







PASTOR SCOTT SUSKOVIC

2025 Church Council

Melissa Lanoue President Andy Brincefield Vice President Cassie Thompson Secretary Dave Hutchinson Treasurer Holly Cannon Chad Melton Molly Zmuda Lauren Ratcliffe Janet Wilson Julie DePalma David Herran Brad Keller

Small Groups: The Secret to an Intimate Large Church

For 25 years, I have met with six guys every 3-4 weeks for a book study, but it is so much more. Not only have we covered topics from theology to spirituality to politics to psychology to history with some fascinating books, but we have done life together. We have experienced the death of parents, the marriages of children, the gift of grandchildren and the heartache of cancer. These guys know me better than anyone else, and we have leaned heavily on one another to celebrate the good times and to endure the difficult ones.

For 20 years, Gretchen and I have enjoyed doing life together with three other couples. It's not a Bible study or a prayer group or a book study. We eat...well! Someone hosts a monthly gathering, with everyone chipping in. We laugh, we cry, we give updates, we share our lives with one another. We've gone to our children's weddings together and attended funerals of loved ones. We love these people and call one another friends.

You can easily get lost in a large church. No one is taking attendance if you want to slip in after the announcements and sneak out during the closing hymn. Some prefer it that way. But in an ever increasing impersonal world that is dominated by a quick text or a Zoom meeting, Americans are quickly becoming the loneliest people on the planet. Most live far away from family, don't even know their neighbors and work remotely, apart from the human touch of their colleagues.

I don't want to live that way, do you?

The secret to a intimate large church is small groups. We certainly have many for you to join, but let me give you a better offer. Start one of your own.

Starting on Wednesday, July 30, we are launching a four-week training session for those who would like to lead and start a small group. Beginning with a light dinner at 6:00 p.m., we will then go from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. to cover topics such as:

- \cdot The dynamics of a small group
- · Facilitating a healthy discussion
- The gift of hospitality
- · Logistics of location/time/frequency
- Resources

My small groups are my lifeline to deep, lasting Christian friendships, and I want to encourage you to sign up for this training so you can experience that same intimacy. You can make that happen by clicking on or going to this link – <u>https://t.ly/s6dYQ</u> – and sign up to join me on July 30 for this training. Don't worry if you can't make all four. We will figure out a way to get you all prepared for a congregational small group sign up in September.

Peace, Pastor Scott





Led by Christ Lutheran pastors, Deeper Dive will tackle your big questions about religion & life. Check it out now>> christelca.org/podcast



Brothers in Faith Social Outing

Thursday, July 24 • 7:00 p.m. Open Tap Brewing (5010 Carmel Center Drive in Charlotte)

This is a great opportunity for some fellowship, faith and friendship with one another. We look forward to seeing you there! All adult men welcome.

MORE INFORMATION: David Dietert (dietert0103@gmail.com)



every Sunday at 8:15 a.m. (in the Sanctuary) Calling all singers! Join Mark, Phil and Christ Choir as we prepare an accessible anthem for the Musical Offering during Traditional Worship service. No robes or experience required – just bring your enthusiasm and love for singing!

MORE INFO: pbiedenbender@christelca.org

Hope Springs Family Fun Fair & Mini-Build Sunday, July 20

10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. in the Portico Area Help build a playhouse for a Habitat family while children can build with Legos, K'Nex & Magnatiles. There will be fair-themed food, ice cream, popsicles & much more!

REALM

Scan/Click to Register



Overview: In 3400 years of recorded human history, only about 268 years, or roughly 8%, has seen peace. It begs the question. Is war inevitable? Except for brief hiatuses, we will always be at war? As Jesus comes, proclaimed as the Prince of Peace, how is that peace experienced in our lives?

July 6 • Peace Between Countries

Joshua 6:21-5, 12-16, 20-21; Matthew 5:9

From Ukraine and Russia, Israel and Iran, we have witnessed the destructive power of war. Living in a fallen world, is war inevitable or is war a necessary evil to prevent violence and destruction to spread even further?

