



## Life in Christ, Vol. 70 Issue 6 June 2026



From Pastor Nikki:

In the Bible study on Romans, we read together Romans 8:26,

*“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words.”*

And folks shared about their own times of grieving and what it was like to hear well-intentioned loved ones try to make things better, but accidentally do more harm than good. It prompted me to suggest to folks a book that has helped me to re-think about caring for those who are ill or experiencing grief. The book is called, **“Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I’ve Loved” by Kate Bowler.**

Bowler speaks with such honesty about her own experience of being diagnosed at 35 years old with stage IV colon cancer and how it impacted her outlook on death and dying, but also what it means to live. While offering up and dismantling what she considers problematic things people say, such as the line mentioned in the title, she also offers helpful things that people can say and do when wanting to care for someone. I commend the book to you and also her website, which has all sorts of resources available (free ones too!) [<https://katebowler.com/resources/>]. She says that her goal at Everything Happens is “to create rich language and vibrant community that sustains us when life comes apart.” I’ve included one resource below that gives you a sample of what is available.

As we experience a wave of grief and loss here at Christ Lutheran, I encourage us all to consider how best to offer care to one another and to exercise patience and grace to all as none of us really know what each of us is facing. We can’t fully know, but we can offer to walk alongside- not to fix, but to be present with one another. And that will be a gift- to be reminded that we are never alone.

# DURING TERRIBLE TIMES,



## Never say:

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1 Things will get better. I promise.



## Instead, say:

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Oh my friend, that sounds so hard.

2 God must have needed an angel.



I wish I knew the right words. I am here for you.

3 There will be a blessing in this.



\*Silence\*\*  
(The truth is, no one knows what to say.)

4 When my aunt had cancer....



May I come sit with you?

5 God never gives us more than we can handle.



I would love to bring you a meal this week. Can I email you about it?

6 Everything happens for a reason.



I am so grateful to hear about how you are doing. Just know that I am on your team.

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**Star Word Prompt for June**

**Remembering the Star word you picked up in worship in January. Take a moment to reflect on the following question.**



Now that we’re halfway through, revisit the initial thoughts, impressions, and prayers you first had with your star word. How have they changed? How have you grown?

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Also from Pastor Nikki:

Our annual Southwest California Synod Assembly will take place May 29-30, 2026. We will gather with representatives from across our synod to do the work of our synod- approving a synod budget, electing leadership, considering missions, voting on memorials and resolutions, etc. The theme for the event is “God is Our Refuge and Strength.” Myself, Andrea Joseph and Matt Timney will serve as voting members; Shannon Howard as a volunteer, Ron Nelson as a vendor/visitor, Sue Ruth as a visitor, and Bill Ruth as a retired pastor/voting member. By the time you read this, it will have come and gone, but hopefully, the learnings, challenges, and encouragement will continue to speak into our congregations, including Christ Lutheran, and the lives of all our Assembly participants. We look forward to sharing about our experience with you.

*From the desk of Bishop Brenda Bos, Southwest California Synod:*



**Southwest California Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

Welcome to the 2026 Southwest California Synod Assembly, "God is Our Refuge and Strength."

Our theme comes from Psalm 46, words which have been clung to by people of Abrahamic faiths for centuries. This theme offers a message of hope for each of us. God is *our* refuge. The psalmist likely wrote about God protecting him from pursuing military enemies. A refuge is a place to hide and watch out for danger. While that may not be a relatable experience for most of us, we may understand other concepts of a refuge:

A refuge is a place to find comfort and rest when you are away from home... a place to get out of a storm... a place to breathe and pray when life becomes overwhelming or even dangerous.

God is that refuge, no matter what our life circumstances bring.

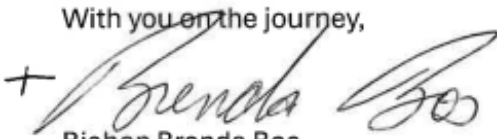
A personal highlight of 2025 was speaking to our synod assembly about my experience of God's love and protection after the Eaton fire. I felt fully alive telling the gathered faithful about God's work in my broken life. I was not healed, I still am not, but I knew in that moment I was testifying honestly and completely about who God is and what God does.

The same is true this year. I confidently declare God is our refuge, and our strength. The psalmist does not say God is an impermeable bulwark. Life still comes at us. But we have a hiding place. Especially in these troubled times, God is present. God is revealed uniquely to each of us, providing the refuge each of our lives requires. God is both deeply personal, and globally present in this world.

Because of God's refuge, we have strength. We can regroup. We can rest. We can seek God's guidance and move forward. This is what our faith offers: consolation in our God, and strength for the journey.

I pray this truth resounds personally for you. I also pray it resounds for this synod. We have faced and are facing many challenges and must always rely on God’s power and protection. How might we lead differently, trust more deeply and respond more courageously, knowing God is our refuge and our strength? Let’s pray about that this weekend, and let’s be open to discovering new places of refuge and strength in our mighty, mighty God.

With you on the journey,

+   
Bishop Brenda Bos

+++++

**Director of Senior Adult Ministry-  
Shannon Howard**

**From Shannon...**

*Prayer and presence is at the core of what I am called to do as your Director of Senior Adult Ministry— SAM.*

We have a new AED (Portable defibrillator) on the Church Campus. It’s located outside the church office. I am in the process of giving “mini” instructions on how & when to use it to all the ushers & office staff. If anyone else is interested, please contact me.



**Call me for more information: Shannon Howard 714.904.0871**

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# Preschool News

The first week of May we had Teacher Appreciation Week. The parents brought in special treats/presents each day for the staff and provided a special lunch on Friday. It is an honor and privilege to care for their children and we are blessed to have such generous and supportive families at CLP!

On Friday, May 8th, we celebrated Mother's Day with our Moms & Muffins event. Moms and their children enjoyed breakfast and fun activities that included making bracelets, painting flower pots, a photo station and playing a flower toss game.

In June, we will wrap up our school year. We will celebrate Father's Day with Dads & Donuts on Friday, June 12th. We will have breakfast and activities for the Dads to do with their child at drop off.

Our school year will come to an end on Thurs, June 18th. We will celebrate at our End of Year Program in the Social Hall at 11:30am. There will be cake on the yard and school will close at 12:30pm. We will be closed for Juneteenth on 6/19 and closed for staff work days on 6/22 & 6/23 to prepare for our summer session which will start on Wed 6/24.

Our theme for summer will be "On the Move". Our weekly themes will include: Our Bodies, Airplanes & Rockets, Boats, Wheels, Trains, VBS-Road Trip, Animals, Cars and Balloons. Our special visitors will include Elks Vision Screening, a Pilot, Long Beach Skate Dogs Skateboarders, Trackless Train, Pony Rides, Police Car, and Balloon Artist. We will celebrate our last day of summer with a bounce house on 8/21.

**Blessings for a beautiful month!**

*Lisa Clinton*



# Congratulations!

*Christ Lutheran joyously sends these young people into the world with God's Blessings!*

Seth Elliott graduated from Concordia University – Wisconsin, Magna Cum Laude, with a double major in Business Management and Marketing. Following his graduation in May, Seth traveled to Europe where he backpacked solo for five weeks. He began his adventure in Rome, Italy and ended in the Scottish Highlands. He is in worship with us for his graduation blessing and then returns permanently to the Milwaukee area on June 15 to begin his employment with Amazon as an Operations and Logistics Manager.

Faith Timney graduated *summa cum laude* from California Lutheran University with a B.S. in Environmental Science and a B.A. in Spanish. A four-year scholar-athlete, she set two school relay records and earned SCIAC medals in 2023, 2024, and 2025. As a Swenson Science Summer Research Fellow, Faith studied microfiber contamination in coastal wetlands and shared her work at the 2026 Festival of Scholars. She served as Co-President of Earth Society, helping lead sustainability efforts and foster a love for the outdoors within the community.

Faith's love of language, culture, and travel grew through immersion coursework in Colombia and a transformative semester abroad in Madrid.

After graduation, Faith will continue her environmental conservation work through local internships focused on habitat restoration and community engagement while also working in her long-held role with Makenna Koffee and pursuing her passion for global travel.

Faith is deeply grateful for the support of her family, friends, coaches, and church community, and she looks forward to continuing her journey in environmental conservation and research.

## **Church in Society June Focus**

### **Please support H4H in any way you can.**



## **Our Mission**

*Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.*

## **Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Habitat LA envisions a world where every person has a decent place to live. Our mission was born from a tradition of radical inclusivity, where people of all races, faiths, and backgrounds come together for a common cause. We commit to dismantling discriminatory housing practices. We create a culture of inclusion that does not eliminate personal differences but celebrates them, allowing for a shared place of love that encourages progress toward a more just society. We empower communities to build equitable and inclusive neighborhoods through housing opportunities and community development. We promote mutual respect, collaboration, authenticity, and a foundation of understanding among our staff, volunteers, and donors.

## **We offer a hand up, not a hand out**

With the support of community partners, donors and volunteers, Habitat LA constructs new or renovates existing homes alongside Habitat partner homebuyers. Our partner homebuyers make a small down payment and monthly mortgage payments, and they invest 200-500 hours of sweat equity hours building their future Habitat home and the homes of other Habitat homebuyers. Habitat homes are sold to partner homebuyers at no profit and are financed with affordable loans. Since 1990, we have built, rehabilitated, or repaired over 1,000 houses in neighborhoods all across greater Los Angeles. Shelter is a basic human need, and Habitat for Humanity strives to achieve its goal of eliminating substandard housing by making decent, sustainable, and affordable housing a reality for all.



**You Are Invited To A  
FAITH-BUILDING FUNDRAISER**

A joint project between  
Christ Lutheran-Long Beach &  
Fe y Esperanza Lutheran-South Gate

**HELP BUILD OUR FUND TO  
SEND OUR KIDS TO  
CAMP/YOUTH GATHERINGS**

A **Luncheon** Hosted by Fe y Esperanza  
13431 Paramount Blvd.  
South Gate, CA 90280

**Saturday, June 20, 11am-2pm**

Choice of Chicken Posole or Pork Posole  
Enjoy a camp-like experience together

**DONATIONS APPRECIATED**

### Sunday Adult Education and Other Activities

#### June 2026

Sunday, May 31	Congregational Meeting		Social Hall
Sunday, June 7	Romans-Session 7	Don Koepke	Conference Room
Sunday, June 14	Romans-Session 8	Don Koepke	Conference Room
Sunday, June 21	Father's Day – NO CLASS		
Sunday, June 28	Moms Connect – Overwhelmed by Life	Chris Caldwell	Founder's Room

Christ Lutheran Church & Preschool  
**VBS 2026**

Register Now

[www.christlutheranlb.com](http://www.christlutheranlb.com)  
(562) 598-2433

*Cokesbury Kids*  
**ROAD TRIP**  
ON THE GO WITH GOD

July 27-31



### We pray for:

**Members at Home or in Care Centers:** Laurie Ennen, Beverly Koenen, Ione Marchael, Gale Musselman,

Sydney Nichols, Phil Peterson, Bary & Janice Schlieder, and Frances Willms.

**Those struggling with illness or other concerns:** Gary Burkard, Don Darnauer, Judy Haenn, Shannon Howard, Shaun Murray, Ken Reason, Kristine Trost, Gary & Linda Zimmerman.

**\*Family & Friends:** Leah Bootman, Bill Burkey, Tina Chang, Susan Clark, Clark Enebo, Brechin Flournoy, Allan Gatzke, Cindy Gray, Vivian Houser, Bill Holford, Kylie & Crystal Huber, Jax, Bryan Koenen, Barb Korsmo, Katrina Lahr, the Llewellyn family, Skye, Vanessa and Joe Lopez, Luke McCann, Tim Myer, Nati and Florian, Deborah Ramos, Kristina & Scott Randolph, Sharry Reed, David Sarvela, Gale Schlesinger, Marlene Shafer, Leah Sourbeer, Laura Straus, Eileen Surette, Jason Thompson, Vicki Thompson, Kathy Van Buskirk, Melinda and Gerardo Vasquez, Jessica & Larisa West, Bethany Wildes, Dave, Carol and John.

### We pray for the ongoing work of:

- + Linda Gawthorne among the Kogi people of Colombia
- + First responders who provide safety, security, and care
- + Those serving in our nation's military, especially: Samuel Brown, Ryan Dorris, Johnny Luna, Jim Reeder, Austin Rowell, Jalan Sanchez, Steven, Brina, Michael Navarro, and Tristan Porter.



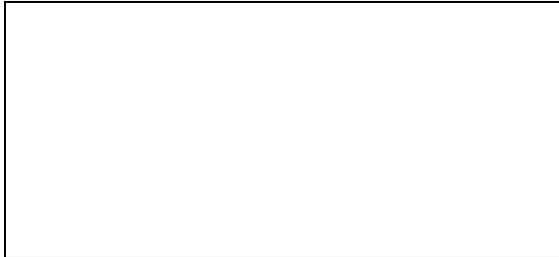
**6/3 Andrea and Mike Joseph**  
**6/19 Pastor Nikki and Scott Fielder**



**6/3 Maggie Fitzpatrick**  
**6/4 Kristina Randig**  
**6/8 Kim Croes**  
**6/9 Amy Clements-Feeman**  
**6/10 Roger Halvorson**  
**6/12 Teddy Book**  
**6/16 Kai Zumaya Flournoy**  
**6/17 Parker Treat**  
**6/20 Kevin Feeman**  
**6/22 Faith Timney**  
**6/24 Keith Miller**  
**6/25 Cathy Westwood**  
**6/27 Richard McGee**  
**6/28 Mike Joseph**  
**6/30 Laura Innes**

**Christ Lutheran Church**  
**6500 Stearns Street**  
**Long Beach, CA 90815-3497**

**Return Service Requested**



**Mission Statement**

Living by Christ's example,  
 we welcome, serve, and love  
 all through God's grace.

**Vision Statement**

Embracing the truth that God's love  
 and grace is for all, Christ  
 Lutheran Church is a vibrant  
 and active community spreading  
 the good news through acceptance,  
 action, and benevolence.

**Our Position**

Christ is ALIVE!

July Newsletter Deadline:  
 June15

***Life In Christ***

Is the newsletter of  
**Christ Lutheran Church**  
**6500 Stearns Street**  
**Long Beach, CA 90815-3497**  
 562.598.2433  
 www.christlutheranlb.com

email:officemanager@christlutheranlb.com

**Please join us in person for Sunday  
 Worship 9:30am**

**Live on our YouTube Channel**

**<https://www.youtube.com/@christlutheranlb>**



Be sure to LIKE us on Facebook.

**[facebook.com/christlutheranlb](https://www.facebook.com/christlutheranlb)**