



Our Savior Lutheran Church

December 2019

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FROM PASTOR ANNE

To God's Holy People at Our Savior Lutheran Church,

As I write this article, Black Friday is still four days away; Cyber Monday is a week away; and we will celebrate Jesus' birth in exactly one month. Meanwhile, we wait.

The season of Advent, a season of watching and waiting, invites us to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Lord. We remember Jesus' first Advent – his coming to us as a baby in Bethlehem. We also look forward to Jesus' second Advent – his promised return – also called his *Parousia*.

During this time of anticipation, many activities vie for our attention. We may be called to shop and spend, to bake and entertain, to write Christmas cards and visit, to attend parties and fundraisers, to eat and drink and generally make merry. Some of these activities may feed our spirits and promote joy. Others may, (truth be told), simply exhaust us. And many of them distract us from our spiritual devotion to Jesus – the true reason for the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

Our lives may feel out of 'balance' during the holidays, but even so, we can regain our 'center' by quietly contemplating exactly why Jesus came. I offer this suggestion to you to practice during the busyness of December. Set aside time each day to read Luke, chapter 2, verses 1-20. You may read it quickly or slowly, silently or out loud, alone or in a group. Enter into the story. Imagine yourself as a bystander and take in the scene – what sights and sounds and smells surround you? Then hear these words from verses 10-11: "Do not be afraid, for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord."

Finally, meditate on the words "to you." Receive them as good news not just for "all the people," but for you. To *you* is born this day.... Jesus was born *for you*. Dwell in this good news with great joy.

Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!

Pastor Anne Palma +

ADVENT ACTIVITIES

During this sacred season as we prepare again to welcome the Christ child into our midst and as we wait for his second coming, plan to participate in the blessing of Christian community with special activities offered through Our Savior Lutheran Church.

- **December 1:** 4 PM. **Faith and Justice in Film** series. Bring a blanket and a friend and come watch a heartwarming film about a person transformed by compassion for his fellow humans.
- **December 4:** 7 PM. **Advent midweek worship.** Sing the song of the virgin Mary, using the beautiful setting of Holden Evening Prayer. Let this 30-minute devotion quiet your heart and remind you of the true meaning of Christmas.
- **December 7:** 10 AM **Cookie Decorating.** Let your creative juices flow as you make nonpareil masterpieces in frosting and sprinkles
- **December 9:** 5:30 PM. Serve your neighbor at **St. Edward's soup kitchen.** Members of Our Savior Lutheran Church actually serve at St. Ed's every Monday, but if you have never participated before, consider this your invitation to devote one hour of loving service to our neighbors in need.
- **December 11:** 5 PM: **Christmas caroling and chili supper.** Gather at the church to begin a progressive trek visiting some of our homebound members to share a few songs, then return to the church for a chili and cornbread supper and holiday merriment!
- **December 18:** 7 PM. **Advent midweek worship** with Holden Evening Prayer.
- **December 22:** 9:30 AM. Our **youth and children** lead the congregation in **special worship!**
- **December 24:** 5:30 PM. **Christmas Eve worship with Holy Communion.** Join your voice with the angels and the shepherds in praising the newborn king Jesus, and light a candle to honor the Light of the World!
- **December 29:** 9:30 AM. **Service of Lessons and Carols.** Gather for morning worship to sing again some of your favorite Christmas hymns, and let the spirit of the season linger in your heart.

FAITH AND JUSTICE IN FILM SERIES CONTINUES DECEMBER 1

What is it like to be born again? Ask a man named Ebenezer. If our original sin is our tendency to always put ourselves first, ahead of everyone else, and even ahead of God, then salvation can be understood as a new life oriented toward God and neighbor. Join us Sunday December 1 at 4 PM in preparing for Christ's coming by watching a traditional Christmas film that tells the story of a misanthropic miser who is born again to a spirit of love and generosity, fulfilling God's call to justice for the poor and needy. [Pastor's note: God is never once mentioned in this film, just as God is never once mentioned in the Bible's book of Esther. Often the most powerful messages of grace are hidden in great literature and art. CG Jung's tombstone is inscribed with the epitaph *Vocatus atque non vocatus, Deus aderit.* Bidden or not bidden, God is present. Hot buttered popcorn and good fellowship await you!



GIVING HONORS GOD

The Advent mid-week offering will bless our neighbors in the Magic Valley as we forward our gifts to the **South Central Community Action Partnership (SCCAP)**. South Central Community Action Partnership, we help community members who are in need in a variety of ways. In Twin Falls and surrounding Idaho communities, they provide assistance with rent, utilities, food and heating bills. They even provide assistance for those struggling to get out of debt. For more information on SCCAP's good work, visit <http://www.sccap-id.org/family-development/>

ELCA Good Gifts again offers you the opportunity to honor a loved one at Christmas by purchasing a barnyard animal that can provide economic stability and opportunity to a desperately poor person somewhere far away. You can buy baby chicks for \$10, a piglet for \$30, a goat for \$50, or a cow for \$500! A Good Gifts catalogue is available in the fellowship area, and you may also visit <https://goodgifts.elca.org>

APPLY FOR A GRANT TO SUPPORT OSLC MINISTRIES

Do you have an idea for ministry that could really take off with just a few hundred dollars of seed money?

Consider applying for a ministry grant. Here are two ways you can do this:

Advent Lutheran Church in Spokane, one of our sister congregations in the synod, has an endowment fund. They will make their annual distribution from this endowment fund in early 2020, and they invite congregations to apply for grants (ranging from \$250 to \$1000). In 2019, Advent Lutheran gave a grant to OSLC to help us pay to ship Bibles to Zambia. What might we dream for this year? Please contact Pastor Anne if you would like to apply for a grant from Advent Lutheran Church. The deadline for application is December 31.

Thrivent Financial for Christians, Inc., offers action grants for ministry to Thrivent members. If you are a member of Thrivent, you may apply for one or two \$250 grants each year. The process is easy! OSLC has received Thrivent Action Grants in the past to support our Hearts 'N 'Hands quilting ministry; to provide food for accompany our Estate Planning for the Heart end-of-life planning workshop; to purchase items to sell at our Potato Bar and Auction; and to fund a CVLI license to support our Faith and Justice in Film program. For examples of how other congregations have used Thrivent Action Grants, you may visit <https://thrivent.cotribute.co/community/thrivent-action-teams/detail>

CHURCH TRIVIA

1. How many wise men (or magi or kings) visited Jesus after he was born in Bethlehem?
2. What Old-Testament name is related to the name Jesus?
3. The first movement Handel's *Messiah* shares sacred words from the Bible related to the Christmas story. We enjoy hearing "For Unto Us a Child is Born" and "Glory to God in the Highest" – but the oratorio was quite controversial when it was first performed. Why?

A New Year's Resolution?

The Bible is God's gift to us. God is revealed to us in the words of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) and the Christian Scriptures (New Testament).

As a new year approaches, consider making a resolution to read the entire Bible, with other members of the community to encourage you.

There are 1189 chapters in the Bible and 366 days in the leap year 2020.

Beginning January 1, a suggested list of readings will be published in the bulletin each week to keep you on track!

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

A NOTE OF THANKS

Your congregation council and stewardship team thank you for your faithful and generous response to this year's pledge drive. Seventy-one pledge cards were distributed, and 49 were returned. Of the 49 pledge cards returned, 40 included an estimate of financial giving, and 9 included a promise to give but did not provide an estimate of giving. Council members will be following up with all members to assure that 100% of OSLC members have been contacted.

Your faithful responses provide invaluable aid to the church's leadership in creating a budget for our next year of ministry together!

COMPANION SYNOD NEWS: THE ULANGA KILOMBERO DIOCESE IN TANZANIA

It is time for an update from Tumaini Lutheran School on the Dining/Assembly Hall project. It is very exciting to announce that the entire building is now roofed! What an accomplishment – all because of your faithful contributions to our partners of the Ulanga Kilombero Diocese. Asante Sana! Thank you very much.

We have been a part of this project for a very long time now! The dream of the students eating inside was first expressed in 2008! That may be a long time ago, but before you gasp at the slow progress, please understand we are working in a different culture. It isn't an easy project. Our partners live in a world where homes usually take years to complete. Rains, bad roads, and difficult construction with very few tools extend the timeline. The UKD never ceases to rejoice with each little step forward as the dining hall takes shape – first walls, then half a roof and a useable dining hall, and now an entire roof! The project still needs the concrete floor and plaster on the walls, but those will come in good time. Right now, it is time to rejoice in the wonderful project on a building that will help the students and the entire diocese.

Thank you is such an inadequate word to express the deep gratitude our partners express. You have made a wonderful difference in the life of students for years to come.

Asante Sana! Thank you!



YEAR A LECTIONARY BEGINS THIS MONTH: (What's a lectionary?)

Happy New Year! Although the calendar doesn't turn over to 2020 for another month yet, the church year begins with the season of Advent, as we prepare for the coming and the second coming of Christ.

With a new church year comes a new set of Bible verses to guide our worship. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, along with many Christian denominations around the world, follows a pattern of readings called the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), which was released publicly in 1994. The RCL provides four Bible readings for each Sunday.

Usually the first reading is from the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament).

The next reading is always from the Psalms.

The so-called second reading (even though it's really the third one!) comes from the New Testament.

The final reading is always from one of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke or John.

The RCL follows a three-year cycle, called year A, year B, and year C.

Year A, which begins on December 1, 2019, focuses on the Gospel of Matthew. Year B focuses on Mark, Year C focuses on Luke, and John's Gospel shows up here and there in each of the three years.

The benefit of a lectionary is that worshipers will hear much of the Bible over the course of three years; a drawback, according to some, is that worshipers may not hear *enough* of the Bible over these three years. This is why it's also important to read the Bible yourself, and to participate in Bible study with other people!

The RCL is the most widely used lectionary in the world. When we hear the Bible texts read on Sunday we can rejoice that we are hearing the same Scripture on the same day as many millions of our fellow believers. Thanks be to God for the gift of Holy Scripture!

CHURCH TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. The Bible doesn't say how many wise men (or magi or kings) visited Jesus after he was born in Bethlehem. Because three gifts are mentioned – gold, frankincense, and myrrh – some people have falsely concluded that there must have been precisely three wise men (or magi or kings).
2. The Old Testament name Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, Yehoshuah in Hebrew, pronounced yay-hoe-SHOE-uh) is a form of the name Jesus (יֵשׁוּעַ, Yeshua in Hebrew, pronounced yay-SHOE-uh).
3. Both the popular press and some religious leaders in the 1740's were scandalized by the notion that sacred music, such as Handel's Messiah, would be performed in a secular theater hall. My, how times have changed!

Thank You Section:

From Valley House:

“Dear Friends, Thank you so much for your in-kind donation of quilts valued in the amount of \$1,500. We appreciated you so much! This is truly a blessing for you to help us in this way!!

Thank you and God bless, Sharon Breshears, Executive Director.

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From Neighbors in Need Committee, The Episcopal Church of the Ascension:

Many thanks for your support of Neighbors in Need during your Holiday Show! The terrific location in the main hallway for the NIN Raffle immediately engages the community who attend the Show. This year’s Raffle raised over \$1700, with a nice mix of winners—artisans, church members and many people in the community. The 200+ staple food items collected at the door and the \$228 from the door receipts will go a long way in keeping the shelves of the food pantry full.

Once again you have been a huge help in our mission to help less fortunate families in our community. Thank you all for your years of support of Neighbors in Need at Ascension Church.

God’s blessings, Cindy Jardine—Chair, Neighbors in Need Committee

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From Matt & Emmy Vanic:

“With Gratitude, Thank you so very much for bringing Emmy and I into your Church family.

- Matt and Emmy

Council Highlights

Your council met on November 24. Highlights of the meeting included:

- ◆ A devotion which invited members to consider “If I could change one thing about this church...”
- ◆ Making a plan for council members to complete the stewardship drive by contacting members whose cards have not yet been received.
- ◆ Celebration of the good work accomplished this year including implementation of a Child Safe Policy and development of a Personnel Manual, as well as making good progress on the Legal Checklist for Congregations.
- ◆ Fixing dates for a special council meeting to review the 2020 budget (January 5), and confirming the dates of the next regular council meeting (January 15) and the annual congregational meeting (January 26).
- ◆ Consideration of the possible resumption of congregational hosting for Christmas in the Nighttime Sky in 2020.
- ◆ Giving thanks for the generosity of members, and making plans to invite Beth Adams, regional gift planner for the ELCA Foundation, to visit in 2020.

All council meetings are open to members of the congregation.

Remember In Prayer.....

Donna Erickson, Noel Erickson, Steven Erickson, Jack Harding, Tamra Helms, Dorothy Kerbs, Pattie Mattlin, Marge Mayer, Connie Miller, Joan Stokesberry, Julie Allen, Marilyn Backstrom, Cathy and Raymond Dey, Wayne Hawkins, The Family of Sandra Soran, Brian Conrad, Henry Ortmann, Paul Ortmann’s father and Luther Sipe, Gary Sipe’s father.



Secretary's Space:

A little reminder regarding the sign up sheets for Saints in Service. Each two month sign up sheet (unless one month is full) is on a back table or hanging up on the back wall for you to choose the week you may want to serve. This helps the secretary plan for the next month and get it into the newsletter. Thank you for all you do.

If you are interested in serving on the Altar Guild, or being an Usher, Greeter, Assisting Minister, bringing refreshments for Coffee and Fellowship Hour or help the Offering Deacons, let the appropriate chairperson know. They will be more than happy to let you know the details of the job. Or you can call the church office and the secretary will pass on your name.

*Reports for the Annual Report and the congregation's Annual Meeting are due in to Matthew Anderson (OSL Church Council Secretary) or the church office by **January 7, 2020***

SCRIPTURE TEXTS FOR DECEMBER

	Dec. 1	Dec. 8	Dec. 15	Dec. 22	Dec. 24	Dec. 29
First Reading	Isaiah 2:1-5	Isaiah 11:1-10	Isaiah 35:1-10	Isaiah 7:10-16	Isaiah 9:2-7	Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm	Psalm 122	Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19	Psalm 146: 5-10	Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19	Psalm 96	Psalm 148
Second Reading	Romans 13:11-14	Romans 15: 4-13	James 5:7-10	Romans 1:1-7	Titus 2:11-14	Hebrews 2: 10-18
Gospel	Matthew 24:36-44	Matthew 3:1-12	Matthew 11: 2-11	Matthew 1: 18-25	Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]	Matthew 2: 13-23
Liturgical Color	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	White	White

DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1</p> <p>9:30 am Worship 10:30 Coffee & Fellowship 10:45 am Confirmation 11:00 am Bible Study 4:00 pm Faith & Justice in Film</p>	<p>2</p> <p>5:30 pm OSL Serves @ St. Ed's</p>	<p>3</p> <p>10:30 am Calendar Planning</p>	<p>4</p> <p>6:30 am Men's Breakfast @ Shari's 9:15 am Bible Study 7:00 pm Advent Worship—Holden Evening Prayer</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10:30 am Special Worship Committee Meeting 1:30 pm Clergy Text Study</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>10:00 am Youth & Adult Cookie Decorating Party</p>
<p>8</p> <p>9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee Hour & Fellowship 11:00 am Bible Study</p>	<p>9</p> <p>5:30 pm OSL Youth & Adults Serves @ St. Ed's</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>6:30 am Men's Breakfast @ Shari's 9:15 am Bible Study' 5:00 pm Caroling & Chili Supper</p>	<p>12</p> <p>10:30 am Worship Committee Meeting 1:30 pm Clergy Text Study</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee Hour & Fellowship 10:45 am Confirmation 11:00 am Bible Study</p>	<p>16</p> <p>5:30 pm OSL Serves at St. Ed's</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>6:30 am Men's Breakfast @ Shari's 9:15 am Bible Study 7:00 pm Advent Worship—Holden Evening Prayer</p>	<p>19</p> <p>1:30 Clergy Text Study</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>TBD: Rehearsal for Youth led Worship</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>DEADLINE!</p> </div>
<p>22</p> <p>9:30 am Worship-Youth Lead 10:30 am Coffee Hour & Fellowship 10:45 Faith Formation 11:00 am Bible Study</p>	<p>23</p> <p>5:30 pm OSL Serves @ St. Ed's</p>	<p>24</p> <p>5:30 pm Christmas Eve Worship Christmas Eve</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Christmas Day Office Closed</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>26</p> <p>No Clergy Text</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee & Fellowship</p> <p><i>No Fifth Sunday Potluck</i></p>	<p>30</p> <p>5:30 pm OSL Serves @ St. Ed's</p>	<p>31</p> <p>New Year's Eve</p>	<div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 10px;">  </div>			



Worship with Holy Communion is Celebrated

Every Sunday

At

9:30 AM

Our Savior Lutheran Church

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