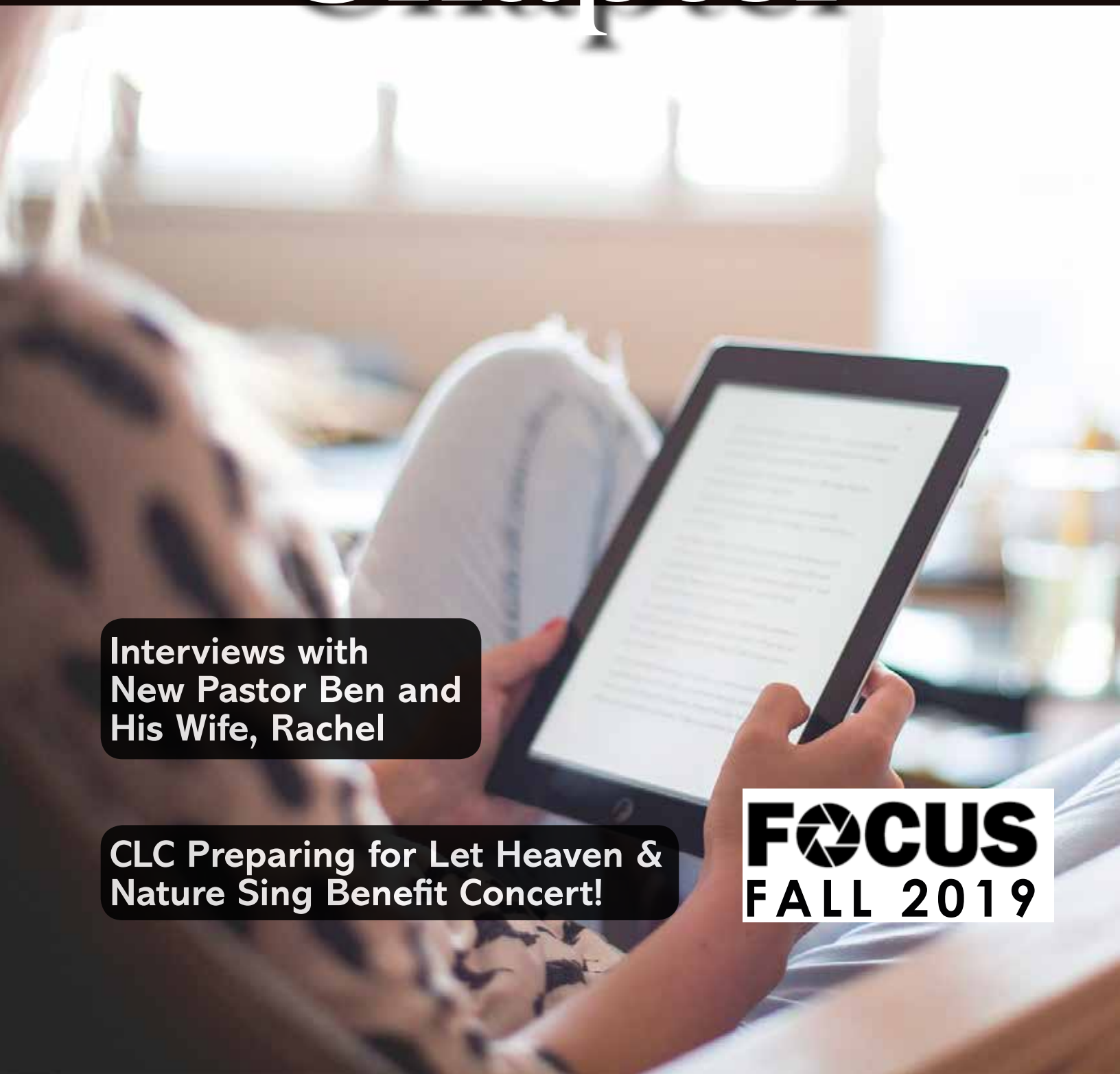
The Next Chapter



Interviews with New Pastor Ben and His Wife, Rachel

CLC Preparing for Let Heaven & Nature Sing Benefit Concert!

FOCUS
FALL 2019

Please join
Community Lutheran Church for our

Christmas Benefit Concert

let HEAVEN & nature Sing

Led by CLC Celebration Choir and Orchestra

Dec. 13 and 14 at 7:00 P.M.
Dec. 15 at 2:00 P.M.

Christmas Boutique & Bake Sale (with gourmet section) open two hours before concert. On Sunday, both open throughout the day.

Admission is free
Donations accepted for the following local charities:
Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, Carolyn's Kids Closet, Vets for Abandoned pets, & Family Promise

COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
3720 E. Tropicana Ave. Las Vegas, NV 89121

Real People. Inclusive God. Radical Grace.
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December Happenings

- **Advent Services** - Wednesdays December 4, 11, & 18 at 12 noon with lunch following.
- **1st Thursday Family Night - Pancakes and PJs Christmas Party** - December 5 from 6-7:45 P.M.
- **Let Heaven & Nature Sing Benefit Concert** - Friday, December 13 and Saturday, December 14 at 7 P.M; Sunday, December 15 at 2 P.M.
- **Chili Cook-off and Praise Team Sing-Along** Thursday, December 19 from 6-8 P.M.
- **Fifth Sunday Cabaret** - Sunday, December 29 - 2 P.M.

Christmas Service Times

- Christmas Eve, December 24: 3 P.M. Family Service
- 4:30 P.M. Celebration Choir led service
- 6 P.M. Praise Team led service
- 7:30 and 9 P.M. services with special musical guests
- Christmas Day, December 25: ONE morning service at 10 A.M.

You are always welcome at Community Lutheran Church!

COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
EL SALVADOR MISSION TRIP

DATES FOR SUMMER 2020
COMING SOON!

I've"*Ben*" Thinking

Fall 2019

It is great to be back in Las Vegas and even better to back at Community Lutheran Church! In 1998, I arrived in Las Vegas as a wide-eyed, know it all, freshly ordained pastor. Las Vegas was a boomtown in the late 1990s. The city was growing at 10,000 residents a month and there was new construction everywhere. Even so, Community Lutheran Church had already established itself as a church that served the entire valley and a shining example of what "church" could be to the entire Lutheran Church in the United States.

Earlier this year, I was surprised to hear that Dr. Mark was retiring and my name had been dropped as a potential candidate to be the next senior pastor. Most of you know that I am the third senior pastor in the 46 year history of Community Lutheran Church of this congregation. I am honored to serve this church and continue the work of Pr. Ray and Dr. Mark. Thank you for entrusting me to be your pastor and your shepherd as we write the next chapter of the story called "Community Lutheran Church."

My hope and prayer is that this magazine will fill you with both joy and love!

Never forget the words of Nehemiah from the Old Testament, "For the joy of the Lord is your strength." Nehemiah 8:10 Nehemiah reminded the people of Israel that joy is stronger than happiness because it is not dependent upon our circumstances. Joy comes from our connection to God.

Enclosed you will discover some of the wonderful ministries that makes this church a place of joy.

