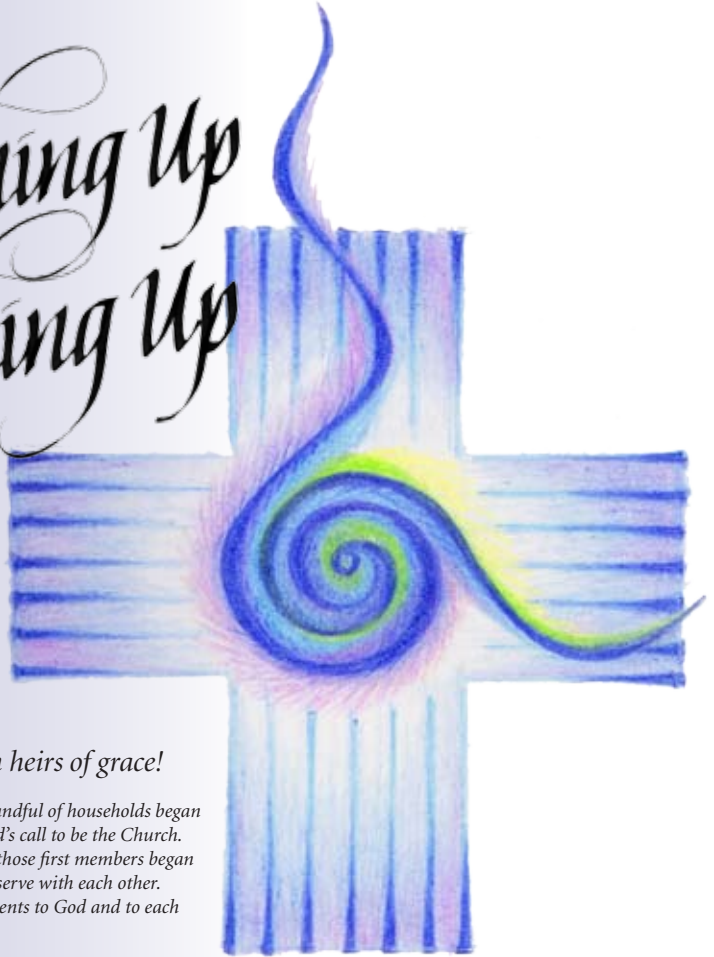


Just as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in Christ, rooted and stretching up into Christ and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

– *Colossians 2:6-7*

*Reaching Up
Reaching Up*



We are the rich heirs of grace!

A generation ago a handful of households began gathering around God's call to be the Church. Drawn by the Spirit, those first members began to sing and pray and serve with each other. They made commitments to God and to each other

We are the rich heirs of the grace that God has poured into us as Christ the Servant.

Pastor Eric Finsand

*“We are blessed
to be a blessing”*

*For by grace you have been saved through faith,
and this is not your own doing,
it is the gift of God-not
because of works, lest any man should boast
– Ephesians 2:8*

*A congregation
is made up of **baptized people**
called to use their gifts in service
to the reign of God*

*“Do not be afraid, I am with you.
I have called you each by name
Come and follow me, I will bring
you home; I love you and you
are mine”*

“We are blessed to be a blessing”

MY FAITH JOURNEY IS HAS BEEN GUIDED BY SOME AMAZING BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST HERE AT CTS. THEY HAVE LIVED OUT TWO MESSAGES- “WE ARE BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING”, AND IN THE WORDS OF A FAVORITE HYMN, “ALL THAT I HAVE IS THINE ALONE, A TRUST OH LORD, FROM THEE”.

Because of my ‘teachers’ I believe that money is only a tool to be used to live out the Gospel.

I believe that hoarding my time and talent is every bit the sin that thinking that MY money is MINE is. So I try to follow in their footsteps and teach Sunday School, serve on committees, pick up a paint brush or rake, and cheerfully fill out our Simply Giving automatic offering. At Christ the Servant I’ve grown to believe that service and sharing are worship and that God speaks to me in the hallway or meeting room through my brothers and sisters as often as he does during corporate worship.

Is money a tool or something to be held on to?

