

The CrossWorks

Information, Inspiration and Invitation from
Cross of Grace Lutheran Church

Begin Againers

Clive has been crawling and pulling up on things for months now. Nothing and no one is safe from his firm grasp as he desperately attempts to stand up. In the last few weeks, he has added pushing things around to his list of skills: his highchair, laundry baskets, kitchen chairs. All of this lends itself to Clive learning to walk. Yet, what he's really doing is learning how to fall and he's getting pretty good at it. From awkward, face-first stumbles to graceful plops on his diaper-padded rear end, the falls have gotten better. He'll try taking one shaking step and then twist and turn and fall in such a way that he is unharmed (*most of the time*). He's not really learning how to walk as much as he is learning to fall, which is arguably just as important.

This idea of learning to fall, or fail, has been on my mind lately, especially as we welcome in a New Year and think about New Year's Resolutions. Somewhere along the way, we adults have lost the importance of learning to fail. As kids, we did it all the time. Now, we are too fearful of failure because we might look bad or be embarrassed in front of others. Perhaps that's why public speaking is the most common fear people hold. Surely you've heard, or even said, "why make New Year's Resolutions? No one ever keeps them. I'm just going to fail".

And that's likely true. The statistics support our skepticism, with various reports citing failure rates ranging from 65% to 80% within the first few weeks, not to mention six months or the year. But, so what? Why should the fear of failure justify avoiding the pursuit of reform altogether? After all, as Christians, we are do-over people. The rhythm of death, resurrection, and new life is not just something we believe, but something we practice. We are begin againers. Each day we fail at living as we should. Yet, thanks to a baptism in Christ and the love of God, we wake up each morning with grace upon grace, forgiven and ready to try again in the new day.

So this year, make the resolutions. And I don't mean milquetoast, self-improvement resolutions that don't really improve your life nor the world. Make meaningful resolutions that are more like repentance: vow to reduce your waste; read more books about other cultures; call the people you know are lonely on a regular basis; ask for and give forgiveness quicker and more frequently; repair the ruptured relationships in your life; share more meals with more people. As Luther said, the entire life of a Christian is one of repentance.

You will likely stumble and fail at these resolutions, too. And at first, the falls will be awkward and perhaps even a little painful. However, as we fall and get back up and begin again, we learn to twist and turn so that the falls aren't so bad. Eventually, like Clive, we will learn to walk. This year let's grow resilience through our resolutions and relearn to fail.

Wishing you a year filled with learning, grace, and the courage to keep falling.

Pastor Cogan



Happening in January

January 2024

The Landing • Wednesday, January 3 • 5:30 p.m.

Let us know if you can help deliver food for a community youth gathering in Greenfield sometime this year. We provide pizza and could use help baking and/or delivering desserts and salad, too. We provide meals the first Wednesday of every other month throughout the year for this ministry to young people in our county.

Comfort Quilts • Saturday, January 13 • 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

A day of quilt-making for our Comfort Quilts group includes opportunities for everyone to help. If you have time or fabric to donate, please check in with Sheila Baker or Nancy Hunnicutt. There are some “take home” projects available, too.

Prayer Shawl Ministry • Sunday, January 14 • 1 p.m.

Gather to offer ideas, share supplies, and help create gifts of prayer to be shared with friends and family who need a sign and reminder that they are loved during difficult times. Contact Joyce Ammerman for more information. (jammerman15@yahoo.com)

Faith Formation Movie Night • Sunday, January 14 • 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.

6th – 8th graders are invited to join Pastor Mark for a movie and discussion, in honor of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday on Monday. Invite a friend or two and plan to join us.

High School Youth Overnight Lock-In • Sunday, January 14 • 8 p.m. – 7 a.m.

With the next day off of school for Martin Luther King, Jr. day, we'll gather overnight for food, fun, and games right here at Cross of Grace. Plan to join us and bring a friend or two.

Agape Alliance Ministry • Monday, January 15 • 6 p.m. (Carpool leaves COG)

Connect with Carla Hopkins (carlahop64@gmail.com) or Linda Sevier (lsevier103@gmail.com) to learn how you can be part of this ministry to sex workers on Indy's east side. Sign up to help on the board in the kitchen.

Craft Fellowship • Friday, January 19 • 7 p.m.

Gather at Cross of Grace with others who like to share ideas and good company while scrapbooking, card-making and other creative endeavors.

Breakfast with Pastor Mark • Tuesday, January 23 • 6:30 a.m.

High School Youth are invited to join Pastor Mark for breakfast at the New Pal McDonald's. The first three get breakfast free.

Home Brew Club • Saturday, January 20 • 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Join this group to learn about making and sharing your own home-brewed beer. Contact Ed Hopkins for more information. (edhopkins30@yahoo.com)

Mission Sunday • January 21 • 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

Jack Havel will invite us to support “Military Heroes,” by way of his Kappa Sigma fraternity at Capital University. Funds raised will support Veteran Companion Animal Services, helping train emotional-support dogs for veterans, as well as the Patriot Project, which provides financial relief for veterans in need of chiropractic care. You may give throughout the month for the good of our Mission Sunday effort.

Movie Night • Saturday, January 27 • 3 p.m.

Facilitated by our Racial Justice Team, we'll gather in the sanctuary to watch ***Killers of the Flower Moon***. This is an R-rated movie, not suitable for children. There will be a discussion of the film the following Sunday morning, during the Adult Forum, between services.