July 13 • Peace Within Society

Acts 5:27-32; Matthew 10:34-39

Can peace be oppressive? Is it necessary for faithful people to struggle to fight? Jesus did not come to compromise and will not be used for vain purposes. Those who would follow Him must be ready to find the life He offers and not be misled by flashing movements, Instagram idols and false peace.

July 20 • Peace With Others

Romans 12:14-21; Matthew 5:23-26

As believers, we are called to the ministry of reconciliation. However, how do we do that when the other person refuses to be reconciled? How can we work towards peace with the other person when peace seems out of reach?

July 27 • Peace With God

Jeremiah 6:14-15; Philippians 4:4-7; John 14:25-27

It is a rare and precious gift to have a deep sense of peace within. Can you imagine? A heart that does not ache, a mind that does not condemn, a stomach that does not churn? The world offers all sorts of remedies and promises of peace, but there is only one peace that passes all human understanding.

READ MORE ABOUT THE CURRENT SERMON SERIES AT: christelca.org/sermon-series



2025 COLLEGE GRADUATES



Brenna Kelly graduated from UNCW in Wilmington, North Carolina with a Bachelor of Science in Marketing. She is currently employed with Hendrick Automotive in Wilmington.



Ben Gibson graduated from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City with a PhD in Astrophysics. After graduation, he will do his post-doctorate at Space Telescope in Baltimore, Maryland.



Jasmine Donohue graduated from Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She's been accepted to the App State MSN Nursing Education Program and is working in the UNC Residency Program at Cannon Memorial Hospital.



Erik Seuster graduated from NC State University with a double major in Electrical and Computer Engineering, He is moving to Chicago in August to work for an engineering consulting firm.



Abby Brincefield graduated from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville with a degree in Elementary Education. She plans to continue on at UTK to pursue her masters degree in Elementary Education.



Trevor Sumlin graduated from UNC Chapel Hill with a B.S. in Geological Science. After completing BOLC training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, Trevor will be commissioned into the US Army as a Second Lieutenant. He will serve in the Chemical Branch for the first few years and then has an assured transfer into the Space and Missile Defense Command.

4 Christ Connections





(Cornerstone Cafe)

ALL KNITTERS & CROCHETERS WELCOME

Online Study Guide

This online resource is a collection of Bible studies and sermons that you will find useful for enriching your spiritual life, on your own or in a group.

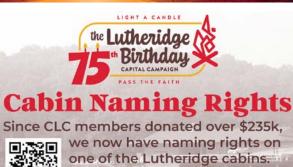




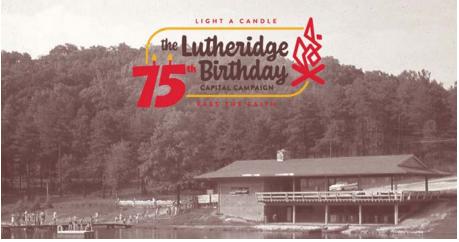
CONTEMPORARY • 10:45 a.m. - no Sunday School classes -

- nursery available for ages 0-36 months -

WORSHIP IN PERSON -or- ONLINE



one of the Lutheridge cabins. Scan/Click to Submit Your Idea!! or go to https://t.ly/Mppu9 · deadline July 15



Lutheridge Cabin Naming Rights -What's in a Name?

I'm not sure where I first heard it, but someone once told me that the most beautiful word in any language is your name. It sounds a little vain, but I suppose it's true when you think about it, and I think it's because names are individual, personal and powerful. They carry a legacy.

Hearing our names called out from within a crowd, or as we accomplish life milestones, are also powerful moments. Think about graduations, the introduction of professional athletes before a game, or keynote speakers.

Names are an important part of our faith, too. There are many names for Jesus and God the Father, each carrying its own significance and meaning. God the Father changed the names of Abram and Sarai, signifying the covenants he made with them, and Jesus renamed Simon to Peter, marking his role as the foundation of the Church.

Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave by calling his name and when he called Mary by her name at the tomb that Easter morning, he changed her completely and made her the first evangelist for the risen savior.

So, why all this talk about names?

Because of the generosity of CLC members, we have the naming rights to one of Lutheridge's cabins. This cabin will be where memories are made, faith is grown, and where people will escape the busyness of everyday life and connect with God.

When I first heard about our opportunity to name a cabin, I immediately thought of a news story I saw last winter. In Minnesota, the Department of Transportation holds a "Name a Snowplow" contest. Names are submitted and thousands of people vote for their favorites. This past winter, EIGHT plows received creative names courtesy of the contest. Some of my favorites include, "We're Off To See The Blizzard", "Don'tcha Snow," and "I Came, I Thaw, I Conquered."

We want to do something similar as we name this cabin, and that's where we need some help. Give us your suggestions by submitting your vote by July 15th. Click or Scan the QR Code located on the ad to the left, or go directly to <u>https://form.jotform.com/251615214832047</u>.

The church council will receive all the suggestions and work prayerfully to pare them down before presenting the finalists to the congregation for selection.

I can't wait to see what you come up with.

Rite of Confirmation

The congregation is invited to participate in the Rite of Confirmation on August 24 at both Traditional and Contemporary worship. The service will be planned and led by the confirmands themselves. During these services these young people will share about their faith, affirm their baptism and commit to continuing their life of faith.

They have been on a three-year journey where they have been educated in the Holy Scriptures, learning the stories of our faith and how they relate to our lives today along with a special emphasis on the Lord's Prayer, the Creeds, the Ten Commandments and the four tenants of the Lutheran faith.

Students have gained an understanding of what it means to be a Lutheran through our history and theology. These confirmands have participated in worship, outreach, study, fellowship and have grown in community with peers and adult mentors. They are now prepared to declare their own faith so they can continue to explore, develop, and grow after they affirm their baptism! Please join us as we celebrate this milestone with these families! There will be a reception between the services in the Lower Commons.

Confirmation Camp: A Year in a Week! by PASTOR ADRIENNE

As part of our confirmation ministry, we like to provide the enriching opportunity to attend camp together. This provides time for additional instruction, adventure, and connection. This year for our week, we are going to Lutheridge! During the week, we will be learning about the Church Year and its seasons. In one week, we will touch upon the famous acronym ACELEP: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Pentecost.

Each day will offer new insight into the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Please pray for us, our students, and our week at camp from July 13-18 as we explore the mystery of our faith in the beauty of the Seasons of the Church Year!

Child Protection Policy

Over the past few months, church staff has been hard at work updating our Child Protection Policy. The Child Protection Policy exists to ensure that anyone involved with our children and youth is equipped to minister in ways that are healthy and appropriate for everyone involved. The updating process is lengthy, but necessary to ensure that our policies are up to date with current needs.

Our Protection Policy, developed by our staff and approved by Council, requires volunteers to attend training each year and receive background checks every three years. This requirement is for any volunteer who has in-person interactions with children and youth, including through McPIE, VBS, Sunday School, youth group, Wednesdays Ablaze and many other programs. This year, we are working to transition back to in-person training, something we had to stop during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We will be offering two training opportunities this fall. The first, on Wednesday, September 3 will be from 6:00–8:00 p.m., with dinner included. The second, on Saturday, September 6, will be from 9:00– 11:00 a.m. If you have any plans to work with our children and youth during the upcoming school year, please mark these very important dates on your calendars and we'll be glad to see you there!



The congregation is invited to the Rite of Confirmation during both services. *Reception between services in the Lower Commons*.



Christ Connections 6



in the Summer of 2026. All interested rising 9-12 graders are encouraged to join the Xperience

on Wednesday evenings in the Fall.

More information will be announced in the Fall

The Youth Corner: Youth Doesn't Stop for the Summer

As school has officially drawn to an end for the year, we are still here throughout the summer with many fun trips and events!

Immediately following the last week of Wednesdays Ablaze, we started a weekly High School Bible Study focused on our faith walk. Led by one of our college students, Cole Zoutewelle, we were intentional about making this a space where everyone can feel comfortable sharing stories and their understanding of the Bible. Of course, we had many of our Middle and High Schoolers volunteering for VBS between recreation, music, crafts and being class leaders.

At the end of June, our youth praise band, the Xperience, went on their annual tour. We have many fun memories and stories to share!

In July we have a couple of big trips! Starting with Confirmation Camp, our students will be headed to Lutheridge with Pastor Adrienne and I. Outside of the teaching time, students will get to experience all joys of camp, spending the week with crafts, games, "great?" food and more!

Near the end of July, we will taking about 15 high school students to Lutherock for our mission trip. We will spend the week helping local communities clean up from Hurricane Helene. Each day we will go out into the community and work for about 7 hours. Once we get back to camp, the night will end with dinner and a bonfire. At the end of the week, we are spending the day on the French Broad River going rafting!

Later in August, we will be taking about 15 rising 9th graders and 6 high school mentors to Camp Awanita for the Confirmation Retreat. Students will have a weekend of learning and fun preparing them to write their Faith Statement by the end of the weekend. They will also get to enjoy a Mountain Hummer Ride, Kayak, Zipline and a bonfire.

On August 23rd we will have a rising 6th grade-only event, parents and students will have an opportunity to go learn all about the process of Confirmation. We will also have many fun water games planned out for the afternoon! Feel free to bring a friend!

Just like that, we are rolling up on Kick-off Sunday and a new beginning of the school year where we will return to regularly scheduled activities. Be on the lookout for more announcements about youth throughout the school year.



Congratulations to our 2025 graduates!













We had a blast at VBS this year learning about all the ways we can trust Jesus! We enjoyed learning awesome new music, Bible stories, did crafts and so much more. Water Wednesday was a hit and we all enjoyed freeze pops after campers shared their music with us Friday afternoon.

Thank you to the army of volunteers that shared their time and talents with our kids to make it an unforgettable week!















Hope Springs Habitat House Family Fun Fair + Mini Build

In 2023, 75% of households in the Charlotte region were unable to afford the median-price home of \$415,000. But only 22% of houses sold in the region were under \$300,000. Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit Christian housing organization that works in local communities in all 50 U.S. States, and globally in over 70 countries. The group partners with families in need of decent, economical housing, offering them an affordable mortgage after building a home from the ground up.

This July, Christ Lutheran will support Habitat Charlotte with a \$100,000 fundraiser, culminating in a Family Fun Fair and Mini-Build on July 20th! This will be a day of fun for all! There will be an opportunity to build a playhouse for a Habitat family, children can build with Legos, K'Nex and Magnatiles, fair-themed food will be served, we'll have an ice cream and popsicle cart, and much more! Kids could even wear a swimsuit under their clothes for church because we will have a mister machine.

If you would like more information, to volunteer, loan your legos/magnatiles (you will receive them back), have any open-air tents to loan, or would like to serve food and snacks, please contact Amy Daniels (<u>adaniels@christelca.</u> <u>org</u>). To donate to the cause, go to <u>https://onrealm.org/</u> <u>christelca/-/form/give</u> and select "Habitat Build."

CLC plans to continue supporting Habitat in August and in the Fall building the house we provide funds for. It will start with a week build during our 8 Days of Service (see schedule in the next article).

8 Days of Service: August 17-24

Each year, we join our hands and our hearts as a congregation to support several worthy causes during what we call the 8 Days of Service. This year, from August 17-24, we'll have a variety of ways you can get involved. There will be opportunities to serve each day as well as in the evenings for those who work. We're preparing a full list of events and sign up information and will have that ready to go prior to August 1, so please look for that soon! For now, we'll highlight a few of the larger events:



1) Habitat Build: August 15–23

In 2022, Habitat Charlotte Region acquired land at below market value between Highway 16 and Beattie's Ford Road, thanks to a vote from the generous congregation of Greater Bethel AME Church. Christened "Hope Springs," the property is being developed as a neighborhood of 29 Habitat homes. Christ Lutheran will build one home in this new neighborhood!

Tentative build dates and projects are:

- Friday, 8/15: subfloor
- Saturday, 8/16: subfloor
- Thursday, 8/21: framing (assembling panelized wall
- components and standing walls
- Saturday, 8/23: framing

We will have spots for 7-12 workers each shift and will need help with delivering lunch, water and snacks.

2) Hunger Fight: Sunday, August 17

We will assemble meals that will be distributed to individuals and families in need within the Charlotte community. This is a great intergenerational service opportunity. We will have spots for 60 or more volunteers for each of the two shifts. We will have a light lunch in between shifts.

- Session One: 10:15–11:45 a.m.
- Session Two: 12:00–1:30 p.m.

3) McPIE and our closest ministry partners:

To support McPIE and some of our closest ministry sponsors, service projects will include a Teacher Luncheon, McClintock campus beautification, School Supplies/Boxes for Teachers, Clothing for Crisis Assistance Ministries, and Sandwiches for A Roof Above.

Set aside at least one day or evening to help our neighbors!

SERVING & OUTREACH

Science Camp is Underway

Science Camp is in full swing this summer! Rising 6th-8th graders will explore science, technology, engineering, arts and math in engaging science modules, followed by a Friday field trip to tie it all together! 80 Summer Science Camp students will have the opportunity to participate in camp June 23-July 3 and learn exciting concepts in Biology, Forensics, Everyday Science, (SMArt) Science and Math in Art, Innovation and more. This summer, we are introducing a new style of module, Calm Collective. Students will engage in hands-on activities, group discussions, and realworld simulations designed to build essential life skills such as communication, decision-making, time management, conflict resolution, and more! All modules are interactive and relevant, allowing students to practice and reflect on science as a college or career path and learn skills they can immediately apply in everyday life!





Freedom School Fully Funded & Underway

Freedom School is back for another summer of fun, reading and activities! This summer, we will welcome 80 Scholars from K-8th grade! They will be enjoying a fun, safe summer. This class of



Scholars will build Something Inside So Strong in hopes of breaking the cycle of poverty. Through the tools they receive in Freedom School, Scholars foster a love of reading and learn that they can make a difference in themselves, their families and the world.

Ways to continue support:

1. Please continue to pray for our Scholars, their families, Freedom School team leaders and volunteers. We hope that the Holy Spirit touches them daily and blesses and empowers them to make a difference this summer!

2. Volunteer. Contact Dee Dee Petronis (<u>dpetronis@</u> <u>christelca.org</u>) or go to <u>https://www.signupgenius.com/</u> <u>org/FSPCLC#/</u>. There are opportunities to lead afternoon activities, be a DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) buddy, chaperone a field trip, etc. Thank you to everyone who donated toward our fundraising efforts! Due to your generosity, Freedom School is FULLY FUNDED and will make a real impact on these Scholars. If you are still interested in making a donation, the McPIE general fund accepts donations yearround to support Family Night and other initiatives.









Family Night Volunteer Opportunities

The 2024-2025 year of McPIE Family Night programming was amazing – let's see if we can top it for this upcoming school year! Family Night will return on Tuesday, September 30th. CLC's Tuesday night programming at McClintock Middle School is the church's largest outreach. Our mission to support the students, families and staff at McClintock is welcomed by all who participate.

There are opportunities to greet students and families with a smile, serve dinner, distribute school supplies, assist a club leader, or even lead a club of your choice. We heavily rely on volunteers to share their passions and careers with students, so they can begin envisioning a future story for themselves, geared toward college or career. Do you work in the medical field, are you an engineer, have science experiments to do, teach yoga, crochet? All of these are possibilities for new Family Night clubs! Materials will be supplied!

We also have programming for elementary school aged siblings and offer parent classes. Leaders are needed for all age groups. There are also possibilities during the afternoon hours right after school (3:45–5:00 p.m.). Dinner is served 5:30–6:00 p.m. and classes and clubs meet from 6:00–7:15 p.m. If you have questions or need clarification on anything to consider volunteering for this awesome program, please do not hesitate to reach out to Angela Davis (*adavis@christelca.org*).

We look forward to several new faces this coming year and new offerings for our students and families to explore!