Please share this publication with someone you know. As our founding pastor always reminded us: "Share the Joy."

God bless you,
Pr. Ben Bergren

FOCUS

FALL 2019

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FOCUS

COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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www.communitylv.org

BE PART OF THE STORY

WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS. A GOOD WAY TO CONNECT IN A CHURCH IS TO SERVE. WE'D LOVE FOR YOU TO JOIN US:

Ushers, Greeters, and Communion Assistants

Choir and Praise Team Singers and Musicians

Children, Youth, and Family Workers

Here 4 U (Collecting and Distributing donated items to our many ministries)

Altar Guild

Kitchen Crew

Seeds of Faith
(Our landscaping team)

to name a few.

An Interview with Pastor Ben and Mrs. Pastor Ben, Rachel

By ***Bruce Ewing***

One of my favorite recent tasks was being asked to interview Pastor Ben for this issue of the FOCUS! I have known Pastor Ben for 20 years. I consider the man to be one of my brothers! I wanted to keep my interview of Pastor Ben light and fun, so that we all could get to know him a little better… and I decided to also interview his lovely wife, Rachel, so you could all get to know her too! The Bergrens are two of my favorite people in the world — and I couldn't be happier that they are coming to our church home! (Warning — Pastor Ben and I have always played this game, where we coyly turn a conversation about anything into being about "me". I couldn't do this interview with the Bergrens without also making it about me — at least a little! Please forgive!)

PASTOR BEN BERGREN, Senior Pastor of Community Lutheran Church of Las Vegas.
Where were you born? Rockford, Illinois
What was your greatest accomplishment as a student? Graduating Seminary
What was the most embarrassing moment you had as a young person? Calling my first grade teacher, Miss Booth "mom"
Three words to describe yourself… Joyful, approachable, strategic
Three words to describe your spouse… Beautiful, dynamic, kind
Three words to describe Bruce Ewing…Hmmmm… funny, caring and thoughtful. If you

want more words, just come find me. I have lots more!

Your favorite color? Ummm, I don't really have a favorite color.

Your favorite food? BBQ… seriously, if you can recommend any great BBQ joints, let me know. Ask me about my connection to Memphis BBQ on Warm Springs.

Your favorite cookie? A good almond cookie from a good Chinese restaurant is always a nice surprise!

Your favorite dessert? My wife makes the best banana bread with pecans and dark chocolate chips.

Your favorite ice cream flavor? If I could eat it without gastric distress, I would choose chocolate chip.

Your favorite vacation destination so far? Anywhere Rachel is. Besides that, we went to Puerto Vallarta last year for the first time and we would totally go back.

What would be your preferred super-power?

Joy. If I could supernaturally spread joy, I would choose that. Or fly.

Top Three bucket-list vacation destinations? Israel, Sweden, Ireland…but I hate flying. I fly quite a bit, but I am not a fan.

Top Five books that you've read?

1. The Ragamuffin Gospel by Brendan Manning
2. The Cost of Discipleship by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
3. Life Together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
4. The Shack by William P. Young
5. The Myth of Equality by Ken Wytsma

What is the 3rd book from the top in the pile of books you want to read? I want to reread a Lyle Schaller book that I've had on my shelf but it is down the list.

Favorite music genre? Jazz as in Bill Evans, Miles Davis and John Coltrane.

Favorite musical artist? Most likely Bill Evans. I am also partial to Elton John.

Your dream car? My first car. It was a 1967 Cutlass Supreme.

Favorite memory of Las Vegas? Taking a plane ride with Peter Christenson who flew Rob Zahn and myself to Sedona for breakfast and then we flew back home to Vegas!

Funniest memory of Las Vegas? Anytime that Bruce, Greg Davis, Rob Zahn or I were together in any configuration. We were always laughing and joking about something.

Funniest memory of Bruce Ewing? Ask Bruce about his "Soup Du Jour" story. I still laugh when he tells it.

Favorite small town in the USA? Winchester, Wisconsin

Favorite Bible Verse? "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." Galatians 5:6

Inspiring quote that moves you forward? "Time to make the donuts" taken from an early 1980's Dunkin Donuts commercial. I often say that before tackling a task or getting up in the morning.

Favorite meal you love to cook? Lemon Oregano Chicken (fancy) or chicken and noodles (comfort food)

Favorite meal that your spouse makes? Italian Beef

Favorite dining experience? Lawry's Prime Rib on Flamingo

Guilty pleasure (TV)? Anything on HGTV

Guilty pleasure (Food)? A medium rare rib-eye steak with grilled onions and a baked potato.

Foods you will not or cannot eat? Dairy… I am allergic. Not a fan of mushrooms. If there are mushrooms on my salad, I give Rachel my "salad fungus."

Cookies you will not or cannot eat? I'll choke down most any cookie in an emergency.

Desserts you will not or cannot eat? See

above… cheesecake is a definite pass.

Dog or cat? Dogs of course. I must balance Bruce's cat collection a little bit.

Last movie you've seen? "Giant" with Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor and James Dean

All-time favorite movie? That is hard. I'll list a few, "The Godfather" "Where Eagles Dare" and "The Caine Mutiny"

What would be your preferred super-power? Joy. If I could supernaturally spread joy, I would choose that. Or fly.

Favorite holiday? Easter!

If you had a warning label, what would it say? Caution: Pastor Ben is known to have a wicked sense of humor. Thankfully he knows discretion.

Top three people (alive or dead) that you would want to meet up with for coffee? Jesus of course. Saint Paul and John Adams our second president.

What is one thing you will never do again? Bend over and touch my toes. I can get close… but it was always a challenge even as a kid. I tell everyone at the gym "I have tight hamstrings."

Where do you want to take Bruce Ewing for lunch after you get settled? - Because we both need to take care of ourselves, I will take Bruce to Sweet Tomatoes.

RACHEL BERGREN (aka Mrs. Pastor Ben) Employed as CPO (Chief Programs Officer) at The Marine Mammal Center

Where were you born? Galesburg, Illinois

What was your greatest accomplishment as a student? I excelled in the sciences and was most proud when I completed my undergraduate degree in Marine Biology and my M.S. in Biology.

What was the most embarrassing moment you had as a young person? I once fell asleep during class in grade school—I'm pretty sure it was because I took some allergy medicine for "hay fever" (as we used to call it) and it made me super sleepy. I think it was math class too, which was definitely not my top subject. However, it was one of my all-time favorite teachers and I was always such a good student, so waking up to him calling on me during class was pretty embarrassing.

Three words to describe yourself? Compassionate, patient, resilient

Inspiring quote that moves you forward?

Progress…Not Perfection

Three words to describe your spouse? Loyal, committed, funny

Three words to describe Bruce Ewing? Talented, generous, kind

Your favorite color? Any shade of blue and coral

Your favorite food? All of the foods. But, if I absolutely had to choose…pizza.

