



OUR VISION STATEMENT

To become a vibrant, benevolent congregation that serves God's creation both locally and globally.

A congregation that offers meaningful and inspirational ministries and worship for all ages that honor and praise God while maintaining the feel of an intimate family in Christ.

Also, a congregation that provides opportunities for all to be involved in ministries and programs that foster the development of gifts in all people needed to sustain and expand God's mission.

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The Church and Money: Never About Coercion, Always About Mission!

“For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has – not according to what one does not have.”

– II Corinthians 8:12, an excerpt from the epistle reading for The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, June 27, 2021

The eighth chapter of Second Corinthians is a classic Bible text on the subject of generosity. It is a favorite of pastors when preaching about stewardship. St. Paul encourages the Corinthian church to join with other churches that he has visited on his missionary journey to honor commitments to participate in the collection he is organizing for the poor and needy Christians in Jerusalem by reminding them that they have received abundantly and should share abundantly too. If we had not set aside June 26/27 as PRIDE Sunday, I would surely have been preaching on this text at this moment in the life of LCR. Why?...

Of late, I have heard quite a bit of concern from our members about the number of times that our church has been asking for money. Some members have spoken the words, “giving fatigue.” In my years with LCR, this concern has been raised from time to time. I am aware that we have had quite a number of fundraising appeals since the pandemic began. Please oblige me an explanation and some reminders about faithful stewardship...and let me give you permission to celebrate and congratulate yourselves. (Yes, I know that it is hard for humble Lutherans to do that!)

My father-in-law owned a stand in the Fulton Fish Market in New York City for all of his adult life. Each year the Mafia would come around to collect his “offering” at Christmas time. I remember one year when his “contribution” was deemed insufficient and sometime later he found four tires on his van slashed when he was ready to leave work! The unspoken message was clear; his “gift” was too small! There is a word for that kind of “fundraising.” It is called coercion. I would add that it is generally effective. My father-in-law’s Christmas gift the next year was far more generous...and he didn’t have to buy new tires for his work vehicle to boot!

Yes, our church has talked about generosity a lot in the past year. The reason is that there have been ample *opportunities for the mission of the gospel*. I stress the word “opportunity” because Christian stewardship of our blessings enables us to live into our faith. We never use guilt, compunction, necessity, or demand in our solicitations. We only ask that our members give as they are able. Our giving strategy does not come out of the Mafia manual for generous giving, but rather, out of the Bible. Later in this same letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul notes, “God loves a cheerful giver.” (II Corinthians 9:7) Those words are not an oxymoron for Christians!

(continued on next page)

The Church and Money: Never About Coercion, Always About Mission! (continued)

Since the pandemic began, we have raised over \$45,000 for the CARES I campaign. That offering was primarily geared toward those who got government relief checks and didn't want them or need them, but rather wanted to help others who were needy (think Corinthian Christians and Jerusalem Christians) in six of our partner ministries. In November we received nearly \$30,000 of gifts for our annual hunger emphasis. LCR has a culture and passion for confronting hunger in the world and in our neighborhood. Last winter, we received nearly \$28,000 (\$12,000 directly to CARES and \$16,000 to designated outreach ministries) in giving to the CARES II campaign. Since our government insisted on being "generous" again, many of our members responded in kind. We received nearly \$4,000 of Lenten offerings to benefit Tikkun Farm. In Phase I of the Jubilee Campaign, we received \$420,000 of pledges and the latest accounting for Phase II of the Jubilee Campaign amounts to about \$58,000. *Together* (I emphasize the word together because we are not Phase I and Phase II congregations. We are, rather, the Body of Christ together.) we retired the mortgage and raised funds for significant current needs. So in the past sixteen months when LCR members have had a number of invitations to give faithfully to the mission of our church, we have received gifts totaling \$585,000 over and above our operating fund giving.

Let me repeat that number; \$585,000!!! Friends, there is nothing to feel guilty about if you could not contribute to every appeal. (News alert; the Kelly and Zorn families do not contribute to every appeal.) Rather, this is something to celebrate! We changed lives by our generosity in the past sixteen months and we freed ourselves from the bondage of a mortgage, giving us the wherewithal for continued ability to change lives in the future for the sake of the gospel. If you missed worship on June 19/20, please access Pastor Streng's sermon on our website and listen to his admonition. While paying off the mortgage relieved us of an obligation, his great joy was for the possibilities of our future mission.

