

**Report of
Ministry Director for Parish Life
The Rev. John H. Brock
March, 2019**

February started off with a triple baptism at Saturday Night worship. Father, son & nephew: Jeffrey Chang, his son Simon, and his nephew Lucas West. These are all relatives of Elizabeth Winters, and we brought in the baptismal font from the nave, which was given in honor of Pastor Matthew Winters by Elizabeth after his death.

I was able to attend the Healthy Leaders Retreat with Sister Marianne. It was lead by Rev. John Herman, a retired ELCA pastor, and centered around spiritual health & spiritual care.

Debbie Wilson, Pastor Liz Frey & I, along with Sister Marianne Brock, attended the *Ignite the Church* conference in Orlando, FL from February 19-21. This was a good conference, in many respects. First, it was held at Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church. This is a former mission development congregation. After years of meeting in various rental sites, they were able to purchase a former bowling alley. With not a whole lot of renovation, they turned the place of commerce into a rather respectable worship space (a bit of a side note: the altar was made with wood from one of the bowling lanes).

As I mentioned in my last sermon, the opening remarks were by The Rev. Pedro Suarez, current bishop of the Florida-Bahamas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He was an excellent speaker. The person who was the driving force in putting the conference together is retired pastor Jeff Linmann, former pastor/developer for Spirit of Joy Lutheran. I attended a workshop on "Congregational Hospitality: How to *really* welcome the stranger," lead by president and CEO Emeritus of 1517 Media, Beth Lewis. She had many good ideas as to how to make facilities more welcoming, as well as to help get word out about congregations. Some of her suggestions: make small signs that members can put in their yards; get members to give your congregation a good Yelp review; and a couple of my favorites - an on-going announcement asking for cell phones to be silenced, but encouraging people to tweet out favorite sermon quotes; and a sign along the lines of Coventry Cathedral - <https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/brilliant-coventry-cathedral-welcome-sign-12422814>

Another positive part of the conference was going to Castle Church Brewing. This is a congregation this is also an active brewery. Or is it a brewery that has an active congregation? I encourage you to check out their website: <https://www.castlechurchbrewing.com>

February also saw the usual meetings, worship and preaching that happens as well.

On a closing note, with Guy Edmiston's retirement, I have been working on trying to get our 50+ homebound folks visited. A special thanks goes out to Ginny Honeysett and Margy Fox for their continued dedication to providing visitors for our homebound members. And, I have been able to schedule monthly gatherings at both Messiah Village and Bethany Village, to bring together our members at both places, as well as provide an opportunity of worship & Eucharist for them as a group.

God's peace,

Pastor John Brock