



Compassionate. Challenging. Inclusive.

Monthly Newsletter

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Holy Play

by Pastor Gina

Play: *to engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose.*

I love my office here at Holy Spirit, because it looks out over the preschool playground. Throughout the day (and especially if I'm having a rough day), it brings me such joy to see and hear the kids playing outside. Their squeals of joy, their laughter, their creativity, the simple pleasure they find in just taking time to leave all worries behind, be themselves, and just play!

As a kid, I remember having lots of time to play. I'd play with my toys, play outside with the neighborhood kids, play with friends at recess, or play games or sports with my family or friends. And, unless I was wearing a brand new dress, it didn't matter whether I got dirty or not. In fact, I remember being told by my aunt that the dirtier you get, the more fun you have! The point was to just have fun and not worry about anything.

However, somewhere along life's journey, the act of "playing" became a sign of immaturity, something that only little kids should do. Embedded in our culture is the mentality that adults don't play. Adults have too many responsibilities to "play." Adults must be serious and practical. It's almost as though you have to prove you're an adult by working hard, earning a lot of money, and being "successful," which is often proven by how many responsibilities you can take on and handle. And if you do those well as an adult, then you get to "relax" or "take a break" – but not play!

Well friends, in scripture, God plays. The most powerful example of this is found in the creation story in Genesis. The way in which God creates the world is what many theologians call "divine play" or "holy play". Think of all of the different kinds of animals, birds, trees, and life that God imagined and playfully created: colobus monkeys with big noses, and giraffes with LONG necks; birds

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At Holy Spirit Lutheran Church

We believe we are called by the Holy Spirit to proclaim and embody the compassionate, challenging, and inclusive love of God revealed in Jesus Christ.



Stewardship: Cultivating Community

As Christians, stewardship is a gift and a responsibility to take care of each other and all of God's creation. The theme for this year's Stewardship campaign is *Cultivating Community*. Watch your mailbox for our annual Stewardship Invitation, coming in May!

Pastor's Letter (continued)

that make sounds of all kinds; plants and flowers that can smell beautiful, or smell awful like skunk cabbage; trees and undersea animals that can glow in the dark with beautiful, fluorescent colors. Even in the creation of human beings, God played in the mud, breathed life into dirt, and then created humanity with great diversity and beauty. If God were a serious God who was aiming to be “successful and mature,” I have a feeling the world would look, sound, and smell a little different. To riff off of the title of a popular children’s book, perhaps everybody wouldn’t poop (and yes, I just said poop in a church newsletter!).

As spring and summer approaches, and new flowers bloom and new animals are born, I would encourage us as adults to honor God by taking the time to play. Not just rest for a few minutes, or just do something because society would deem it an appropriate way for an adult to “relax,” but take time to engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation. Play in the dirt, swing on the swings, go down the slide if you want to, play with Legos, have tea parties - do whatever brings you joy and allows you the freedom to just be and enjoy life. Indulge in holy play!

- Pastor Gina



Women's Retreat Recap

We had a great time at our annual Women’s Retreat over the last weekend in February! While gathered at the beautiful Rainbow Lodge in North Bend, Pastor Katy and Kris Isensee led studies of several women in the Bible. We also had time for hikes, delicious food (that we didn’t have to plan, cook, or clean up after), playing cards, puzzles, and naps! And of course, strengthening of friendships and making new ones. We hope you can join in next year! Mark your calendars now for 2025 - Friday, February 28th through Sunday, March 2nd.

Midweek Meals, Way to Live, Kidz Club Resume on Wednesday, April 3rd

Midweek programming resumes on Wednesday, April 3rd. The Midweek Meal is served from 6:00 pm to 6:45 pm. Pastor Katy’s *Way to Live* study and Kidz Club for kids K-5 starts at 7:00 pm. Nursery care is available after dinner for ages birth to Pre-K.

The *Way to Live* study starts with a three-week series called, *Reading While Black*. Using the work of biblical scholar Esau McCaulley, we will look at the power and hope of Black biblical interpretation. McCaulley delves into questions of ethnicity, political protest, policing, and slavery – topics often ignored by white interpreters. You’re encouraged to read McCaulley’s book, *Reading While Black*, but it’s not required – just come with questions, an honest desire to listen, and a willingness to encounter the bible in new ways. Check out this short video from the author’s website: https://youtu.be/_59qaxbvmk0.

