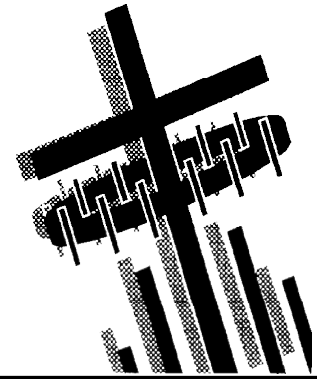


# Comments



324 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, SE ~ Hickory, NC 28602 ~ 828-328-1483 ~ March 2025

## Who Is the Greatest?

As Jesus is completing his earthly ministry, just before he enters Jerusalem for his final week, which leads him to the cross, he has a strange encounter. He has just foretold his death and resurrection for a third time, and Matthew writes, *Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to [Jesus] with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers (Matthew 20:20-24).*

It might seem to us like an odd request. In fact, who could ever be so audacious as to ask such a thing of Jesus? And yet, this desire to be the greatest among the disciples was regularly discussed by them, especially toward the end of the gospel account. In Matthew 18:1, just after the transfiguration, Matthew writes that the disciples came to Jesus and asked him, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Whether or not we're willing to admit it, this

question "who is the greatest?" probably has a bigger impact on our lives than we might let on. Have you ever strived to finish first in a contest? Achieve success over others? Win an argument? Have you ever tried to outdo someone else in any way? While our words might not betray our deepest desires and intentions, sometimes our actions do. Who is the greatest?

Maybe, if we're honest with ourselves, the sons of Zebedee, at the request of their mother, are not as far removed from us as we would like to think. Of course, the response of the other disciples is

not surprising: they became indignant. Do our attempts to be greater also instigate the same response? To seek greatness in the world and even greatness in the

kingdom of heaven on our terms goes against what that kingdom is about in the first place! In fact, seeking greatness in the kingdom over others becomes a stumbling block to proclaiming and sharing the kingdom and the good news of Jesus.

Just after this episode with the disciples, Matthew writes, *But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew*



### Reflections from the Pastor

Pastor Alec Fisher

# CLC Notes and News

(continued from page 1)

20:25-28). To be “greatest” in the kingdom of heaven is to seek to become the least.

This saying of Jesus is clearly at odds with the way the world around us operates. It’s at odds with the values of our society and culture, which push greatness on human terms, greatness by overcoming others rather than by serving. We’re called to something different.

Each Sunday of this Lenten Season, we’re going to be reading through the very end of Jesus’s earthly ministry in the Gospel of Matthew where we see this question “who is the greatest?” arise in one way or another. Throughout, we’ll be comparing our ideas of the greatness of rulers, the greatness of power, the greatness of wealth, the greatness of achievement, and the greatness of status to the kingdom that Jesus has come to bring. How do all those things add up when they are confronted by Jesus himself?

Each Wednesday, we will dive further into the heavenly values of kingdom life as we talk about Jesus as the Way, Truth, and Life. We will talk about the way of love and service, the truth of the Word and of God, and the life of grace and sacrifice. While these things might not lead to greatness in the world around us, they define the path that we take as citizens of the kingdom of heaven. In this way of life, Jesus’s kingdom reality is made manifest through us.

I look forward to a blessed and meaningful Lenten Season as we prepare our hearts and contemplate our lives always giving ourselves over to the ways of our Lord’s heavenly kingdom.

In Christ,  
*Pastor Alec*



As part of our church’s 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we’re having a *Hobby Day*.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am in the Family Life Center.

Fun & Fellowship & More Fun!  
Everyone is encouraged to come and enjoy our 8 church members who have agreed to present their hobby, collections, or interest.

Afterwards, stay around for some lunch and more fellowship.



