

February 2024

The Messenger

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Office Hours: 8:30 am - 2:30 pm Monday - Thursday

Sunday Worship: 9:30 am

Pastor Darryl Thompson Powell



Serving Our Neighbors  Sharing Our Blessings!

Recently Carla went to worship at a church that is part of her responsibility with her position at the synod office. Before going, she tried calling the church to make sure of the worship time. No answering machine, so no message stating the time. She tried to find the information online and discovered they have no online presence to speak of (not even an up-to-date Facebook page). When she googled the church, it said that they were “Temporarily closed.” Carla decided to try going for worship with a backup plan in case they were closed. She arrived and parked on the street. As she walked towards the front door, she saw someone walking away from the door after they had tried to open it and it was locked. There were no signs on the door providing any guidance as to why the church was locked tight on a Sunday morning. Later she found out that they had decided to do worship by Zoom that morning “because of the weather.” She did arrive on time for when worship should be. The sign outside the church (the only way she could find out the time) said worship was at 10:00 AM.

Last month I told you this year we are looking at how to give our best to church guests. Clearly, the above true story isn’t an example of giving guests your best. It shows instead a congregation that isn’t concerned with making visitors feel welcome. Their main concern is for themselves. Congregations whose focus is on how to take care of themselves usually think of themselves as being friendly. That’s because they are...to each other. They miss the opportunity to be welcoming to guests. Genesis 18 tells about three visitors showing up at Abraham and Sarah’s home. When that story is discussed, emphasis is often placed on the hospitality extended by the couple going out of their way to prepare a meal for the visitors. Personally, I love what is said in Genesis 18:2 – “*When [Abraham] saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them...*” Abraham didn’t wait for them to come to him; he ran to them.

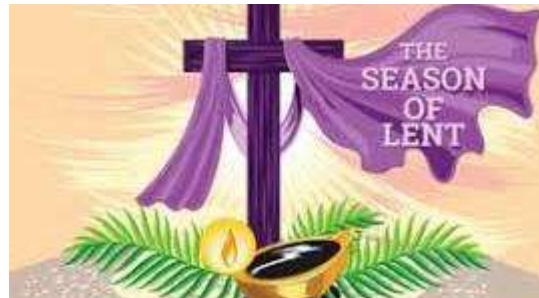
This month, I need your help in starting the journey to becoming better at welcoming guests. To be more welcoming, we need to figure out where we are right now. ChurchFuel.com has a quick, 20-question assessment to help churches figure out if they are ready for first-time guests. I hope you are willing to take the time and do the assessment to help us better understand where RLC is at. If you are, please send me an email (pastor@rlcfp.org) and I will send an invitation to you. By doing it this way, Church Fuel will share an aggregate of all the assessments filled for RLC.

I know it might be confusing why we need to look back to move forward. Author Terry Pratchett put it this way in his book, *I Shall Wear Midnight*: “*It is important that we know where we come from, because if you do not know where you come from, then you don't know where you are, and if you don't know where you are, you don't know where you're going. And if you don't know where you're going, you're probably going wrong.*”

-Darryl Thompson Powell

*Next month: Building a better website

The Church Council did not meet in January so there are no minutes to share.



Figuring Out Faith with Peter

The people have spoken (well, the five members who gave their input on which devotional to use this Lent have spoken). This Lent we are using *A Sanctified Art's* devotional, **Wandering Hearts**. With it, we are focusing on the life and faith of one of Jesus' most famous disciples. In Peter, we see a person who is both steadfast and unsteady, a dear friend and a betrayer, a follower and a wanderer. In Peter, we often see ourselves. By following Peter's journey, we watch the story of Jesus unfold through the eyes of a very normal human trying to figure it all out—just like us.

This series affirms that faith is a constant journey of steadfast pursuit, one that ebbs and flows, seeks and wanders. It affirms that wandering is exploration, not necessarily distance from God. The authors affirm the ways Peter keeps going: he drops his nets, he walks on water, he runs to the empty tomb, he swims to the shore to meet the risen Christ. He keeps searching and yearning and loving, even after missteps or mistakes. Ultimately, in Peter's story, we are reminded that God loves imperfect people—in fact, time and again, that's precisely who God claims and calls.

This Lent, we will look for ourselves in the steppingstones of Peter's story. We will reflect on the stages of our own faith journeys as well as who and what has shaped us along the way. As we wander, hopefully we will tune our hearts to sing God's grace and rest in streams of mercy, never ceasing.

Devotional booklets are available for those who need them. Those who prefer the electronic version or want to print their own, please email Pastor Darryl (pastor@rlcfp.org). As with the recent Advent devotionals, there isn't a budget line for this important time. If you are able, please make a donation for these materials.



Outreach Food4Life Food Pantry/Clothing Closet News



In December the Food Pantry served 67 families consisting of 140 adults and 57 children. We had 10 new guests this month. We were open 3 Mondays in December as Christmas Day was on a Monday.

We are forever grateful to those who donate food each week. We received donations from 46 donators this month.

Our special item Sunday continues to be very successful, and we thank our members for their generosity. This month we had pasta Sunday. During the month of January, it will be Ramen Sunday. Everyone's help in keeping our food pantry stocked is greatly appreciated. Due to the increase in the number of guests, it is getting harder to keep the shelves stocked. Any and all donations are greatly appreciated. We rely on our members, friends, and neighbors to keep the food pantry running.

Thank you to our personal shoppers who are helping buy the items that are not donated. Barb and Alan Miralgio and Walter Johnson are the shoppers. We are forever grateful for them.

Our volunteers continue to be dedicated and make our Mondays at the food pantry work. They work very hard in a short period of time to prepare all the donations that we give to our guests. Our team consists of 23 volunteers, of which 3 are part of the community but not members of Resurrection. They worked a total of 124 total hours in December. Thank you, God, for blessing us with so many people wanting to do your work. The Food Pantry is now going into its 14th year of serving our neighbors. Thanks be to God!

**Financial Summary
December 2023**

	December	Year to Date
Income:	\$15,051.38	\$90,842.18
<u>Expenses:</u>	<u>(\$11,163.43)</u>	<u>(\$153,310.23)</u>
Income Shortfall:	\$3,887.95	(\$62,468.05)
<u>Loss/Gain Investments:</u>	<u>\$515.89</u>	<u>\$12,294.93</u>
Total Gain/Shortfall:	\$4,403.84	(\$50,173.12)

December results show a gain in our investments of \$515.89. Envelope income was over budget by \$3,142.78 for the month & over budget \$9,385.95 for the year. Expenses were under budget by \$1,902.40 for the month, & under budget by \$3,479.77 for the year. Our cash position as of 12/31/23 is \$161,816.57 in total cash assets, spread across our Money Market Fund, CD, Checking Account and ELCA investment. We moved our investment funds into a money market fund, so we will no longer have to deal with stock market fluctuation. Overall, we had a very positive year.

God Bless. Be Healthy and Safe.
Wayne Molley, Treasurer



When God answers your prayers, He's increasing your faith. When God delays, He's increasing your patience. When God doesn't answer, He has something better for you. So, when you pray, have faith, be patient and trust in God.



Church Calendar

February 14	Ash Wednesday Service	1:00 pm & 7:00 pm
February 19	Vision & Mission Meeting	6:30 pm
February 25	Fellowship Hour	11:00 am
Mondays	Food Pantry/Clothing Closet	12:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Wednesdays	Bible Study	2:00 pm
	Midweek Lent Services	1:00 pm & 7:00 pm
	Choir rehearsal	6:00 pm
Thursdays	Al-Anon Meetings	7:30 pm

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'Friend' us or 'Like' us at Resurrection Lutheran Church.

In an Emergency

If you have an emergency outside office hours, you may reach **Pastor Darryl at 847-616-0537.**

*Happy
Valentine's
Day*