

# The Good News

## Pastor's Press: Strength in Weakness

We do not live in a world that celebrates weakness. We are taught to curate strength, project confidence, and conceal struggle. Vulnerability is often treated as failure. But the Gospel tells a different story.

At the center of our faith stands a crucified Savior. In Second Corinthians, the Apostle Paul writes, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."* The cross reveals a truth the world cannot understand: God's power is made known not in dominance, but in self-giving love. To be Christian is to stop pretending we are self-sufficient.

When we confess our sins each Sunday, we practice holy vulnerability. We admit we are not fine on our own. We acknowledge our need for mercy. And what do we receive? Not shame — but forgiveness. Not rejection — but grace.

The Church is meant to be a place where masks come off and we are our **authentic selves**.

This does not mean we overshare or disregard healthy boundaries. It means we are honest about our need for Christ and for one

another. It means we pray for one another's burdens. It means we offer grace first, not last. It means we say, "I need help," and also, "How can I help?"

Scripture consistently binds together humility before God and compassion toward the vulnerable. Our Redeemer Jesus tells us in the Gospel of Matthew that whatever we do "for the least of these" we do for Him. The vulnerable — the poor, the grieving, the lonely, the sick, the anxious, the cast aside — are not interruptions to ministry. They are the very places where Christ meets us. Serving the vulnerable is not charity from a position of superiority. It is solidarity from a position of shared need and a recognition that we are neighbors on the same block.

***We serve because we ourselves have been served. We forgive because we ourselves have been forgiven. We give because Christ first gave Himself for us.***

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# Council Corner

March is going to be full of new opportunities - for learning together, partnerships with our community, and fellowship.

The congregation has an exciting new Faith Food series throughout March, planned by our Learning Committee at Council's request. This Faith Food series will be focused on our commitments as a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation. **These learning events will be on 3/1, 3/18, and 3/22 after service.** Council has also conferred with the Fellowship Committee and agreed to having these learning opportunities in the Fellowship Hall to make it easier for everyone to attend. If you have questions, please reach out to a Council member or Pastor.

We have some new and potential ministry partnerships forming. Council approved **Gleaners to utilize our building for weekly food distribution on Tuesday mornings.** We also **may be partnering with LoveINC** to be a care pantry provider for clients they would refer. There is one other church currently in talks with LoveINC determining fit, but we are next in line if that church is unable to volunteer. One of the empty downstairs classrooms would be utilized for the pantry.

Council also approved the installation of an axe-throwing target outside on Church grounds to expand our youth and other fellowship opportunities. This is covered by our insurance and carefully supervised by our resident 'ax-pert,' Pr. Sena!

## Pastor's Press Cont.

### CONTINUED FROM P. 1

This kind of life requires courage. It requires us to loosen our grip on reputation. It calls us to listen more than we speak. It asks if we can bring assistance, not judgement. It invites us to notice the quiet suffering in the pew next to us, the neighbor who withdraws, the family under strain.

And it begins with prayer: *"Lord, make me humble enough to receive help. Make me brave enough to openly and freely offer it."*

As a congregation living in gratitude, let us continue to cultivate a culture where confession is normal, grace is abundant, and mercy wrapped in abundant love flows outward into our community. Let us be a people who reflect the heart of Christ — gentle, humble, and strong in love.

For when we are weak, then we are strong.

In Christ and with you on the Way,  
*Pastor Sena*

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# Building Users vs. Building Partners: A Call to Deeper Community

In our fast-paced world, it's easy to fall into transactional thinking—even in our faith communities. But as we reflect on how we approach ministry and community building, we might ask ourselves: Are we building users or building partners?

## The "User" Mindset

When we think of people as "users," we focus on:

- What services we can provide them
- How they can benefit from our programs
- Meeting their immediate needs and preferences
- Measuring success by attendance, utilization, and satisfaction

This approach, while well-intentioned, can inadvertently create a consumer mentality where people come to "get" rather than "give and receive."

## The "Partner" Mindset

When we see people as partners in God's work, we emphasize:

- Mutual investment in our shared mission
- Openness to everyone's unique gifts and calling
- Collaborative ministry and decision-making
- Building relationships that transform both giver and receiver

## The Biblical Foundation

Scripture consistently calls us into partnership. Paul writes, "I thank my God every time I remember you...because of your partnership in the gospel" (Philippians 1:3-5). We're not customers in God's kingdom—we're co-laborers, each essential to the body of Christ and so is everyone else!

