FOCUS GROWING TO SERVE



2023

Our Savior Lutheran Church 745 Front Street South Issaquah, WA 98027

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From the Desk of Pastor Vaswig

As we begin a new calendar year, I think it is important for us to continue in Life Together in addition to worship. So we are gathering as a community for a study beginning Wednesday, January 11 at noon. Bring your own lunch. I am particularly invested in this study as we examine in community the phenomenon of what many are calling Christian nationalism.

My interest in the subject actually goes back quite a few years, having taught classes on the dangers associated with the cross wrapped in the flag. However, today we see significant manifestations of Christian nationalism even during the event of the January 6, 2021 riot on the Capitol.

I believe we are at a crucial point in this country and in the life of the church in defining what the Gospel is and what it is not. My starting point is always the teachings of Jesus, which stands opposed to any nationalistic idolatry that places God and country over what is the content of the Gospel.

As a group, we will explore Jesus' teaching contrasted to a white, male-dominated agenda which perverts the Gospel of Jesus' love and proclamation of justice. We will take the time to define what Christian nationalism is, how Christian is Christian nationalism, what a healthy patriotism looks like, and how the church should and must respond to this perversion of the Gospel.

I look forward to honest conversations in community, to calling something what it is in community, and to mutual engagement for the sake of Gospel clarity. A blessed New Year to you all as we continue our Life Together.



Pastor John L. Vaswig

Our Savior Community

From the Congregational Care Ministry Team

The Congregational Care Ministry team has been studying the book *Growing an Older Adult Ministry* by Pastor Donald R. Koepke. His writing is grounded in his belief that *aging is a spiritual journey*. The study of this book has been bracing and inspiring for our team, as our attitudes and ideas have been challenged, reshaped, and broadened to see older adults in a new light.

Aging brings many changes. Changes in physical ability and stamina. Changes in relationships as family and friends die or move away. And aging often brings neurological challenges, like word-finding or memory difficulties. Most of us learned about these changes by observing our grandparents or parents as they increased in years. Many of us see some of these changes in ourselves.

Pastor Koepke writes: "These losses present challenges, but they are not the essence of aging. In fact, these very losses give focus and power to the real experience of aging, the spiritual journey of aging. The challenge of aging as a spiritual journey is to engage a person's spiritual life – those values, beliefs and perspectives that form the foundation of life, integrating it into a meaningful whole – so it is life-giving even as diminishment in physical health and relationships occur."

The new OSLC Call Committee has begun their work of finding a new pastor for our congregation. The Church Council asked members from the previous Call Committee and Transition Team to review the OSLC Ministry Site Profile (MSP) and update it to reflect OSLC as it is today. The MSP is a document used by the Call Committee to help prospective pastoral candidates understand who we are and how we see our mission. This excerpt from the MSP attempts to bring into clear focus who we are now:

"We are a congregation of mostly older adults (more than 80 percent of our members are 50 years old or above). We have a deepening awareness of the gift and calling inherent in this reality. We recognize the need of older adults for support in their spiritual journey as they explore questions of faith, deepen their experience of God's love, and deal with the challenging issues of aging. We embrace the gifts of wisdom, experience, compassion and service that can come with increasing years. As we learn more about the needs and gifts of older adults, we are stirred to action, encouraging each other to live meaningful lives of love and service to others. We welcome and appreciate people of all ages, with their unique perspectives and gifts, who participate in our life together in Christ."

The Congregational Care Ministry team is pleased to offer an opportunity, in small group settings, to explore aging as a spiritual journey. It's called "Who Am I Now?" We will use the book *Autumn Wisdom: Finding Meaning in Life's Later Years* by James E. Miller as a guide. We hope you will join us for this insightful and inspiring study. See the next page for more information.

Ann Thomas Congregational Care Ministry



"Who Am I Now?"

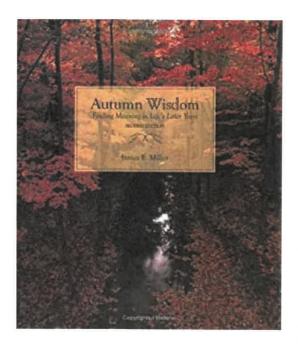
A Study for Older Adults Using the Book Autumn Wisdom: Finding Meaning in Life's Later Years

Do you ever wonder:

- What is my purpose now?
- What have I learned, and what am I meant to learn?
- What brought me to this place in my spiritual journey, and what's next?

Take this opportunity to join other adults in exploring the experiences, questions, hopes, and meaning in life's later years.