Our Church Council, with assistance from our Long Range Planning Committee and Stewardship Committee, will be inviting you to participate in a forum over the summer to hear about our dream list for future mission and to offer your feedback. Yes, paying off our mortgage in advance will save us about \$40,000 of interest cost, but far more importantly, it will provide us with \$100,000 of funds for our mission in 2022 and every year thereafter. That is, of course, if your faithful giving to LCR remains the same, and dare I say, even grows because you believe in the mission of our church "for you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." (II Corinthians 8:9)

Clearly, none of what we accomplished *together* in the last year would have happened had we not asked you to be generous. I welcome any conversation and debate that you would like to have about this subject and when you feel like our church is asking too often, please do not hesitate to let us know. However, in all of the love that I have for you, and because of the clarity of Scripture on the practice of generosity, things will not likely change very much.

Please do not underestimate yourselves! When my colleagues ask me how LCR can do so much in its mission (especially during a pandemic!), I offer a simple answer: We are a wealthy congregation *and* we are a faithful congregation. When you combine those two things for the Kingdom, watch out!

I leave you with one of my favorite and most compelling teachings about Christian stewardship that I learned from our former bishop, Callon Holloway. I'll adapt it for the story that I shared about my father-in-law. At Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, we are not the Mafia and you will not be coerced into giving enough. Rather, in the words of the good bishop, "Give until it feels good." Don't give too little because you'll feel guilty. Don't give too much because you'll feel resentful. When Goldilocks meets Jesus, we give until it feels good. When I take a moment to step back and consider what we have done for the mission of the gospel since the pandemic began, *I feel really good!*

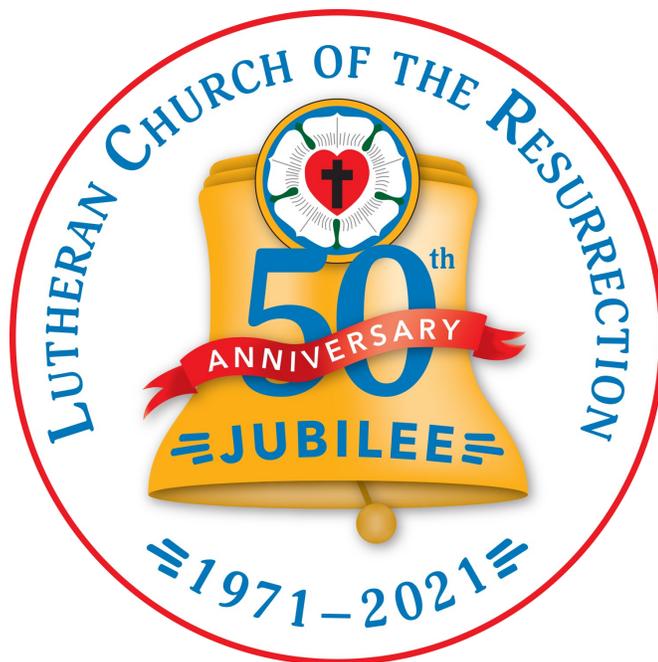
In Christ,

Pastor Zorn

Jubilee Year Update: Celebrating After a Pandemic!

And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family.
– Leviticus 25:10

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary from November 2020 through November 2021, we will provide an article in the Ramblings each month to highlight upcoming events and provide any required details to help the congregation join in the festivities. Again, we remind you that if you have adult children who grew up in the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection community, please keep them informed. Also be reminded that we have established a 50th anniversary landing page on our web site (<https://www.lcresurrection.org/50thAnniversary>) that has the calendar for the entire year.



We Celebrated A Big Father's Day Weekend!

On June 18, we hosted the Northern Kentucky Brotherhood Singers. The concert was soothing, engaging, and spirited. There were many guests in attendance; thank you for inviting friends! In a special rendition of Amazing Grace, Kay Luccasen made the Brotherhood singers sound great! Thanks to Diane Ross and her crew for providing a great time of fellowship after the concert. Thanks to DellAnn and Bob Sathe for hosting this wonderful event!

