A phenomenon called phototaxis explains how organisms respond to light with motion. Insects, such as moths, that move toward lights are considered positively phototactic. Other insects, such as cockroaches, that move away from lights are considered negatively phototactic. One of the most popular theories holds that positively phototactic insects are drawn to lights because the light acts as a navigational guide. Many insects find their way by keeping a natural light source, such as the Sun or the Moon, at a constant angle.

God created light at the beginning of earthly time. In Genesis 1 we read: “In the beginning, God created everything: the heavens above and the earth below. Here’s what happened: At first the earth lacked shape and was totally empty, and a dark fog draped over the deep while God’s spirit-wind hovered over the surface of the empty waters. Then there was the voice of God. Let there be light. And light flashed into being. God saw that the light was beautiful and good, and He separated the light from the darkness.”

The light of day effects the growth of plants as well. Botanists believe that most plants on God’s good earth cannot survive in total darkness. All plants, except for a few that live on other organisms, use a process called photosynthesis to obtain the energy they need. Most plants are autotrophs—they are self-feeding and require sunlight to survive. Bugs require light to find their way. Plants require light to grow. And people... well... they need light to live.

Most of us have had experiences of darkness that have left indelible impressions on us for life. If you’ve ever been caught in a snowstorm in the middle of Iowa in the dead of night, you know how overwhelmingly chilling the darkness can be. If you’ve ever been lost on a trail in the mountains as night falls, you know how frightening and lonely the enveloping darkness can be. These are physical manifestations of darkness.

But what about the emotional darkness that we have lived through. If you’ve ever lived with depression, you know how stifling and scary darkness can be. If you’ve struggled in a relationship with a good friend or lover, you know the darkness of losing your best friend; losing a friendship that matters to you as much as anything you’ve ever been blessed to be a part of. If you’ve lived in a home where there are abuses, you know the pain of darkness.

John 3:19 says: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. Certainly, living in the darkness of losing a friend or losing your way is not evil, but there are times when it is easier to sit in darkness than face the light of day. Sometimes we’d rather not be found out and so we hide in the dark.

Just as bugs need light to navigate their “buggy” journeys and plants need light to grow, we need Light, too. But not just any light. We need Jesus; Jesus who declares he is the Light of the world. Jesus, who promises to shine in the darkness of our lives and show us the way. And Jesus does this, not because he must, but out of great love for us. Jesus is Life and Light. And,

“Even after all this time the sun (Son) never says to the earth, “You owe me.”
Look what happens with a love like that, it lights the whole sky.”
~Hafiz (with edit by Pastor Vera)
Striving for Justice

“[T]he mark of the baptized is not to agree on the meaning of ‘justice’, but only that the people of God are called to strive for it ‘in all the earth’.” – Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Public Church, quoting the Affirmation of Baptism

This quote of Dr. Moe-Lobeda’s has stuck with me ever since I first read it while taking a class with her on public theology at PLTS. The implication is simple but powerful – we don’t have to agree on how to act justly, but we are called by Christ to act justly regardless.

Justice, as Dr. Moe-Lobeda described it to us in class, is all about acting out neighbor love. Living out our call to love neighbor means not only to meet the needs of individuals, but to also address the great love and purpose we find in Scripture, the political climate and striving for the good of all. Why we do that may differ, Why we do that is grounded always in the call of Christ to love our neighbor as ourselves.

This does not mean we’re all called to be saints or theologically minded politicians. None of us is capable of doing this work perfectly. But when we listen to the movement of the Spirit and work together, we can achieve some pretty spectacular things.

As I reflect on what it means to act justly, I’m reminded of a prayer written by Bishop Ken Untener in memory of Bishop Oscar Romero, which I’ll include below for your own reflection. As you read Bishop Untener’s words, may they inspire you in the way you want to act justly, here, now, for the sake of the world.

“It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view. This enables us to do something, and in a sense of liberation in realizing that. This is what we are about.

Peace to you all, in this holy work, and throughout your lives.

Rachel Swenson, Pastoral Intern
It’s Never too Late to Learn

It’s never too late to learn. We have all heard this phrase and the older I get the more I am embracing this. There is so much to learn as technology advances and history is made before our eyes. As a former teacher, I embrace the fact that people learn in different ways and for me that is exciting because I can learn from each individual. I can learn how people process what they see and hear. I can learn how their gender, environment, and culture inform the way they view and interact with the world. Every person is different and every person has something to teach us.

The following quote by Thomas Aquinas and commentary by Richard Rohr speaks to how we interpret scripture each from our own perspective. “Whatever is received is received according to the manner of the receiver.” (Aquinas) Rohr suggests: “People at different levels of maturity will interpret the same text in different ways. There is no one right way to interpret sacred texts. How you see is what you see; the who that you bring to your reading of the Scriptures matters.” Who are you when you read the Bible? Defensive, offensive, power-hungry, righteous? Or humble, receptive, and honest? Surely, this is why we need to pray before reading a sacred text!

Rohr gives us good guidance, to be aware of our emotions when we read the Holy Scripture. We need to bring our whole selves, our past and our present. Most important we need to read scripture through the lens of Christ. To stop and pray, to pause, to be ready to hear and receive the word of God.

Blessings in your praying and in your reading, blessings in your hearing and in your receiving.

With you in Ministry,
Kim Williams,
Director of Adult Ministry
**Baptized and Set Free**

The focus of one of our Adult Faith Formation studies this month is Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s book, “Life Together.” This week, we watched a DVD about the time in Germany’s history from WWI through WW2, especially as it related to Bonhoeffer’s life. I’ve seen this video before and was no less moved, as I watched again the atrocities humans impose on each other in their quest for power.

In several of the scenes, it showed worship services. Music was important to Bonhoeffer. At one time, he considered a music career as an accomplished pianist. I was moved by their powerful and heartfelt singing. Clearly, they had something to sing about … their hope in an omnipotent God.

In 1930, Bonhoeffer studied in New York at the Union Theological Seminary. It was the first time he came to know black people. He became friends with Franklin Fisher, a student from Birmingham, Alabama who was assigned to the Abyssinian Baptist Church for his field work. Bonhoeffer taught a Sunday school class with him there. *He wrote to his sister in January 1931 confessing that he felt a bit out of place, “a staunch German working and ministering among blacks who are truly oppressed and genuinely poor.”* "Yet they have a Christian spirit and humor," he went on, "which I find refreshing. Papa may have told you that I have fallen in love with their gospel music. It haunts me in the deepest part of my soul." He was moved by the way they sang of their oppression, suffering and hope … and how they engaged their voices and bodies in their music. He came to know the struggles of the black community and it opened his eyes to the Social Gospel – the need for moral responsibility in this world. He was exposed to issues of race and civil rights. This transformed him for the rest of his life. When Bonhoeffer left New York, a member of the church presented him with several gospel records, which he later played for German friends and students as evidence of his growing opposition to the Nazi's persecution of Jews. As he wrote in April 1933, "The Church has an unconditional obligation toward the victims of any social order, even when those victims do not belong to the Christian community."

As I participated in worship that day, I was still stirred. I thought about how privileged we are to be able to worship openly and boldly without fear. It is easy to take that freedom for granted and not immerse ourselves in worshiping and singing our faith with conviction and hope.

Our offering music was from the hymn “Baptized and Set Free.” (vs. 1, 4)

*We are people created, chosen by God. Then we’re washed, ever gently, in mercy and love. Sin has power no more. Jesus opened the door to a fountain bringing healing, and wholeness and more. Now with praise and thanksgiving, we join the song. All are welcome!*

*Quotes from Reggie L. Williams, associate professor of Christian Ethics at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago and author of Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus: Harlem Renaissance Theology and an Ethic of Resistance.*

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*We gather to sing loud and strong. Not enslaved, but set free! From now on, all will be one in Jesus, one in water, baptized and set free!*

It’s easy for us to just sing along, mildly engaged, when we feel safe. I kept wondering that day how I would be singing if I were faced with the life and soul threatening experiences people endured then – and still endure in so many places throughout our world.

I pray we will live each day in thankfulness for all our blessings – worshiping and singing with our whole being – grateful that we are children of God, living out our Christian/social responsibilities in our troubled world.

Peggy Fetchenhier, Minister of Worship and Music

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'The Church has an unconditional obligation toward the victims of any social order, even when those victims do not belong to the Christian community.”
The Value of a Church Library

As the church librarian, I have certain goals for the library. The first is to provide an adult-level religious and secular reference collection. Second, is the to make available historical and current religious books of value and relevance. Third, is to provide books on a variety of topics including relevant social issues as they relate to today's church. Fourth, is to get input from others within and outside the church. Fifth, is to offer reading and viewing materials that support and complement the education, worship, and ministry programs of our church.

Please take time to look over the reading and viewing materials that ELC's library has to offer. A library is a storehouse of materials that reinforce a church's message and aids people to dig deeper. There's something for everyone.

"A reading church is an informed church. An informed church is an interested church. An interested church is an action church. An acting church is a Christian church."

-- David R. Kenney

God's peace,
Lloyd Peltzer
Librarian

“One cannot celebrate books sufficiently. After saying his best, still something better remains to be spoken in their praise.”

~ Louisa May Alcott,
Grandpa Lee's Gems for the Fireside

Canvas & Cocktails

Join us for a night to remember—an evening of fun for both the artistic and not so artistic!

Date: Friday, February 22
Time: Appetizers at 6:00 p.m. Painting at 7:00 p.m.

The evening begins at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall with heavy appetizers and wine/beer followed by our painting session at 7:00 p.m. Grab your spouse, friends, or coworkers, and join us for an evening of entertaining art instruction. Each attendee will go home with a painting they can call “uniquely theirs.” It’s easy, fun, and totally stress-free!

Cost is $40 per person for hearty appetizers, wine, canvas painting, and fun!

All proceeds to benefit the ELC Youth Mission Trip to Puerto Rico.

RSVP by Wednesday, February 20 to the Church Office. Please make checks payable to ELC.

Church Council

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Jim Ritter – Vice President
David Hood – Treasurer / Stewardship & Finance
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Larry Patella – Lay Ministry
Kristi Kohne – Christian Education
Dave Kirberg – Christian Outreach
Karla Briggs – Worship and Music
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Linda Hoilund, Nursery Attendant
Lloyd Peltzer, Librarian & Custodian
Karlae Ormsby, Custodian
Jacque Whyte, Kitchen & Church House Custodian
At the Mountain Backpack Program, we have been counting our blessings all fall as members of our community generously supported the program and helped keep kids full and focused. As we head into 2019, we continue to provide food for 170 children each week and are grateful for your incredible support and look forward to continuing to work with all of you. Over the next few newsletters, we will be highlighting some of the things we’ve been up to for the last few months, as well as lifting up volunteers and organizations in gratitude!

This fall:

† The packing prep team stepped up their game by organizing the stock room and building systems to weigh, track, and disperse thousands of pounds of food. From creating snack bags to breaking out bulk items such as cereal and pancake mix to planning the weekly menu, this team gets everything ready each week for packing day. Thank you to Annette, Vicki, Maureen, Janet, Stephanie, and Linda!

† The packing leaders continued to organize volunteers who come each week to pack almost 170 backpacks of food. We are incredibly grateful for our youngest packing leader - Jack Lindquist, an Evergreen High School senior - who generously gives of his time almost every week! Thank you also to Janet, Dan, Allison, and Maureen who make sure that all the kids who depend on this food each week get what they need!

† Delivery volunteers continued to make sure that backpacks go from the packing room to each school by the end of the week so kids have food to take home for the weekend. Additionally, many volunteers ensure that pantries at Evergreen Middle School, Evergreen High School, and Clear Creek Middle School/High School are stocked each week with breakfast, lunch, and snack items for any student who needs help with food to access. Thank you to all the delivery volunteers!!

† At each school we work with, there are staff members who help make this program happen. They are often front office staff who ensure each child gets their backpack and has access to snack and pantry items. Thank you to:

- **Doug Hesbol** at Georgetown Community School
- **Lynda Cox** at Marshdale Elementary
- **Denise Simpson** and **Jodi Rueschhoff** at Parmalee Elementary
- **Diane Bartlett** at Rocky Mountain Academy of Evergreen
- **Sarah Krzanowsky** at Wilmot Elementary

† We are incredibly grateful for the ongoing support of Amy Wells, Guidance Counselor at Evergreen High School, and Natalie Winkler, Guidance Counselor at Clear Creek Middle School/High School, who have helped us improve the pantry and backpack system at the schools. Both guidance counselors have worked incredibly hard to identify students in need who can benefit from the program and helped us address issues that mitigate stigmatization in these older student populations. Thank you so much Ms. Wells and Ms. Winkler!