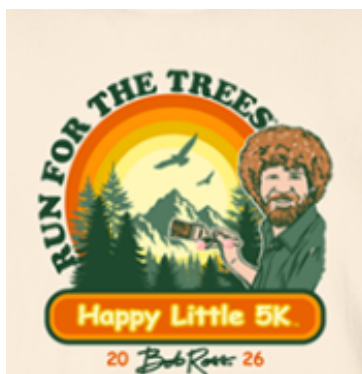
## Moving Forward Together

As we continue growing as a church-neighbor family, let's intentionally cultivate partnerships rather than simply serving or seeking more users. This means creating more opportunities for everyone to contribute their gifts, being open in our planning, and remembering that true community happens when we're all invested in something bigger than ourselves. It also might mean a change in the way we view those who come to our building – from a building user to a partner in ministry!

***How might our outlook change if we changed our language from "building users to building partners"? Could making this change bring more partners to our doors and more ministry flowing out?***

**-Pastor Sena Norton**

## Virtual 5k with Oregon Parks Forever



Celebrate Earth Day and the beauty of God's creation by participating in a virtual 5k. In addition to receiving commemorative gear, 10 trees will be planted in Oregon for each registration.

You can get all the details and learn how to register at [orparksforever.org](http://orparksforever.org).

# Bunk Bed Ministry Celebration

Thank you to everyone who joined us in February to celebrate our Bunk Bed Ministry. Thank you to Council for hosting the reception. What a blessing this ministry has been for our community!



## Lilies for Easter



Help us decorate for Easter and honor someone special. Lilies are \$15 each and may be taken home after worship on Easter Sunday.

Special Envelopes are in the narthex for your contributions. Please remember to list the names of anyone being honored so we can include them in the Easter Sunday bulletin and place these envelopes in the offering plate. **Orders due 3/29.**

## Fill the Alter for Lent!

During Lent, our tradition is to fill the alter with food for our local food bank.

You contributions of boxed, canned and packaged foods help feed our neighbors in need.

Please bring food all Sundays in Lent (February 22 - March 29). Let's help feed our community!



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# A Faith Community Shaped by Thanksgiving, Not Complaint - *A Lenton Reflection*

Luther once wrote that everything in the Christian life flows from faith in the promises of God. Where faith trusts that God is good and that Christ is sufficient, gratitude follows. Where trust weakens, complaint quickly grows.

Complaint comes naturally to all sinners. Since the fall, the human heart curves in on itself. We notice what we lack. We measure what others have. We grumble about inconveniences. Israel did it in the wilderness. The disciples did it on the road. We do it in congregations. But the Church is not meant to sound like the wilderness.

On Sundays, we begin not with critique but with confession. We admit that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed. And what does the Lord give? Absolution. Forgiveness - full and free. The Gospel interrupts our complaining by reminding us that we deserve nothing — and yet in Christ we have everything.

The Apostle Paul writes in Philippians, “Do all things without grumbling or disputing.” That is not a call to suppress concerns or ignore real problems. The Church must address challenges and missteps honestly. But there is a difference between *faithful conversation* and *faithless complaint*.

Complaint assumes God is not providing enough. Gratitude trusts that in Christ, God already has.

As a practical example, at the Lord’s Table we receive what the Church has long called the Eucharist — *thanksgiving*. There we are given the body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins. If God has given us His own Son, what greater gift could we demand?

This does not mean life is easy. It does not mean congregational life is without tension. It means that our identity is not rooted in preferences or personalities but in baptismal grace. We are forgiven sinners gathered around Word and Sacrament. That reality reshapes how we speak.

Because when gratitude takes root:

- *We thank those who serve rather than assume their labor.*
- *We pray for our leaders rather than critique them from a distance.*
- *We speak encouragement more readily than dissatisfaction.*
- *We remember that every hymn sung and prayer said, every person baptized, every sermon preached is sheer gift.*

In First Thessalonians, Paul writes, “Give thanks in all circumstances.” Not because every circumstance is pleasant, but because Christ remains faithful in every one of them.

A complaining spirit shrinks a congregation. A grateful-loving spirit strengthens it.

Gratitude does not ignore imperfections. It simply remembers that the Church does not stand on perfection — *it stands on Christ*.

May the Holy Spirit guard our tongues from idle grumbling and shape our speech into joy-filled thanksgiving. May Jesus teach us to see every mercy, large and small, as undeserved grace. And may our life together reflect what we confess each week: that we are saved not by what we lack or achieve, but by what Christ has already accomplished for us.

In Him, we have more than enough...  
thanks be to God!

-Pastor Sena

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# Council Elections Coming in April

**It's not too early to start thinking about taking on a leadership role at Prince of Life.** Elections are in April at our Annual Congregational Meeting. There are many places where your gifts will be an asset to Prince of Life.

Three council member term's end in 2026: Judy Cook, Bev Spilseth, and Peggy Vermaas. The remaining members of Council are Bryan Bowyer, Becky Linke, Melissa Martenson, Kathy Metzger, Paul Rickey, and Annie Sakaguchi.