Jean Beckman spoke powerfully to me about a family that “needed \$1,000. We had \$1,000 so we gave it to them” and trusting God to work out repayment, or not. When she said, “if we lost everything but had our health, we’d just go to work and start over,” it put a face on the “lily of the field” passage that tells us not to worry about the future.

How much is enough?

Toby Richner provided a bucket of produce for a youth auction item and the farm boy in me couldn’t resist buying it. Toby took the young Dooley family under his wing to share not only the bounty of his garden but his belief that a tithe is where you start and that you look for ways to use what you have. Toby had clients with excess apples, he had an apple press, and the CTS youth needed a fundraiser. Young people also needed to learn to work and partner side by side with adults who could plant and nurture seeds of faith. As a result apples didn’t go to waste, hundreds, if not thousands of gallons of cider were shared, money was raised, and young people saw faith in action.

Who are our neighbors?

When I was on the Stewardship Committee with Cindy Klein her passion was where the outreach portion of our Christmas and Easter offering would go. Her stories of dental missions to Central America were inspiring. Her service within the Hispanic Community was humbling. I wonder what God has in store for CTS with a repurposed space on the North end of our building? Do the middle school students at Kulshan Middle School need a safe place to be after school or help with their homework? Could campus ministry at WWU find a new home on Lakeway? Could we feed the homeless and hungry?

When is the right time to give?

Cindy Petersen is the older sister I never had. Her advice is practical and clear. When her family needed her, she modeled backing away and taking care of first priorities. When asked to take on a challenging task, she said yes. When a financial need has been in front of the congregation she was there leading by example. From her I’ve learned that there’s never a perfect time to give more, say yes, or take the lead, but there’s always the right time.

– I’m not the person I was when I came to Christ the Servant 20 years ago. I’ve learned, grown and been changed by those who have walked with me saying, “Come and See,” “Yes, we can,” and “God will provide.”

– Shawn Dooley

How has Christ the Servant Lutheran Church been a blessing to me?

ONE JANUARY SUNDAY MORNING A FEW YEARS AGO I WALKED INTO CTS FOR WORSHIP, FEELING DOWNRIGHT DEPRESSED AND DISPLACED.

My role as a mom was radically changing.

My three sons had grown up into young adults and they no longer needed the cookie baker, cheerleader, hovering nurturer. My husband had retired, so I no longer needed to be the supportive corporate spouse. My professional life was at a stand still, and I felt rather disconnected. Bruce Henninger and Cindy Petersen greeted me as I walked into church that morning, and as they each asked how I was doing I honestly answered them. Without missing a beat both of them invited me to join them. To join them in things they loved to do. Bruce asked me to sail with his racing crew; Cindy asked me to walk with her, to join Team in Training to do the San Diego Marathon. They connected me, they cared. They were reflecting Christ that morning.

Yes, sometimes I see God through the people at CTS and other times the music, the scripture and the message allow me to see God more directly.

I feel Him in the water of the Baptism font. I taste Him in the meal served. I sense His presence and supportive love. I hear His voice and am nudged to think outside of myself, to go beyond the comfortable and safe. I enter the doors a sinner, disconnected and struggling to make things happen on my own. I leave as a forgiven child of God, ready for another week – another chance to be the face, the hands, the heart of Christ in this world. It doesn't take long for the reality of imperfection and sinfulness to creep back. But my church and my church family continue to remind me of the miracle of God's unending love and forgiveness. Christ the Servant Lutheran Church connects me.

– *Sally Holloway*

*For by grace you have been saved through faith,
and this is not your own doing,
it is the gift of God-not
because of works, lest any man should boast*
– Ephesians 2:8

I love the fact that salvation is first provided to us by grace through Jesus Christ. It turns our worldly thoughts upside down.

No longer do we do something good hoping to get something in return.

My life is given to me and it's up to me to decide how I will respond.

I am hugely grateful for forgiveness, new life, and salvation, but will I love and care for others as Christ has loved me? It is a quiet inner conversation urging me to find my unique way to serve others each day.

I am inspired and challenged by my brothers and sisters at CTS as I see the many ways they embody Christ's love by serving their fellow man and creation.

PRAYER: DEAR LORD, THANK YOU FOR GRACE, FOR NEW LIFE, AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO REFLECT YOUR LOVE. AMEN

*For by grace you have been saved through faith,
and this is not your own doing,
it is the gift of God-not
because of works, lest any man should boast*

– *Don Beckman*

*A congregation
is made up of baptized people
called to use their gifts in service
to the reign of God*

A CONGREGATION AND EXTENDED CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS LEAD, THROUGH EDUCATION, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE TO THE DISCERNMENT AND USE OF THOSE GIFTS.

Within every congregation, at one time or another some members consider a call to serve the church as rostered leaders. It is the congregation's privilege and responsibility to help potential candidates hear the first whispers of that call, continue with discernment of a clear call, support and encourage through the process of professional education, and, at least through early years of serving the church professionally.

When my family came to Christ the Servant in the fall of 1991, I had been on a journey of preparing for rostered leadership for about fifteen years. The call to study theology and "do something" was clear. But, the hour for full-time focus on preparation had not come, because of the intervening call as primary caregiver and spiritual supporter in my family. For example, I had started seminary programs twice, and chose to lay theological education aside when the family moved to other states.

At Christ the Servant, our family received a full warm welcome and encouragement to be involved.

Those were the days of being a family-sized church; every household had a key to the front door. Using the facility, even for family events required only clearing the calendar with the receptionist. The supportive, caring atmosphere gave natural opportunities for sharing my long term goals. Fellow members and staff offered ready encouragement to pursue the goals, and to use my gifts. I took the Befrienders' training and served on that team of visitors. I served as a leader, in the adult catechumenate.

Recognizing the role of the church in helping people discern gifts and prepare for leadership.

The church invited a representative from Seattle University to talk about the opportunity for part time study there, either in continuing education or as a regular student. Finally the time had come to start school with the finish line as a primary goal in my life. Having another woman in the congregation as a fellow student was a grace upon grace. One of our courses was an individualized course in New Testament the pastor agreed to give us.

When the candidacy process started, CTS enthusiastically agreed to be my sponsoring congregation.

A women's book club accepted my "application" to serve as their leader for one of the practicum experiences. One couple provided transportation to a meeting with the candidacy committee. The pastor served as my spiritual director. These are all just examples of the consistent affirmation of the Body of Christ as it is manifest in Christ the Servant lavished on me.

With the degree earned, and the candidacy process, and direction for a place of service still underway, guidance came from two primary sources.

The pastor suggested that I apply for an interim position as hospital chaplain. That position clarified the call to health care ministry. Later, a woman who had close ties with Josephine encouraged me to let that long term care facility know of my preparation and strong desire to work with an older adult population.

It is a joy to look back on the work of CTS as "equipper of the baptized" for service, wherever the vocation leads. It is a shining hope to see our commitment to follow the Spirit's leadership into wider fields of service.

– Troy Faith Ward

THE GUIDELINES OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
DEFINE THE CHURCH BUILDING AS THE PLACE FOR THE LITURGICAL ASSEMBLY
GATHERED AS ONE BODY IN CHRIST.

*The church building is a sign and reminder of the
immanence and
transcendence of God – who chose
to dwell among us and whose presence
cannot be contained or limited to any single place.*

**Worship in these buildings is the loving response of God's People to the
mystery of God who is with us and who is yet to come.**

“As visible constructions, churches are signs of the pilgrim church on earth; they are images that proclaim the heavenly Jerusalem, places in which are actualized the mystery of the communion between people and God.” In addition, the church building manifests the baptismal unity of all who gather for the celebration of liturgy and “conveys the image of the gathered assembly.” While various places “express a hierarchical arrangement and the diversity of functions,” those places “should at the same time form a deep and organic unity, clearly expressive of the unity of the entire holy people.”

**I strive to embody and apply these goals in my professional work both with
congregations and quietly with secular projects.**

I believe that CTS successfully lives out many of the attributes that the temporal church structure aims to house and inspire. I have personally experienced the mystery of God's presence in fellow Lutherans' loving response to the needs of our family and in sharing the communal rites of baptism, communion, and God's Word. I also know we have worked through some divisive issues of faith with the goal of deep unity and compassion for all of God's people both locally and in places far away.

***I look forward to continuing journeys of loving response to the mystery of
God as we gather together.***

– Brad Cornwell

What Comes Over Me

I have attended Christ the Servant Lutheran Church for 6 years now. I was raised in church and have attended church for a good part of my adult life, but CTS is the first liturgical church I have ever attended. The service takes you through the cycle of confession, forgiveness and renewal, centering around the communion.

**I find, at this stage in my life, in my walk with my Lord, that the service
often has a powerful effect on me.**

I meet my Heavenly Parent (*see, I didn't say Father-oh the changes CTS has wrought*) in a very new, and very dynamic way. There is a meditative center in the service that allows me to experience God, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, in a very fresh way.

I believe the Lord led me to CTS in order to reveal His Father (*He said it, not me*) in this new way.

***I love the people of the church, the Spirit of the church, and the effect the
church has had on my wife and my children. I love the music too.***

– Jim Marshall

“Do not be afraid, I am with you.

*I have called you each by name
Come and follow me, I will bring
you home; I love you and you
are mine”*

– You Are Mine, Text and Music: David Haas, #581, ELW

We live in a world of numbers, our identification numbers, our passwords, and our number in line. We take a number, enter our password, and attach our ID number to every form. It can be easy to live as a shadow behind the numbers that identify us in the world. Many of these numbers are kept secret, known only to us; because in the wrong hands these numbers can be used to take our place, our identity.

In the sports world, however, your team number holds your place and both sets you apart and includes you within the group.

Everyone knows Jackie Robinson was number 42 and Ken Griffey, Jr. was number 24 on the Mariners and Lou Pinella was number 14. (Well, maybe not everyone knows Lou’s number.) Our grandson is number 35 on his basketball team. Our son always wore number 6 in soccer. And I am number 29 in the choir.

When I first joined the Servant Singers choir at CTS, I was still a little lost in the congregation.

I knew a few people and was making friends fast, but I needed a place to belong, a smaller group in the larger church. The choir helped me feel welcome. Music gives you a place to feel at home. Choir was familiar territory. The surprise came at the second rehearsal. I was given a folder for my music and when I opened the folder, there was my name and number, 29. I have never had a number in choir before; I was always sort of anonymous, one of the altos. I was deeply touched. With my number I belonged; I had a place at CTS, at once unique for me, but also part of something bigger than myself.

For me this is the blessing of CTS.

We are large and small at the same time. There is a place for everyone and we take the time and make the effort to find a place for newcomers. When we sing the hymn, “You Are Mine”, I remember my place in the choir and my place in God’s heart. I am known and cherished. I do not have to struggle to know who I am; I have a place and I belong.

My choir folder is worn and held together by black electrician’s tape now.

I use a shiny, second generation folder for Sunday’s service. But my folder with my number follows me to every rehearsal; it is my assurance that I belong there. Just as I will always have a place in God’s heart, I belong there.

Are you wondering how to belong at CTS? Have you seen someone on Sunday that looks a little lost? Let’s find a place of belonging for everyone in our congregation.

–Donna Grubbs, #29

What I found in CtS is a group of people who are loving in a Christ-like way

There is a wooded trail directly across the street from my front door which leads to a pond that spills down a concrete wall into a creek that gathers speed and power as it flows over larger rocks and forms a cascading falls.

Whatcom Falls has the majesty to make it worthy of being a destination. Sometimes as I walk these trails I find myself singing “Surely the Presence.” The natural world is a place where I find it easy to connect with the Divine. The soothing sound of moving water can be heard as a song of praise of the created to the Creator. But on Sunday mornings Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, not Whatcom Falls, is my destination.

Walking through the doors of CTS was not a comfortable step for me.

For most of my adult life I have considered myself a non-Christian, having had some experiences in Christian churches that were less than loving. I found my way into this church through the figurative back door. I was invited by a woman I met at a “bible study” I learned about in the bulletin of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. I happened to be at St. Paul’s looking for a community I could observe Lent with after a surprise meeting with Jesus in a dream.

What I found in CTS is a group of people who are loving in a Christ-like way.

It is visible and it is real. I have found words and practices that bring me closer to God and more important help me to experience a God who knows me and who wants to be known. In this church and in following the circuitous path that led me to it, I have increased my intimacy with my Creator.

The walking path I take to church passes the main falls, heads south, crosses over the creek, through the off-leash area, turns east and terminates at Lakeway Drive half a block from Christ the Servant where I sometimes find myself singing “Surely the Presence.”

If I had had a destination in mind when I began this journey, I wouldn’t have found my way to CTS. Because I literally heard Jesus call, I found a path that leads from my front door to a place where I can continue my individual faith journey in a caring community.

– MAY I NOT BE SO FOCUSED ON DESTINATION SO AS TO MISS THE JOURNEY.

– MAY I BE QUIET ENOUGH TO HEAR THE SONG OF PRAISE SURROUNDING ME AND BOLD ENOUGH TO CONTRIBUTE TO IT.

– MAY I CONTINUE TO HAVE THE CURIOSITY TO DISCOVER THE PATH LAID OUT FOR ME BY DIVINE DESIGN.

– MAY I HAVE THE COURAGE AND WISDOM TO FOLLOW WHERE IT LEADS.

– *Angela Mercy*

We are called to be lights in the darkness, to shine Christ's love into the areas in this world where it does not seem to exist. This is a tough task on the best of days — even tougher when the batteries in our flashlight are run down. The world is pretty good at sapping the positive energy which is shined into it.

Going to church on Sunday is like a recharging session. Sometimes one of the lessons will strike a chord in me or I may find that the sermon was written just for my circumstance.

Whether a lesson or sermon strikes me or not, I can count on something else: seeing God in one of you. It might be Barbara telling me one of her stories about her cat. It might be Del encouraging me to come to the men's choir practice. Dan's friendly smile and booming "Good morning Mike!" Or the inspiration from Jeff when I see he has brought another friend to church. God takes the form of a few encouraging words or the compassion in someone's eyes when the brokenness of the world is wreaking havoc in my world.

Good people out of work, senseless violent acts, poor health and suffering within my family.

The burdens of this world tend to weigh me down pretty good. It is a necessity that I can come here and experience God's love through real people who, despite their wrinkles, receding hairlines, and sore backs are the light of Christ in this world. As long as you are here for me I will keep coming back.

– Mike Hess
January 2, 2012

I know God's love because he first loved us

IN THE 10+ YEARS I'VE BEEN BACK IN BELLINGHAM CTS HAS BECOME VERY IMPORTANT TO ME, NOT JUST AS MY CHURCH BUT ACTUALLY AS MY FAMILY.

I am loved, cared for and welcomed into members' homes. I am included as "grandma" to two sweet children; and, "sister" to others closer to my age. We give, share, console, celebrate, laugh, listen, receive, work together, and pray. I am blessed.

Our church has also become a place, an instrument, for mission -- for ministry.

Considering my own disability I have discovered how small the "dis" is in comparison to the "ability." Working with other members who have learned successfully to manage our hearing losses, we are able to bring hope and good news to so many in our county who have yet to learn how to achieve and maintain a quality of life with a hearing loss that is debilitating. Now in our eighth year our CTS Hearing Health Ministry, quietly and compassionately, ministers to hundreds of people as we have through our eight years of monthly meetings, programs and services. We help so many to find their way out of withdrawal, isolation, fear and self-deprecation with information and support that is so hard to come by. We bear good news that is life-giving to many.

What other church has this ministry?

I know of none. I also know our support group is one of the largest and strongest in the nation – a mission, a ministry that is located right under our own church roof! Those in need come to us! And the joy is that out of my own weakness I have found strength, out of brokenness I have found wholeness, out of belief that we are all members of one body I have gifts to give that continue to make a difference in the lives of others.

I know God's love because he first loved us. He works through me that others might know his love. I believe we all, though imperfect, have so much to give. It's not what we can't do, but what we can that makes all the difference. Amen

– Charlene MacKenzie

*The opportunity to be a part of the
Body of Christ through CTS and
make an impact on lives,
including my own*

FOR MANY YEARS CTS HAS BEEN A BLESSING TO ME IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS. I FIRST CAME TO CTS TO EXPERIENCE SOME REST AND RELAXATION AFTER A RATHER DIFFICULT TIME AT OUR PREVIOUS CONGREGATION. WHAT I FOUND IN CTS WAS A PLACE THAT FELT VERY MUCH LIKE A COMFORTABLE HOME. I WAS ALLOWED TO REST, RELAX AND RECHARGE IN A CARING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. IT WAS JUST WHAT I NEEDED AT THAT TIME IN MY LIFE.

In the years that followed I found new blessings at CTS. There was much work to be done in a small growing church and I found myself immersed in Council, building projects and committees.

As one who thrives on those types of challenges I was blessed to be able to work with people who shared a common vision for the Church. I must say that I was also blessed by working with some people who had a different vision of where CTS was going. Looking back now I understand that I was blessed by learning to work with all people, not just those that agree with me all the time.

I cannot write about the blessings that CTS has brought me without bringing up music.

In many ways that blessing overshadows all others. Over the last 25 (*cough.. cough..*) plus years I have had the great blessing of being in the midst of a congregation that embraces music in worship. The synergy of the music staff has taken me places where I could not go by myself. The congregation has lifted me up when I couldn't do it myself. That blessing has shaped my life in very fundamental ways and I will be ever thankful to the body of CTS for making that possible.

While I look at past blessings I have experienced at CTS I realize that perhaps the greatest blessing of all is that of opportunity.

The opportunity to be a part of the Body of Christ through CTS and make an impact on lives, including my own. Along with all of you I have the opportunity to very directly impact the life of the stranger who walks through our doors, or the child who is coming to VBS this summer or even the family thousands of miles away from Bellingham that needs a clean glass of water.

Now that is a blessing!

– Rick Lysen

I look forward to being at church and to my time in worship

Ispend a lot of time in my office chair. It's a dependable chair; well-made and durable; I think it's been with me for over 15 years.

It's a good chair – its seat and arms have joined me in times of big decisions and small, tight fiscal times and flush, times of certainty and times of indecision, times of challenge and times of support, and times of boasting and times of listening and humility. I find that most workday mornings I look forward to my day in that chair; I'm thankful that I have the opportunity to be with it.

As I sat in church this morning, I got to thinking...maybe my office chair is a bit like the CTS church community to me.

I've been with CTS, too, a long time. This congregation has seen me at my best times and my worst, my all-together times and my lonely times, my confident times and my questioning times. CTS certainly has blessed me and my family: Kathi and I met and were married at CTS and Kelsey was baptized in the "old" sanctuary. This CTS community supports me and challenges me, gives me opportunities to learn about others and myself, and lets me be a part of what being in the church is and can be. I find that on Sunday mornings I look forward to being at church and to my time in worship and, when the service is over, I can say that it was good that I came. The CTS community and worship experience enriches me and, like my chair's seat and arms, keeps me focused on what's important.

When I plop down into my chair each weekday morning I'm thankful for my job and what it allows me to do. On Sunday, I again give thanks for the opportunity to be a part of this church community.

Take a seat!

– Kurt Willis

What Is This Place



1 What is this place where we are meet - ing? On - ly a house, the
2 Words from a - far, stars that are fall - ing, sparks that are sown in
3 And we ac - cept bread at this ta - ble, bro - ken and shared, a



earth its floor. Walls and a roof shel - ter - ing peo - ple,
us like seed: names for our God, dreams, signs and won - ders
liv - ing sign. Here in this world, dy - ing and liv - ing,



win - dows for light, an o - pen door. Yet it be - comes a bod - y that lives
sent from the past are all we need. We in this place re - mem - ber and speak
we are each oth - er's bread and wine. This is the place where we can re - ceive



when we are gath - ered here, and know our God is near.
a - gain what we have heard: God's free re - deem - ing word.
what we need to in - crease: our jus - tice and God's peace.

Text: Huub Oosterhuis, b. 1933; tr. David Smith, b. 1933

Music: KOMT NU MET ZANG, A. Valerius, *Nederlandsch Gedenckclanck*, 1626

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