## CROSSBEAMS

#### **Doing Ministry Together**

As you are probably aware, Pastor Laura has gone on leave for a few months. She is doing well and has really immersed herself in her art classes at Alberta University of the Arts. She also has a therapist and is already excited about the results the therapy is providing. She greatly appreciates the cards she has received acknowledging her ministry and impact. (By the way... her doctor has instructed her not to have any church conversations for the time being! This has really changed our conversational dynamics...)

With her on leave, I have been pondering how we might cover her responsibilities and workload. I have been considering going to full-time to try to take on more of Pastor Laura's workload to minimize the impact on the congregation.

As I have been thinking and praying about this, I have become increasingly aware of a congregational model called *Collaborative Ministry*. The general idea is that the pastoral staff and the membership of the congregation *co-labor* in providing ministry in, among and through the congregation. For many of you, this is not a new idea! You grew up in or were members of a congregation where almost everyone had a role they played in the activities and ministry of the church. In my home congregation in Austin, Texas, they tried to capture this idea by putting in the bulletin where worship participants were acknowledged:

Ministers – The members of St. Martin Ev. Lutheran

It has been exciting to be in conversation with the

Church Council about what *Collaborative Ministry* can look like here at Church of the Cross. It has been a major dynamic in the LEAD work that we have been doing together as we have sought to discern how God is calling and leading our congregation. We continue to work together as we envision what it looks like to work together in ministry. It is particularly timely right now during this time while Pastor Laura is on leave. I see and welcome the creation of the Listening Response Team and see it as a manifestation of shared/ collaborative ministry.

NOVEMBER

2021

Where could you see yourself using your time, gifts and abilities to forward the work of Christ here? What would it look like for you take on a role in worship or serving or communicating?

Peace,

Paster Hul

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## LEAD ... love God with all your heart

# LEAD CENTERING TEAM

#### STRENGTHENING BY RE-CONNECTING

The Listening Response Team

#### The Many Impacts of COVID-19

As we stand on the threshold of the Fall season, after a year and a half of COVID-19, we find ourselves in a situation where the future of the pandemic is still very uncertain. Will we be able, with the help of vaccines, to get the virus under control to the extent that we can gradually move back towards a normal social life? Or will there be further mutations or other factors that cause further "waves" of the pandemic, and seemingly "endless" uncertainty?

How has COVID-19 impacted the Church of the Cross? For all of us, our day-to-day lives have become disrupted by the pandemic . For some of us, this has been marked by loss and grief for our nearest ones. Some have suffered health issues or employment loss. Some are on the "front lines" of work that involves dealing directly with the pandemic, and/or dealing directly with the public.

#### We Want to Re-Connect

As a congregation, over the last 18 months, we have lost a great deal of the togetherness that comes from regular, full-attendance services and other activities centred at the church. Many of us miss this togetherness and feel its loss keenly.

In order to respond to this, Church Council is forming a Listening Response Team" to "re-connect" with congregation members:

To check in and hear about how life is going,

To share about the work the council has been doing on our core purpose and core values and to get your feedback, To pray with you.

The *Listening Response Team* is just being formed but plans to begin its calling by mid-November. When someone from the Listening Response Team reaches out to you, we hope you say YES to this conversation!

Sincerely, Paddy Colfer LRT Co-Chair



#### Common-Sense Compassion

The following is the daily devotion from Father Richard Rohr for Thursday, September 30th, 2021, from the Center for Action and Contemplation .It is part of that week's theme, "Compassion."



In this homily, Fr. Richard reflects on the well-known story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–35), a parable Jesus used to teach us what common-sense compassion looks like in our everyday lives.

This is probably the most well-known of all Jesus' parables, probably because the lesson of compassion is so obvious. First of all, we have a scholar of the law. This smart man stood up to test Jesus, asking, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus just asks, "Well, what's written in the law?" And the answer the man gives is perfect. He puts together the two great commandments, exactly as Jesus himself would do: "Love God and love your neighbor." Jesus says to him, "Do this and you will live." Then there's a giveaway line: "Because he wished to justify himself, he then asked, 'Who is my neighbor?'" (Luke 10:25–29).

Jesus tells him this beautiful story that we call the story of the Good Samaritan. I'm sure many of us have been told that the Samaritans were the outright enemies of the Jews, so here Jesus is picking a bad guy in their eyes to be, in fact, the good guy.