Council member terms are 3-years and generally Council meets once a month. As a Council member, you help direct the ministry of PoL and the business of the Church. Traditionally, you volunteer to attend committee meetings and report back to the Council the activities of the committee. Some committees don't have regular meetings, but still serve.

Mission Endowment Fund Committee and Nominating Committee also elect members at the Annual Congregational Meeting in April. Susan Rodway and Sue Stark's terms end in 2026.

Remaining members of the MEF Committee are Rebecca Harms and Lyle Wiese. MEF Committee terms are 2 years. Meetings are quarterly.

Nominating Committee terms are 2 years. Leaving Nominating Committee in 2026 are Linda Garrett and Janet Mann. Remaining members are John Mohlis and Linda Wiese. There are several meetings in February, March and April in preparations for the Annual Meeting in April. Nominating Committee members are also asked to count ballots at the Congregational meeting and any elections during the year.

Pastor Sena is giving us all an opportunity to share our gifts as she and we work to transform ourselves into a stronger and more faithful community.

Please prayerfully consider becoming a nominee for one of these positions mentioned above. You may contact any one on the Nominating Committee to discuss it. - **Annie Sakaguchi, Linda Garrett, Janet Mann, John Mohlis, or Linda Wiese**

*"The meaning of life is to find your gift.  
The purpose of life is to give it away."  
-Pablo Picasso*

## **Interested in Other Service opportunities?**

Beyond serving in Council leadership, there are many of opportunities to serve at Prince of Life! Consider signing up on the Sunday Servant list. Come and share your gifts as a reader, usher, server or as part of our altar guild.

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# Rhythm and News: Updates from our Music Director

In this season of Lent, I'm surprised to find myself appreciating the ancient traditions of the Church Year. Though this is a somber season of introspection, repentance and appreciation of our Lord's sacrifice, we look forward together to the triumphant celebration of His Resurrection. I hope that the season also brings you time for quiet reflection as well and a renewed sense of our calling to be His presence in a needy world.

In the spirit of inclusivity, I'd like to invite you to join us for an upcoming

special worship opportunity. Stay tuned for details. We are also hoping to add a guitar or bass player to our worship group. If you have some skills and are interested, please get in touch with me.

Finally, thank you to several of you who have given feedback, helpful suggestions and encouragement regarding the worship music. I am learning and appreciating your input!

Happy to be walking together in Him,

**Suzan -  
Music Director**



## Journey to the Cross: Holy Week Schedule

PALM SUNDAY  
WORSHIP SERVICE  
3/29  
10AM

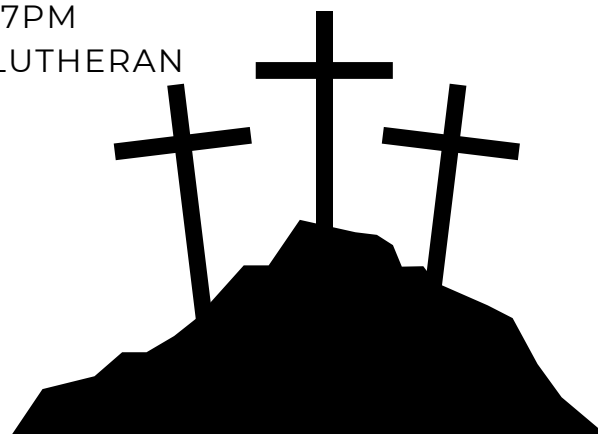
MAUNDY THURSDAY  
WORSHIP SERVICE  
4/2  
6:30PM

GOOD FRIDAY  
WORSHIP SERVICE  
4/3  
6:30PM

HOLY SATURDAY  
OPEN SANCTUARY  
4/4  
10AM-2PM

HOLY SATURDAY  
UNITY EASTER VIGIL  
WITH COLTON  
LUTHERAN  
4/4 AT 7PM  
AT COLTON LUTHERAN

**EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP**  
**4/5**  
**10AM**  
**BREAKFAST TO FOLLOW**  
**PROVIDED BY THE BOY SCOUTS**



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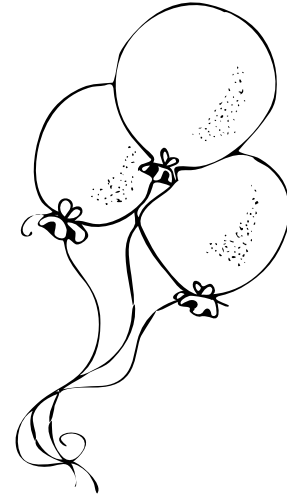
# March Celebrations

## Birthdays

- 1 Marsha Guthrie
- 4 Dan Hughson
- 6 William Morgan
- 15 Nicholas Wheeler
- 16 Aubree Costa
- 17 Kathleen Wood
- 20 Jim Wasson
- 21 Jerry Cook
- 22 Skyler Fray
- 31 Ethan Fulop

## Anniversaries

- 9 Denny & Kathy Metzger
- 13 Tom & Susan Rodway
- 15 Joe & Yvonne Sawtell



*God's Blessings on your celebrations!*

## Lent Pastoral Care Hours

Pastor Sena is available every Wednesday in Lent from 12-1pm or by appointment. This is a space where you can come and share anything on your mind or heart with Pastor. This is open space for you!

