



Compassionate. Challenging. Inclusive.

Monthly Newsletter

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Cultivating and Letting Go...

by Pastor Gina

"Faith is a place of mystery, where we find the courage to believe in what we cannot see and the strength to let go of our fear of uncertainty."

—Brene Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are*

I am not the best gardener. I have often told people that I have a "black thumb," because, despite my best efforts, I seem to kill most plants given to me. However, I also don't always take the necessary time to properly cultivate the soil before planting, which is an important part of a successful garden and a healthy crop. Cultivating, which entails both removing weeds and loosening the soil, allows air to penetrate the soil and better retain the water and nutrients the plants need to grow.

This is a great image for our faith as well, especially as we approach the season of Lent. The definition of cultivating is "to prepare and use for the raising of crops; to foster the growth of; to improve by

labor, care, or study; to refine; to further; to encourage." * If we don't take the time to "cultivate" our faith regularly – to continue to learn about God, Jesus, and the ways in which we believe God works in the world through us and others – then our faith can become stagnant, making it difficult for us to continue to grow and see God in the world. It's especially important to cultivate our faith when we are struggling with "weeds" in our lives, things that can paralyze us with fear and hopelessness, such as failing health, struggles with work, family or friends, financial struggles, and the violence and horrors we witness all around us. Alone, life and faith can seem overwhelming. But when we work together as a community to care for and encourage each other in our faith – to cultivate our faith – that's when we feel and can experience the overwhelming love, grace, and support of God, and let go of some of those fears and things that can hold us back.

In my time here at Holy Spirit, I have certainly witnessed and experienced ways in

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Lenten Wednesday Meals and Worship begins Wednesday, February 21st

On Wednesdays during Lent, a simple soup supper will be served at 6:00 pm, followed by Lenten Evening Worship at 7:00 pm. Each family is asked to provide a salad to share. HSLC provides bread and soup. Even though each household provides a salad only once during Lent, you are invited and encouraged to come to dinner and worship every week.

Please bring salad on the week designated by the first letter of your last name. Thank you!

A-C: Feb. 21 D-H: Feb. 28 I-M: March 6 N-R: March 13 S-Z: March 20

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.

Pastor's Letter (continued)

which this family of faith has worked hard to cultivate a place of welcome, justice, and inclusion. It is evident in the generosity of time, money, and talents you have given and continue to give to provide for families in need, and social justice initiatives and work, as well as to provide meaningful opportunities for faith growth for people of all ages. I can't thank you enough for the ways in which you have supported the mission and ministries of Holy Spirit and have helped me to cultivate my faith as well.

This Lenten season, if you are looking for support, encouragement, and perhaps new ways of connecting with others in the faith community and broader community as well, I invite you to join us as we work together to cultivate our faith.

Pastor Gina

* Definition by Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary



Souper Sundays through Sunday, February 11th

Nearly 9% of people in King County are currently experiencing food insecurities, with just over 1 in 10 children experiencing not enough food for them to feel full. In an effort to help feed the neighbors in our community, HSLC is collecting cans of soup that will be distributed to those needing a bit extra on these cold, winter days. We know that on one of the most extravagant sports days, Super Bowl Sunday, there are people who are hungry and can't even afford a can of soup. We would love to collect 1,000 cans of soup by February 11th to share with those who are in need. Please bring a can of soup (or more) and put them in the wooden bin in the Fellowship Hall. We prefer the pop-top soups so people without a can opener can easily eat their soup.

Vintage Spirits Tuesday, February 20th | 1:00 pm

Come and **decorate cookies to be given to those in our community who might be isolated.** All fingers (and thumbs) are invited, no special talent or creative ability required! Come for coffee and company! Questions? Contact Deirdre Staudt at deirdre.staudt@comcast.net.



Holy Spirit Lutheran

*Mission:
To expand the intersection of intellect and spirituality while holding physical space in our busy world for prayer, introspection and study.*

February at the HSLC Library

The Holy Spirit library is featuring two different categories of books during the month of February. We are honoring both Black History Month and Lent.

For Black History Month, we have quite a few books crossing several genres – you may find just what you want. We have novels with African-American themes, US history, sociological studies relating to racial issues, theology, church history, and more.

For Lent, we have a good collection of devotional books written especially for Lent. We also have many books on prayer and other spiritual disciplines in general. We will keep several on display, but if you have time and want to explore downstairs, the Dewey Decimal number for books on prayer is 242 and following. Aim to your left and back from the door and you should find it readily.

