



*Pastor's Note...*

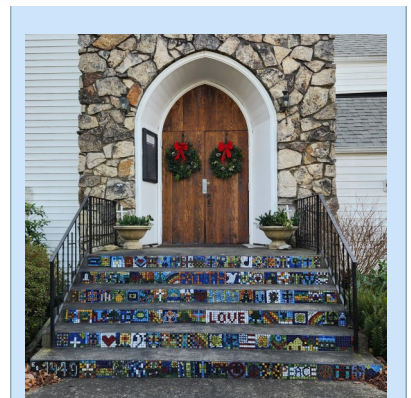
Grace and peace to you,

Blessed New Year to you and to those you love! Welcome 2024, I can't wait to see what the Spirit has in mind for our faith community in the coming year. 2023 was certainly chalk full of incredible ministry and fellowship at Mt Si. We saw the expansion of our backpack/school supply ministry as other local social service agencies, such as Trail Youth and Feed Kiddos, stepped into support and collaborate. We saw another fun-filled season at the Si View Farmers Market hosting the free craft booth with over 60 kids a weeks stopped by. This ministry too saw and expansion with as we were invited to partner with a King County program to teach children about farmers, nutrition and cooking with produce. We continued our participation in outreach events like the North Bend Block Party , Holly Days and hosting the Harvest Carnival. Our quilters and prayer shawl knitters/crocheters provided warmth, prayer and comfort for countless people who received their lovingly crafted items. The prayer circle uplifted our community and the wider Christian community through their dedicated practice of prayer and fellowship. VBS once again drew children from around the community to hear about Jesus. Our family ministry expanded with cluster game nights, which have been a blast with 50 or more participating each month. The Men's Bible Study, Women's Bible Study, Thirsty for Theology, Mid-Week Study, Intergenerational Sunday Ed, Confirmation and more engaged young and old in deepening their relationship with God. Our financial leadership continues to serve the community well as they seek to use your gifts wisely to support all this ministry. Our building and grounds team has worked to provide safe, cozy, welcoming space for the expanding use of the building for internal and external groups. This year we welcomed two new AA groups, Mountain Valley Preschool, continued our work with the Red Cross as a blood drive host site, continued our work with the Girl Scout Leaders who meet monthly in our space, continued our ministry to offer space to families looking for a place to hold funerals for their loved ones who are not members of our church and so much more. Many individuals provide fellowship ministry through coffee hour, beautifully decorated spaces, caring for the changing of the altar clothes. Our continued partnership with the local cluster of ELCA Churches (St. Andrew's, St. Luke's, Sammamish Hills, Cross of Christ and Our Savior Lutheran) led to a beautiful joint outdoor worship service this summer, an upcoming mission trip to Belize in April, a summer mission opportunity for our middle and high school youth to build a Tiny Home, a youth retreat to Lutherwood and more.

I know I've missed things, there isn't space to list them all—I'd love to know what you loved most about the ministry of Mt Si in 2023. We have the second part of our annual meeting on January 28th after worship, I'd love for you to share those ministry memories. So much incredible, life-giving ministry took place in 2023. Let's give thanks to God! Know, that I am giving thanks to God for you—it was your presence, your dedication to this community of faith and your willingness to let God work through you that accomplished all this. Amen. Thanks be to God!



Peace, P. K.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Bible Studies.....	2
Education.....	2
Sunday Lessons.....	3
Council Report.....	3
Youth Reports.....	4 & 5
Epiphany Bonfire.....	5
Red Cross Blood Drive.....	5
Larry Thomas Book.....	6
Birthdays.....	6
75th Anniversary Planning .....	6
Pastor's Sabbatical.....	7
Belize Fundraiser.....	7
Donate.....	7

Special points of interest

- Bishop's Letter on last page—*great read!*
- Council Report pg. 3



**MOUNTAIN VALLEY  
PRESCHOOL**



Mountain Valley  
Preschool

Where a Love for Learning is Created

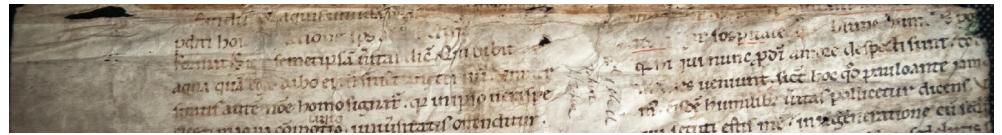
*Updates to events are communicated through Constant Contact and an email list of families and friends, if you are not on this list but would like to be included please let Pastor Krista know.*

**AA**

Will meet Thursdays and Sundays in Luther's Lounge weekly at 7 pm Ogle Street entrance

**GIRL SCOUTS**

The Girl Scouts Leaders meet the 3rd Thursday of each month



**THIRSTY FOR THEOLOGY**

No Thirsty for Theology in January.

**WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY**

The Monday Ladies Bible Study will not be meeting during the month of December. We will resume our study in January. If you have any questions, please reach out to Vivian Waid.

**MEN'S BIBLE STUDY**

Each Saturday @ 9am the men gather at Little Si Restaurant in North Bend for breakfast and Bible Study. The Study focuses on the readings for the upcoming Sunday worship. Reach out to Dave Spurling or Ed Benson for details.

On Dec. 10, Jan 7, Jan 14 and Jan 21 we will explore the ROAR series and learn all about the brave, bold, unexpected and fearless followers of God throughout scripture. Each week we will dive into a different Biblical character and see how God used each of them to bring hope and promise to God's people.

**Be on your guard;  
stand firm in the faith;  
be courageous; be strong.**

**1 Corinthians 16:13 (NIV)**

**ROAR**

*being bold in our faith*



Intergenerational Bible Study  
December 10, January 7,  
January 14, January 21

**SAVE THE DATE!  
Sunday, January 28**

**Part Two of our Annual Meeting following worship**

We will need a quorum of 40 one final time as we seek to ratify our constitutional changes made in November.

Please plan to attend so we can ratify our constitutional changes made in November, vote on representatives to the May Synod Assembly of the North West Washington Synod, see our year end financials and celebrate with all our ministry teams the incredible work God has done through this faith community.

A reminder to all ministry team leads -

## COUNCIL REPORT

Greetings from your council.

Our income in November was \$14,712. Our expenditures for November were \$13,353. This is a gain of \$1,360. At the end of the month we had \$43,200 in our checking account compared to \$63,605 at this time last year. Our net loss through the end of November this year is \$20,405

We were busy during advent. We had a good turnout for our advent festival on the first Sunday in advent. There were lots of treats and craft activities for all ages. On December 21 we had a youth and children Christmas party. At the end of the party we recorded the annual Christmas pageant which was played during the service Sunday service.

As we have done in the past we had a booth at the Holly days and tree lighting celebration in North Bend. We offered free hot chocolate and three different crafts for kids. We had over 100 kids drop in to do a craft.

On December 14 we hosted the Red Cross blood drive. Over twenty people donated blood. We will host this again in March.

We will hold our year end congregational meeting on January 28.. At our November meeting we approved making changes to our constitution. Before those changes can go into effect we need to vote to ratify the changes that were made. We will need 40 members to make a quorum to ratify the changes. Once they are ratified we will only need %30 of the voting members to make a quorum. With our current membership of 83 the quorum will be 25 members. Please get this on your calendar and attend either in person or virtually.

At our December council meeting we elected a new executive team. Dave Spurling will be president for 2024 and Jack Boller will be secretary. We did not make a final selection for vice president. We will fill that position at our January meeting.

Jack Boller

### **New Council Officers:**

Dave Spurling, Council President;

Jack Boller, Council Secretary; still seeking council Vice President.



**Epiphany Sunday**  
**January 7th**

### **JANUARY SUNDAY LESSONS**

#### **January 7th**

First Lesson:  
Psalm 89:1-8  
Narrative Text:  
Mark 1:1-20

#### **January 14th**

First Lesson:  
Psalm 65  
Narrative Text:  
Mark 4:1-34

#### **January 21st**

First Lesson:  
Psalm 95:1-7  
Narrative Text:  
Mark 5:1-20

#### **January 28th**

First Lesson:  
Psalm 62:1-8  
Narrative Text:  
Mark 5:21-43

## Quilters Group

Quilters meet on Monday mornings in the quilting room.



**The Sunday flower chart is in the Fellowship Hall outside of the library.**

You are welcome to sign-up for a Sunday to provide one vase of flowers for the altar.

Did you take photos of an event with Mt Si that you would be willing to have used in our newsletters or other promotional purposes? Short videos are also appreciated. Please send to Kathleen at:

[mtsi.assistant@gmail.com](mailto:mtsi.assistant@gmail.com)

## Sock Samurai Invite for Middle and High School Youth January 7th, 5-7pm

@ St. Matthew's Lutheran in Renton



### **What is Sock Samurai you ask?**

The best way to describe it is a giant team game of freeze tag meets dodge ball with socks (don't worry, they are clean!) Pr. Krista chaperoned one at St. Andrew's and says it is a blast!