Leaders will host groups in a variety of settings: homes, church, and on Zoom. Each group will set their own time and frequency of meeting.



Sign-ups will begin after worship on Sunday morning, January 8.



If you would like more information, talk with a Congregational Care Ministry team member: Sandy Aldworth, Bonnie Brice, Jo Hess, Jean Pickering, Jen Winslow, or email Ann Thomas at annlthomas@gmail.com.

Call Committee Corner

On December 18, the members of the Call Committee were officially installed during worship. As they begin their work, please continue to hold them in prayer:

Barbara Fetty-Solders John McDowell Phil Griffin LaRue Nelson

Gary Hanson Jen Winslow Marilyn Jewell

A Message of Gratitude from the Community Outreach Committee



Thank you for your generous support of our November/December gift card collections for the non-profits OSLC supports.

In November, we collected and donated \$1,600.00 in gift cards for the Issaquah Food Bank's Holiday Gift Barn. Here is a quote from the Food Bank's Volunteer Newsletter: "IFB received and provided over \$60,000 worth of gift cards to more than 1,200 children at our Holiday Gift Program." Our donations contributed to their being able to do their mission.

In December, we collected \$545.00 in gift cards for the Parents at Vine Maple Place to give to their teens for Christmas. We collected \$300.00 in gift cards for OSLC to help members of our community with needs that arise.

In addition to our gift card collections, we gave monetary gifts to the Issaquah Food Bank, Issaquah Community Services, Kid Vantage (formerly Eastside Baby Corner), and Vine Maple Place to help with their client needs during this season. These totaled \$3,500.00 from the budgeted Community Outreach Designated Funds.



Thank you all for being a blessing to our community.

An Update from Mission Quilters

OSLC Mission Quilters have been busy this year! Thanks to the donations of time, talents, materials and funds from OSLC members and friends, we have been able to continue with this ministry.



This year we have been able to donate 92 twin-sized quilts to Lutheran World Relief for distribution to people around the

world. You can check the bulletin board in Anderson Hall to see where our quilts have been shipped through the years. The Puget Sound Honor Flight Program received 16 lapsized quilts. These quilts will be presented to Veterans when they return from their Honor Flights. In December, 35 lap-sized quilts were given to Issaquah Nursing and Rehab. These will be given to residents for Christmas and throughout the year.

Mission Quilters meet in Anderson Hall on Thursday mornings from 9:30-noon to pin quilt edges and tie the quilts together. Some of us make quilt tops at home. We'd love to have you join us for ministry and fellowship; no experience needed! We have a lot of fun together! There are also ways for you to be involved in this ministry from home. Please call Sue Friddell at 425-392-9730 if you'd like to talk with one of the Mission Quilters.



Worship with Us Sunday Mornings at 10:00 a.m.

The Season after Christmas:

January 1: Name of Jesus
January 8: Baptism of Our Lord
January 15: Second Sunday after Epiphany
January 22: Third Sunday after Epiphany
January 29: Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

In-Person: Our Savior's Executive Committee strongly suggests attendees continue to wear masks in worship, principally because of singing. Please continue to stay home if feeling sick, and receive Holy Communion in a safe manner

Online: Worship services are live-streamed at 10:00 a.m. A link to the service is published in the weekly email (sent with the bulletin), or you can click here: <u>Worship Live</u>. If you try the link prior to 10:00 a.m. each Sunday, you may see the message "video unavailable."

Services are recorded and posted to the <u>Our Savior YouTube Channel</u>. If needed, pull down the menu under "Uploads," then click on "Past Live Streams," or go to our website at <u>www.oslcissaquah.org</u>.

Gather with us for fellowship and coffee hour each Sunday following worship.

Coffee hour hosts are needed. You can sign up to bake/bring treats only, help with coffee, or sign up for both.



The sign-up sheet is located in Anderson Hall next to the kitchen pass-through window, and there are several folks happy to partner with you or walk you through the kitchen and teach you how it all works.

Thanks for your participation in making our time of fellowship truly wonderful.

Northwest Washington Synod

The Spirit



Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

From the Bishop:

More than twenty years ago now, when I was serving in a congregation, I sat with a woman who was dying. I loved this woman. Her name was Bobbie. She was fierce and funny. She was smart. She could be a little intimidating. She was a tall, big woman who pounded her cane into the ground as she walked. Throughout her life, like most people, she knew grief and joy. Disappointment and surprise. I was honored to hold her hand and sit with her as she took her last breaths.