† Nolan Bly, a member of Boy Scout Troop 737 in Evergreen and a Conifer High School sophomore, chose the MBP to be the recipient of his Eagle Scout Project. Redesigning our packing rooms, Nolan and his team of helpers painted the rooms, removed obstructing doors and furniture, built sturdy shelves, and designed incredible packing bins that allow teams of volunteers to more effectively utilize a very small space. Thank you so much for all of your hard work, Nolan – you are really making a difference in kids’ lives!

If you are interested in volunteering with the Mountain Backpack Program, we would love you to join us – there are many opportunities, most of which take very little time. Thank you for considering giving of your time to keeping kids full and focused!

*The Volunteers of the Mountain Backpack Program*
**Ministry Fair**

**Sunday, February 3**

The next step in our commitment to the Stewardship for All Seasons (SAS) program is our pledge to support our church and her members, and our community with our time and talents. Sharing our time and talents with others is an integral part of our calling as Christ’s disciples, and every bit as important to the health of ELC as our monetary pledges. There are many opportunities to serve others and share your interests and talents within Evergreen Lutheran. Additionally, there are a host of outreach ministries that Evergreen Lutheran Church is involved in that bless the mountain communities, the ELCA, and the world.

To help you learn about the many ways you can share your skills, interests, and passions, the SAS Team and the Boards of Christian Outreach and Christian Discipleship are hosting a Ministry Fair in the Fellowship Hall on **Sunday, February 3 after both worship services**. You are invited to attend and participate in the Fair, where you will learn about the many opportunities in which you might serve.

At the Ministry Fair you will be able to talk with and ask questions of representatives from dozens of ministries our church offers. In addition, you may also share your ideas of how we can better serve our church community and neighbors as well.

Please plan on attending this event to learn about and celebrate the gifts you and your brothers and sisters have. Sharing those gifts and our time and talent allows us to fully administer and share God’s amazing grace. At the Fair you will be able to sign up for new service opportunities or commit to continuing to serve ministries that you have already spent time blessing.

Following is a listing of ministries at Evergreen Lutheran Church.

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February Calendar

2/1  7:00pm  †ED Lock-In

2/2  10:30am Meal Prep for Christ’s Body—Confirmation and Full Circle Friends
     12:30pm Serving at Christ’s Body—Confirmation and Full Circle Friends

2/6  4:00pm  Guitar Lessons
     6:00pm  Kingdom Kids Confirmation †ED

2/13  6:00pm  Kingdom Kids Confirmation †ED

2/20  4:00pm  Guitar Lessons
     6:00pm  Kingdom Kids Confirmation †ED

2/22  7:00pm  Canvas and Cocktails Fundraiser

3/1  Urban Plunge for M/S and H/S

Dan’s Contact Information:
Cell: 701-412-1695
Church: 303-674-4654
danbock@evergreenlutheran.org

Get hooked up with our ELC Youth News. You’ll get info for all ELC Youth events! Email
danbock@evergreenlutheran.org if you want to get connected.

Winter Months
I, like many at ELC, and many people around the world, suffer from depression. More specifically, my depression really rears its ugly head in the winter months, because it shows up as Seasonal Affective Disorder. Because I’m aware of this fact and have dealt with it since I was a young man, I dread the month of February. It’s my least favorite month. The joy and excitement of December and the Christmas season has past, the perpetual “new-ness” of January has slowly become stale, and spring seems like it will never come (even though I know logically that it’s right around the corner!). It’s comforting to know that this slog through the winter isn’t a battle that I face by myself—many, many people I know struggle with the darkness of those winter months.

Besides therapy, medication, meditation, and my typical coping mechanisms for Seasonal Affective Disorder, I have found that there is one surefire way to help ease the feelings of tiredness, grumpiness, sadness, and pain of depression through the winter months (and through the summer months too!): community. When I place myself in situations where I am surrounded by friends, family, and community, I find that I tend to get a bigger boost than all the rest of my little coping mechanisms. Conversation, laughter, silliness, contact all make my shoulder slump a little less and make me more optimistic about the world.