Where will you find the books chosen for display? On the kiosk upstairs in the narthex/lobby area, at the Library Express table in the Fellowship Hall on February 25th, and along the windows and counters in the library downstairs. (Yes, you can check out books in the windows – don't worry about leaving a blank space.) We will also continue to display recent acquisitions of all kinds. So hopefully everyone can find something!

Happy reading!

Holy Spirit Lutheran Preschool: Accepting Applications for 2024-2025

Our preschool has classes for children who are 2 ½, 3, 4, and 5 (not yet entering kindergarten). We would love to have your child explore their natural curiosity and develop their love of learning at HSLC's play-based preschool, which focuses on STEM, pre-literacy, outdoor play, and socio-emotional development. We welcome children from many different cultural, economic, and faith backgrounds to learn through play, art, and nature. We are fortunate to share HSLC's mission of inclusive faith formation and help children learn more about the world around them. Our current offerings for next fall are:

- Twinkles Class (age 2 by 3/1/24) – Mondays and Wednesdays 9:30 am - noon
- Stars Class (age 3 by 6/1/24) – Monday - Thursday 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

To learn more about our preschool or to schedule a tour, visit holyspiritpreschool.org. If you have specific questions, please email Kelly at preschool@hslckirkland.org.



Route 456 Marshmallow Mania Saturday, February 3rd | 10:00 am to 11:30 am

4th, 5th, and 6th graders - Join us in the Youth Room for a fun and squishy morning of marshmallow mania! We'll have marshmallow-themed activities and play "Minute-To-Win-It"-style marshmallow games. Depending on numbers, we'll also play Sardines! Bring a snack to share! Friends are always welcome! Signup online at hslckirkland.org/rt456-event so we have enough marshmallows to go around. Questions? Contact Becky at children@hslckirkland.org.



For God So Loved the World Saturday, February 10th | 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm

Families with children birth - 3rd grade are invited to celebrate Valentine's Day and help create a project to share God's love with the whole congregation. We will gather in the preschool space. Kids will participate in games, take home crafts, hear a story, and of course, enjoy Valentine's Day snacks! Sign up today by emailing Becky at children@hslckirkland.org and join us for this fun-filled Valentine's Day celebration. Parents are strongly encouraged to stay and help their child through all the activities.



Oasis Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser Sunday, February 25th after worship

Join us in the Fellowship Hall Sunday, February 25th after all three services for the return of our annual Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser! The high schoolers will cook up the best pancakes in town to raise money for their programs and trips. Bring the whole family and enjoy these yummy pancakes!



Middle School Baking Championship Sunday, February 25th | 12:15 pm to 2:30 pm

6th, 7th, and 8th graders - join us as we gather in teams to bake and decorate a cake! Your team could be the next HSLC Baking Champion! Cost: \$20 and includes lunch. Come join the fun and bring a friend! Sign up online on the church website. Questions? Contact Tammie at confirmation@hslckirkland.org.



Share the Love Kit Drive—February 1-25 Helping Newly Arrived Refugees

As vetted refugees continue to arrive from the Ukraine, Moldova, Afghanistan and other countries, Lutheran Community Services Northwest is overwhelmed with helping families settle into their new apartments.

This is where the HSLC Refugee Resettlement Committee likes to step in and support families by supplying Kitchen Kits. We are inviting the congregation to join us! And invite your kids to participate!!

Select one or more of the items below and bring them to the Fellowship Hall anytime between now and February 25th. All items must be **new**, not used. Just put them on the table under the "Share the Love" sign and our committee will begin packing these much-needed essentials for families who have left everything behind. Donations are also accepted by writing a check to HSLC and writing "Refugee Resettlement" in the memo line. Questions? Email Susan Worthen at sworthen87@comcast.net.

Thank you for Sharing the Love during February!!

Kitchen Kit Items:

Dishes (plates, bowls, mugs for 4)	Paper towel holder	Large pot with lid
Drinking glasses (4)	Trash can	Baking dishes (2-3)
Silverware (4-6)	Trash bags (1 box)	Cutting board
Silverware tray for drawer	Mixing bowls (2-3)	Large carving knife
Dish towels (2-3)	Plastic storage containers	Small paring knife
Potholders (2)	Frying pan	Spatula
Paper towels (2)	Small pot with lid	Can opener

Thank You!