Over the weekend, we welcomed back Pastor Streng and Marie. Quite a number of LCR alumni attended worship. The emotion of having the Strengs back with us was beyond words. The love, community, Spirit, and joy that filled the sanctuary was alive and palpable. Pastor Streng offered a meaningful sermon reminding us that paying off the mortgage is only fulfilling an obligation. The real benefit is that we are freed for the future of our mission. If you were not present in worship or on the livestream, be sure to listen to his sermon, available on our website.

Jubilee Year Events in July

On the weekend of **July 10/11**, we will welcome a visit from Deacon Diane Schwiger-Alexander, our former Director of Congregational Ministries and Associate in Ministry from 1997-2012. Diane will preach at all of our worship services and be available for fellowship after the Sunday morning 9:30 a.m. worship service.

Our 50 West Craft Beer Festival will take place on **Sunday, July 18**. There will be one worship service this weekend and it will be held on site at the brewery at 10am. There will be good food and family fun for all at the 50 West brewery. We will have a commemorative beer stein, compliments of Thrivent Financial, for each family in attendance. **Please see the rsvp form in this edition of Ramblings (page 5) and be sure to respond by July 4.** We cannot take reservations after that date because of arrangements needed for the buffet lunch.

Meal Packing Event

The meal packing event with Northern Kentucky Hunger Relief has been rescheduled a second time. It is now set for Saturday, **September 11**. Please mark the date on your calendars.

The Long Range Planning Committee

Loraine Everett, John Fireovid, Kathy Meyer, and Pastor Zorn

A Heavenly Banquet of Mismatched Chairs and Tablesettings

I am writing this just after our beautiful weekend of Jubilee celebration with Pr. Erv and Marie Streng. The Spirit was palpable as we worshiped together. There are a million things I could say about sharing in this special weekend. Yet, I keep coming back to Erv's sermon.

I'm not sure what I expected his message to be. Pr. Zorn worked with Erv in crafting worship so I was a blank slate as Erv stepped to the makeshift pulpit music stand in the Memorial Garden at 8am. Midway through Erv's proclamation, I thought, "He's leaving it all on the court, holding nothing back." Erv poured out the depth and richness and meaning of nearly 90 years of Gospel living and nearly 70 years of ministry. Erv was clear with me before the service that he didn't think he'd get to be back to LCR again. And, as he preached, I was struck that he may have been sharing his last act of public proclamation with us. I was humbled by his beautiful gift of wisdom and lived-faith to us.

As the morning and day went on, I found myself wondering what must it be to craft a final public sermon to a dear people you love? After 1000s of messages, how does one decide the theme of a possible last? What beats at the heart of faith and ministry that aches to be proclaimed one more time?

Doubtless such a task is the work of the Holy Spirit and a labor of love. I think we all felt that in Erv's words. I was deeply moved by Erv's witness and call to pollinate the world with God's love.

I found myself wondering what Word burns in my bones that would ache to be told one more time?

Lord willing, that sermon is far off still for me. But the question has been haunting me all week -- what beats at the heart of the gospel as I have experienced it in relationship with God in my 40 years?

The Word I'd preach with the wisdom of elder years may be different from the wisdom of my middle years. Maybe I'd just have more examples from which to draw;) As I've reflected on this question this week, it is the wideness of God's mercy and love that keep coming to me.

My spiritual journey has felt like a string of stretching exercises. God reveals a wideness and inclusiveness that is just beyond my comfort zone time and again and I am pushed to stretch, to widen my understanding of just how expensive is God's love. Every time I think I've reached an understanding of the finite limit of the size of the table for the heavenly banquet, God brings someone new (with vastly different life experience) to pull up a chair and introduce themselves to me and I have to rethink the table; I have to acquaint myself with new possibilities of who is invited to the feast and how I am called to love.

I think of a dining table surrounded by mismatched chairs. What a beautiful thing is God's feast eaten by rag-tag, mismatched, thoroughly diverse beloveds!

It's scary too, though.

I have to leave my comfort zone and all I think I know about God to encounter God in unexpected form. I have to engage the radical call of the wideness of God's mercy.

That radical call to love isn't only for those we encounter or in the world. Sometimes the hardest person to extend God's radical love to -- is ourselves. We are tempted to imagine God's banquet as one for the pristine or for others. We struggle to know that there is a mismatched chair with our name on it in the heavenly realms. We forget that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus.