Your favorite cookie? Iced Gingerbread

Your favorite dessert? Homemade coconut cream pie

Your favorite ice cream flavor? Mint Oreo

Your favorite vacation destination so far? Puerto Vallarta

Top three bucket-list vacation destinations? Greece, Sweden, Iceland

Top 5 books that you've read?
The Red Tent
The Dovekeepers
Outlander (the whole series)
Lilac Girls
She's Come Undone

What is the 3rd book from the top in the pile of books you want to read? Educated: A Memoir

Favorite music genre? 80's Pop

Favorite musical artist? Too many to choose! Madonna and Queen are faves!

Your dream car? Classic Thunderbird Convertible (aqua)

Favorite memory of Las Vegas? Meeting Bruce, Andrew, Greg and Fred for the first time!

Funniest memory of Las Vegas? Any of my memories with Bruce are THE funniest and THE best!

Funniest memory of Bruce Ewing? All of them!

Favorite small town in the USA? Winchester, Wisconsin (this is where our cabin is)

Favorite Bible Verse... Be still, and know that I am God. Ps 46:10

Inspiring quote that moves you forward? Progress...Not Perfection

Favorite meal you love to cook? Cereal (I prefer to bake)

Favorite meal that your spouse makes Anything on the grill, but especially his steak!

Favorite dining experience? Bern's Steakhouse in Tampa, FL

Guilty pleasure (TV)? Outlander (see also "favorite books")

Guilty pleasure (Food)? French fries

Foods you will not or cannot eat? Avocado (I'm allergic!), any kind of organ meat (blech!), Sushi (ick!)

Cookies you will not or cannot eat - This question makes me sad.

Desserts you will not or cannot eat - See above.

Dog or cat? Dog (tho, I'm pro-cat, as well)

Last movie you've seen? A Star is Born (With Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper---I was late to the game...)

All-time favorite movie? Love Actually

What would be your preferred super-power? Time-travel

Favorite holiday? Thanksgiving

If you had a warning label, what would it say? Feed regularly: Prone to Hangry-ness

Top three people (alive or dead) that you would want to meet up with for coffee? Fred Rogers, Moses, Robin Williams

What is one thing you will never do again? Intentionally spend time in the sun without sunscreen

Where do you want to take Bruce Ewing for lunch after you get settled? Wherever he'd like to go! (Editorial Note: Guessing it won't be for Sushi! :)

REMINDER: Save the Date for GALA 2020 "Getting To Know You - Our First Big Party with Pastor Ben and Mrs. Pastor Ben!" Saturday, May 16, 2020

THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE AND PIE NIGHT!

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, AT 7 P.M.

Hill and Dale Child Development Center

By ***Tamy Gates, Center Director***

Hill and Dale Child Development Center has been serving the community since 1975. We've even had the honor of Pastor Ben's son, Carl, at our center when he was 2 years old! Many things have changed since then and yet many things appear to be the same. We're still here living our mission statement to "Provide high quality early childhood education for our Community" and Pastor Ben still has Carl's school picture from when he was at Hill and Dale, but we truly have changed; even Carl had to grow up—funny how that works!

In early childhood as with life everything changes; new brain development becomes available and we are continually learning even more on how young children learn and what best practices in educating them are. It's such a wonderful thing to learn how to be and do better with the most precious of God's miracles, our young children. Did you know that a child's morals and values are set by age 5? I've known this for over 20 years and I still tear up and get goosebumps when I say it out loud to new parents, and to think of just how important the work we do is, it's never taken for granted! Our staff is looking forward to working under Pastor Ben's leadership and wishes him well on the next step in our church's journey.

Music Ministry: Singing Our Way Into Our New Chapter!
By Bruce Ewing

What an exciting time for Community Lutheran Church as we begin a new chapter in the history of our church family! We in Music Ministry at Community are so grateful that music is valued, not only in worship, but as a source of fellowship and outreach as well!

We are so excited to have Pastor Ben Bergren join us, knowing how important music is in his plan for our church family. Besides welcoming Pastor Ben, we recently welcomed Peggy Williams as our new 8 A.M. Worship Leader—and expect her to be with us a good long time! After all, our Sunday 7 P.M. Worship Leader, John Thompson, has been leading worship with the Honky Tonk Angels for almost 30 years! (If you haven't checked out that service, come join us in the chapel…it's like visiting a small country church family! It's wonderful!)

In the past few months, The Praise Team Service (regularly at 11 A.M.) has provided some special worship at the 9:30 service as well—and on special concerts—giving more of our congregation the chance to experience this wonderful, growing team!

If your schedule ever changes on Sundays, and you want to attend church on Saturday, come join us for The Gathering at 5 P.M. in the Chapel. This service is intimate, with a blended musical style. Our Celebration Worship continues with our wonderful choir at 9:30 A.M. After a "dream-like" year, which included a concert at Carnegie Hall in NYC under the direction of composer Pepper Choplin, we were fortunate to have Mr. Choplin also visit Community Lutheran (writing a brand new song for our choir) in mid-October! Yes, we have a busy and growing Music Ministry! We are all so blessed!

2020 5th Sunday Cabaret Dates…
March 29, May 31, August 30 and November 29
(tickets go on sale the 1st Saturday of each of those months)
***GALA 2020 - "Getting To Know You - Our first party with Pastor Ben and Mrs. Pastor Ben Bergren!" on Saturday, May 16, 2020

As we move forward in this new chapter, we hope that you will join us for many upcoming special worship services, as well as some really fun social events!

- Wednesday, November 27 at 7 P.M. Thanksgiving Eve Service (and Pie Night!) led by Robby Wingfield in a bluegrass Americana style!
- Let Heaven & Nature Sing
  A Christmas Event to benefit four local charities!
  Friday and Saturday, December 13/14—Boutique/Santa Visits open at 5 P.M. / Concert at 7 P.M.
  Sunday, December 15—Boutique/Santa Visits open at 12 noon/ Concert at 2 P.M.
- Thursday, December 19 at 6 P.M. Chili Cook-off and Praise Team Concert (with Family and Youth Ministries)
- Christmas Eve Services - Tuesday, December 24, 2019
  3 P.M. - Family Worship
  4:30 P.M. Candlelight/Communion Worship with Choir
  6 P.M. - Candlelight/Communion Worship with Praise Team
  7:30 and 9 P.M. - Candlelight/Communion Worship with Special Music
- 10 A.M. Christmas Day Service - Wednesday, December 25, 2019

COMING DATES TO SAVE!
***5th Sunday Cabaret "Anticipation: All About The Eve - A New Year's Eve Eve Eve Celebration"
Sunday, December 29 at 2 P.M.—Tickets go on sale December 7 at 10 A.M.

CLC CHOIR JOINS OTHERS AT CARNEGIE HALL

Carolyn's Kids Kloset/Laces for Literacy by Judy Hughes

Over the last 6 months, Carolyn's Kids Kloset has accumulated a large amount of clothing to be given away at elementary schools. Clothes have been donated by the congregation and also purchased for the giveaways. In August, Laces for Literacy had a Ministry Table to raise funds for the shoe giveaway at Ullom and Ruby Thomas Elementary Schools. Every Kindergarten student will receive a new pair of shoes and socks. Thanks to church member, Betty Fueller, for connecting us with the Skecher warehouse manager here in Las Vegas. When it is time to buy the shoes, he will be giving us a generous discount. The Women's Ministry donated school supplies and money raised at the Barnyard Bingo to this ministry. The Men's Ministry in August gave us a donation to help with the purchase of shoes. Luv 'N Stitches provides hats and scarves for the clothing giveaway. Kindred Spirit Bible Study also donates to our ministry. A heartfelt *thank you* to these ministries for always supporting us.

Carolyn's Kids Kloset will be part of the charity tables at Let Heaven & Nature Sing again this December.

In the picture posted with this article, the Here 4 U volunteers are sorting and bagging underwear and socks donated by the congregation. We try to keep the schools supplied with these items.

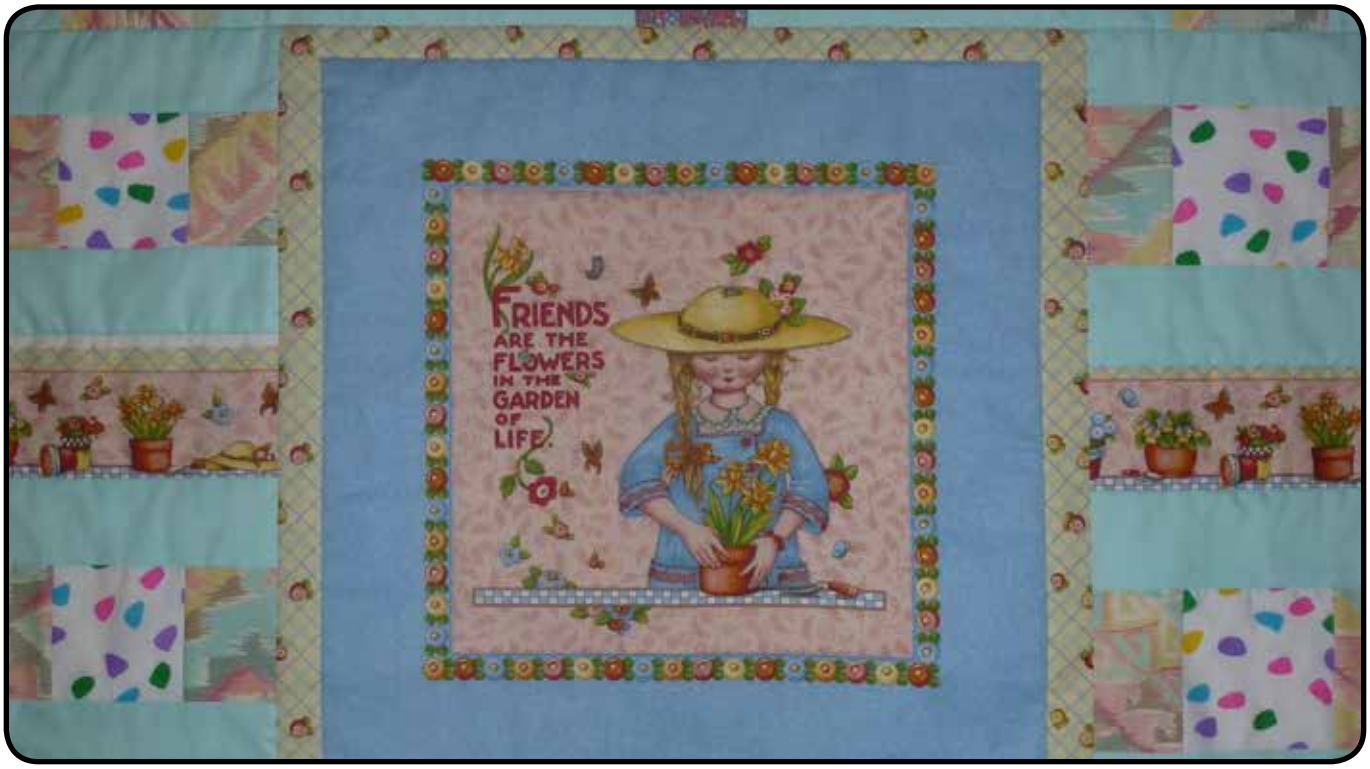
This ministry has been so blessed by the support and love given to it.

Comfort Quilt Ministry
by Jody Cotton

Comfort Quilt Ministry, meets on the 2nd Saturday of the month with showing quilts on Sunday after the second Saturday. We enjoy sharing with all of you the creations we have made for a charity donation to the Children's Hospital and the Oncology Unit at UMC. This past year we made an average of 15 quilts bi-monthly. If you would like to learn more about quilting and help in making of quilts please join us at 9 A.M. in Room 11. Thanks to all who have donated monies and fabric, we are so grateful to receive your contributions. We gladly share our blessings. We will accept donations of finished quilts you make at home, too. Contact Jody Cotton, 702-437-2037 for supplies you need for your quilt donation.

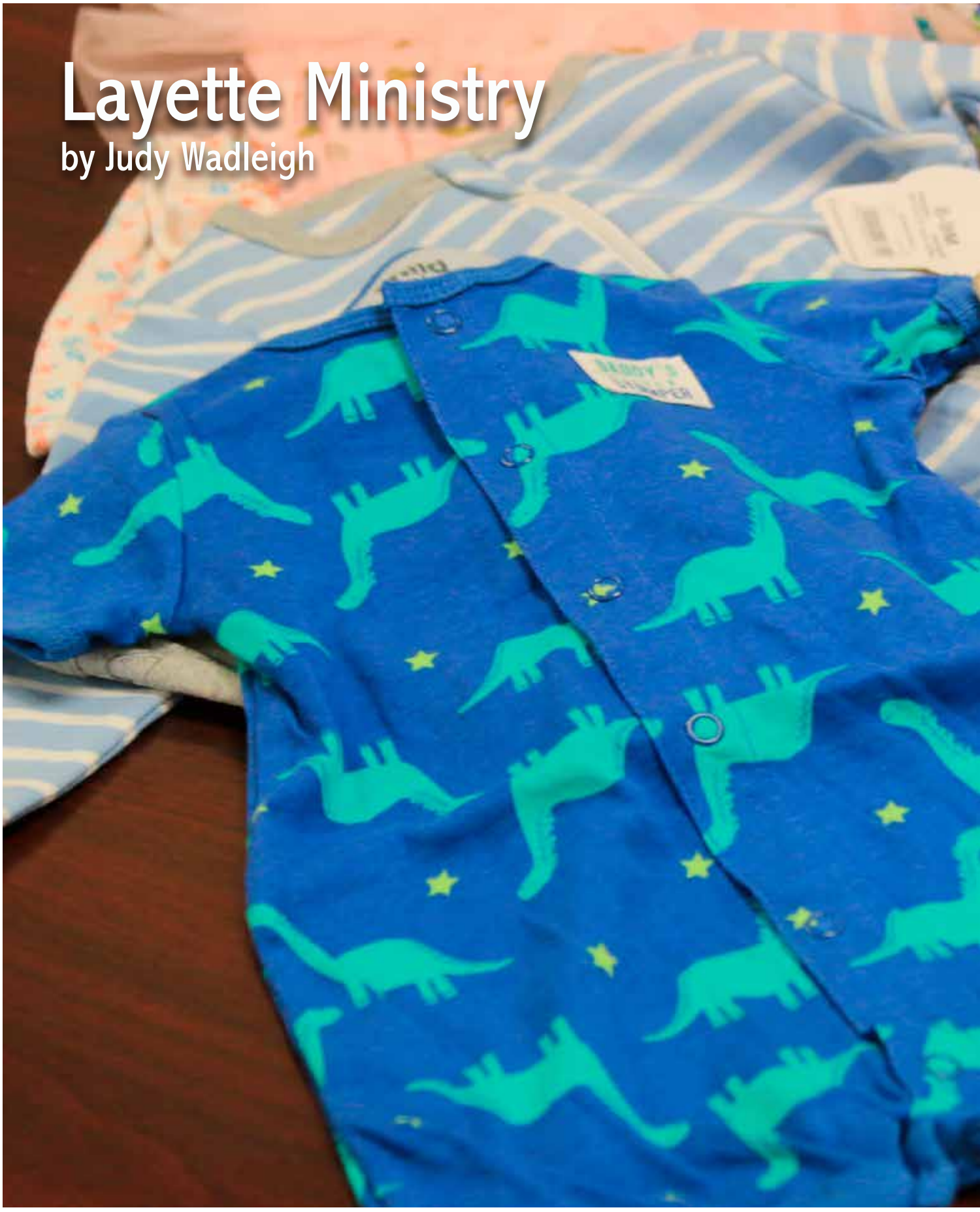
Pictured is the last quilt Valerie Smithe made, God rest her soul, with two labels of blessings with the right hand of fellowship and a message of Hope.