In the story, a man who was coming down from Jerusalem fell victim to robbers and was left half-dead. A priest and a Temple assistant were going down the same road but passed him on the other side. Priests and Levites had to maintain ritual purity. In Judaism at that time touching a dead body made a person ritually impure. That's perhaps the reason these two walked by the man. They're not necessarily bad people; they're just trying to maintain ritual purity so they could enter the Temple. This is part of the point of the story: *love is more important than ritual purity*. These men want to be pure and to do their priestly works, so they pass up a chance to love an ordinary human being.

The Samaritan who came upon the man was moved with compassion. I might say to the man, "I'll pray for you," but the Samaritan really goes out of his way! He bandages his wounds and takes him to an inn. He gives the innkeeper money, and even offers to repay any more that the innkeeper spends in the injured man's care. He goes to the utmost degree to show compassion. Jesus simply asks the scholar who was trying to justify himself: "Which of these three was neighbor to the wounded man?" (Luke 10:36).

What Jesus is doing in this beautiful story is defining what love of neighbor is: it is the concrete practice of love and caring. We already know this law of compassion, because it is written in our hearts. Our common sense knows what we are supposed to do, and we still don't do it. We contradict our own good common sense when we seek ritual purity or any kind of moral superiority instead of loving who and what is right in front of us.

Adapted from Richard Rohr, "The Good Samaritan," homily, July 14, 2013.

## LEAD ... love God with all your soul

#### Nurturing the Spirit of our Congregation

Visitors often remark about the positive, uplifting spirit they encounter both in the sanctuary but also in the narthex after worship. This kind of spirit needs to be nurtured and engendered. I ran across this article from the Alban Institute recently and thought it is very helpful in naming unhealthy communication behaviors and how we might use and develop healthy ones. Pastor Phil

#### **Cleaning Up Bad Communication Habits**

From the Alban Institute

Of the several negative communication patterns congregations practice, three habits are particularly problematic: triangulation, pass-through communication, and anonymous feedback. While these three may be strategies for getting needs met, they all block rather than help healthy communication. Even if well intentioned, they are deadly habits that in the long run allow people to dodge accountability, gain power, and alienate others. Once everyone understands how to break these habits, those who persist will eventually have to stop or they will become so uncomfortable and isolated that they will leave the congregation. To clean up bad communication habits, congregations can do three things: reduce the triangulation, eliminate pass-through communication, and reject anonymous feedback.

#### **Reducing Triangulation**

While people often suggest that venting is good for the soul, it is actually not very productive. Venting to someone about a third person is simply an avoidance technique that creates what is known in counseling theory as a relationship triangle, or triangulation. Triangulation is talking about feelings, opinions, or personal issues regarding some person or group with a third party instead of with the person or group actually concerned. Relationship triangles usually involve three people who each take one of three roles: victim, persecutor, and rescuer. Once in a triangle, people change places among its three points. The only way to stop the triangulation is for each person to communicate his or her feelings, concerns, or opinions directly to the other.

Of course, the best communication strategy is to avoid being recruited into a triangle in the first place. But so often well-intentioned faith leaders and congregants listen to another person's concerns, feelings, or opinions, then realize they inadvertently let themselves be co-opted into involvement, sometimes even taking sides. Once in a

triangle, escape may take some courage and clarity but is possible. The triangulated person can redirect the other person straight to the appropriate individual or committee—the one actually involved in the personal issues or the one that can address the concern or mend the relationship. A three-way conversation sometimes helps, but only if the third party facilitates without taking sides or having an agenda, without speaking for one of the other parties, and without adding to the emotional drama.

#### **Eliminating Pass-through Communication**

Some congregations get in the habit of pass-through communication. To get a message to someone, you tell someone else. Like triangulation, pass-through information also involves three parties, but the content of the information is less emotional and personal—sometimes as simple as the expected outcomes of a meeting.

With both triangulation and pass-through communication, few people take responsibility for what is accurate and few people speak directly to each other. Informal channels of pass-through communication lead to misunderstandings down the road. Like the children's telephone game, the content usually becomes distorted and often the necessary action delayed. Miscommunication may occur unintentionally, but individuals or groups also can use passthrough communication to divide congregations and stir up conflict. Giving the message to whomever is close by and expecting him or her to pass it on may seem expedient, but there is no substitute for the direct message. And like triangulation, pass-through communication must be stopped for healthy congregational functioning.