In Matthew’s 5th chapter, Jesus tells his disciples, “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” In those winter months when we get less sunlight and when it feels like the world is a little bit darker, I think it’s important to remember that we, as people of God, can act as light to one another. We can brighten up dark rooms, we can lift up spirits that are stuck in the mud, we can enlighten those around us.

This month, I encourage you to reach out to someone in your life you haven’t heard from in a while. Be a light for them. You never know, they might need it. And if you’re like me and struggle in these winter months, I encourage you to lean into your communities. Let your friends and family be a light for you. You can also talk to Pastor Vera, or to any member of our staff (including me!). We’d love to be a light in your lives, too.

Dan Bock
Children, Youth, and Family Minister

“When I place myself in situations where I am surrounded by friends, family, and community, I find that I tend to get a bigger boost than all the rest of my little coping mechanisms.”
February Birthdays
1 Gary Antweiler
2 Jackie Lanning
3 Sue Wuertley, Ed Furlong
9 Linda Almquist
10 Kathy Malpass, Stephen Moe, Savanna Moe
11 Isaac van Westrienen
12 Megan Biller
15 Theres Wahstrom
16 Gary Baldwin
17 Natalie Plothow
18 Jan Hahn, Gene Enebo
19 Eric Plothow, Jennifer Hood
20 Arthur Onweller, Vicki Borns
21 Beth Knochenmus, Chris Haggenjos
22 Ryeson Berne
23 Max Watkins
24 Sue Queen, Dick Willhardt, Pastor Vera Guebert-Steward, Lindsey Foust, Pat Lehman, Attie Forbes
25 Lynne Theiss, Claire Nemmers, Scott Zbryk, Carisa Smith

February Anniversaries
13 Pastor Vera Guebert-Steward began her ministry with ELC in 2001
14 Cindy & Pat Vondenkamp
17 Gary & Sherry Antweiler

Christ’s Body Ministry
This ministry blesses all involved, the recipients of the meals as well as the many volunteers who have purchased food, made the hot meals, and served on a Saturday.
Join us to make and/or serve a meal for people who are homeless in Denver with Christ’s Body Ministries. We head to Denver at 12:30 p.m., Saturday, February 2 to serve the food and return to church at 4:00 p.m. For KP, a Kitchen Party to clean up. Sign-up to make casseroles or to serve the food and clean-up.

Cook’s Corner
Berry Berry Good French Toast
From “Welcome to Our Table, Recipes from Evergreen Lutheran Church”, available in the ELC Library

- 1 8oz pkg frozen raspberries, thawed
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. crème de cassis liqueur
- 2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- Fresh black pepper
- 1/2 c heavy whipping cream
- 1/2 c raspberries
- 1/2 c blueberries
- 1/2 c blackberries
- 2 c milk
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsp grated lemon zest
- 2 tsp grated orange zest
- 8 slices thick bread (Texas toast)
- 4 tbsp. butter
- 8 oz caramel sauce in squeeze bottle
- Powdered sugar

For the sauce, blend the raspberries, sugar, crème de cassis, balsamic vinegar and several twists of black pepper from a pepper grinder in a blender of food processor until smooth. Strain the sauce into a larger bowl to remove seeds.

Add fresh berries, stir, cover and refrigerate until ready to use. Whip the heavy cream until stiff peaks form. Cover and store in the refrigerator.

Whisk together the milk, eggs, and both zests. Soak the bread in the milk egg mixture in a large baking dish. In a skillet, melt the butter.

When the butter is hot, pan-fry the bread until golden brown on each side. Remove from skillet and continue with the remaining bread until all bread is golden brown.

Place the berry sauce in the middle of each plate. Lay one slice in the sauce slightly to the side of the plate. Place the second slice on top resting to the side of the first slice. Drizzle the caramel sauce on top. Sprinkle lightly with powdered sugar. Top with a dollop of whipped cream. Serve immediately and watch your Valentine’s eyes light up with joy.

Serves 4 (Since bread is thick, these servings are large).
All who serve in worship, please arrive 15 minutes early and check in with the lay minister when you arrive on Sunday to let them know you are present.

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Pastoral Acts

Baptisms
1/6—Kinsley Lee Smith

Memorials
1/26—Robert K Kennedy