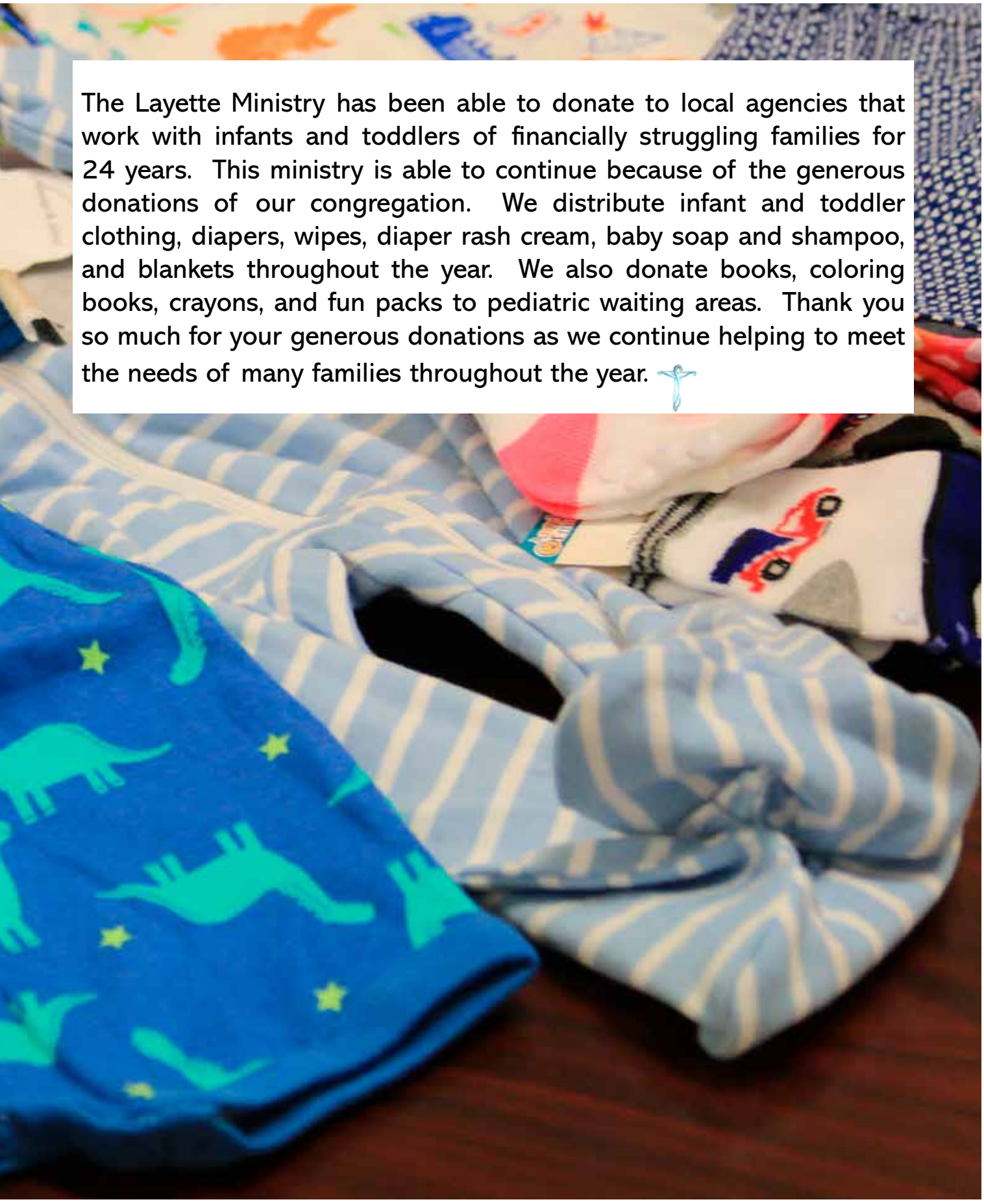
Friends Quilt was donated in May. Enjoy the message it gives.



Layette Ministry

by Judy Wadleigh





The Layette Ministry has been able to donate to local agencies that work with infants and toddlers of financially struggling families for 24 years. This ministry is able to continue because of the generous donations of our congregation. We distribute infant and toddler clothing, diapers, wipes, diaper rash cream, baby soap and shampoo, and blankets throughout the year. We also donate books, coloring books, crayons, and fun packs to pediatric waiting areas. Thank you so much for your generous donations as we continue helping to meet the needs of many families throughout the year.

Serving God for 45 years!

LONG BEACH RESCUE MISSION
SAMARITAN HOUSE

BE STRONG
FEAR NOT

GREAT
FEAR NOT

Women's Ministry

by Susan Girouard

"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the things He planned for us long ago." Ephesians 2:10

Women's Ministry just celebrated its 30th Anniversary of Women's Ministry and Retreats at CLC and we were excited to look back at all we have done. But now Women's Ministry has a new wonderful program scheduled for this coming year.