As pastor, I have had the opportunity to sit with many people as they are dying. It is one of the most holy things a person can do. There is truly a thinness between what is and what is to come. While there are many things I love and miss as a congregational pastor, one of the top absences is being invited into people's lives as they leave this world and enter into God's presence in the company of all the saints.

Recently I attended a three-day retreat with several bishops and leaders from the western part of the United States. Most of what we talked about and discerned was what it means to be church today. Included in the conversation was how to journey and accompany congregations that are dying. This retreat wasn't a "how-to manual" of what to do. Instead, the intentional prayer, singing, worship, and community led us to sit in the same "thinness" feeling that I mentioned above: what is and what is to come.

As we sat in both the grief of some of our congregations closing and in the anticipation of what God is calling us towards, one person made the comment, "There is Spirit-led death and then there is just death." I've been pondering about this statement since it was said. What does it mean to have a Spirit-led death? What does it mean to just die?

Perhaps we can use Bobbie's death as a guide.

I think back to Bobbie who I met with many times before she died. She made it clear to me what her wishes were for her funeral. She talked many times about how thrilled she would be to see her husband again. (Her husband died when he was twenty-eight leaving her with two small sons.) She was looking forward to resting. She wanted to make sure that I knew how glad she was to not be a burden any more to her sons. She had hopes for the assets she was leaving behind and how they would be used to further her passions. Most of all, she was excited about what was next for her – she talked quite frequently about the questions she was ready to ask Jesus.

Northwest Washington Synod

In the weeks before Bobbie died, her sons called me to ask if I would be available to sit with Bobbie when she died. They lived far away and knew that they might not make it to her bedside in time. I, of course, said yes. When the nurse called me, I went.

In Bobbie's last hours on earth, I was with her. I felt God's holy presence as I held her hand, sang hymns, prayed the Lord's prayer, shed tears, sat in silence, loved her, and was present with her and Jesus in the thin place between life and death and resurrection.

Going back to the retreat that I was at and the questions that arose, I wonder how we can have language to talk about some congregations having Spirit-led deaths. While I hope and pray that all congregations thrive and grow, I also know that there is a life cycle for all things. And I want to be able to live in the thinness between life and death and resurrection with all of us in the Northwest Washington Synod. I want to have the hard, deep conversations that need to happen. I want us to talk about looking beyond survival and instead talk about death and resurrection. How can we do this in meaningful ways? How can we do this before there is a sudden death? How can we do this acknowledging the pain and heartache and also living in faith and hope?

We in the synod office want to journey with you in these conversations. It is not easy and it is not wanted. But it is a time that can be holy and where God's presence is made known.

As this new year begins, may we walk together in the Spirit – placing our hope in God through Jesus. May we journey as resurrection people.

+Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee bishop@lutheransnw.org



Lutheran Counseling Network

Lutheran Counseling Network Faith and Everyday Life January 2023

Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. (Romans 12:12)



We've all heard of post-traumatic stress. But have you heard of post-traumatic growth? Post-traumatic growth happens when we have endured a traumatic event or crisis and we learn from it, grow from it, move on from it, and become even better versions of ourselves because of it.

The idea of the transformational power hidden in suffering is not new. For thousands of years the meaning of human suffering has been pondered by philosophers, scientists, and people of faith.

In current times, positive psychology (the science of happiness) studies resilience, shifting from surviving to thriving. Post-traumatic growth is a key element in this process, contributing to overall well-being.

In American nun Joan Chittister's book *Scarred By Struggle, Transformed By Hope*, she writes, "Hope is to believe that God stands on this dark road waiting to walk with us toward new light again. We can begin to build a new life when death comes. We can reach out to make friends with others rather than curl up, hurt and angry, waiting for someone to come to us. We can allow ourselves to love again. We can allow ourselves to cultivate new joys, new interests . . . We can decide to go through life with open hands rather than to trap ourselves inside a heart closed to everything but the past."

Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. God is ready to take your hand and lead you from the dark road of your suffering toward new light. To transform your trauma into resilience. To open you up to new experience, bring you new joys, and help you learn to live and love again.

Written by a staff member of Lutheran Counseling Network

OSLC in Our Community

These are the community organizations that use our church building for meetings, rehearsals, and training:





















We remember in prayer . . .