With grateful hearts, we give thanks to all of you for your recent generous giving. Our December financial giving was the strongest it's been in the past four years, both in terms of dollars as well as number of you contributing. The Giving Trees projects received very strong support with:

- 91 books contributed in a variety of languages to Mary's Place
- 21 kits for migrants arriving in the United States to receive fresh clothing and a welcome card
- \$1650 of gift cards to be given to our neighbors with daily needs through the church and local organizations
- a barnyard of animals through the ELCA's Good Gifts Fund

Your giving makes it possible for Holy Spirit to continue to thrive, grow, and give ourselves away for the good of God's beloved world. Thank you!

Update on Homelessness in Kirkland

KING 5 recently published an article on their website about homelessness in Kirkland and Lake Washington United Methodist Church's Safe Parking program¹. It illustrates why support from the community is so important. Here are key excerpts from that article:

KIRKLAND, Wash. — More than 2,700 people live in their cars in King County, according to the most recent data from the King County Regional Homelessness Authority. Many of them don't have a safe place to park their cars.

Lake Washington United Methodist Church in Kirkland has had its safe parking program running for over 10 years. They say in the past few years, and even in just the past few months, they have seen an increase in the number of people needing a safe place to stay. This program is for women and people with children.

"We're seeing more and more people come in," said Karina O'Malley, the Safe Parking coordinator for LWUM Church. "So, we've had, you know, ten new folks join us in the last two months." O'Malley said many families are finding themselves in dire situations due to a lack of housing options in King County. She said more housing options and resources are needed. The church has staff who help people staying in the parking lot apply for housing.

"It used to be that a family would come in and they would be able to get a spot in a shelter or housing in a few weeks. Now they are waiting months," said O'Malley.

The church also has food available for people and access to bathrooms, showers, a laundry room, a workspace, and more.

O'Malley said that, on average, 20 to 40 people stay in the parking lot each night. That number has been up to 55 during the summer months. During the winter, they supply people with blankets, sleeping bags, insulation for their cars, and hand warmers.

Want to help? Send an email to Jack Staudt at JackmStaudt@gmail.com.

¹ Board, Conner. (2023, December 8). Kirkland safe parking program seeing increase in people needing a place to stay. king5.com. <https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/kirkland-safe-parking-program-seeing-increase-people-need-place-to-stay/281-86c387a4-917c-4489-a893-646a5dddf45>

Refugee Family Update! from Connie Weiseth

On November 1, 2019, our church welcomed a refugee family of 6 from Afghanistan - 4 little boys, a very pregnant mom, and a worried father. They spoke very little English and arrived just in time for COVID chaos. But after a very rugged beginning, there is much good news to share. A few examples:

- Mom is thriving in English class at Edmonds College, Dad is working 6 nights/week at a car wash/MiniMart, and the baby girl born in the USA is now 4 years old and LOVING preschool. When she plays with her doctor kit, she likes to be called Dr. Seuss.
- All 4 boys (now ages 7, 9, 11, 12) are doing great in school and are totally fluent English speakers. They love puns and riddles - e.g. "Why did the nurse always carry a red crayon?" - In case she needs to draw your blood!" Recently, the 7-yr-old read flashcards of the 500 English words that readers should know on sight faster than I could flash them! The 9-year-old is a good sport about undergoing orthodontic care at the UW School of Dentistry and loves to come back to our house after his appointments for a "soft supper" and some games before going home. He usually wins, whether it's Chess, Genius, UNO or Jenga.
- His 11 yr-old brother is in the midst of assembling an 806-piece Lamborghini! The oldest is a walking encyclopedia of facts about soccer player Lionel Messi, and sprained his ankle twice this past summer doing his tricky soccer moves.



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February 2024 HSLC Newsletter

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

Ash Wednesday Services

Wednesday, February 14th at noon and 7:00 pm
Childcare available for the 7:00 pm service.

Lenten Soup Suppers and Lenten Services

on Wednesdays during Lent, starting February 21st
Soup Supper at 6:00 pm, Lenten Worship from 7:00-7:30 pm
No Kidz Club or Way to Live, but childcare available during worship.

Go Paperless!

If you'd like to reduce waste and not receive a paper copy of this monthly newsletter, please let us know. A digital copy of this monthly newsletter comes out with our weekly enews updates, and is also available via our website. Contact office@hslckirkland.org to update your communication preferences. Thank you!