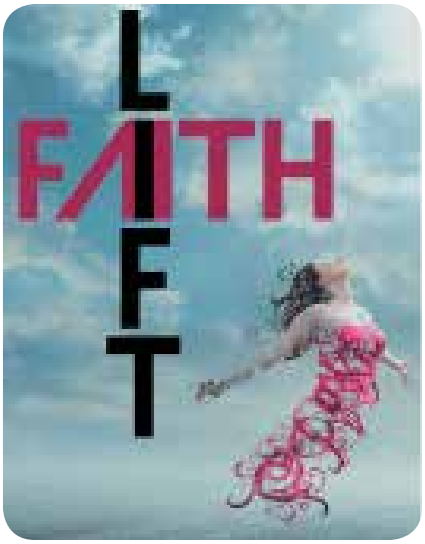
Keeping our mission to still serve our church, our community, and all around the world, It is our goal to raise funds to support other ministries such as Carolyn's Kloset, Lutheran World Relief, Children and Youth Ministry, Layette Ministry, Safe Nest, and any others that God calls us to. Of course, still having fun doing God's Work.

Women's Bible Study has begun for the Fall Session, and we had a great Rummage Sale with MOPS for our fundraiser. In November, the Grand Canyon Synod Women's Bible study is in Mesa, Arizona. New this year is our Faith Painting Party in November. January will be active with Gather Bible Study One day event, get some exercise at the Run, Walk, or Stroll, and help collect some children's shoes.

Of course we are in full planning mode for our Annual Women's Retreat in St. George, Utah, ***"Faith Lift" if you are wrinkled with burden come to God for a faith lift.*** Also, work has begun on All God's Daughters Tea. We are praying to have a great turn out for the Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering July 16-19, 2020 in Phoenix. ***"Just Love": Following Jesus is messy. Loving one another is justice, We are not perfect. We are one body in Christ!***

JUST LOVE

WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING
JULY 16-19, 2020 | PHOENIX



#thisismotherhood
MOPS.ORG

MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS
Meeting the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the Month at 9:30 A.M.
Email mopsclc@gmail.com

Community Lutheran Church

KINDRED SPIRITS BIBLE STUDY

Are you looking for a daytime Bible Study group? We are a small group of kindred spirits who meet on Thursdays at 9:30 A.M. in the Fellowship Hall. Please come and join us. Any questions contact Margaret Meirs at 702-321-0705.

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2

Our **Stephen Ministry** exists to serve God by providing one-to-one distinctively Christian care and Christ's healing love to hurting people. Caring for others and providing a confidential relationship are cornerstones of Stephen Ministry. Training for new Stephen Ministers will begin in early 2020. Please contact the church office for additional information.

By Rick Truex

ALTAR GUILD

by Dottie Korkosz

NO TIME FOR MEETINGS BUT WANT TO BE PART OF A MINISTRY? Then Altar Guild is perfect for you! We don't have a lot of meetings, just an annual luncheon. All we need is to have an hour or so of your time on a few Saturday mornings. You and two others will prepare communion and perform some other tasks in preparation for the weekend services. It's that easy! As a bonus many of our members become close friends, enjoying meaningful fellowship outside of their Altar Guild ministry. Most Altar Guild people give us four (4) Saturday mornings a year; others choose to do more. That's up to you and your available time. You get on-the-job training and are provided all the materials you will need.

Interested? Please join us at our annual luncheon on Saturday, January 25, 2020 at 11:30 A.M. in the Fellowship Hall. You'll get to meet other Altar Guild members and we'll answer all your questions! Looking forward to seeing you on January 25!

HEARTS, HANDS, & HUGS

by Jeanne Churchill

Hearts, Hands, & Hugs strives to reflect the heart of God by becoming His hands and by the power of the Holy Spirit share Christian hugs through support to chemo patients and caregivers by making this time of medical challenge a little lighter. Some members are now cancer-free. At times we have a speaker at our meetings. We meet on the 1st Saturday of every month from 10 a.m. to noon in Room 2C. Our meetings are open to anyone wishing to attend. Our mission scripture is ***Galatians 6:2 "Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the Love of Christ."*** We thank all the ministries and people who have donated to Hearts, Hands, & Hugs.

CAPS - COMMUNITY FOOD ASSISTANCE AND SENIOR OUTREACH PROGRAM

by Judy McCullough

CAPS – Community Food Assistance and Senior Outreach Program encompasses the food drives, emergency food assistance and the Senior Outreach Program.

Our Thanksgiving Food Drive began October 27 and continues through November 17 providing food boxes for families for their holiday meal. This year we will also include food bags for 90 seniors registered in our Senior Outreach Program and food boxes for Angel Tree families. If you know of a family we can help with a food box please let us know and we will see that they are included. There will also be an Easter Food Drive beginning three weeks before Easter.

The Senior Outreach Program, in partnership with Three Square Food Bank, Nevada Hand, and the Housing Authority of Southern Nevada provides produce, bread, milk, and yogurt to 170 low income seniors at five facilities every month. One of the Starbucks shops continues to support us with donations of sandwiches and pastries which we include in the deliveries.

As a result of the recent paper drive, we delivered generously packed bags of paper products to 90 of the seniors that are registered in our program. We will conduct another drive for personal paper products in the spring.

We are grateful for the congregation's donations and continued support and encouragement, which has allowed us to reach out to these seniors in need in the community and show them they are not forgotten. And a big thank you to our volunteers who drive to Three Square and set up these donations.

STITCHING BROTHERS AND SISTERS

by Shirley Lizotte

The Stitching Sisters and Brothers will gather together again for "The Next Chapter." Beginning in April 2020, the Stitching Sisters and Brothers are back at work cutting fabric, sewing quilt tops, and tying the layers together. We work all through the hot summer, making more and more quilts. We complete our sewing at the end of August.
Our ministry was blessed this year with several new people joining us to make quilts. We gratefully receive donations of fabric and use it to sew new quilt tops. We are blessed to be able to make these beautiful quilts and each person who receives a quilt is blessed by God. We are grateful to all who give of their time, talents, and resources.

Fifty-eight quilts with red/white/blue fabric designs were distributed to U.S. Armed Forces patients at the Las Vegas Veterans Hospital and to those in the Intensive Care Unit. We thanked each recipient for their service as we gave them a quilt.

Fifty quilts were given to deserving middle school youth at the Park Outreach under the direction of Kristen Theile, Youth Ministry at Community Lutheran Church. The remaining quilts were given to a local elementary school classroom with deserving students.

Squares of fabric were drawn and written on by children and leaders who attended Vacation Bible School this summer. Those squares were sewn into 43 quilts that were given to deserving children. The quilts were on display in the Crossroads between worship services in September.

There are an estimated 15,000 homeless school-age children living in the

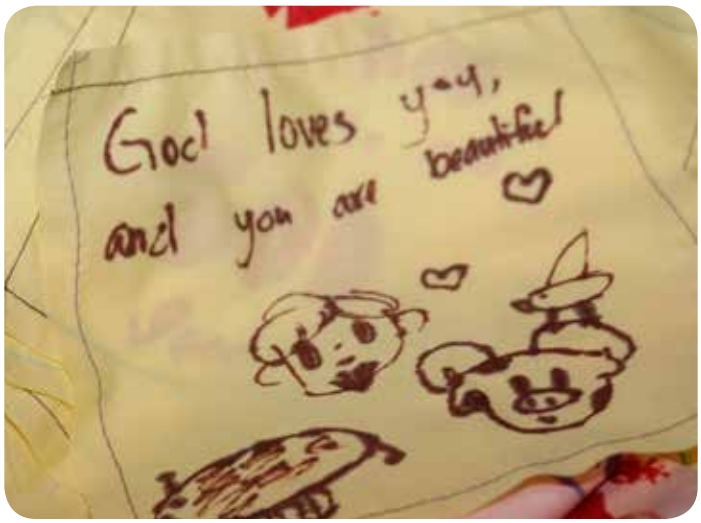
(cont. next page)

Las Vegas valley. Last year we made 166 quilts. The quilts give the children something beautiful and functional. A label sewn on each quilt says: "Jesus Loves You! The Stitching Sisters and Brothers of Community Lutheran Church."