Sometimes on the journey we are stretched to love unexpected neighbors; sometimes we are stretched to know that we are beloved ourselves.

There is an unfathomable wideness in God's mercy.

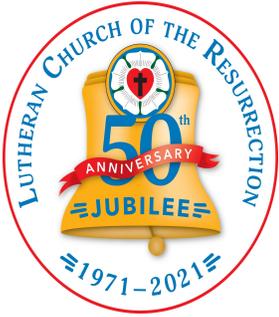
God delights in our uniqueness as his children.

God loves us in all our messiness even beyond the reach of death through Christ.

In lives of faith, God stretches us to do and share this good news likewise -- and it is the hardest, most amazing journey there is.

Similarly, go into the world as resurrected butterflies to pollinate the world with God's love. I think I heard that somewhere recently;)

<>< Pr Nicole



LCR 50th Anniversary Celebration

At

Fifty West Brewing Company

7605 Wooster Pike



Sunday, July 18, 2021

10am—4pm

Event Schedule:

10:00 am: Worship. There will be NO Saturday or Sunday 8am worship that weekend

11:30 am - 1:30 pm: Catered buffet lunch

12:30 pm - 3:00 pm: Outdoor games and activities for adults and kids with adjacent bike trail available for biking and walking. Space has been reserved for LCR activities such as pickleball, cornhole, and spikeball.

After 3:00 pm: Anyone interested in a late afternoon 16 mile bike and brew ride to Miamiville Trailyard, contact Cindy Zorn

RSVP REQUIRED

LCR will be sponsoring the catered lunch that will be served from 11:30—1:30. You will be responsible for purchase of your own beverages. Appetizers, side dishes, and desserts will be provided with the meal. Please RSVP by **July 4**.

Reservations CANNOT be accepted after July 4

Please choose from the following main courses. Please choose one main course item/person.

Names of all attendees: _____

BBQ:

_____ Pulled Pork

_____ Pulled Chicken

Grill:

_____ Hamburger

_____ Hot Dog

_____ Portabella Mushroom

****Remember to choose one main course option for every person attending!**

Return your RSVP to the Church office by July 4.

RECONCILING IN CHRIST (RIC)

It's hard to believe that it is already July – a time when we celebrate Fourth of July also known as Independence Day. It also means summer is here!

When thinking about July 4th, the Declaration of Independence naturally comes to mind and what this document says to all of us.

The Declaration of Independence states three basic ideas: (1) God made all men (people) equal and gave them the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; (2) the main business of government is to protect these rights; (3) to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men (people) deriving their just powers from the consent of the people – that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends it is the right of the people to lay a foundation and organize its power in such form as to effect their safety and happiness.

I then searched for thoughts on the Declaration of Independence from LGBTQIA+ people. Shauna Marie O'Toole is a transgender activist who has organized and attended countless rallies and lobbied New York State lawmakers for legal protections.

Convinced that “no amount of science” would win over her opponents, she decided that an “emotional statement” was needed, one drawing upon words as rooted as any in American history. Here are her words:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all people, regardless of race, gender, religion, immigration or economic status, sexual orientation or gender identity, are created equal, that they are endowed by their government with certain unalienable Rights, that among them are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

For O'Toole the Declaration of Independence is more than an old document for students to memorize. It's a starting point for seekers of social justice.

LCR's Welcome Statement sounds a lot like O'Toole's Declaration of Independence and we are seekers of social justice. It also means that we as disciples of Jesus may be called upon to advocate for those who have no voice and call out and address injustices against others.

Welcome Statement of LCR:

We welcome all people created in the image of God, Creator of the universe inclusive of:
 race, culture, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression;
 relationship or social status; abilities or disabilities;
 outcast or stranger; typical or atypical skills;
 how the world describes you or you describe yourself.

We invite those sure in who they are, those still seeking and those looking for a church that believes in a loving, non-judgmental, safe, inclusive, grace-filled God and a beloved community that reflects those values.

Because God loves us unconditionally, we share our Christian love through acceptance, inclusion and understanding. We welcome you to share yourself, your time and talents with the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, a part of God's universal Church. God made each of us unique and we share our diversity here.

ALL are welcome in this place.

This July let us keep our government officials and all those in power in our prayers as our country continues to wrestle with social justice for all.

Happy Fourth of July Beloved Community!