Kidz Club will be talking about prayer. Questions? Contact Becky Cole at children@hslckirkland.org.



Northwest Washington Synod Assembly Saturday, May 18, 9am-4pm at Grace Lutheran Church in Des Moines

Join other representatives in our Synod to worship, hear reports and synod updates, Spirit Stories from around the synod, vote on the upcoming budget, and to elect members to synod council, committees and the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. For more information, visit the Synod website at lutheransnw.org/pages/synod-assembly. If interested in attending, please contact Joan in the church office (office@hslckirkland.org or 425-823-2727).

Thank you to Holy Spirit for *Sharing the Love* in February

Many, many thanks for Holy Spirit's generous outpouring of love you showed for the Kitchen Kit Drive sponsored by the Refugee Resettlement Committee in February. We were able to complete 30 kits and helped to load them onto a large truck in early March, headed for Lutheran Community Services Northwest, where they will be distributed to some of the lucky refugee families ready to move into a new apartment. Imagine the happiness it brings them to start with all the things they need for their first American kitchen. Your generous support for this project is appreciated immensely. Thank you!



Baptism Class

Saturday, April 20th | 10:00 am - 11:30 am

If you've been thinking about baptism for yourself or your child, or simply want to know more about what we believe about baptism, here's a great opportunity for you! Kids and adults are invited to join us on Saturday, April 20th from 10:00 am - 11:30 am for an educational and interactive class on baptism. Those who attend the class will have the opportunity to be baptized on Sunday, May 5th. For more information or to sign-up, contact Pastor Gina at pastorgina@hslckirkland.org.

VBS & Day Camp 2024—Treasure Hunt!

Monday, July 29th - Friday, August 2nd

All kids ages 4 through 2nd grade are invited to join us at Vacation Bible School, and 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders are invited to Day Camp! Join in a week of Bible stories, energetic games, fabulous music, craft creation, exploring science, and delicious snacks during our Treasure Hunt! We'll also need lots of volunteers, so mark your calendars now! Registration begins mid-April. Watch your e-mail and the website (www.holyspiritvbs.org) for more information. Questions? Contact Becky at children@hslckirkland.org.



Middle School Retreat at Camp Casey Recap

In March, we took 17 youth to Camp Casey for an overnight retreat to talk about relationships. God created us to be in relationship with others, and scripture calls us to love God, others, and ourselves. But we all know that relationships are not that clear cut. Relationships can be confusing and complicated. Whether you're thinking about relationships with friends and family, romantic relationships, or even your relationship with yourself – figuring out who you are and what you need as a person – God wants us to have healthy, positive relationships that model respect and “agape” love, which is the love God has for us. It was a great weekend with wonderful weather and meaningful conversations. But most importantly, the youth were able to form deeper relationships with each other. Along with learning about relationships and what makes a healthy relationship, we had some fun too! During our free time on Saturday afternoon, we walked to the beach and to the old army bunkers at Camp Casey - it was a gorgeous day! We connected as a large group around games and while sitting down to meals together. All in all, it was a wonderful retreat.

A huge thank you to all of our leaders who came along: Nancy Swanson, Randy Wilson, Royal Hanson, Tammie Zarfos, and Pastor Gina Herman.

Volunteers Needed for Bridge Disability Ministries Event - Sunday, April 28th at 11:00 am

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

- Hebrews 10:24

True to these words, our church encourages us to participate in various church activities that benefit not only the church family but also the greater community.

Bridge Disability Ministries is committed to coming alongside persons with disabilities to foster spiritual growth and emotional well-being. One of the ways they do this is by partnering with area churches who invite persons with disabilities to worship and to share a meal. For over a decade Holy Spirit has supported Bridge Ministries by hosting a dinner once a year. This engaging and fun filled event truly proclaims the compassionate, challenging, and inclusive love of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

This year we are hosting this event on Sunday, April 28th. Our guests will worship with us at the 11:00 am service followed by lunch in the Fellowship Hall.