Newcomers are welcome to join our group at any time. Donations are used to purchase rolls of batting and spools of thread, both necessary to making the quilts. This coming year, we will especially need to purchase red/white/blue patriotic themed fabric for the quilts we give to our US Veterans. If you have patriotic fabric that you would like to donate, we will appreciate receiving your donation.

We meet occasionally in the winter months to sort through donated fabrics and put them in order by color. Then we go through the boxes and choose fabrics that go together and bag them – ready to be cut into the squares and rectangles we use in our simple pattern. Then when we meet in April, we are ready to go – and sew!

Look for our items at the CLC Christmas Market, "Let Heaven & Nature Sing." Do your holiday shopping with us! And help others who are in need. Blessings to all.



CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
BY KRISTEN THEILE

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

This summer, we hosted our annual Vacation Bible School! The Sanctuary was transformed into an African savanna, complete with a massive baobab tree and waterfall. Tree vines lining the ceilings, tribal pattern wallpaper, and a station with drums and other traditional musical instruments set the tone for our African safari VBS! Over 120 children participated and many of our youth volunteered as crew and station leaders. The theme was ROAR! Life is wild, God is good! Campers learned that no matter the circumstances of life, whether we have a good day or a bad day or a sad day, God is still good! Each day, campers heard a different Bible story and learned a Bible point, all with the help of our Bible buddies, such as Mack the Rhino and Zion the Lion. After watching a fun skit and singing songs in the morning, campers set out to play fun games at Stampede Sports, make crafts and do other activities in Imagination Station, eat a tasty snack at Watering Hole Cafe and explore God's Word in Bible Adventures. On the Sunday following VBS, we held a special service where families enjoyed a free breakfast, coloring pages, games, and bouncy houses in the Fellowship Hall and our campers sang the theme song during the 11 A.M. service.

Nick Roman, a VBS volunteer veteran and station leader for Stampede Sports, says that he loves doing VBS because working with kids is his passion and that he loves "the atmosphere that kids bring to life with their excitement and laughter." When asked about his favorite memory from this summer, he stated that he enjoyed welcoming the incoming groups each day. "We would say "are you ready to have some funnnn" and then the kids would yell back "yes!" and then we said, "we can't hear youuu," and then the kids would say yes louder. I think that the kids' enthusiasm was the best part about VBS. Without it, VBS wouldn't be fun."

BE STRONG
FEAR NOT
GREAT
GO

Craft & Play

BE STRONG
FEAR NOT
GREAT
GO

SCIENCE AND GAMES CAMP

In the afternoon after Vacation Bible School, we also hosted Science and Games Camp! Campers got to play lots of fun games, such as Army Navy, indoor bowling, and relay races. The games were designed to reflect the Bible message the children had learned earlier that day at VBS to reinforce the day's theme while also having fun! Along with games, campers were able to engage in amazing science experiments, including volcano-making and bottle rockets. Congregation members Anne Grisham and Peanuts Boyer graciously designed the curriculum for the entire week, creating the different games and science experiments for the kids to enjoy. Anne also volunteered her time to lead the science experiments and teach the kids about cool science facts!

1st Thursday Family Night

Join us on the 1st Thursday of every month for free, family fun and a community meal! Each night has its own theme, such as superhero night. There will be activities, games, fun, food, and fellowship. We will also have special holiday celebrations, including a Thanksgiving celebration and a PJ party for Christmas!

COOKIE BOWL

In October, each week in Sunday School, we had two different kinds of cookies go up against each other in the fight for cookie domination. Hundreds of cookies, such as Chocolate Chip, Snickerdoodle, M&M, and Oatmeal Raisin, had been baked by congregation members and taste-tested by the kids in Sunday School. The kids voted on their favorite cookie out of the two options and at the end of October, the previous winners were voted on to determine the best kind of cookie.

TRUNK OR TREAT!

In October, we had our annual Trunk or Treat event. We had carnival games, bounce houses, face painting, craft activities, AND...trunk or treating! Volunteers decorated their trunks with different themes and passed out candy to all trunk-or-treaters. This is not only an amazing event for members of our church, but also a wonderful way to outreach to the community and engage local families in a safe, family-friendly environment. ***We were also blessed as our new pastor, Ben Bergren, drove all the way from Northern California to be at the event to greet old and new friends!***

LA MISSION TRIP

When most people think of Los Angeles, they think of the Hollywood sign, Rodeo Drive, crowded beaches, and sun shining through palm trees. What people might not realize is that although there is a lot of fame and luxury associated with LA, it is also home to one of the nation's largest populations experiencing homelessness. In this area, known as Skid Row, you can find tent after tent lining the streets as well as numerous rescue missions that serve meals and provide services to the 5,000-8,000 homeless people living there.

Each summer our youth group travels to LA to serve this population, working with different organizations and volunteering on Skid Row. This year we partnered with Midnight Mission to serve lunch to over 700 people experiencing homelessness. We also patterned with Long Beach Rescue Mission, prepping food and serving lunch there as well. Our youth even had the opportunity to sit with residents at Long Beach Rescue Mission, converse with them, hear their stories, and share a meal together.

Other volunteer work included organizing at St. Vincent's Thrift Store, packaging food at LA Food Bank, and participating in a beach clean-up. Our youth were also able to visit Homeboy Industries, an organization that provides resources and community to formerly gang-involved and previously incarcerated men and women. We were blessed with the opportunity to hear the testimony of a man who had grown up in gangs but with the guidance of Homeboys, was able to turn his life around, find Jesus, and had begun to build a new future.

In addition to service and volunteering, the youth also participated in different cultural activities. Some of the youth visited a marine mammal care center and were able to see seals and sea lions. The youth also went to The Getty, a museum with beautiful gardens, interesting sculptures, a variety of art pieces from different time periods, and a cool monorail. At the end of the week after working hard and serving the community, the youth got to enjoy the beach and boardwalk at Santa Monica.

LUTHERWOOD HIGH SCHOOL AND FAMILY CAMPING TRIP

This camping trip is a faith retreat where our youth and families can spend time in nature, and of course, engage in fellowship with one another. There is hiking, exploring lava tunnels, viewing beautiful waterfalls, eating s'mores, and spending time around the campfire! The theme for the weekend was Light in Darkness where all campers will explore the story of Lazarus and examine the things that hold them back, or the different "tombs," that they have in their own lives.

Disney Multi-Church High School Trip

For seven years now, our youth group has participated in this multi-church trip filled with fun and fellowship! Youth from different ELCA churches gather to enjoy a new theme park, with Disneyland being this year's destination, while also learning about God's love, mercy and grace alongside their peers.

GTS IN ACTION

Our Youth Group is titled Growth Through Service, or GTS, as our Youth Ministry has been built around the concept of serving. When we serve others, we have an opportunity to show God's mercy, grace and kindness. And our Youth Ministry is packed with different service events! On the 3rd Thursday of each month, instead of regular youth group, our Youth Ministry holds a service project. We partner with different groups each month, including Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, Las Vegas Rescue Mission, Three Square, and Family Promise. Additionally, on the first Friday of every month, there is Feel Good Friday. The youth and our adult volunteers serve food and pass out supplies to about 100-150 kids who have food insecurities and/or are experiencing homelessness. After the service project, we go to dinner and a do a fun activity, such as mini golf and roller-skating. Youth Ministry will also be hosting the annual Thanksgiving lock-in this year on November 27-28. We invite everyone to join us as we prepare full-course Thanksgiving meals for all Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth safe houses, pass out supplies at Las Vegas Rescue Mission, and deliver breakfast items to local fire stations!

Mexico Mission Trip

For the fourth time this December, GTS will cross the border to build a home for a family in need in Mexico on the Nailed It Mission Trip. We partner with Amor Ministries, a wonderful organization that has been running home building mission trips for over 30 years. Amor connects us with a family in need and in three days, 2 by 4 beams, concrete, chicken wire, and nails are transformed into a new home and a new start for that family. Seeing how people live in third world countries is a truly eye-opening experience for all volunteers, and we invite any youth in 8th grade and up to join us, as well as all interested adults!

El Salvador

Our church has gone on mission trips to El Salvador for over 16 years, traveling to different villages in the country to provide medical aid to communities in need. This year, our team drove hundreds of miles around the country and over 700 patients were seen.

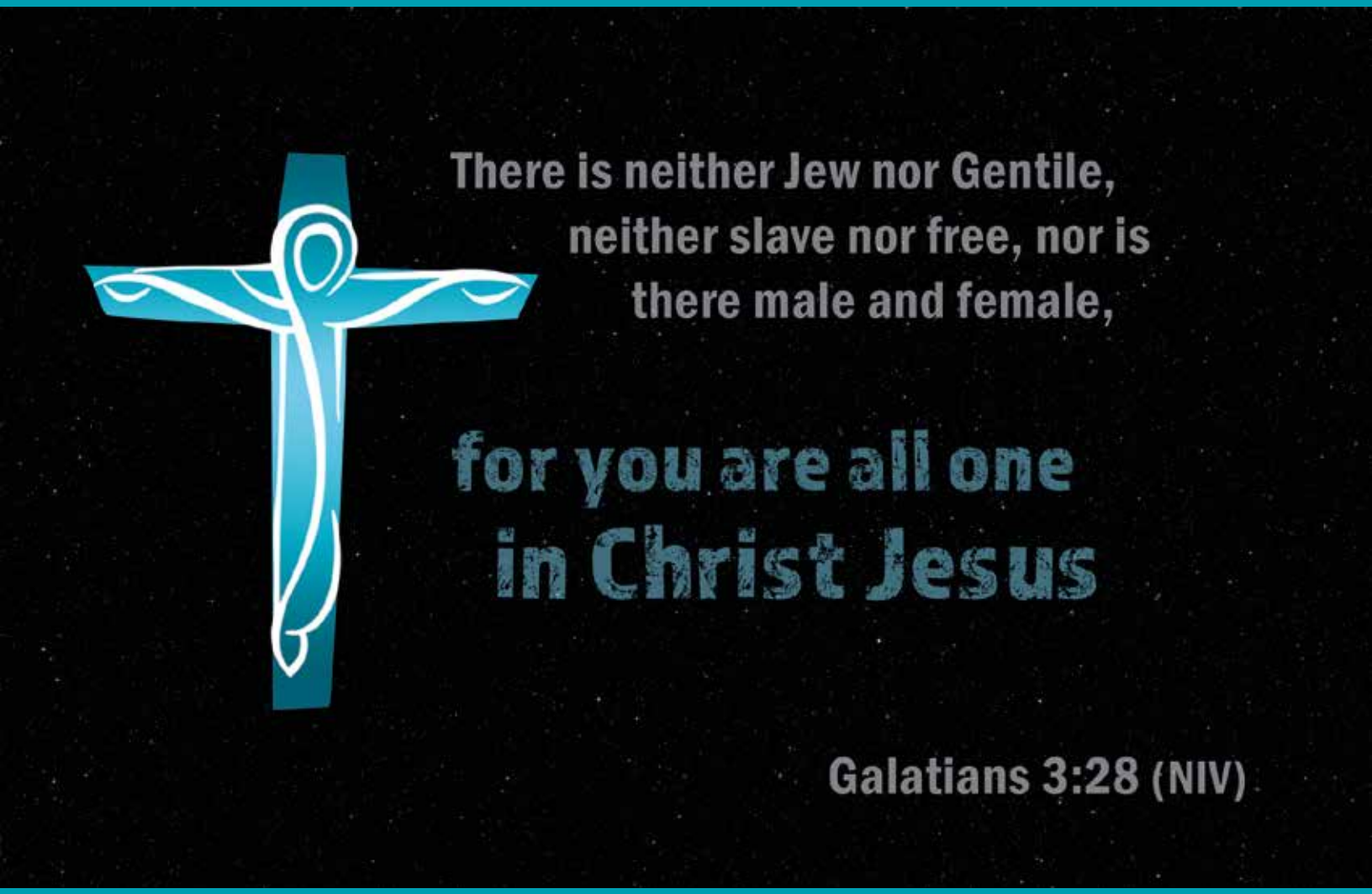
Our team handed out

- 1,464 doses of medicine to address the different problems in each of the four communities we visited
- Over 250 gloves were handed out to protect the hands of the many men working in the fields
- 446 sunglasses this year, as well as 265 readers and 78 pairs of RX glasses to lessen headaches from working under the sun and prevent other eye problems.
- 600 pairs of socks courtesy of our Women's Ministry and Ally's sock drive.
- Feminine hygiene kits that contain reusable washable underwear pads to ensure the women in the community can continue their daily lives.
- Soccer balls, visor hats, cross necklaces, and crafts to the children in each village as well as other items such as visor hats to protect them from the sun, cross necklaces to remind them of Jesus' love, and different crafts for fun.

Our photo team took photos of any villager who wanted a photo and printed it for them so that they could have a photo of themselves because many have never had a photo of themselves or a loved one.

God can be seen in the smile of someone whose vision is no longer blurry, the reaction of a parent who receives a photo of their family, and the laughter of a child as they play soccer with their own ball with other village kids. This mission trip not only provides relief for physical ailments, but also addresses the social, emotional, spiritual needs that all people, regardless of their language, age, or ethnicity, need fulfilled.

REAL PEOPLE. INCLUSIVE GOD. RADICAL GRACE



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