## March Fellowship Opportunities

### All Church Potluck 3/8

Watch our Sunday announcements for more information.

### LLL Happy Hour 3/17

Location and time TBA for Feb. Watch our Sunday announcements for more information.

### Men's Lunch 3/17

3rd Tuesday each month. Men are invited to meet at Wichita Pub (OC) at 12pm for food and fellowship. Need a ride? Call Harlow Jacobson at 503-656-1616.

### Family Game Night 3/20

Join us at 6:30 with your favorite board game and a Potluck dish to share.

# March Calendar

|   |   |   |   |   |                                 |                                     |
|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1<br>10am Worship Sanctuary & YouTube<br>11am Coffee Hour<br>11am Faith Food<br>6pm Private Event         | 2<br>4:30 Private Event                             | 3<br>9am Gleaners<br>11:30am PEO<br>4:30 Private Event  | 4<br>10am Bible Study<br>12pm Pastoral Office Hours<br>4:45 Navigators USA<br>5pm Music Rehearsal<br>6:30 Recovery 1  | 5<br>9am Peace by Piece Quilters<br>6:15pm Scouts                           | 6                               | 7<br>9am Two Weeks Ready Session 1  |
| 8<br>10am Worship Sanctuary & YouTube<br>11am Potluck<br>11am Faith Food<br>6pm Private Event             | 9<br>4:30 Private Event                             | 10<br>9am Gleaners<br>4:30pm Worship Committee<br>6 pm Private Event<br>7pm Council   | 11<br>10am Bible Study<br>12pm Pastoral Office Hours<br>5pm Music Rehearsal<br>6pm Dinner Church<br>6:30 Recovery 1   | 12<br>9am Peace by Piece Quilters<br>12:30 OC Women's Club<br>6:15pm Scouts | 13                              | 14<br>9am Two Weeks Ready Session 2 |
| 15<br>10am Worship Sanctuary & YouTube<br>11am Coffee Hour<br>11:15 Child Care Comm.<br>6pm Private Event | 16<br>4:30 Private Event<br>7pm Brenden Estates HOA | 17<br>9am Gleaners<br>10am Material Girls<br>12pm Men's Lunch @ Wichita<br>4:30 Private Event<br>6 Private Event<br>7 Private Event | 18<br>10am Bible Study<br>12pm Pastoral Office Hours<br>4:45 Navigators USA<br>5pm Music Rehearsal<br>6:30 Recovery 1 | 19<br>9am Peace by Piece Quilters<br>6:15pm Scouts                          | 20<br>6:30 pm Family Game Night | 21<br>9:30am DAR                    |
| 22<br>10 am Worship Sanctuary & YouTube<br>11am Coffee Hour<br>11am Faith Food                            | 23<br>4:30 Private Event<br>7pm Private Event       | 24<br>9am Gleaners<br>6pm Private Event   | 25<br>10am Bible Study<br>12pm Pastoral Office Hours<br>5pm Music Rehearsal<br>6pm Dinner Church<br>6:30 Recovery 1   | 26<br>9am Peace by Piece Quilters<br>12pm Backpack Buddies<br>6:15pm Scouts | 27                              | 28                                  |
| 29<br><b>APRIL NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b><br><br>10 am Worship Sanctuary & YouTube<br>11am Coffee Hour       | 30<br>4:30 Private Event                            | 31  |   |   |                                 |                                     |

PRINCE OF LIFE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
13896 MEYERS RD  
OREGON CITY, OR 97045



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## Prince of Life's Welcoming Statement:

The love and mercy of God move us to welcome all people, including those who have ever felt excluded because of race, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical or mental challenges, addictions, imprisonment, economic status, family status, or anything that might divide us.

Whatever your country of origin or ancestry,  
wherever you are on your journey of faith,  
we welcome you.

**Our unity is in Christ.**

**PRINCE OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
ALL ARE WELCOME! We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation.



*To know the love of God in Jesus Christ, and to share that love through word and action*

phone: 503-657-3100  
[www.princeoflife.org](http://www.princeoflife.org)