We are a
RECONCILING *in* CHRIST
Congregation

Summer Spiritual/Wellness Practice on the Virtual Camino



Are you familiar with the ancient pilgrim path *El Camino de Santiago*? *El Camino*, for short, is a pilgrimage route through Spain and part of France. It is one of three major medieval pilgrim routes. The Way of Saint James, in English, is a network of pilgrimages leading to the shrine of the apostle Saint James in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain, where tradition holds that the remains of the saint are buried. This path is still in use today. The path is 482 miles in total. Many walk all or part of the path as a spiritual pilgrimage or spiritual retreat.

I love the idea of pilgrimage. There is deep value in connecting bodily movement with spiritual attention, prayer, and reflection. I recently discovered an app called, "Camino for Good," (available for Apple and Android users) that is a virtual experience of *El Camino*. You use a pedometer (or other means) to track your own mileage of walking, running, or biking, input your miles into the app, and it tracks it along the real *El Camino* route. You can see your progress as you go. The app doesn't only track miles, however. It is loaded with pictures and information about *El Camino* that "unlocks" and becomes available as you reach new destinations along the path, so that it really is like a virtual

experience of the pilgrim way. You can access and track miles via the website, <https://caminoforgood.com/>, too.

The actual Camino is sustained by the donations of pilgrims who walk the path. This virtual pilgrimage was created as a way to support the pilgrim path during the Covid shutdown. You can try the app for free, but will be asked to pay \$60 for the full version after the first 5 miles. The proceeds go to support and maintain the pilgrimage while the path is shut down for safety during the pandemic. You can learn more and see FAQs on their website.

If you are a runner, walker, or cyclist or if you are interested in challenging yourself and deepening your spirituality this summer, this might be just the thing! Contact me if you'd like to participate. I am creating a list of those who are participating for those who might like a walking/running buddy and to share insights and encouragement along the way.

<><Pr. Nicole

coming
soon

50TH ANNIVERSARY MURAL

Remember the mural in the back of the church which Paul

Oman painted for us a number of years ago? He is creating one for LCR's 50th Anniversary and you can be a part of painting it! The project will kick off Orange Sunday, August 29. Watch for more details about this family friendly event.



The next Enter the Silence, Awaken the Spirit contemplative service will be on **Tuesday, July 13** at 7pm via Facebook Live



GATHER CINCINNATI

Gather Cincinnati is a new faith community of young adults from around the Cincinnati area. It is a space for anyone who identifies as a young adult. For people who want to ask questions and dive deep together. Our summer worship gathering will be socially distanced and outdoors on Sunday, July 11th, 5:30-7:00 pm at Christ the King Lutheran Church (7393 Dimmick Rd, West Chester Township, OH 45069). We'll share dinner together, sing, pray, and engage in intentional conversation. We'd love to connect with you, please reach out here if you're interested in faith community with other Cincinnati area young adults:

<https://forms.gle/RU4c73Egmg1kjc6A8>.

Lutheranism 101 - NEW MEMBER CLASS

-Pastor Zorn

Introduction to Lutheranism and LCR classes will take place on Monday evenings (mostly, with some on Tuesday or Wednesday) from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. beginning on **August 30** and ending on **October 26**. The classes cover topics including the Bible, Church and Lutheran history, Lutheran doctrine, Lutheran worship and the church year, and the history of Lutheran Church of the Resurrection. The classes are an excellent refresher even for those who are lifelong Lutherans. If you are interested in joining the classes please notify the church office so that material can be procured for you. If necessary, I will offer the classes in a hybrid format, combining in-person participants and Zoom, virtual participants. If you are interested in the Zoom format, please be sure to let me know.

Endowment Funds Available...

Do you have ideas for outreach to the community or a way to enhance LCR's mission in the community? The LCR Endowment Committee is pleased to announce the availability of \$1,400 to make grants for these purposes. The committee intends to make more than one grant with this current year's amount.

Examples of projects or efforts the Endowment Fund has supported in the past include: Habitat for Humanity, First Lutheran church in OTR, Guatemala outreach, hospitality benches in the narthex, the columbarium towers, IPM's mobile food pantry, the hand bells, Memorial Garden benches and the Outreach freezer.

A simple application form is available from the church office and will be due no later than September 1 to the church office. Contact Jim Michaelis or Mary Ann Mette with questions.

