



## **THE SERVANT**

The monthly newsletter of Servants of Christ Lutheran Church, a congregation of The North American Lutheran Church serving the Cedar Rapids area

Meeting at Robins City Hall Community Room, 265 South Second St., Robins, Iowa 52328  
Worship: 9:00 am; Fellowship & Coffee: 10:00;  
Bible Class and Sunday School: 10:15  
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### **The Season of “In-between”**

Dear Servants,

We are on the cusp of February, basically mid-way through the season of winter. Four “weather” seasons adorn our planet: spring, summer, fall, winter. For some, each season has its likes and dislikes. For others one season is *loved* while another season is dreaded. If you will indulge me for a few minutes, I would propose a fifth season: the season of “in-between.” We are currently in the “in-between.” The early weeks of winter are past—you know, the weeks where Christmas was celebrated, family and friendly gatherings (though limited) were enjoyed, a new year dawned, first snows brought sledding and snowmobiling and dazzling winter pictures displayed on local news station. But now, the holidays/festivities are over. And even if the snow looks pretty through a window, icy sidewalks and slippery streets make us hesitant to go outside, even into our garage. Anticipation and fun have been traded for initial thoughts of income tax preparation. With determination we decide to tackle those closets and drawers and cupboards that really need to be cleaned out. But here is where the season of “in-between” can deliver unexpected fun, joy, laughter, fond memories. Finding an old card or letter or photo or even recipe and exclaiming, “I had forgotten all about that.” Spring may be weeks and weeks away but for the moment, the heart is renewed, thankful, and hopeful.



In the minds of Christians, sometimes the idea of “in-between” is applied to this time of year. The past months saw much activity in the church year: Reformation; All Saints; Thanksgiving; Christ the King Sunday; the beautiful anticipation in Advent; the joy and celebration of Christmas; the awesome journey of the Three Kings with their unique and costly gifts. And though we are still in the season of Epiphany where we celebrate Jesus being the Light to all nations, we still can feel “spiritually in-between” as we await the next “big” season: Lent. So let’s pause and “clean the closet” of those stored and sometimes forgotten truths of Scripture. Let’s uncover John 1:14.

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## The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

When we pull that verse from the back of the closet of the mind and dust it off, it reveals so many treasures:

1. The **INCARNATE** Word. God, in His love and mercy, didn't just send a card or a stimulus check or a thoughtful text message, He came in person . . . in Jesus. And whereas family visitors might have to travel long distances, be inconvenienced by weather or transportation issues, spend money to make the trip, Jesus had to "empty Himself." Philippians 2 says it best: *he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.* He's part of the team, not just a cheerleader in the stands.

2. The **LOVING** Word. Christians are always saying "God is love." And we believe this (John 3:16). But even the greatest scholar, learned teacher, gifted theologian cannot begin to comprehend how great is God's love for His children. His ways and thoughts are so far above ours. Unlike the unearthed letter or card that reminds us of things in the past, God's love is a pulsating, daily, present reality.



3. The **LIVING** Word. We call this Word (Jesus) the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. We proclaim "from everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Psalm 90). The resurrected card/letter/picture brings back fond, sometimes humorous, memories. The LIVING Word is not reminiscing, not a walk down memory lane. It is a reality. Re-read Psalm 23. All the verbs are in the *present* tense, not the past.

4. The **FINAL** Word. Perhaps you've heard a conversation or watched a movie/tv show where there is a back and forth in conversation. One actor finally says, "So is that your final word?" In other words, anything you want to add, anything that will change, something more to come? The Israelites waited for centuries for God to fulfill His promise of a Messiah. Jesus came and said, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father." Final Word. "I will come again." Final word. "It is finished." Final Word. That is good news.

So, make this "in-between" weather season count. Enjoy the quiet, pause to rest, and yes, do a bit of cleaning! But even more, revel in this "in-between" time in the church year. Dust off and re-read some of those lost and forgotten Biblical stories and truths. It can be the best season of the year.

In His love,  
Ron

God's Word is our great heritage.

## The NALC 2020 Vision: a 10-Point Plan

The NALC is a mission-minded, mission committed church.

The following represents a 2020 Vision for the North American Lutheran Church. The development of this Vision has included input from NALC Staff, Executive Council, Mission District Deans, the NALS President and Board of Regents, and other appropriate parties. This was approved by the NALC Convocation this past August.

This plan supports the Four Core Values of the NALC. It also represents the commitments we are striving to accomplish withing the nest four years. By the year 2023, we see . . .

**2. A Body of Believers committed to increasing our Mission Outreach and Congregational Multiplication Efforts. The Immediate Goal is the engagement of every NALC Congregation in active and proactive outreach efforts by 2022.** This includes 45 new congregational starts along with challenging every congregation to be involved with and/or supporting at least one local, global or domestic mission effort.

### Mission Giving for February

NALC General Fund: \$667 (2021 support for this outreach is \$8,000)

NALC Great Commission Society: \$1,500

Our 2021 Mission Spending Plan has been expanded to \$24,550, a \$10,000 increase from 2020.

## The Gospel of Mark

Study continues in February

### Topics include:

*The Messiah Arrives*  
*Who Speaks for God?*  
*Fruitful and Unfruitful Soil*  
*Fear and Faith*  
*The Training of the Twelve*  
*Unclean?*  
*The Unexpected Mission*  
*The Right Question*  
*The Fruitless Tree*  
*What Matters Now*  
*Betrayal*  
*End and Beginning*



Join us following worship each Sunday.



**Lent Begins February 17**  
**Theme for 2021: Living in the Forgiveness of God**

- ◆ Ash Wednesday worship February 17 at 6:30 pm. Midweek Lenten worship held **TUESDAY** evenings beginning February 23 at 6:30 pm. All services will be held at the Robins City Hall, 265 Second St., in Robins.
- ◆ Lenten devotional booklets are available on the information table.
- ◆ Midweek Lenten offerings will be directed to Water Mission.

**LENT**

- ◆ 40 days preceding Easter, beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending with Easter Sunday.
- ◆ Holy Week commemorates Christ's last week of life on earth. It begins with Palm Sunday, moves to Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, and culminates in the resurrection.
- ◆ The focus is on penitence, prayer, meditation.



**2,800**  
Safe water &  
sanitation  
solutions  
built.

For several years Servants of Christ has included the global ministry of Water Mission in its outreach budget and designated our special offerings to this caring ministry. Water Mission is a nonprofit Christian engineering organization that designs, builds, and implements safe water, sanitation and hygiene solutions. To date, 3,600,000 people have been provided with safe water, 137,000 now benefit from sanitation, and 550 more projects are underway.

Our congregation has been generous in its response to this need. But perhaps in our current situation in America, we can become even more sensitive and committed to providing basics for others. Americans are richly blessed with everything at its fingertips, that “everything” often taken for granted. As we shopped for basics in 2020 (like toilet paper!), hopefully we became more aware of how blessed we are . . . and hopefully more thankful. Feeling the loss of some food and paper products, feeling the frustration of limited gatherings and entertainment pales in comparison to having little or no water and sanitation.

Christ gave His all on the cross. Let us show His love through generous support of Water Mission.

**WATER  
MISSION**