Contact: David Puett (828-291-7228)

IN LOVING ♥  
*Memory*

Rev. James Taglauer  
who died February 14, 2025

**Pastor Alec’s Book of the Month:** Pastor Alec invites you to read books that he’s now revisiting. Each month a new book will be recommended for your own enjoyment. For the month of March, Pastor Alec will be reading *The Screwtape Letters*, in which C.S. Lewis talks about Spiritual warfare. If that’s a topic that might interest you, you’re encouraged to pick up a copy and read along!



The LWML will meet March 5<sup>th</sup> in the multi-purpose room at 11:30 (notice it is 30 minutes later than usual). After our meeting, we will attend the *Ash Wednesday* service. The April meeting will also be at 11:30 instead of 11. Kathy Ludwig will deliver a birthday cake to the men’s group home on March 20. Keep those mites coming!

## Guiding Through God’s Love

**Save the Date!** Join us for Christ Bible Camp 2025. Our theme this year will be “Living Water” as we look at some of the Bible stories that talk about water – the power of water and the blessing of water! What stories do you think of? Register online or by completing the registration form at church. Christ Bible Camp runs June 2-5 from 9:00am until Noon. Lunch is included. Children must be at least 3 years old (potty trained) through rising 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Volunteers are needed! Please see Sister Robie if you are interested.

### Christ Bible Camp

“Living Water”

June 2 - 5



If you or a member of your family had been a member of the Stephen’s Ministry, please contact Nancy Rinehart or Debbie Wolf. We are working on the church history for the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

### --- Altar Flowers ---

**Feb. 23:** The Altar Flowers today are given to the glory of God and in celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary (Feb. 27) of Don & Sylvia Lail by their children and grandchildren.

*Dear Friends:*

*Thank you for partnering with us in ministering to the needy in our community. Generous gifts like yours make it possible for us to help meet the increasing needs of those who are hungry in our area. We depend upon faithful friends like you to enable us to continue to address their needs. Thank you for putting your compassion into action. I am incredibly grateful for the blessing your generosity is for our guests! Thank you!*

*Sincerely,*

*Austin Pearce, Exec. Dir.*

**125 Years – God is still making all things new:** Christ Lutheran Church was formed in 1900 and officially brought into the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in 1903. So, 2025 marks 125 years of our life together as a congregation! This year, we will have all kinds of reminders about what God has been doing and continues to do at CLC. Our Theme verse for this year is: *And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new”* (Revelation 21:5a). God has been making all things new at Christ Lutheran Church for the last 125 years, and he continues to do so today. We pray that this year of fellowship, celebration, and trust in God’s future plans for us will be a reminder to us all! Happy 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

**Alleluia!** Thank you in advance for the lilies that will adorn our church on Easter Sunday. Country Road Greenhouse (Myron, Lisa, Tracy) are no longer providing lilies due to the delicate growing requirements. Thanks to them for their previous service. Our new provider is Settlemyre Nursery. They can provide large numbers **and** they deliver! Cost will be \$17.50 per lily. The bulletin order forms may be placed in the offering plate or given directly to the church secretary. Cash or check made out to CLC Easter Lily Fund. Forms will begin on Mach 16 with the deadline of April 13.

**On Sunday, February 2,** the Sunday school children made 52 Valentine door decorations for Hickory Memory Care. The children loved being creative! Some extra hearts decorated the Narthex bulletin board for the month of February.

On February 12, Mary Puett and Sister Robie delivered the door decorations to Jessica White at Hickory Memory Care. We were able to take pictures as some of the residents chose their favorite and put them up in their door.

Jessica and the residents are very grateful for the partnership with Christ Lutheran Church. Jessica wrote – “Our residents loved the door decorations so very much. . . . I wanted to tell you that we are so very appreciative of everything you do for our community!”



**St. Peter's Lutheran,** in conjunction with Alaska missions for Christ, is planning upcoming VBS trips to various sites in Alaska this summer. Tentative dates are July 4-13 for Circle, AK and Central, AK & July 11-20 for Ninilchik, AK. Would members of Christ Lutheran be interested in learning more about joining us or learning more about mission opportunities in Alaska? If so, please contact Tonya Darden at 828-850-2260 for more information.