What's New in the ELCA?

By Julie Pahutski, Mission Interpreter

This month, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton shared an interesting perspective on stewardship. Since I have been a Lutheran for 59 years I sometimes feel like I have heard everything there is to say about stewardship! However, I found her piece thought-provoking and, dare I say, educational.

Bishop Eaton reminds us of the difficulties with starting the early church after Jesus ascended. Paul spent over a year and a half establishing a church in Corinth. The Corinthians were undisciplined and argumentative about what it meant to be a true Christian. When a famine hit Jerusalem, Paul encouraged generosity among the church members in Corinth, and a new definition of self-sufficiency. Bishop Eaton writes:

"By the time Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, self-sufficiency meant not just having enough for oneself, but having enough to give away to others. One could have all the wealth and power and status in the world, but if one didn't share it with others, the person was not self-sufficient.

"Stewardship is a deeply spiritual act. It moves us out of ourselves and toward the neighbor in need. It glorifies God. It brings freedom from wealth and status. It unclenches our hands and hearts. It lets us rest in the promise of God's abundance."

You can read Bishop Eaton's entire statement at ELCA.org.



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**



Dear LCR members & friends,

Thank you for all the prayers, kind thoughts, and cards. This has been a difficult road for me but I am doing somewhat better, however my road will take many months still for recovery. Thanks for to you all!

God bless LCR!

Bonnie Jean Birr

Thank you for all the wisdom, muscle and energy that helped make our Reception for our Brotherhood Concert: Åsa Durtsche, Phyliss and Ed Hiestand, Teresa and Steve Ahrenholz, Madi Boren, Pam Park and Barb Schmidt. It was warming to spend time with everyone !

Diane Ross

Dear LCR,

What a joy and delight to be able to visit, even briefly, with our beloved LCR family and friends and to celebrate 50 years of service to our God. Thanks to all who made it such an inspiring experience. Your loving embrace was especially meaningful after the isolation of Covid - 19. Our hearts overflow in love and thanksgiving to God to be able again to glimpse your faithful commitment to your call to ministry and mission. We hold you warmly in our hearts and prayers.

LOVE, JOY & PEACE,

Erv & Marie Streng

Dear LCR,

Bruce & I visited June today. Seeing how many LCR members sent cards to June for her 95th birthday "made our hearts sing". The response was overwhelming, and to be honest - we really were taken aback. Few cards had been open, so we opened them for her. Sadly, her memory is so bad now that I don't believe any of it registered with her.

We feel as if we're a part of a wonderful LCR family. Seeing all the cards and feeling all the love, just reaffirmed those feelings and sense of belonging for us.

We are truly blessed to belong to such a great congregation with such caring people.

Thanks so much,

Steph & Bruce Laybourne

To the congregation of the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection

We are most grateful for your generous donation to the SEM Food Pantry. Our pantry is growing daily in serving low income families in our community. Numbers of clients who reside in Mr. Washington area and have no means of transportation, are increasing due to our convenient location for them. We are in our second week of in person client shopping and the process is going smoothly. Please know you are all helping us grow and, in turn, helping needy families put healthy food on their tables.

Sincerely,

SEM Food Pantry



BAPTISM: We celebrate with **Lori & Michael Carpenter** and grandparents **Rick and Chris Schmidt** on the baptism of **Madison Carpenter and Michael Carpenter III**.

MARRIAGE: We celebrate with **John & Donna Johnston** on the marriage of their daughter, **Sally Johnston to Tom Ware**.

MONDAY MEALS

Monday Meals will be restarting on

September 27th!

MM is a community dinner held at LCR usually on the last Monday of each month from 6:00-7:00. A home cooked meal with fellowship is provided. Everyone is welcome!



Volunteers are needed to donate food, set-up, serve, and clean up. This is a wonderful opportunity to help others in our community. We would love to have you join us! Please contact Jolie Prasser (jolieprasser@gmail.com) if you are interested in

RAMBLINGS is a monthly publication from Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, a congregation of the Southern Ohio Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Ramblings: E-mail: karen@lcresurrection.org

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

Lutheran Church of the Resurrection strives to be:
A COVENANT based congregation, NURTURING
spiritual growth and WELCOMING all into Christ's
community through
Word, sacrament and love.



Lutheran Church of the Resurrection

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran church in America

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