

RELIGION

PASTOR’S COLUMN

When the news is bad



DEB MECHLER

“When will it end?” we ask ourselves.

Last week, we were horrified by the assassination of Charlie Kirk. He is not the first politically motivated killing. Murder is wrong, no matter how strongly his assassin felt about the speeches Kirk was making.

That killing was closely preceded by yet another school shooting, in Minnesota this time. Other shootings, a stabbing on a light rail train. So many unthinkable acts are crossing our news

feeds that we might try to push them aside after saying a prayer for the victims and their families. Otherwise, we fear that we will sink into despair that will be continually fed by more bad news.

These days, there is a kind of cynical helplessness that has people scoffing at “thoughts and prayers” as a response to violence and tragedy. They want sympathizers to act. Of course they do. We need to help each other recover from real loss. We cannot help everyone, but we can help someone, and we should. Financial aid, labor and advocacy are often called for. I do not have to cite Bible verses to support

this; it is all over the Scriptures, summarized in “love one another.”

But how can we respond helpfully otherwise? How can we keep from being jaded on the one hand and overwhelmed on the other? I believe that this is why we need community. We gather together to lament on street corners and in sanctuaries so that we will not be alone in our grief. We sing hymns of hope and resurrection because we believe in God whose love is stronger than the shrill voices or the dark impulses that fuel the hate which leads to violence. We even proclaim hope in the face of tragedy, confident that these circumstances do not define the deepest truths.

“We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7) is not just a great motto to put on a T-shirt. It is a claim that there really is a bigger picture than the one displayed temporarily by our circumstances. It is not a denial of what is happening around us either. Instead, it is reaching deeper into our souls to know that God is with us there and will never leave us. It is knowing that God is suffering with us, calling us forward to keep serving as agents of love and forgiveness and compassion out of that divine strength that is ours.

We also come together to name what is wrong. But this not only

involves accusing the “other.” To be truthful, we must examine ourselves too. How have we contributed to a culture that glorifies winning at all costs and vengeance? Have we stood by as division escalates, not doing our part to bring wisdom and grace to the conversation? When was the last time I listened to the story of someone with whom I disagree? Have I bothered to try to understand the actions of the school board or the state Legislature?

It is too bad that prayers are regarded by some people as a quaint but outdated response. Prayer is not a futile response to tragedy. Not only are we invited by Jesus himself to call on God, but prayer also changes us when we truly seek the heart of God and not just the satisfaction of a list of requests. Personal and group prayer make a difference, despite the cynics.

The bottom line for Jesus is always love. Love compelled him to become a victim of injustice and violence himself in order to be with us in our despair. He showed us how to love our enemies. When these unspeakable tragedies happen, we need to look to him to show us how to be agents of love, and we need to look to each other to be the hands and feet of Jesus for one another.

AREA CHURCH LISTINGS

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Foundation Church, Spencer
Rev. Nicholas Hanges, Senior Pastor
1410 W. 18th St.
712-262-6292
foundationspencer.com

- Sunday School K-12, 9 a.m.
- Sunday Prayer/Fellowship, 9 a.m.
- Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.
- Kids Church Sunday, 10 a.m.
- Wednesday All Ages, 6:30 p.m.

- Saturday Service, 4:30 p.m.
- Sunday Service, 11 a.m.

Livestreamed at:
spencersacredheart.com/
onlinemass

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Trinity United Church of Christ, Hartley
140 N. Fifth Ave.
712-728-2889

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Spencer Family Church, Spencer
Rev. Larry Neiderhiser
905 Fifth St. SW
712-262-7298
spencerfamilychurch.org

- Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.
- Sunday Kid’s Church, 10:30 a.m.
- Wednesday Life Group, 7 p.m.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Spencer
1701 W. 11th St.
712-262-6172

- Sunday Sacrament Meeting, 10 a.m.
- Sunday School; Primary and Youth Meetings, 11:10 a.m.
- Sunday Men’s Priesthood Meeting and Women’s Relief Society, 12:10 p.m.

CONGREGATIONAL

Grace Congregational Church, Greenville
Rev. Tonna Parsons

- Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.

EPISCOPAL

The Way Station, Spencer
Rev. Beth Preston
120 W. Fourth St.
712-580-5463
revbethpreston@gmail.com

- Sunday Service, 3 p.m.