### **I had so much fun at the youth party!**



I loved decorating the cookies and playing the fun "Minute To Win It" games. My favorite part was all the good food! Everyone had a great time!

- Kelsey H.



## **2023 Memories**

*Can you believe that 2023 is over?*

*I can't, and here comes 2024!*

In 2023 there was the Lutherwood retreat (when the power went out), the Christmas party, God's Work Our Hands Sunday, Family Game Nights, and much connecting with the people of our church community. I am so happy to have Mt. Si Lutheran Church as my family! And I am excited for 2024!

- Nellie S.



## Epiphany Bonfire

January 7

12pm @ the Burnsides



Come bring your live Christmas Tree to burn during our annual Epiphany Bonfire or just come for fellowship and enjoy the warmth of the bonfire! All are welcome.

## Family Game Night Returns!



We will continue to gather the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month from 5-7pm with cluster churches starting on February 18<sup>th</sup> @ Sammamish Hills Lutheran.

Look for sign-ups in an upcoming News From the Pews.

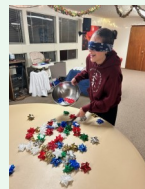
We recently did a winter pageant and I am here to write about it.



We would gather for practice and decided who would get the different parts. Everybody chose the part they wanted and we ran through the play several times. The original plan was to perform for church but after

some kids got sick we were not able to perform when originally planned, and some other people couldn't go to the service, so we ended up meeting together to rehearse and film the play.

We sang and acted and everybody did a wonderful job participating in the pageant. We even had all the parents join in and participate as the angel choir. The pageant was a huge success. :)



- Kaelynn S.

## Red Cross Blood Drive



Upcoming Blood Drives:  
Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>  
and Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>

If you are interested in helping with this blood drive please reach out to Rick Rodriguez.



Confirmation will meet up again starting on Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> from 4:45-5:45pm

Confirmation continues to meet each Wednesday from 4:45-5:45pm unless otherwise noted due to school breaks, etc.

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



Peggy Halferty 4th  
Brent Koukol 7th  
Michael Hanson 10th  
Lisa Sampson 10th  
Eleanor Haycox 13th  
Rachel Flanagan 14th  
Joe Stone 14th  
Vicki Wallentin 14th  
Mary Abrahamson 16th  
Leslie Hatling 18th  
Nancy Flanagan 24th  
Dana Koukol 25th  
Judy Stoddard 29th  
Marcus Tiongson 31st

*If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please reach out to the office so we can make the correction.*

## 75th Anniversary planning

This year, Mount Si Lutheran Church will celebrate 75 years of Serving, Reaching Out, and Growing in Grace.

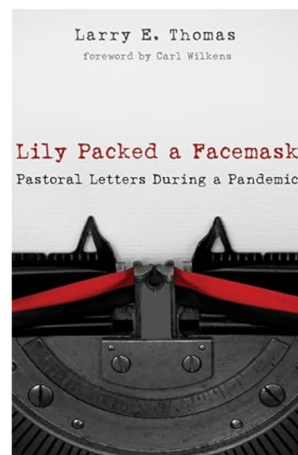
**The date for the celebration will be  
Saturday, September 14, 2024**

**Bishop Shelley will be here to celebrate the  
75th Anniversary**

There will be many opportunities for you to volunteer to help. Please prayerfully consider joining one or more of these sub-committees. It may seem early to be signing up, but we hope to have special events leading up to the September celebration and we will need your ideas as well as your help.

**Next planning committee meeting:  
Tuesday., January 16, 2024 at 11am**

If you have questions or suggestions for the upcoming events next year, please contact Sheila Rodriguez. You can call the church office for her contact info.



At the end of February 2020, Larry and Ann Thomas left their home in Issaquah, Washington, for a three-week vacation visiting family in Colorado and Texas. News of the coronavirus pandemic was slowly spreading. By the middle of March 2020 the world had changed and the global pandemic was in full swing. The Thomases decided to shelter in place in Flower Mound, Texas, for the next six weeks. On March 17, 2020, when Larry returned to his work as the interim pastor at Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church in Sammamish, Washington, it was from a makeshift office in Texas, not his office in Sammamish. Working remotely, Pastor Thomas began organizing

weekly virtual prayer gatherings and Bible studies. In order to connect with the congregation, he started writing pastoral letters as a way of reflecting on the intersection of faith, hope, and love while living through the pandemic. Lily Packed a Facemask is a chronicle of one pastor's commitment to engage with a congregation during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. Grounded in biblical texts, Thomas takes the threads of a variety of writers and contemporary resources and weaves a tapestry of living life faithfully in the midst of a year of constant changes and challenges.