My daughter Karen and granddaughter Tasha, for recovery from RSV (Patty Gerde); Shelley Howe, as she recovers from labral hip tears (The Howes); Sara Reid, as she recovers from tibia and fibula fractures (The Howes); Marge Armos, who is struggling with COPD and dementia, and her husband Joe, who is caring for her (Helen Nychay); Hye-Tong Robinson, for recovery; Dave Carlson, for healing (Marilyn Carlson); Connie Hogue, full recovery following a stroke (Marilyn Carlson); Ken Schaper, heart surgery (brother of Lena Schaper); OSLC Call Committee, for wisdom and discernment; The Moscow, Idaho community (Lena Schaper); Alan, for successful heart surgery and recovery (brother of Don Robertson); Bob Beck, for healing (Debby Beck); Guests of the Community Meals Program; all affected by COVID-19.

We ask for peace and comfort for those mourning the death of their loved ones:

Pauline Montague; Stephen Gacek (husband of Emily Gacek); Carol Harbolt (wife of Ray Harbolt).

Expectant mothers: Devin Amrine (The Howes); Brandi DeIrio (niece of Shelley Howe).

Healing and peace of mind: Lyle Lewis; Lucy Acker; Henrik & Patty Christopherson; Vern Lindquist; Mary Fricke, Jerry & Linda Nack, Marian James; Katie Moeller; Margot Inman; Dorothy Soland; Randi Strom; Jeanne Kuipers; John Pass; Florence Kinnune; Bernice Jensen; Sandy Aldworth; Jen Winslow; Larry Pruitt.

<u>Undergoing cancer treatment:</u> Kirsten Olshausen; Scott Paine (Rowan Hinds); Kip Hauser (father of Cheryl Hauser); Roger Stanley (Alice Lewis); Chris Howe (brother of Mark Howe); Doug McVety (Helen Nychay); Larry Harbolt (Ray Harbolt); Richard (Debby Beck); Dianne Tanner, Marilyn Pro (sister of Rick West).

<u>Living with cancer:</u> Peggy Scalise (cousin of Mark Howe); Eileen Letts (cousin of Mark Howe); Harold Mandt (brother of Mary Ann Hult/Lorna Robertson); Sonja (Dianne Tanner); Gerald Welch (Vern and Jeannie Lindquist); Duane Jacobson; Mary Lewis (sister-in-law of Lyle and Alice Lewis); Suzanne Lewis (daughter-in-law of Lyle & Alice Lewis); Barbara Jones (mother of Ron Sordahl).

If you have any prayer requests to be included in this list (or if you or your loved ones no longer need to be included in this list), please reach out to office@oslcissaquah.org. Thank you.



January Worship Readings

Sunday, January 1 — Name of Jesus

First Reading: Numbers 6:22-27

Psalm 8

Second Reading: Galatians 4:4-7

Gospel: Luke 2:15-21

Sunday, January 8 - Baptism of Our Lord

First Reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalm 29

Second Reading: Acts 10:34-43

Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

Sunday, January 15 — Second Sunday after Epiphany

First Reading: Isaiah 49:1-7

Psalm 40:1-11

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Gospel: John 1:29-42

Sunday, January 22 — Third Sunday after Epiphany

First Reading: Isaiah 9:1-4

Psalm 27:1, 4-9

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Gospel: Matthew 4:12-23

Sunday, January 29 — Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

First Reading: Micah 6:1-8

Psalm 15

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12



Worship Assistants for January Service Time: 10:00 a.m.

Date & Service: All are Sunday at 10 a.m.	Assisting Minister	Usher	Altar Guild	Sound & Videography
January 1 Name of Jesus	Jen Winslow	Bill Suttmeier	Barbara Fetty- Solders	Jonathan Smith/ David Hersey
January 8 Baptism of Our Lord	Mary Ann Hult	Sang-Beom Shim	Barbara Fetty- Solders	Jonathan Smith/ David Hersey
January 15 Second Sunday after Epiphany	Joan Friel	Bill Suttmeier	Jane Wuest	Jonathan Smith/ David Hersey
January 22 Third Sunday after Epiphany	Lori Downey	Don Robertson	Jean Pass & Delaney Cash	Jonathan Smith/ David Hersey
January 29 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	Jen Winslow	Ken Konigsmark	Stacy Smith	Jonathan Smith/ David Hersey

Psalm Cantors for January:

January 1: Lori Downey
January 8: Nora Thomason
January 15: David Carlson
January 22: Wendy Winslow
January 29: David Carlson



Volunteer Coordinators

We're so thankful for all our volunteers and for those who coordinate them!

Assisting Ministers: Jen Winslow

Altar Guild: Jane Wuest Ushers: Bill Suttmeier

Sound & Videography: Jonathan Smith &

David Hersey

January Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

- 1/1 Ginny Amphlett
- 1/3 Morgan Wood
- 1/4 Patty Christopherson
- 1/5 Margot Inman
- 1/7 Becky Brooks
- 1/10 Gary Hanson Paula Swanson
- 1/13 Judith Bergquist
- 1/16 Lena Schaper
- 1/18 Rick West
- 1/19 Ken DeCamp
- 1/22 David Gretch Wendy Winslow
- 1/24 Donald Rentschler
- 1/25 Bill Cash David Hersey
- 1/26 Jean Kampf
- 1/27 Barbara Fetty-Solders
- 1/28 LaRue Nelson
- 1/30 Jen Winslow

Anniversaries

1/4 Lisa Thomassen & David Gretch





If your name is missing from the birthday or anniversary list, please contact the church office so we can update our records.

We want you to be included!

January 2023	2023			Su Mo Tu We Th 1 2 3 4 5 8 9 10 11 11 15 16 17 18 19 22 23 24 25 26 29 30 31	Fr Sa Su Mo 6 7 5 6 7 5 6 20 21 19 20 26 27	February 2023 Tu We Th Fr Sa 7 8 9 10 11 14 15 16 17 18 21 22 23 24 25
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Jan 1, 23	2	3	4	5	6	7
9:00am SOP (Encompass Rm) 10:00am Worship (Sanctuary)		10:00am IF&CB (Ed. Room) 7:45pm AA (Anderson Hall)		9:30am Mission Quilters (Anderson Hall) 10:00am Al-Anon (Ed Room)	12:30pm Companions Bible Study (in Person) (Library and Zoom (first time trying both))	9:30am Take down Christmas decorations (Sanctuary and Narthex)
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9:00am SOP (Encompass Rm) 10:00am Worship (Sanctuary) 11:00am Puppet Show	10:30am Congregational Care Ministry 6:30pm Master Chorus Eastside (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop	10:00am IF&CB (Ed. 3:00pm Community 6:00pm Executive 7:00pm Endowment 7:45pm AA (Anderson	12:00pm Life Together Study (Anderson Hall) 2:00pm Issaquah Garden Club (Fellowship	9:30am Mission Quilters (Anderson Hall) 10:00am Al-Anon (Ed Room) 7:00pm Finance	12:30pm Companions Bible Study (remote) (Zoom)	
15	16		18	19	20	21
9:00am New Member Class 9:00am SOP 10:00am Worship 12:00pm Focus Deadline	6:30pm Master Chorus Eastside (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 676 Meeting (Anderson Hall)	10:00am IF&CB (Ed. Room) 7:00pm Church Council (Narthex) 7:45pm AA (Anderson	12:00pm Life Together Study (Anderson Hall)	9:30am Mission Quilters (Anderson Hall) 10:00am Al-Anon (Ed 2:00pm Community 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop	12:30pm Companions Bible Study (remote) (Zoom)	2:00pm Stephen Gacek Memorial Service (Sanctuary)
9:00am New Member Class 9:00am SOP 10:00am Worship 2:00pm Talley Studios	23 10:30am Congregational Care Ministry 6:30pm Master Chorus Eastside (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop	24 10:00am IF&CB (Ed. Room) 7:45pm AA (Anderson Hall)	25 12:00pm Life Together Study (Anderson Hall)	26 9:30am Mission Quilters (Anderson Hall) 10:00am Al-Anon (Ed Room)	27 12:30pm Companions Bible Study (remote) (Zoom)	28
9:00am New Member Class 9:00am SOP (Encompass Rm) 10:00am Worship	30 6:30pm Master Chorus Eastside (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 676 Meeting (Anderson Hall)	31 10:00am IF&CB (Ed. Room) 7:45pm AA (Anderson Hall)	Feb 1		ω	4

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Our Savior Lutheran Church

745 Front Street South Issaquah, WA 98027 425-392-4169

Stay connected! www.oslcissaquah.org



All information for the *Focus* newsletter is **due by the 15th of each month**, unless noted otherwise. Please email items to **office@oslcissaquah.org**.

OSLC STAFF DIRECTORY

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425-392-4169	office@oslcissaquah.org
Dr. Jiyoung Lee	Parish Organist
	jiyounglee23@outlook.com
Beth Carroll	Accountant
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Emergency Pastoral Care

For emergency pastoral care thru January 9, please contact Pr. Larry Thomas, retired OSLC pastor, at 425-802-1212 or ledgarthomas@gmail.com.

After January 10 (once Pr. Vaswig returns from vacation), please contact OSLC Transition Pastor John L. Vaswig at 253-677-4515 (cell) or jlvaswig@gmail.com.