~ \* ~

**There is an urgent need for cooks at Camp Linn Haven.** Mary Puett and Robie Hillhouse have volunteered to serve meals March 12-15. The volunteers are the Concordia Football Team and another team from a Lutheran church in Maryville, TN. They will be feeding breakfast, lunch, and dinner to about 45 people (but with the football team, it is estimated it to be closer to 60 meals in terms of volume). Food is supplied at the camp, but we may bring up fresh fruit, baked cookies, that kind of thing, to supplement and give the volunteers some variety to what has already been donated (ie - pastas, lunch meats, etc). Please contact Sister Robie (301-755-4603, or [srrobie@msn.com](mailto:srrobie@msn.com)) for details.

~ \* ~

**Lenten Sunday Service Sermon Series:** During our **Sunday services** in the season of Lent, we will begin a **new sermon series** based on the end of Jesus's ministry in the Gospel of Matthew, called "**Who is the Greatest?**" This series will deal with questions of what we hold to be great in this world and how those things pale in comparison to what our Lord has given to us in his kingdom.





## **Foothills Veterans Helping Veterans honors Jim Starkey**

Jim Starkey, one of the original founders of Foothills Veterans Helping Veterans (FVHV), was honored on Valentine’s Day during the weekly FVHV meeting. The group meets each Friday morning at the Hickory Sou Kitchen.

Starkey, who is shown seated front and center in the photo, was presented an honorary black belt by Tai-Chi Master Instructor J.P. Nelson, who is shown seated at the end of the table on the right.

Starkey chaired the first two Foothills Veterans Stand Downs. FVHV will hold its 13th annual event on April 11 at Catawba Valley Community College. The prestigious Jim Starkey Award, given to a veteran or an ally at each Stand Down, was named in honor of Starkey’s many contributions to veterans in the area. He will celebrate his 91st birthday on March 4.

FVHV meets each Friday at 9:30am at the Hickory Soup Kitchen, and anyone who cares about veterans is welcome to attend.

From Hickory Daily Record Staff Reports

~ \* ~

**Midweek Lenten Services:** Join us for our midweek Lenten services on **Wednesdays** (March 5, 12, 19, 26, April 2 and 9) at **12:30pm**. On *Ash Wednesday*, March 5<sup>th</sup>, there will be **two services** at **12:30pm** and **6pm**. The theme for our midweek services, “**Jesus: Way, Truth, Life**” will go along with our Lenten devotionals.

**Shrove Sunday Lunch:** The Tuesday before *Ash Wednesday* is sometimes called “Shrove Tuesday”, a day in which pancakes are eaten to symbolize one last day of feasting on rich foods before the fasting of Lent. While the word “shrove” means repentance, in preparation for the Lenten Season, this day is also called “Fat Tuesday” or “Mardi Gras”. **Sunday, March 2**, we conclude the Epiphany Season by celebrating the *Transfiguration of our Lord*. At the end of the traditional service, we will “bury” the Alleluia banners and begin to prepare for the Lenten Season. After the service, we will commemorate this with a **pancake lunch!** Rather than our trivia, we will also have a special time of repentance, where we lay our sins at the foot of the cross. So, join us for our “Shrove Sunday” pancake lunch!

~ \* ~

**New Small Group Bible Study - “The Momentum Theorem”:** There is a new small group Bible study starting! This study, based on Dave Ramsey’s book, **The Momentum Theorem**, focuses on turning things around in your life. Whether it’s your relationship with God, family, health, finances, there is always a chance to take things in a new direction by establishing healthy, life altering changes. This Bible study will begin on Sunday, **March 2<sup>nd</sup>**, at **9am**. Join us!

~ \* ~

**Lenten Devotions:** The Lenten devotions are in and are now available in the narthex! This year’s Lenten devotions are called “**The Way, the Truth, and the Life**” and are based on the writings of Henri Nouwen. Pick yours up today!

# THE CHURCH FAMILY

## JOYS, PRAYERS, & CONCERNS

### Mission outreach for:

- our ministry of Guiding through God's Love
- local outreach ministers: CCM, Soup Kitchen, University Christian High School, Pregnancy Care Center
- Mid-Atlantic Lutherans in Mission (malim.org)
- Lutheran Heritage Foundation

**Surgery:** Tim Brewer (2/26); Carmen Divers (2/26); Pat Hamby (TBD)

**Hospital:** Jim Starkey (2/23); Eric Yount (2/16 Charlotte)

**Testing:** Pat Hamby (3/11); Barbara Pingel (2/9 cousin of Kathryn Pingel)

**Recovering:** Glenda Griffith (2/16); Rebecca Locke (2/6); David Sigmon (2/2); Rita Crotts (2/6 sister of Tony Lail); Eli (friend of Betsy Downs); James Robinson (2/9)

**Undergoing treatments:** Teresa Mays; John Sigmon; Doris Smith; Barbara Jones (sister of Lois Hunt); Thekla Sebaugh (2/6 sister of David Ludwig); Courtney Brown (2/9 friend of the Hamby's)

**Under doctors' care:** Kathie Albright; Shelly Baker; Jack Divers; Jimmy Gantt (2/23); Lois Hunt (2/9); Becky Rimmer; Rita Roseman; DiAnn Wichman; Paul Cates (2/9 husband of

Angela); David Pingel (3/2 father of Kathryn); Sandy Smith (2/9 friend of Ludwig's, Cam Davis, Hamby's, & Kathryn Pingel)

**For shut-ins:** Juanita Isenhower at Trinity Village; David & Donna Lumb at home; Peggy Mays (Terra Bella Newton); Robert Sigmon (Autumn Care, Statesville); Carolyn Smith (Autumn Care); Randy Smith; Alice Yount

**For those who are suffering** due to *Hurricanes Helene* and *Milton* and the California wildfires

**For those who mourn** the deaths of Clayton Baker (brother-in-law of Judy Baker & David Sigmon), and Chris Rix (friend of Will Rose)

**If not otherwise updated, prayer requests will remain on the Prayer List for four (4) weeks.** Some dates are listed next to names to indicate when a person has been added to the Prayer List. Please update the church office with any changes within four (4) weeks to help us keep the Prayer List current.


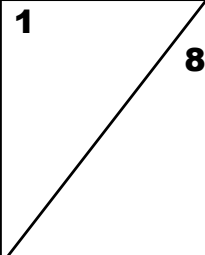








### Financial Stewardship

	Actual: January 2025	Actual: January 2025
<i>Income</i>	\$ 22,082.41	\$ 22,082.41
<i>Expense</i>	\$ 29,490.26	\$ 29,490.26
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-\$ 7,407.85</b>	<b>-\$ 7407.85</b>

