion Sunday can be both a profound worship experience and a time for learning more about our wider community of faith.

*From [https://www.globalministries.org/special\\_days\\_wcs\\_world\\_communion\\_sunday\\_ideas](https://www.globalministries.org/special_days_wcs_world_communion_sunday_ideas)*

## Remembered in Prayer

- Our students, teachers, and leaders;
- Our nation as we approach election; may we treat our neighbors with respect even if they have different political views;
- Darlene Leland, as her health declines;
- Pastor Meggie as she moves forward with the next step in her pastoral life; and
- Our farmers and farm laborers as they work long hours during harvest.

**Attention: Are you soon leaving to go south for the winter? Please notify the office or email [lalee@rrt.net](mailto:lalee@rrt.net) so we don't mail your Echo to your present address and get it returned with postage due! Thank you.**

## Emmanuel Lutheran Council Highlights—September 1, 2020



The Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council met on September 1, 2020. In attendance were Sharon Tschakert, Fred Tol, Kevin Paczkowski, Jessica Kappes, Lesley Hulne and Pastor Meggie. Pastor Meggie gave devotions. The Secretary's report was given by Lesley and approved in a motion by Sharon and second by Fred. The Treasurer's report submitted by Lou Ann was reviewed. Jessica moved to accept the Treasurer's report and Meggie's mileage with a second by Sharon; motion carried to approve the Treasurer's Report and mileage.

The Pastor's report from Meggie:

- She attended the Synod Assembly in August and a new Synod Bishop was elected. Tessa Moon-Leiseth will begin her term as Bishop of the ELCA Eastern North Dakota Synod on November 1.
- Meggie has a plan going forward for Continuous Communion, which we will celebrate on September 13. We will resume the first and third Sunday Communion schedule in October.
- There will be a double baptism at the joint service in the Park on September 27.
- We will welcome new Members in October, on a Sunday to be determined.
- We talked about a children's message and possibly doing it virtually.
- A motion was made by Lesley and seconded by Jessica to agree to let the Dohman's use Emmanuel for their wedding on October 10.
- Confirmation Class will begin on September 23.

Stewardship & Worship Committees: No Report.

Education: Possible kids for Sunday School were discussed.

Property: The committee will contact people to assist with straightening the tombstones in the cemetery. New light fixtures for the entry were discussed and tabled. The landscaping project is looking great.

There was no old business.

New Business: Tessa will assist in obtaining prizes for the Raffle.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 6th at 6:30 PM.

A motion was made to adjourn by Fred and seconded by Sharon. The motion passed.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

*Lesley Hulne, Secretary*

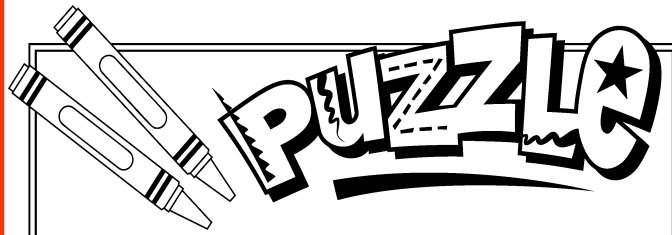
### Faith journey

A family was heading on vacation: two little ones were nestled in car seats; the van was packed. As Dad locked the house and Mom secured the garage, an adult neighbor the kids knew walked up and spoke through an open window. "Where are you going?" The kids shrugged. "Well, what road are you taking?" the friend asked with a knowing smile. Of course, they had no idea. "Do you know where you'll eat today, or where you'll spend the night?" Blank stares. Then the friend asked, "Who are you traveling with?" The children broke into grins and shouted, "Mommy and Daddy!"

On the journey of faith, we don't know precisely where we're headed or how all our needs will be met. But we know who we're traveling with: our loving God who is fully aware of the twists and turns ahead; the loving Parent who promises to care for us wherever we go.

*Published in: March 2019 in Newsletter*





# A PLANTING PARABLE

Jesus had to explain his Parable of the Sower to the confused disciples.

*Directions: Use the word bank to answer the clues. Then fill in the correct words below to complete Matthew 13:23, NIV.*

**WORD BANK:** sow, soil, wither, root, thorn, crop, seed, farmer

1. Plant part that absorbs water . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_
2. Contains what's needed to grow a plant . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_
3. To plant . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_
4. Sharp part of a plant . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is harvested. . . . . \_\_\_\_\_
6. To dry up and shrivel . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_
7. Person who plants . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_
8. The earth a plant grows in. . . . . \_\_\_\_\_

“But the 2 falling on good 8 refers to someone who hears the word and understands it.

This is the one who produces a 5, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was 3 n.”

MATTHEW 13:23, NIV

Answer: root, seed, soil, wither, farmer, soil, seed, soil, crop, sow, thorn, crop, wither, farmer, soil, seed, soil, crop, sow

## Kingfisher faith

In a video on his publisher’s website, Eugene Peterson tells of watching a kingfisher repeatedly dive for fish in a lake. Peterson counted 37 dives before the kingfisher caught its supper! “And he’s the king fisher!” Peterson

chuckles. From that bird-watching episode, he gleaned a ministry lesson: It may take a long time and many attempts — maybe dozens! — before something works out.

God calls us to live out his love faithfully, even when we don’t seem to be accomplishing anything. Maybe we extend 36 invitations to worship, work 36 monthly shifts at a food bank or utter 36 prayers without seeing results. “What’s the point?” we wonder. But the kingfisher urges us on: “Maybe number 37 is the charm!”

In the words of St. Paul (and mixing fishing and farming metaphors): “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9, NIV).



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4 <b>COMMUNION</b> Galchutt 9 AM Worship 9:45 S.School Emmanuel 10:30 AM Worship	5	6 Emmanuel Council Meeting 6:30 PM	7 AA Mtg 7PM @ Emmanuel Confirmation at O.S. 3:30 PM	8	9	10
11 Galchutt 9 AM Worship Emmanuel 10:30 AM Worship	12 Galchutt Council Meeting 6:30 PM	13	14 AA Mtg 7PM @ Emmanuel Confirmation at O.S. 3:30 PM	15	16	17
18 <b>COMMUNION</b> Galchutt 9 AM Worship 9:45 S.School Emmanuel 10:30 AM Worship	19 ECHO articles due TODAY RRQ QOV meets at Emmanuel	20 LWR Quilting at Emmanuel 9AM-3PM	21 AA Mtg 7PM @ Emmanuel	22	23	24
25 Galchutt 9 AM Worship Emmanuel 10:30 AM Worship Reformation Sunday	26	27	28 AA Mtg 7PM @ Emmanuel Confirmation at O.S. 3:30 PM	29	30	31 Reformation Day 

**Galchutt-Emmanuel Ministry Office: (701) 553-8546**  
 Interim Pastor Meggie Bjertness; cell (701) 205-6803  
 Admin. Asst. email: emmanuelgalchutt@gmail.com ; Admin. Asst. cell (701) 640-7074  
 Website: <http://galchuttemmanuel.weebly.com/>

**Galchutt-Emmanuel Ministry**

Emmanuel Lutheran Church      Galchutt Lutheran Church  
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## Just for Laughs.....