St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, Spirit Lake
Rev. Carolyn Tuttle
23rd and Zenith
712-336-1117

- Sunday Mass/Eucharist, 10 a.m.

All Saints Episcopal Church, Storm Lake
Rev. Stacey Gerhart
121 W. Marina Road
712-202-6624

- Sunday Eucharist, 10 a.m.

EVANGELICAL FREE

Riverside Evangelical Free Church, Linn Grove
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

- Ignite: 6:30 p.m.
- Salt Youth: 7:15 p.m.

CrossWinds Church, Spencer
Campus Rev. Jordan Gowing
Rev. Dr. Kurt Trucksess
1900 Grand Ave, Suite A
712-584-3151
spencer@crosswinds.tv

- Sunday Worship, 8:30 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.

FIRST CHRISTIAN

First Christian Church, Spencer
(Disciples of Christ)
Pastor Interim
915 Fourth Ave. SW
712-262-2945

- Sunday Service, 9:30 a.m.
- In-House and Facebook Live
- Wednesday Kids Sunday School: 4:30 p.m.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

First Congregational Church, Peterson
712-295-7150

- Sunday Worship, 8:45 a.m.
- Sunday School, 10 a.m.

First Congregational Church, Spencer

Rev. Shazzy Britz
1212 First Ave. W.
712-262-4392

- Worship, 10:30 a.m.

Livestream on YouTube

LUTHERAN

Hope Lutheran Church, Everly
Rev. Dan Taylor
206 N. Washington St.
712-834-2767

- Sunday Worship 10 a.m.
- Sunday School and Adult Education, 9 a.m.

Services livestreamed on YouTube at “Hope Lutheran Church — Everly, IA”

Lost Island Lutheran Church, Graettinger
Rev. Peter Morlock

- Sunday Service, 8:45 a.m.
- Fellowship, 9:45 a.m.
- Sunday School, 10 a.m.

St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran, Hartley
Rev. Christopher Nitzel
60 N. Central Ave.
712-728-2711

- Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.
- Sunday School 10 a.m.
- Fellowship, 10:30 a.m.
- Confirmation, 11 a.m.
- Choir Practice, 11 a.m.

Harbor of Joy Lutheran Church, Milford
Rev. Tim Voth
1204 L Ave.
712-338-2355

- Sunday Fellowship,

- 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday School, 8:30 a.m.
- Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

First Lutheran Church, Milford

1525 Three Cross Road
Rev. Perry Aalgard, Senior Pastor
Rev. Brian Jack, Associate Pastor
712-338-4514
3cross.org

- Sunday Worship, 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.
- Sunday Fellowship, 9:30 a.m.
- Education/Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Royal
Rev. Dr. Mark F. Wilms
207 Church St.
712-933-2229

- Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

Zion Lutheran Church, Ruthven
Rev. Eric Patten

- Sunday Service, 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday Fellowship, 10:30 a.m.

First Lutheran Church, Sioux Rapids
Rev. Tonna Parsons

- Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

Bethany Lutheran Church-ELCA, Spencer
15 W. 14th St.
712-262-2327
bethluthspencer.com

- Worship, 9 a.m.

Christ the King Lutheran Church, Spencer

Rev. Michael McGinley
500 Fourth Ave. SW
712-262-2244

- Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.
- Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.
- Services on Facebook, 9 a.m.

Podcast” released Sundays

Faith Lutheran Church, Spencer
Rev. Ben Unseth
2912 Highway Blvd.
712-580-4316

- Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.
- Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.

Services are streamed on YouTube
flcspencer.org

First English Lutheran Church, Spencer
Rev. Paul Kaldahl
1311 E. 18th St.
712-262-5598
spencer-church.com

- Divine Worship, also broadcast on 1240 AM and 102.5 FM, 8 a.m.
- Fellowship, 9 a.m.
- Child care in the nursery, 9:15 a.m. to Noon

- Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
- Bible Class, 9:40 a.m.
- Divine Worship, 10:45 a.m.
- Communion on first and third Sundays.

Services & Bible Class
livestreamed via website

Riverview Terrace Chapel, Spencer

1501 St. Luke Drive
712-262-5932

- Sunday Worship, 10:45 a.m.

St. Luke Home and Services, Spencer

Rev. Perry DeGroot
1301 St. Luke Drive
712-262-5931

- St. Luke Lutheran Home Worship, 10 a.m.
- Riverview Terrace Worship, 10:45 a.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Spencer
Rev. Renae Behrends
900 11th Ave. W.
712-262-1287

- Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

NONDENOMINATIONAL

Faith Community Church, Milford
805 Okoboji Ave.
Rev. Jennifer Hesebeck
faithcommunitymilford.com
fcc@milfordcomm.net

- Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.

The New Light of the Lakes Friends Church, Okoboji

- Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday Service, 10:30 a.m.
- Group Bible Study, 5 p.m.

Living Word Outreach Ministries, Spencer

Rev. Barb Dean, Lead Pastor
Rev. Mark Feauto, Associate Pastor
905 10th Ave SE
712-262-9545
livingwordspencer.org

- Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.
- Livestream id also available on the website, Facebook and YouTube.

River’s Edge Church, Spencer

Rev. Tim B. Frasher
Pastor Joseph Leggett
701 E. 18th St.
712-580-3013

- Sunday School, 9 a.m.
- Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

Spirit Life Fellowship, Spirit Lake

Rev. Eric Holdeman
2504 Enterprise Ave.
712-336-0114

- Sunday School, 9 a.m.
- Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

Maple Grove Church of God, Sutherland
Rev. Michael Hyde

- Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday Fellowship, 10:30 a.m.
- Sunday School, 11 a.m.

PENTECOSTAL

Faith Pentecostal Church, Spencer
1700 11th Ave. SW
712-262-3368
fpcspencer.com

Rev. Brad Wallace
Rev. Dale Hodges

- Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.
- Wednesday Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.

REFORMED

Good News Community Church, Okoboji
Rev. Brandon Morrow
1010 Julia St.
712-332-5698

- Sunday Worship Services, 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
- Fellowship. 10:15 a.m.

Hope Church, Spencer
Pastor James Runcorn
919 Grand Ave.
712-262-3016

- Sunday Worship, 8:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m.
- Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

Seventh Day Adventist Church, Spencer
1910 10th Ave. E.
712-262-5766

- Saturday Sabbath School, 9:45 a.m.
- Saturday Worship, 11 a.m.

UNITED METHODIST

Calvary United Methodist Church, Arnolds Park
Rev. Chris St. Clair
209 N. Okoboji Grove Road
712-332-2447

- Saturday Worship, 6 p.m.
- Sunday Lakeshore Worship, 7:30 a.m.
- Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

Dickens United Methodist Church, Dickens
Rev. Donna Gray

- Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

United Methodist Church, Everly
Rev. Michael Eeten
301 N. Ochededan
712-834-2501

- Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

Community United Methodist Church, Gillett Grove
Rev. Donna Gray

- Sunday Worship, 10:15 a.m.

United Methodist Church, Hartley
361 Eighth Ave.
712-928-2649

- Sunday Church School/Confirmation Classes, 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday Worship Service, 10:30 a.m.

United Methodist Church, Langdon
Rev. Chris St. Clair

- Sunday in-house and Facebook Live Worship, 11 a.m.

First United Church, Sioux Rapids
Rev. Dr. Mike Currier
Rev. Karen Currier

- Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

Church of Christ, Spencer
Contact Jeff Cookinham
1304 St. Luke Drive
712-262-2294

- Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.
- Sunday Bible Study, 11:15 a.m.

First United Methodist Church, Peterson
Rev. Tyler Thomsen
103 E. Third St.

- Sunday Worship, 9:15 a.m.
- Sunday Fellowship, 10.15 a.m.
- Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.

First United Methodist Church, Royal
Rev. John Battern
408 Church St.
712-933-2489

- Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

United Methodist Church, Ruthven
Rev. Kathy Kluis

- Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

First United Church, Sioux Rapids

- Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

Grace United Methodist Church, Spencer
Rev. Michael Slininger
311 Second Ave. W.
712-262-5970

- Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

Zion United Methodist Church, Spencer
Rev. Michael Eeten

- Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday Worship, 10:45 a.m.

United Methodist Church, Terril
Rev. Terry Luiken
302 S. State St.
712-853-6549

- Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.

Trinity United Methodist Church, Webb
Rev. Kari A. Etherington

- Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.
- Fellowship, 10:30 a.m.

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