# Belize Mission Fundraiser

## SAVE THE DATE

Feb 03, 2024 | 3-5pm

Sammamish Hills Lutheran

Join in a dinner inspired by Belize cuisine, learn about Belize, participate in fun games and a silent auction.

All proceeds will go to support the mission projects our team will carry out in country.

RSVP by January 27 to [pastor@mtsilutheran.org](mailto:pastor@mtsilutheran.org) or [pastornyla@shlc.org](mailto:pastornyla@shlc.org)

Suggested donation of \$30 per person for dinner  
Our Goal is to raise \$5,000-\$8,000



**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**Saturday, February 3rd**  
**3-5pm @ SHLC**

**Belize Mission Trip fundraiser!**

**Come enjoy a Belizean inspired meal, silent auction, games and more.**

Proceeds from the evening will go to support mission projects we hope to accomplish while in Belize. Our goal is to raise \$5,000-8,000. Suggested donation for the dinner is \$30 a person. See sign-ups in the Fellowship Hall or reach out to Pr. Krista.

Thank you!

I begin my 7th year serving as your Pastor. I will leave for the Belize Mission Trip on April 3rd and move directly into my sabbatical time when I return. I will return to the office on Wednesday, July 17th and be in worship on Sunday, July 21st. - Pastor Krista Johnson

## PASTOR'S SABBATICAL PLAN

April - July 2024



**Please**

**Make a gift online through our website:**  
[www.mtsilutheran.org/onlinegiving](http://www.mtsilutheran.org/onlinegiving)

Thank you for your continued generosity.

- Treasurer

**If you have "unreimbursed" receipts to claim on your MSLC annual giving statement**

please complete a form with receipts included and place in the church office or give to Leslie Hatling, Financial Secretary, by **January 15, 2024**. Forms are available by request.

If you have questions, please contact Leslie Hatling.

# BISHOP'S LETTER

January 2024



I was listening to the news a few days ago when I heard that Israel had bombed Gaza using artificial intelligence called “The Gospel.” I thought at first that I had misheard. Surely an AI program designed to bomb people is not named “gospel.” But, horrifically, I had heard correctly. As Steve Inskeep from NPR’s Morning Edition reports on December 14, “The system is called The Gospel. And basically, it takes an enormous quantity of surveillance data, crunches it all together and makes recommendations about where the military should strike.”

Pause right here and read the above paragraph again. I mean it. Read it again.

A weapon of war is named The Gospel. Dear Beloveds of Christ, I cannot emphasize enough how bone-chilling and nauseous it makes me feel that a word designed to bring hope and love and peace and joy to this world – Gospel – is being used to kill.

I don’t know who first named this system “gospel.” I don’t know what marketing expert or even what acronym “gospel” might mean in the AI world. I could not find the origin. But what I do know is that this system is now being used for something horrendous. This is so contrary to the first words from the gospel of Mark, “The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

As you might be aware, the word gospel is translated into English as “good news.” When Martin Luther was struggling about the laws of God and feeling that he was a sinner beyond redemption, he recounts in many of his writings how his understanding of God changed as he read Paul’s letter to the Romans. He suddenly realized that it was not up to him, but up to God. God was the one who redeemed. God was the one who forgave. Luther suddenly experienced what God through Jesus does for all of us: Through Jesus Christ, God provides comfort for the terrified, forgiveness for the sinner, and faith for the doubting. Martin Luther was overwhelmed with God’s grace and was immersed in the Gospel.

Following this earth-shattering understanding of the Good News of Jesus, Luther taught, preached and wrote about this insight every chance he got. In 1521, Philip Melancthon condensed Luther’s insight to this provocative sentence: “The gospel is a promise.” To this day, Lutherans continue to bear witness to the whole church and world that the gospel is a promise, truly good news of God’s mercy and love in Christ, received by faith alone.

In these days when words are manipulated by those in power, when evil seems to be gaining ground, when neighbor turns against neighbor, may we remember and experience God’s grace. May we be enveloped in God’s love. And, in response, may we, in our words and actions, move against the forces that are contrary to all that Jesus stands for.

For we are called, my dear Beloveds, through God’s grace towards God’s promise of wholeness and true peace. This is the Gospel.

As the prophet Isaiah proclaims of God in chapter 42, “I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

May it be so. May it be so.

We look towards 2024 in faith, holding God’s promise of Gospel.

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee