

FAITH TALKS

October 2023

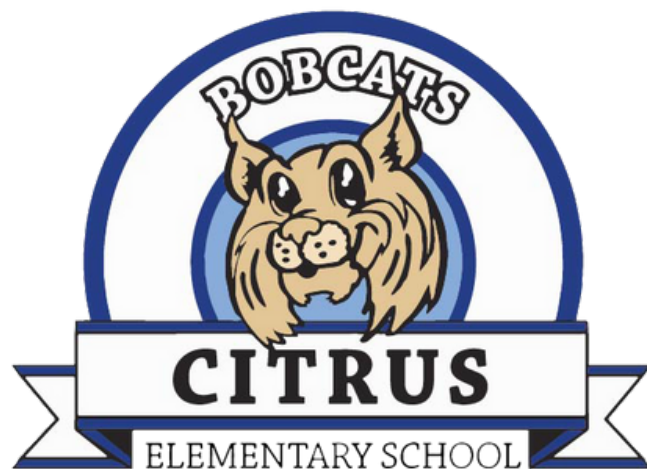


Worship Sundays at 9:30 a.m.



About the Cover

Each year, we hold *God's Work, Our Hands*, a Sunday when we worship God not in our building, but through service to our neighbors. This year our goal is to expand on the relationship we started with Citrus Elementary School when we gathered school supplies for their teachers. We'll be doing a joint *God's Work, Our Hands* Sunday with Bidwell Presbyterian on October 8th at Citrus Elementary. Read page 9 for more details.



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Pastor's Article

Pr. Ben Colahan

The last Sunday in October is Reformation Sunday, a day to remember when the German monk Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses about the waywardness of the church in his day and began what is known as the Protestant Reformation. Reformation Sunday is not only a day to celebrate the Lutheran tradition, it is a day to ask how we as the church are continually called to re-form ourselves in accordance with the good news of Jesus Christ.

I write this article one day after this year's Sierra Pacific Synod assembly. The Sierra Pacific Synod assembly is an annual gathering of Evangelical Lutheran congregations from northern California and Nevada. It is supposed to be a time when we gather to encourage and support one another, and to mutually set a vision for how we walk together as siblings in Christ. The past two years it was the exact opposite. Two years ago, the synod assembly had a close, contentious, and accusatory election of a new bishop. Last year, the synod assembly was defined by an effort to remove the bishop we had elected. An experience rife with suspicion and factionalism.

Praise God, this year's synod assembly was radically different! Thanks to our previous bishop no longer being in office, and an interim bishop who has spent a year tirelessly seeking to acknowledge the wounds of our synod and to give us the tools to begin to heal them, the mood in this year's assembly was one of hope and joyous reconnection. The main work of this year's assembly was to elect a new bishop. Bishops represent the unity of our church, they are called to inspire us to work together as the body of Christ. Our bishops have three main powers to do this: 1) discerning who can and cannot serve as a pastor in our synod, 2) guiding the use of our synod's finances and real estate, and 3) directing the synod to assume direct responsibility for church properties when individual congregations can no longer manage them.



In considering who could best carry out the ministry of bishop, I found myself in the difficult, if enviable, position of choosing between one of my closest friends, several colleagues whom I deeply respect, and one of my most important mentors from seminary. Ultimately, in what I trust was the working of the Holy Spirit, our assembly decisively elected The Rev. Jeff Johnson to be the next bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod. I don't know why each person voted the way that they did, but here are three reasons that I am excited for Bishop Jeff Johnson.

1) He is a reformer who loves Jesus. Jeff Johnson was originally denied ordination within our denomination over 30 years ago. This was because he is gay. As compared to so many other people who are hurt by the church and walk away from organized religion altogether, Jeff simply began to do the work of a pastor without the support of the denomination. He began serving in a night ministry to people living on the streets of San Francisco, and then was called by a Lutheran congregation that was willing to defy our denominational rules.

For two decades, even though he had been kicked out of it, Jeff sought to convince our denomination to live out the limitless grace of Jesus Christ that he knew we believed. His work finally came to fruition in 2009 when our denomination voted to change the rules to allow the ordination of LGBTQIA+ individuals. Being a bishop involves facing endlessly conflict and bureaucratic roadblocks. Bishop Jeff has shown he can do that and still not lose sight of Jesus.

2) He is a mentor. Seminarians spend two years working 8-10 hours a week in a congregation under the mentorship of a pastor. Jeff Johnson was my mentor. He taught me how to put together liturgies that are both creative and faithful to our tradition. He taught me how preach about Jesus in a way that matters to our society today. He taught me how to rely on the gifts, skills, and passions of the members of the congregation. He showed me grace when I was foolish. A lot of it. And through his example, I learned from my mistakes. Jeff wasn't just a mentor to me. He has been a mentor to dozens of seminarians over the years. There is a poetry in knowing that the man who supervised me when I was a seminarian will now supervise me as a bishop.

3) He is joyous. Jeff is man set free by Christ and on fire with the Holy Spirit. To everything that he does, Jeff brings humor, passion, and energy. It is fun to be with him. It is also exhausting to keep up with him! So many congregations are struggling, worried, and tired. In his conversations with those congregations, Bishop Jeff will be able to remind them of the joy and hope we have in Jesus.

This year's synod assembly, in both the way people treated each other, and in the person we raised up as bishop, was a reminder that for all church's faults, Christ's grace continually allows us to be made new. May we remember that truth for ourselves.



*Your Brother in Christ,
Pastor Ben Colahan*



Faith Family News

Dani Vogel, Director of Family Life

We are rolling ahead with fall here at Faith Lutheran Church, and our Sunday School kids are transitioning into multiple rooms. We give so much thanks for furniture assemblers, everyone who donated items for the new rooms, and everyone who helped us get the rooms ready for Rally Day!

We would like to invite you to work with our kids in Sunday School. This invite is extended to prospective teachers and aids/helpers. We hope that you will consider accepting this invitation, as our goal is twofold: to allow others to invest in our children's ministry, and to provide adequate coverage for each of our three rooms.

Teachers: Our goal with Sunday School is to get enough teachers on board that they are asked to teach only once per month, in order to avoid burnout and keep multiple people engaged over a long period. Training will be provided during late October. Folks are welcome to shadow current teachers at any time to get a feel for whether they'd like to officially teach.

Aids/Helpers: We are looking for 4 dedicated adults to assist in our nursery and provide supervision to our infants and pre-preschool aged toddlers. Additionally, we'd love to give our children time to engage in music together, so we are looking for 4 individuals to help sing and play instruments with the littles.





Youth Group has kicked off for this fall. We will be fundraising for the Youth Gathering, put on every three years by the ELCA-Churchwide offices. The trip will take place over July 15th-20th, 2024 in New Orleans and is open to youth ages 14-18. The theme of the gathering is "Created to Be," and it includes opportunities for service, fellowship, worship, experiential learning, and more. Each evening features different speakers, worship leaders, and opportunities to gather with youth from our synod, state, and from across the country. If you would like to donate, fundraise, or help us offset the costs for this trip, talk to Dani Vogel for more details. The youth will host a presentation on the trip following their return next summer.





Janine Rush

For as long as I can remember, music has been an integral part of my life. My mother, Doris Schlichting, was the reason my four siblings and I learned to appreciate music—from singing to playing an instrument, we all participated in one way or another. Mother taught each of us piano basics and music theory by using the red John Thompson's Modern Course for the Piano series (vintage 1937!), and when we "graduated" to a level beyond where her comfort level, we were sent to a "real" piano teacher. Only my younger sister and I made it to that level, and, after two years, I knew this wasn't the path for me. However, I still can visualize my mother and brother, Merl (now a retired Lutheran minister) sitting together on the piano bench and playing duets. The entire house was filled with musical genres from Souza marches to classical to big band and show tunes. It was phenomenal!

After trying my hand at clarinet in 8th grade and realizing it wasn't for me, I returned to the thing that gave me the most pleasure, and that was singing. Whether it was in Sunday School and church on Sunday mornings or in any number and variety of elementary and high school ensembles, all brought great joy. There was a point in my thirties where church took a backseat to everything else. Such not only took me away from the faith that had been instilled in me from little on, but also deprived me of that invaluable musical outlet. It was not until I moved from SoCal to Chico that I rediscovered both. Labor Day Weekend 1989 found me, for the first time, at Faith Lutheran Church. When Pastor Carl Wilfred inquired about first-time visitors, I timidly arose and shared my



Doris and Henry Schlichting began attending Faith Lutheran in 1992. After her husband passed away in '96, Doris assumed many responsibilities at FLC including being in charge of the kitchen and more. She remained a member until her passing on March 6, 2019 at age 99.



name. Unlike bestowing keepsake coffee mugs upon visitors as we do now, at that time, first-time guests received intricately assembled wooden crosses that were created by FLC member Lyle Miller from wood associated with the old sanctuary building. My cross is still hanging in our home for all to see.

Along with the rediscovery of my not forgotten but well-hidden faith came FLC's adult choir directed by Barb Janzen and CSUC's University Chorus directed by Sharon Paul. Talk about joyful and joyous singing! While church choir rekindled my joy for singing beautiful anthems of praise, the University Chorus opened up opportunities of performing unbelievable, breathtaking works, the most magical of which was Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana" and traveling on a concert tour to the Baltics, countries that, just prior to our arrival, had been recognized as independent states by the USSR.

Fast forward 34 years, and my love of music has not waned, and while University Chorus singing is no longer on the schedule, handbells, sanctuary choir and contemporary singers have more than adequately filled the void. Two weeks after Luke's arrival, the pandemic closed down everything. His dreams for what would be his first Lent and Easter as a gainfully employed organist and music director were put on hold. Not to be deterred, our never-say-never Luke discovered cases of handbells hiding in the music closet and by utilizing an abundance of precaution and care, a few of us gathered and learned how to play them. Very slowly and as health officials allowed, choral singing resumed, and a handful of well-spaced and face-masked singers once again began making a joyful noise.

By now, many of you have taken or have been approached by a member of the Equipping Ministry Team regarding the Spiritual Gifts Assessment meant to discover skills, unique to you, that could be used to facilitate and enhance Faith's mission not only to its members, but also to the greater Chico community. Not surprisingly, music was my highest score on the assessment. Perhaps you, too, have scored reasonably high in this category and would like to share talents that have been lying dormant for a number of years. Please gather up your courage and try something new like handbells or get those vocal cords revved up by joining the Sanctuary Choir or the Contemporary Singers. In particular, Sanctuary Choir needs lower voices, and my Sunday morning experiences tell me that Faith is blessed with a large number of tenors and basses! Please join us on Tuesdays at 5:00 for handbells, Thursdays at 5:00 for Sanctuary Choir and Thursdays at 6:30 for Contemporary Singers. We look forward to having you with us!

Janine Rush



Worship & Music

Luke Nicolay, Dir. Worship & Music



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Music Practice

Handbell Choir Practice - Tuesdays at 5pm

Choir Practice - Thursdays at 5pm

Contemporary Music Practice - Thursdays at 6:30pm

October 1st, Blessing of the Animals (St. Francis Day)

Come bring your animals, great and small, wise and wonderful, to be blessed in the tradition of St. Francis! Before service, animals will be blessed in the courtyard. If you feel your animal is able to remain calm in the sanctuary, you are encouraged to parade your animal in with the opening procession. You can then stay for the entire service with your animal, or take them outside as needed. Stuffed animals are welcome!



October 8th, God's Work Our Hands

Each year, we worship God not in our building, but through service to our neighbors. This year our goal is to expand on the relationship we started with Citrus Elementary School when we gathered school supplies for their teachers. We'll be doing a joint God's Work, Our Hands Sunday with Bidwell Presbyterian on October 8th at Citrus Elementary. There we will fix up their gardens and playground, paint, make food for the homebound, and celebrate the fellowship we have in Christ. We will have a very short worship service in our sanctuary at the regular time of 9:30am and then caravan the three minute drive to Citrus Elementary. Activities for every age and physical ability will be available. Afterwards, we'll head over to Bidwell Presbyterian for a taco lunch. Please sign up at the Welcome Table after church.

WORSHIP - 9:30 AM at Faith Lutheran Church

SERVICE - 10:00 AM at Citrus Elementary

TACO LUNCH, RSVP Needed - 12:00 PM at Bidwell Presbyterian



October 15th, Usher Training

We are offering an usher training course on Sunday, October 15th after worship. This is both a refresher course for existing ushers and a starter course for new ushers. If you are a current usher, would like to become an usher, or anything in-between, please come and join us. We will meet for about 30 minutes immediately following worship. During this training we will talk about ushers duties, responsibilities, and answer any questions you might have. In addition, we will also walk through how we pick up offering and how we dismiss for communion. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Luke at the office.

October 22nd, Fall Bake Sale & Boutique

Get ready! Tuesday Quilters are having their annual fall bake sale & boutique on October 22nd. You can make or bake some items to donate to our sale. Remember, we supply bus/paratransit tickets to members, and fund scholarships for graduating high-school Faith Lutheran seniors who are entering university, junior college, certificate programs, or trade programs. So if you have a craft or baked good you'd like to donate to support this ministry, you are invited to participate! (Also, feel free to join the Quilters each Tuesday morning at 9:30 a.m. to quilt and craft.) If you have any questions, please call the church office and ask for Char Miller.



October 29th, Reformation Potluck & New Member Installation

Make sure to wear red for Reformation Day on Sunday, October 29th! Bring your favorite dish to share with the congregation and drop it off in the kitchen before worship. After worship, we'll gather together for a potluck, coffee, desserts, and fellowship in the aptly-named fellowship hall. What a perfect day for a potluck, because we'll be welcoming our newest members of Faith Lutheran Church who have just finished taking the New Members class with Pr. Ben!

Small Groups

Dani Vogel

Just Older Youth, Seniors (JOYS) | every-other Monday from 10-11:30am, Room 7

This group meets twice a month to read, review and discuss "The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World" by Dali Lama, Desmond Tutu and, Douglas Carlton Abrams. We delight in welcoming all Older Youth to join our group! Please contact Dani at the office to learn more about the reading material or meeting times.

NEW

Tuesday Morning Bible Study | 2nd and 4th Tuesday from 9-10am in Room 7

Deepen your relationship with God and your siblings in Christ through studying the Gospel according to Luke. Our time together will begin with a check-in of highs and lows from the past two weeks. We will then work our way through *Luke* asking, "How does this point out the brokenness in my reality?" and "how does this reveal God's grace in my reality?" Our time together will end by praying for each other's needs. Childcare will be provided. To participate, please contact Pr. Ben.



Who, What, When, Where, Why: Women of the Bible Wednesdays from 4-5:30pm in Room 7

How much of what you think about women in the Bible comes from legend as compared to scripture? Find out in this weekly class what the Bible actually says about our spiritual foremothers. The class will run for 6 weeks, each week focusing on a different woman from the Old Testament and will return again in spring. Facilitated by Sherrill Heinz and Penny Melvin.

Men Toasting Martin | Every Sunday at 3pm at Secret Trail Brewery

Apply the sermon from each week to your own life. This group meets Sundays at 3pm at Secret Trail Brewery to share life and beverage.

NEW

Roses

For Whom We Give Thanks

The Sierra Pacific Synod's new bishop, Jeff Johnson.

Pat Snyder, Alyssa Manes, Alecia Grey, Pr. Ben, and Luke Nicolay for their attendance and leadership at this year's Synod Assembly.

Steve Hall for preaching on September 17th; Bill Kees for presiding.

Mark Kimmelshue, Leanne Chrisman, Michael N-D, Jill Bentler, Dani Vogel, and Jamie Holmes for attending a safety symposium to address security concerns at our church.

Max Gillespie and Neo Jia who were baptized in September.

Alex Jia, who has begun taking care of our garden, watering and tending the plants each week.

All those who manned a booth at Rally Day or who helped in any way. We would like to give a special thanks to Jenny James for making lots and lots of food from scratch and supplying a whole congregation with refreshments.

Suzie Ernest for prettying up the boards in the fellowship hall.

Ralph Godwin for assembling all of our new Sunday School furniture.

Candy Munson for leading Alphabet Soup's second paint and sip session.

***Bishop Jeff Johnson and
newly ordained Pr. Ben***



***Jenny James
at Rally Day***



***Alphabet Soup paints
the Sutter Buttes***



***Steve Hall
Preaching***





Financial Report

Mark Kimmelshue, Council Treasurer

Faith Lutheran Church General Fund Finances as of 8/31/23

	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Percent Of Budget
TOTAL INCOME	\$73,582.84	\$82,004.75	111.45%
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$91,249.33	\$88,238.33	96.70%
NET INCOME/(LOSS)	(\$17,666.49)	(\$6,233.58)	
Beginning General Fund Balance as of 7/1/2022		\$23,779.08	
Net Revenue through 8/30/23		(\$6,233.58)	
Ending General Fund Balance		<u>\$17,545.50</u>	

The figures shown above are for the first 2 months of the fiscal year.
As shown, we continue to do better than projections.

Thank You All for your continued support.

If you have questions, please feel free to
contact:

Mark Kimmelshue

530-520-8228

kimmelshue@armcorice.com



Council Minutes

Alyssa Manes, Council Secretary

Faith Lutheran Church Council Meeting from Council Meeting September 19, 2023
Chico, CA. Members Present: Pastor Ben Colahan, Jill Bentler, Mark Kimmelshue,
Alyssa Manes, Sharon Prindle, Martha McDermott, Elaine Lund, Leanne Chrisman.
Guest present: Jamie Holmes. Members Absent: Steve Hall, Pat Snyder, Sky Sample,
Mary Schweder.

1. **Welcome** – celebrations, appreciations, and prayer requests.
2. **Devotion and Prayer** led by Jill Bentler, reflections on making connections and celebrating differences.
3. **Reading of the Covenant**
4. **Ministry Reports – Stephen Ministry**, presented by Jamie Holmes.
 - a. Over 10k Stephen Ministry congregations in the U.S.
 - b. Faith Lutheran has had Stephen Ministry for 21 years.
 - c. 50 hours of training; training class usually offered every 2 years, ask for a 2 year commitment.
 - d. Each Stephen Minister is paired with one care receiver and they visit one hour a week (also clarified what is not involved – errands, transportation, household chores, etc.), don't give advice/not therapy, focus is on listening and showing up.
 - e. Confidential (very important), free.
 - f. Recipients need not be members of Faith Lutheran.
 - g. Currently, there are no men who are Stephen Ministers (but they would love men to join).
 - h. Video during communion and hosting coffee hour – upcoming, to let more people know about Stephen Ministries.
5. **Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Amend to remove the name of Meridith Woods as an absent council member, then the August Council retreat minutes were passed.
6. Reports
 - a. **Financial report** – Mark Kimmelshue
 - i. Reviewed actual and budget numbers for July/Aug.

- ii. Discussed specific items on the budget.
- iii. Discussed specific designated categories within the Memorial/Designated Gift Fund.
- v. Rwanda Fund – we no longer have a relationships with the church that we used to support; discussed finding an alternative Rwanda recipient to give the remaining funds to.

b. Plant Operations Update – Joel Zimbleman wrote an update, presented by Jill Bentler

- i. Nearly done with landscaping project.
- ii. Agreement that we should finish the landscaping and have actual money (not just pledges) before beginning the bathroom project.
- iii. Since we owe checks to the landscaping and don't have the money in the capital campaign fund right now (used for other capital projects), suggested to borrow from and repay to the Capital Reserve fund.

c. Pastor's report – Pastor Ben

- i. Grateful for spiritual grown in our congregation, 5 baptisms this summer, new Bible studies and book groups.

d. Synod Assembly report – Alyssa Manes

- i. Jeff Johnson was elected the bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod.
- ii. Budget and two resolutions were discussed and passed.
- iii. A youth and an adult council member were voted in.

e. Enloe Safety Conference – Leanne Chrisman

- i. Presented by police, sheriff, Department of Homeland Security, etc.
- ii. Suggests it would be worth making our own safety committee for Faith Lutheran; Leanne agreed to be a council point person to help develop a team.

f. Rally Day

- i. Overall positive feedback, want to do it again next year.
- ii. Maybe have more of it in the courtyard next year? Some locations didn't get much foot traffic.

7. Old business

a. God's Work, Our Hands, coming up October 8 at Citrus Elementary School.

b. Pastor Ben's Sabbatical:

- i. Still want Pastor Ben to have a sabbatical, even though grant was declined.
- ii. Generous donation has been made which will allow for the hiring of pastoral

coverage (6 weeks each for 2 pastors, Ben has two who are interested but not committed yet).

iii. Donation will also cover part of sabbatical (like hiring a guide to help climb Mt. Shasta).

iv. Might be able to also use continuing education money from budget to help pay for ancient Greek class in Greece (part of original sabbatical plan).

v. Might take up an offer to use a time share in Hawaii for a family get-away.

vi. Suggestion was made that other donations could be made that aren't necessarily monetary, perhaps donating airline miles.

c. New nursery and care attendant hiring – written report from Dani

i. Job description for nursery attendant is finalized; hope to interview beginning in October.

ii. Other updates – ELCA youth gathering registration beginning, current Sunday. School and nursery renovations are done and rooms are ready to be used.

iii. Motion was made to use funds from the 1st 3rd account to pay for the new nursery attendant – passed.

d. ADA Bathroom remodel

i. We will wait until landscaping is finished and more funds are available

8. New Business

a. Facility Use Agreement

i. Suggestion to clarify about AV.

ii. Motion was made to approve with amendment – passed.

b. Weekly Sunday council representative

i. One council member per week would be introduced by Dani during announcements.

ii. After service, council member would be available to answer and/or write down questions in a note book, and check church for locked doors before leaving.

c. Book study: Rich Church, Poor Church – resume and discuss chapter 4 next month

d. Office phone system – Michael is looking into upgrading, don't have exact cost/numbers yet

e. Cyber Security – we think the concerns have been addressed; will check in again next month

9. Announcements

- a. Next meeting October 17, 6:30pm, Faith Lutheran conference room
- b. Refreshments and devotion for October: Elaine
- c. Lenten opportunities for service (Equipping ministry) – they are beginning to plan ahead an event involving community service

10. Put it in the plate

- a. Other things not yet discussed: Parkinson's group wants to meet once a month but can't afford our rental cost. Motion was made to charge them the \$25/month discounted rate that we charge to Anon. groups – passed

11. Action items

- a. Reviewed

12. Closing prayer

13. Adjournment

*Hip-hip hooray! Enjoy
these Rally Day photos!*





Tips to Avoid Scams

Michael N-D, Office Manager

Halloween is my favorite holiday because I love scary stuff, and what better way to celebrate spooky season than to talk about something that scares us: scams...which are admittedly less fun than ghosts and goblins! Scams take the form of phone calls, text messages, emails, and postal mail. Churches in particular fall victim to scams due to their demographics and the trustworthy nature of parishioners. This is why we get so many scams from people claiming to be Pastor Ben; we all know and trust the real Ben, and if the real Ben asked for help, we would want to help. But as scary and disheartening as scams are, they can be spotted and prevented. If you receive mail, an email, a text, or a call from someone asking for money, look for the following red flags:

- 🚩 You are being asked to send gift cards. No legitimate payment is ever made through the exchange of gift cards. Pr. Ben will NEVER ask you for gift cards.
- 🚩 You are being asked to provide banking, financial, social security, or personal info. This includes contact information like your address or phone number. NEVER give personal information out online/through email!
- 🚩 "Pastor Ben," "Michael," "Luke," "Dani," etc. are contacting you through text or email asking for money. We will never do this. If you receive such correspondence, call us immediately and let us know. And if you ever get an email asking for a favor from one of us that seems suspicious, call us at the office and confirm.
- 🚩 Mail is marked URGENT, PAST DUE, etc. This is a very common scare tactic to pressure you into paying something immediately.
- 🚩 One of your service/utility companies is contacting you out of the blue telling you to pay or your gas, electric, water, cable, phone, etc. will be shut off.

This is not how companies operate, ever. And scammers frequently operate under the guise of companies who probably service you. Common ones include AT&T, PG&E, Comcast, even the IRS.

When somebody tells me I have to do something *right now*, I internally panic. When I panic, I feel like I can't organize my thoughts and won't be able to get to the bottom of things. If you ever get a phone call from somebody being pushy or giving you an ultimatum (pay, or else...) just remember to **C-C-C**:



Collect Yourself. If the person on the other end is telling you to pay something right now, say, "One moment please," and set the phone down. Breathe. Collect your thoughts.



Get a **Callback Number**. Once you've collected yourself, tell them you can't speak right now and ask them to provide a callback number. If they will not provide a number, hang up. If they do provide a number, write it down, thank them and hang up.



Confirm. DO NOT CALL THE NUMBER BACK. Instead, call the official number for that person or service (e.g. their 1-800 number). Let them know you've received a call about a bill and ask them to confirm its legitimacy.

And when it comes to handling suspected scams, keep two things in mind: **#1. You don't have to handle it alone.** Tell a family member or friend what's going on and solve the problem together. **#2. REAL people are understanding.** If you do receive a message that turns out to be real, that real person will understand that you were just being cautious by checking directly with them first.

If you ever feel like you may be the victim of a scam, please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you can use the help. Happy October, friends!

Michael, Office Guy

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A COMMUNITY REFLECTING GOD'S LOVE WITH A PLACE AT THE TABLE FOR EVERYONE

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