Again, the individual being asked to pass something on has the power to stop the pattern. A simple statement such as "I'm not comfortable carrying that message" or "I might mix up what you've said, so perhaps you could call him yourself" is very helpful. The intended messenger needs to clarify why that person is talking to him or her instead of the individual who needs the information. If he or she is dodging responsibility for direct communication, the

## LEAD ... love God with all your soul

#### **Cleaning Up Bad Communication Habits Continued**

intended messenger should be all the more determined to stop the pass-through effort.

#### **Rejecting Anonymous Feedback**

Why would someone give feedback anonymously? There are several reasons. Anonymity allows people to avoid accountability for the content. The individual with the complaint or accusation may also fear reprisals. Sometimes the individual simply doesn't know whom to talk to about a concern. At other times the individual is trying to get his or her way in a conflicted situation, but stays underground to maintain the appearance of being in a harmonious relationship with other congregants.

Personnel committees and other groups that oversee pastoral ministry must be clear in their policies and practices that they will neither receive nor take seriously anonymous complaints—letters, phone messages, e-mails, or pass-through communication. Slanderous comments in particular should not be disseminated by the recipient, not even to the clergyperson or any others on a committee, unless the content contains serious threats or requires a legal response. Congregations can waste a lot of energy on slanderous static that interferes with their listening to and addressing real issues. If e-mails are sent from unknown sources, they can be stopped by a trusted leader sending a letter to the congregation asking everyone to block the anonymous sender of the "junk" information and to ignore the content.

Anonymous communication is damaging to everyone in the congregation because feelings are often expressed but cannot be resolved. Wounds are named but cannot be healed. Criticism is offered without the chance to explore the possibility of healing. To stop anonymous feedback, clergy and lay leaders need to agree that it is counterproductive. You can't apologize to anonymous. Anonymous will remain angry or sad until he or she comes forward with the truth. Anonymous others cannot and should not be considered when making leadership decisions or resolving conflicts.

A congregation can greatly reduce negative criticism and unresolved hard feelings with these simple and clear boundaries: no triangulation, no pass-through information, and no anonymous communication. When recruited into a communication triangle or to pass information on to another person, leaders need the mantra, "Please tell the person (or committee) directly yourself." When asked to respond to anonymously obtained information, leaders need to simply refuse to consider it substantive until the anonymous person is willing to more clearly own his or her concern. Congregational communication can sometimes hide secrets, agendas, and conflict. While clearer boundaries and transparency in communication may cause negative aspects of congregational life to come into the light, they also reveal the strength, commitment, and love that bind the congregation together—ultimately giving more courage to faith leaders to address any negative dynamics that hinder their faith journey as a community.

#### How to Clean Up Bad Communication Habits

- Speak directly to the person or committee that the issue concerns.
- Refuse to carry a message from one person or group to another.
- If two people talk with you about each other, offer to meet with both of them together or to find them a mediator.
- If a person complains to you about someone else but refuses to directly talk with the person to resolve the problem, ask him or her to stop talking to you or others about it.
- Reduce venting by first listening and then asking what action the person will undertake to resolve the problem.
- Refuse to take nonspecific or anonymous feedback seriously.

Adapted from <u>Healthy Disclosure: Solving Communication</u> <u>Quandaries in Congregations</u>, copyright © 2007, the Alban Institute. All rights reserved.



## Wednesday Morning Study

### Introduction to Luke and Acts by Pastor Phil

Preparing for a year of Luke's story of Jesus and the Early Church 9:30-11:00am, Wednesday mornings In-person: North Meeting Online: Zoom Prayer Room

Each year, the gospel texts that are assigned from the Revised Common Lectionary focus on a different gospel. We are just finishing the year of Mark and will begin the year of Luke beginning in December. The gospel of Luke is the first of two volumes that the gospel writer wrote. The second volume is *Acts*. In this study, we prepare ourselves for Luke's account of Jesus and how his actions are mirrored in Acts. The themes for each Wednesday in November are:

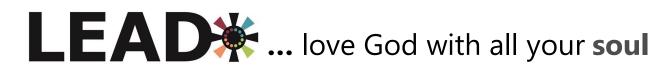
Nov. 5 – Reviewing the Gospel of Mark

Nov. 12-The different perspectives of the gospel writers and St. Paul

- Nov. 19 The context, audience and intent of Luke
- Nov. 26 -- Parallels in Luke and Acts

This will be our first attempt to do a *hybrid* study: in-person and online at the same time. Please let Pastor Phil know if you are planning to attend either in-person or online!





## **COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS**

Autumn is typically busy time for the Council: the summer break leaves us with a backlog of chores that need to be done by the end of the year. The gathering frost, and the shorter days make us all want to turn on the fireplace and wait out the winter with a hot cup of cocoa. But once Halloween is over, it's only a month until Advent. Christmas comes fast, and by the New Year, we need to prepare the Annual Report, nominate a new Council, prepare a budget, and plan for the Annual General Meeting. And this year, it's all complicated by the effects of COVID-19.

The main effect has been on our attendance. For several months, we were unable to attend service in person, and even now, with many of the restrictions lifted, we're still wearing masks and sitting two meters apart. And while we are singing hymns again, the masks make us sound a little muffled. It'll be interesting to hear "O Come All Ye Faithful" apparently played on a family of muted trombones.

But the main work remains to do, and as we have moved steadily into the livestream world, we're finding we need more people to help with sound and video. In addition, a number of Council members are at the end of their three-year term, so if you'd be willing to serve on Council for 2022, please let us know. Also, if you'd like to help out with livestreaming our services, or serve on a committee, we'd be more than happy to have you.

Finally, as part of our sixtieth year we are hoping to come out with a fresh copy of the church directory. This will mean updating our photos, and we're hoping to have photo sessions in November. We'll send out further details as we get that firmed up.

Stay warm everyone, and try to keep your spirits up. The fourth wave is waning, and we can all look forward to 2022 as a year of growth and renewal.



## Books and Celebrating from your Affirming Ministry team

October 28<sup>th</sup> will mark the ninth anniversary of our becoming an Affirming church. We are hopeful that when the tenth anniversary arrives next fall, we will be able to have a truly wonderful celebration.

For this year, though, we feel it is important to keep the fires burning under this ministry through acknowledgement of how far we've come.

We have a fine collection of books – board books for small children, picture books, books for older children and young adults, and books for adults as well. Will have a display of the books on a table in the narthex for the next two weeks, and we hope you will take a minute when you're at church to pick up one (or two or three!) to take home to read. There are cards in the books and you need only fill in your name and phone number and leave the card on the table. Feel free to take as much time as you like to appreciate these thoughts and stories.

Reformation Sunday, All Saints Sunday – and our intent to continue to grow. This is a good time indeed for celebration.

LCOC Affirming Ministry Team, Dianne Fortier Marilyn Jonasson Judy Shore-Isford Betty Jane Hegerat Celebrating our 9th Anniversary as an Affirming Church

## LEAD ... love God with all your soul

# **EVENTS**

### Family Photo Time



In honour of our 60th Anniversary it is Photo Time.

Please plan to come in for your 15 minute family photo session. The sitting and the photo directory are all

free of charge. After the photo is taken you will have a chance to choose which photo will go in the directory, as well as the opportunity to purchase family photos. Watch for more details in the coming days.



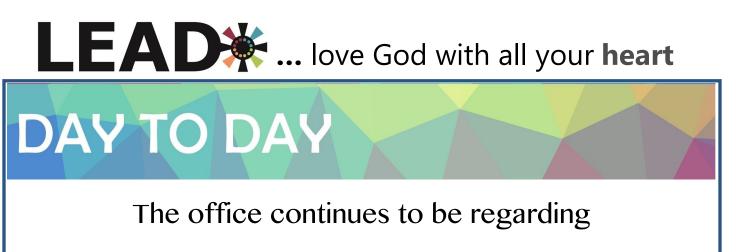
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## **MONTHLY FINANCIALS**

Church of the Cross Financials through September 30, 2021								
	2021 Budget	Budget YTD	Actual YTD					
Income*	\$350,000.00 \$262,500.03		\$238,353.10					
Expenses**	\$354,667.00	\$266,000.13	\$259,550.24					
Balance	(\$4,667.00)	(\$3,500.10)	(\$21,197.14)					
General Fund Bal-	\$13,755.51							
Designated/Pass	\$120,131.82							



During November and December we encourage members to donate funds to enable us to supply food or gift cards for families who struggle to meet their needs during the winter and holiday season. Your continued support is much appreciated. As our Christmas project we will again do the 'stuff a pair of socks' for the Mustard Seed. A box will be placed in the narthex for the collection of socks and all donated items. List of items needed to stuff socks:



### the "Work from Home" Order.

You can reach Stacey in her remote office

Monday–Wednesday 9:00-2:00

Church and Office are open Thursday 9:00-4:00

-Stacey is away until Nov 3. Pastor Phil will be answering the phone

### Pastoral Care during COVID-19

Pastors Phil and Laura are available for one-on-one in-person conversations during the pandemic. We can schedule to meet with you at the church following COVID-19 building protocols:

- Upon building entry, you must register your presence, mask, and sanitize your hands.
- You may bring a personal beverage, or we can provide coffee or tea following COVID-19 preparation restrictions.
- We will meet face-to-face in the "comfy" chairs, six feet apart.

While it seems that these restrictions hamper our interactions, there really is a great deal of benefit provided from face-to-face interactions. We can see each other, talk, laugh, and pray together. It is healing to be in each other's presence.

We are also available by phone or Zoom, if in-person meeting is not an option for you.

Remember that your mental, physical, and spiritual health and safety are our highest priority. If you would like to see one of the pastors, please phone the church office for an appointment. (403) 255-4792.



## LEAD ... love God with all your heart

# WE SUPPORT

## Warm Feet for the Street



Annual drive for toiletries! Find the collection box in the narthex and details in Thursday Thoughts

### The Social Ministry Team

As our Christmas project we will again do the 'stuff a pair of socks' (also known as "Warm Feet for the Street") for the Mustard Seed. A box will be placed in the narthex for the collection of socks and all donated items.

List of items needed to stuff socks:

Personal hygiene (i.e. soap, toothpaste and brushes, deodorant, lip balm, skin cream, shampoo, comb, tissues) chocolate bars, candy treats, pen and writing paper, bus tickets, gift card, scarf, mitts.

December 12<sup>th</sup> is the final day for collection.

# LEAD ... love God with all your strength

## PARTNERS

## Sat. Nov 6, 2021 @ 7:00 pm

#### more info at campusministry.ca

Lutheran Campus Ministry

Calgary





## Campus Ministry Fundraiser Auction & Online Event

**Online Auction opens Oct 27** 

Hear from Chaplains Margaret & Tim and a student about how Campus Ministry helped students through pandemic



Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Saturday, October 30<sup>th</sup>

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Sunday, October 31<sup>th</sup> 1:00 PM - 4:30 PM Delivered over Zoom.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

This introductory training provides content based on the philosophy and practices developed by the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), which builds on lessons from over 70 years of organizing experience.

It assists organizers where they live—**in their communities.** The training provides a foundation to learn about what community organizing is and why to use a community organizing approach in their work.

> This is a free workshop offered by the Calgary Alliance for the Common Good. To learn more and register, go to <u>www.calgarycommongood.org/events</u>.

# LEAD ... love God with all your strength

## LETTER FROM OUR BISHOP

#### Dear Beloved of God -

The Sabbath pattern - six days of work, followed by one of rest - is woven deep into the fabric of the Bible - it is seen, fundamentally, as a gift! The root word means to cease, to desist. The idea is not that of relaxation or refreshment, but cessation from activity. The first story of Hebrew and Christian Scriptures climaxes on the seventh day, the first time there was a seventh day. Having created everything, God rests, and blesses this day, and makes it holy.

Fax (780) 433-6623Email: info@albertasynod.ca<br/>www.albertasynod.caLater, God teaches the people of Israel to share in the blessing of this day (Exodus 16). After<br/>bringing them out of Egyptian slavery into the wilderness, God sends them manna, comman-<br/>ding them to gather enough each morning for that day's food alone. Mistrusting, they<br/>gather more than they need, but it rots. On the sixth day, however, they are told to gather<br/>enough to last for two days. Miraculously, the extra does not rot, and those mistrustful ones<br/>who go out on the seventh morning to gather more food find none. God is teaching them,<br/>through their own hunger and nature's provisions, to keep the Sabbath, even before Moses<br/>receives the commandments on Sinai.