We need your help to make this a truly welcoming event! We need volunteers: kitchen helpers, parking lot attendants, greeters, table hosts, musicians, craft helpers, set up and clean-up crews.

If you can help, please notify Joan at the church office (office@hslckirkland.org or 425-823-2727). Questions? Contact Paul Jeganathan through the church office.



Go Idle Free

In conjunction with Earth Day, April 22nd, The City of Kirkland is partnering with *Sustaining America* on a campaign encouraging drivers to turn their engines off when parked for more than 10 seconds. Turning your engine off reducing fumes which can cause health problems, and protects your engine, since idling can causes build-up that can damage engine parts. Also, 10 seconds of idling also burns more fuel than restarting, so you could save 2-5 tanks per year. For more information and to take the no-idling pledge, visit iturnitoff.com.

Reflections of a Refugee from the Refugee Resettlement Committee

Recently we celebrated the beginning of Ramadan with our Afghan family. They have been in the USA for 4 years, and the mom is yearning to return to Afghanistan to visit her mother, introduce her little daughter (born here at Evergreen!) to her extended family and friends, and see her country once more. I tell her it's not safe. I tell her they can't afford it. I show her our government website that says, "Do not travel to Afghanistan due to terrorism, risk of wrongful detention, kidnapping and crime." But she says with tears, "I'm tired. I'm lonely. All I do here is cook and clean and take care of my 5 children and my husband. My country is very beautiful and I want to see it again."

Suddenly, I truly feel her loss and sadness and have a deeper awareness of the refugee experience. They were in danger so they left everything and everyone they ever cared about, except their immediate family, to move to a strange land where they don't understand the culture, the language, and don't have comfortable old friends with shared memories. I, on the other hand, am looking forward to reunions this year with 2 different groups of my old friends. So I sit with her in her sadness – and beg her not to go.

- Connie Weiseth

Library News For April - Earth Day

In April we celebrate God's creation with Earth Day. We have added many new books that focus on the environment in our library. Here are a few to check out:

- ***Wild Robot* by Peter Brown** - this middle grade chapter book is excellent for kids and adults. Stranded on a remote island, the Robot begins to explore the island and we see the landscape and wildlife through the eyes of someone seeing it for the first time.
- ***Yoshi and the Ocean* written by Lindsay Moore** - beautifully illustrated picture book that tells the true story of Yoshi, the sea turtle, who is rescued after being injured, rehabilitated, and released back into the ocean. The story follows her extraordinary ocean journey to find her home.
- ***Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life* by Dacher Keltner** - new research has attempted to answer the question, "how do you quantify awe?" In this new book, the author draws upon his recent emotional experience following the death of his brother to describe the wide variety of forms that awe enters and enriches our lives such as marveling at a sunset or singing together in 'collective effervescence'.
- ***The River Why* by David James Duncan** - growing up along rivers in the Pacific Northwest has heavily influenced Duncan's writing and perhaps none more so than *The River Why*. Part coming-of-age story and part philosophical quest, this story is a moving family drama and a love letter to the rivers of our beautiful land.

- Michael and Suzanne Fiegenschuh

Library



Holy Spirit Lutheran Church

Mary's Place Fundraising Luncheon

Thursday, April 18th | 11:30 am – 1 pm at the Fisher Pavilion, Seattle Center

Join Mary's Place at their dream BIG luncheon on Thursday, April 18th to learn more about how they take action together for families experiencing homelessness in our community. You'll hear from Mary's Place leaders and learn more about their programs, including a glimpse into the Lullaby Project, a special collaboration between Mary's Place and the Seattle Symphony where Mary's Place parents are paired with a musician to write a sweet lullaby for their babies.

Join us, bring a friend, or gather your community and host a table! Tickets are \$25 per person* and a minimum suggested donation of \$150 at the luncheon or when you register. We hope to see you there! For more information and/or to register, visit give.marysplaceseattle.org/event/dream-big-luncheon/e554506.





Holy Spirit Lutheran Church
10021 NE 124th Street
Kirkland, WA 98034

www.hslckirkland.org
425.823.2727
office@hslckirkland.org

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Worship on Sundays - 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 AM

Childcare available at 9:30 am and 11:00 am
Livestreaming at 9:30 am

Go Paperless!

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