# March 2025

# Christ Lutheran Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>8<sup>th</sup> after Epiphany 2</b> 9:00a 1 <sup>st</sup> Service ☩ Small Group 9:00a Sunday School 10:00a Fellowship 10:30a 2 <sup>nd</sup> Service Small Group 11:45a <i>Breaking Bread Together</i> - Sunday Lunch	<b>3</b> 10:00a Zumba (FLC) 11:00a Chair Zumba 1:00p <i>Matthew Monday</i> w/ Pastor Alec	<b>4</b> 10:30a PEEPS 6:00p Womens Bible Study (Zoom)	<b>Ash Wednesday 5</b> <b>Bulletin Deadline</b> 10:00a Zumba (FLC) 11:00a LWML 12:30p Ash Wed. Service 6:00p Ash Wed. Service 	<b>6</b> 9:30a Chrismon Repair (Baby Nursery) 7:00p CMT (FLC)	<b>7</b> 10:00a Zumba (FLC) 11:00a Chair Zumba	<b>1</b> 
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent 9</b> 9:00a 1 <sup>st</sup> Service Small Group Sunday School 10:00a Fellowship 10:10a Ad. Choir Reh. 10:30a 2 <sup>nd</sup> Service ☩☩ Small Group 11:45a Elders	<b>10</b> 10:00a Zumba (FLC) 11:00a Chair Zumba 1:00p <i>Matthew Monday</i> w/ Pastor Alec	<b>11</b> 10:30a PEEPS 6:00p Womens Bible Study (Zoom)	<b>12</b> <b>Bulletin Deadline</b> 10:00a Zumba (FLC) 12:30p Lenten Service 	<b>13</b> 9:30a Chrismon Repair (Baby Nursery) 7:00p CMT (FLC)	<b>14</b> 10:00a Zumba (FLC) 11:00a Chair Zumba	<b>15</b> 
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent 16</b> 9:00a Meal Service ☩ Small Group Sunday School 10:00a Fellowship 10:30a 2 <sup>nd</sup> Service Small Group	<b>Newsletter Deadline 17</b> 10:00a Zumba (FLC) 11:00a Chair Zumba 1:00p <i>Matthew Monday</i> w/ Pastor Alec 	<b>18</b> 10:30a PEEPS 6:00p Womens Bible Study (Zoom)	<b>19</b> <b>Bulletin Deadline</b> 10:00a Zumba (FLC) 11:00a Soup Kitchen 12:30p Lenten Service 	<b>20</b> 9:30a Chrismon Repair (Baby Nursery) 7:00p CMT (FLC)	<b>21</b> 10:00a Zumba (FLC) 11:00a Chair Zumba	<b>22</b> 11:30a <i>Feed the Needy</i>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent 23</b> 9:00a 1 <sup>st</sup> Service Small Group Sunday School 10:00a Fellowship 10:10a Ad. Choir Reh. 10:30a 2 <sup>nd</sup> Service ☩☩ Small Group	<b>24</b> 10:00a Zumba (FLC) 11:00a Chair Zumba 6:30p Kenworth Mtg. (@ Mt. Zion)	<b>25</b> 10:30a PEEPS 6:00p Womens Bible Study (Zoom)	<b>26</b> <b>Bulletin Deadline</b> 10:00a Zumba (FLC) 12:30p Lenten Service 	<b>27</b> 9:30a Chrismon Repair (Baby Nursery) 7:00p CMT (FLC)	<b>28</b> 10:00a Zumba (FLC) 11:00a Chair Zumba	<b>29</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent 30</b> 9:00a 1 <sup>st</sup> Service Small Group Sunday School 10:00a Fellowship 10:30a 2 <sup>nd</sup> Service ☩☩ Small Group	<b>31</b> 10:00a Zumba (FLC) 11:00a Chair Zumba 1:00p <i>Matthew Monday</i> w/ Pastor Alec <b>NO</b> Kenworth Mtg.					<b>Holy Communion</b> ☩ - early ☩☩ - late

*March 2025 Birthdays and Anniversaries  
Congratulations and may God continue to bless you!!!*

2	Caroline Dale Scarlett McKelvain	19	Linda Bowman Justin Lackey
3	Samantha Wilson	21	Becky Rimmer Kaitlyn Sain
4	Pam Godfrey Jim Starkey		Doris Smith Dan Sturgill
5	Elizabeth Abernathy	22	Cade Hamby Robert Kraay
6	Ronald Duncan Susan Fulbright		Matt Lail
8	Carmen Divers Amy Locke	23	Viviann Wall
	Mary Ross	25	Joseph Isenhower Catherine Mundy
10	Dale Matthews Don Peck	25	John Sigmon
16	Keith Rhyne Linda Sturgill	26	Pastor Richard Schwandt
18	Benjamin Campbell	28	Kayla Baker
		31	Alex Bolch Eric Wilson