10 Christ Connections

HELP FUND A SERVICE PROJECT WITH

thrivent

ion learne

For more information: Dee Dee Petronis (dpetronis@christelca.org)

CHOOL REED

Thursday, July 31 • 1:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Come watch the culmination of these Scholars' hard work! Each class will give a presentation through song, dance, spoken word, video & more!



STUDENT NEEDS: pencils, book bags, over-the-head headphones

TEACHER WISHES: headphone organizers (buy YOCOMEY Over-the-Door Shoe Organizers from Amazon), brooms, dustpans, hall passes (buy ABAMERICA Hall Passes from Amazon)

Donation Dropoff: Lower Commons on Sundays or- Outreach during the week.



NEXT BLOOD DRIVE: Sunday, July 20 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at Christ Providence

SIGN UP TO DONATE at redcrossblood.org



Thursday, July 3 • 1:00 p.m. at McClintock Middle School

JOIN STUDENTS FROM THE SUMMER SCIENCE CAMP AS THEY SHOWCASE ALL THEY HAVE LEARNED, ENGINEERED & INVENTED!



Tutor Coordinator Needed

Tutors are a critical part of academic success for many students! McPIE is looking for a new Tutor Coordinator. The job is simple:

- ·Advertise for tutors through the church newsletters, Weekly E-news, and McPIE table displays at the beginning of the school year;
- •Gather the preferences for each tutor, ie. subject, grade level, day and time;
- ·Work with Shannon Gibson to place the tutor;
- ·Check in periodically to make sure everything is going okay;
- ·Send out reminders about holidays, workdays and early dismissal days.

Once tutors are placed with a student/teacher, the Coordinator just checks in from time to time. The bulk of coordinating is at the beginning of the school year. If interested, contact Angela Davis (adavis@christelca.org).

Civil Rights Trail

Two great short trips are on the horizon. We all owe it to ourselves to learn what we have barely been taught. Join together for these two important trips.

On Saturday, September 27, we will take a trip to the Greensboro Civil Rights Museum with members from Emmaus Lutheran (the newest chartered congregation in our synod). We will meet at the church, travel to the museum, have a tour and time looking around, and then lunch, discussion and prayer together. We will return to Charlotte by late afternoon. The entrance fee cost will be \$20.

On October 16-17, we will go for an overnight trip to Charleston, SC to visit the Civil Rights Museum. We will travel on Thursday evening to stay overnight at Coastal Retreat Center, visit the museum on Friday morning, and return Friday evening after lunch, discussion and prayer. The cost (tba) will include overnight accommodations and fee for museum.

Please look for more info on both of these trips in our Weekly E-News, bulletins or our website (*christelca.org/latest-news*). You can also contact Amy Daniels directly at adaniels@christelca.org.



Mark Diffley's Eagle Scout Project. The project was cleaning up and beautification of the Columbarium. Mark, along with his troop, friends and family power washed the bricks, spread 250 bags of mulch, created new pathways with the pavers, and planted over 30 plants that were left over from Easter. Thank you to Mark for this wonderful gift!





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Scott Suskovic • Senior Pastor Ryan Ritzmann • Pastor, Evangelism & Faith Formation Adrienne Martin • Pastor, Family Ministry Alexis Williams • Minister, Christ Online Amy Daniels • Director of Outreach Mark Johanson • Minister of Music Tony Hyde • Director of Property and Finance

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In your REALM profile, you can set newsletter mailing preferences to USPS mail or online delivery. Hard copies are available for pickup at each campus. You can also view the online, interactive version at <u>christelca.org/latest-news/newsletter</u>

CONTENT DEADLINES FOR 2025 EDITIONS Jan/Feb - December 10 Mar/April - February 15 May/June - April 15 July/Aug - June 15 Sept/Oct - August 10 Nov/Dec - October 15 *Submit stories or other news items at <u>christelca.org/jotform</u>



FOR ALL TICKET LEVELS:

tprlive.co



Friday, September 19th 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

 Scan/Click to save on processing fees for general admission REALM (limited availability in REALM)