Hope-Filled Discipleship

SYNOD OF

BFR

The Office of the Bishop

10014 - 81 Avenue NW Edmonton, AB T6E 1W8 Ph: (780) 439-2636

> When those commandments come, the Sabbath commandment is the longest and, in some ways, the most puzzling. Unlike any of the others, it takes quite different forms in the two passages where the Ten Commandments appear (Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-**Tradition** 15).

Collaborative Partnerships Both versions require the same behavior - work on six days, rest on one - but each gives a different reason. What is wonderful is that each reason (remembering and observing) arises from a fundamental truth about God's relationship to humanity. Together, these two renderings of the Sabbath commandment summarize the most fundamental stories and be-

liefs of the Scriptures: creation and exodus, humanity in God's image and a people liberated from captivity. In both remembering and observing, the Sabbath is understood to be gift.

The Christian community continued to treasure the Sabbath commandment, along with the other nine commandments from Sinai. They also came to believe that its meaning had changed with the new creation God began with Christ's death and resurrection. The holy day from now on, therefore, was not the seventh but the eighth, the day on which the future burst into the present.

## LEAD :... love God with all your strength

As you know, at its September 2021 meeting Synod Council approved my proposal for a sabbatical leave, October 25, 2021 through January 24, 2022 with a few days of holiday preceding the sabbatical and a few days of holiday following the sabbatical. In effect I will be away October 20, 2021 through January 27, 2022...for a time of remembering and of observing.

Those who have served recently on Synod Council will recall that during the March 2020 Bishop's Performance Review I was encouraged by Council to consider taking a sabbatical beginning early winter 2020. However, given the reality of the Covid pandemic, the upcoming 2020 Synod Convention and the reality of planning for an on-

line event, and the anticipated hiring of synod staff, Office Administrator, in the summer of 2020, I determined to set aside this encouragement.

I thank the Synod Council, and you, the Synod of Alberta and the Territories, for this gift, and I invite your prayers for The Rev. Prema Samuel, Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational Life, who will serve as Commissary while I am away; Marla Berg, Office Administrator; and other synod staff; Synod Officers – Deacon Karen Wedman, Keith Scheidt and Paul Ellison; and the Area Deans: The Revs. Jeff Decelle, Kevin Powell, Julianna Wehrfritz-Hanson, Matthew Lyseng and Trish Schmermund.

I also welcome your prayers for Cathy and me during this time of sabbatical.

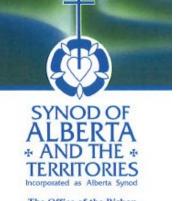
Know that I will continue to uphold you in prayer.

And, as I have shared before, and will continue to do so: Beloved of God, as people of faith, continue to be humble and gentle with one another. Honour each other. Make space for lament. Welcome moments of joy. Help each other live into hope. Learn from this journey in the coronavirus wilderness and let the learning lead us forward. Trust that God is at work in this time and look for the new things God is doing even now.

In Christ Jesus –

Shalom,

+Larry



The Office of the Bishop

Movember Sunday Mon Jues Wed Jhurs Fri Sat 1 2 3 4 5 6								
Sunday	Mon	Jues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat		
		2 Office CLOSED			5	6		
7 All Saints' Sunday 7th In Person	8	9 Morning Prayer <b>10am</b>	Remote 9-2	Office 9-4	12	<b>13</b> Men's Breakfast		
Online Worship 10am 14	Remote 9-2	Remote 9-2	Office 9-4	Office CLOSED	19	20		
In Person & Online Worship <b>10am</b>	Remote 9-2	Morning Prayer <b>10am</b> Remote 9-2	Remote 9-2	Office 9-4				
2 CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY IN Person	22	23 Morning Provor	24	25	26	<b>27</b> Men's Breakfast		
& Online Worship <b>10am</b>	Remote 9-2	Prayer <b>10am</b> Remote 9-2	Remote 9-2	Office 9-4		Diedklast		
28 In Person & Online	29	<b>30</b> Morning Prayer <b>10am</b>						
Worship 10am Remote 9-2 Cause of the Month								
Vermber 2021 16								