<i>Anniversaries</i>	
13	Harrison & Rachael R. Tilley
17	Frank & Mary Kerns
19	Brad & Kim Fulbright
24	Brian & Nicole Rose
26	Mark & Payton Dockery



	<b>March 2</b>	<b>March 9</b>	<b>March 16</b>	<b>March 23</b>	<b>March 30</b>
<b>Preaching</b>	Pastor Fisher	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor
<b>Lector</b>	Adeline Fisher	Zach Rose	Cam Davis	Jim Hunt	Wendy Wilson
<b>Distributor</b>	~*~	Linda Bolick	~*~	Alison Matthews	Angie Ewing
<b>Acolyte</b>	Jack Fisher	Adeline Fisher	Adeline Fisher	Jack Fisher	Adeline Fisher
<b>Elder</b>	Maria McKinney	Angie Ewing	Nicole Rose	Robert Kraay	Bill Lail
<b>Counters</b>	Cam Davis Kathryn Pingel	Pat Hamby Bob Rinehart	Cam Davis Kathryn Pingel	Pat Hamby Bob Rinehart	Cam Davis Kathryn Pingel
<b>Audio/Video</b>		Noah Lail	Kyle Donovan	Cam Davis	
<b>Media</b>	Lisa Smith	Rick Lail	Kyle Donovan	Karla Bolch	Lisa Smith
<b>Host</b>	Pat Hamby	Anna Newton	Betty Link	Mary Puett	Pat Hamby
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Sadie Lail	Nicole Rose	Sadie Lail	Nicole Rose	Sadie & Nicole
<b>Security Team</b>	David Puett	Britt Griffith	Rick Lail	Chris Mundy	Randall Mays



# Connection

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On March 5, Ash Wednesday, we move into a new season of the Church year – the Season of Lent. Lent is a 40-day season focused on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. (Almsgiving is a word we do not use in our everyday vocabulary, but means “an act of giving money, food, or other items to people in need”). The season of Lent is a solemn time of reflection as we prepare for the joyous season of Easter.

Consider using this prayer, based on the words of Psalm 51:10, during your Lenten reflections, pausing as indicated to think about what that description means to you:

Create in me a clean heart, O God: a humble heart \_\_\_\_\_, a meek heart \_\_\_\_\_, a peaceful heart \_\_\_\_\_, a benevolent heart \_\_\_\_\_, a devout heart which does evil to no one \_\_\_\_\_, a heart which does not repay evil for evil, but overcomes evil with good \_\_\_\_\_, a heart which loves you above all things \_\_\_\_\_, a heart which always thinks about you \_\_\_\_\_, a heart which speaks about you \_\_\_\_\_, a heart which gives you thanks \_\_\_\_\_, delights in hymns and spiritual songs, and has its citizenship in heaven \_\_\_\_\_. Amen.



# Christ Lutheran Church

324 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, SE  
Hickory, NC 28602



## **Comments**

is published monthly by *Christ Lutheran Church*, a non-profit church located at 324 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., SE, Hickory, NC 28602; Phone: 828-328-1483; Fax: 828-328-9841; Email: [cles@clchickory.com](mailto:cles@clchickory.com); web: [www.christlutheranchurchhickory.com](http://www.christlutheranchurchhickory.com)

### **Our Mission Motto is**

*Guiding Through God's Love*

### **CHURCH STAFF**

Adm. Pastor.....Rev. Alec Fisher  
Assoc. Pastor.....Dr. David Ludwig  
Assistant Pastor..Rev. Richard Tucker  
Organist.....Danny Foster  
Secretary.....Jill P. Lafone  
Adm. Assistant.....Nancy Rinehart  
Newsletter Staff.....Nancy Rinehart  
and Jill Lafone  
Contributors: CLC Family & Friends

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# Christ Lutheran Church

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