



**Bethany Lutheran Outlook**  
**December 2020—January 2021**

Serving God, Community, and Individuals





## PASTOR'S REFLECTIONS

As I write this in late November, we're a week or so into a three-week period of tighter COVID restrictions, restrictions that have caused us to suspend in-person worship for now. It's disappointing but not really a surprise as the one thing the "experts" agreed on from the beginning is that there would be a second coronavirus wave late in the year. The hope is that the restrictions now in place will slow the spread and that at the end of the three weeks (December 8), things return to where they were. But...we don't know if that will be the case.

Because of that, all I can give you is the tentative plan for worship during Advent and Christmas.

### ADVENT

- The first two Sundays of Advent, November 29<sup>th</sup> and December 6<sup>th</sup> will only be online.
- In addition to online, the third and fourth Sundays of Advent will include in person worship at 10:30.
- On Thursday December 10<sup>th</sup> and Thursday December 17<sup>th</sup> there will be in person Evening Prayer services at 6:30.
- There will not be any kind of children's program or Advent choir cantata this year.

### CHRISTMAS

- TV6 and FoxUP will broadcast a Northern Great Lakes Synod Christmas service at the following times:
- Christmas Eve 4pm on TV6 and 7pm on FoxUP
- Christmas Day 9am on FoxUP and 12noon on TV6

For many of you, this will be your best worship option and I strongly encourage everyone to make it a part of your Christmas. Thanks are due to Rick Rhoades and the folks at TV6 for their willingness to help with this and to make it available to everyone.

- **We will have an in-person Christmas Eve service at 4pm.** The familiar carols are a big part of Christmas Eve but the restrictions on singing will still apply so it won't be the same. With recorded music we will do our best to make it meaningful. If you plan to attend you are encouraged to contact the church office. With social distancing we'll only be able to accommodate about 50 people. For anyone with health concerns of your own or within your family, the televised service will be a better choice.
- There will not be a Christmas Day service.
- The Sundays after Christmas and into the season of Epiphany will include both an online and in person option.
- There will not be an Epiphany service on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Note that all the in-person services are contingent on restrictions being eased and a return to at least 20% of seating capacity being allowed. Without that, the only options will be the online services as well as the televised service on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.**

It will definitely be a different kind of Christmas for all of us this year. Maybe though, being forced out of our usual routines, there will be an opportunity to reflect more on the real truth of Christmas which is Immanuel, God with us, the truth that God loved us enough to become one of us!

The celebration of Christmas will be different this year, but the truth of Christmas remains the same.

Merry Christmas!

Pastor Geier



## DAILY LECTIONARY



*The foundational premise of this set of daily readings is their relationship to the Sunday lectionary. The readings are chosen so that the days leading up to Sunday (Thursday through Saturday) prepare for the Sunday readings. The days flowing out from Sunday (Monday through Wednesday) reflect upon the Sunday readings.*

“The Bible is the cradle wherein Christ is laid.”  
—Martin Luther

### December 2020

1 Psalm 79	Micah 4:6-13	Revelation 18:1-10
2 Psalm 79	Micah 5:1-5a	Luke 21:34-38
3 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	Hosea 6:1-6	1 Thessalonians 1:2-10
4 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	Jeremiah 1:4-10	Acts 11:19-26
5 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	Ezekiel 36:24-28	Mark 11:27-33

### 6 Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11   Psalm 85:1-22, 8-13   2 Peter 3:8-15a   Mark 1:1-8

7 Psalm 27	Isaiah 26:7-15	Acts 2:37-42
8 Psalm 27	Isaiah 4:2-6	Acts 11:1-18
9 Psalm 27	Malachi 2:10 — 3:1	Luke 1:5-17
10 Psalm 126	Habakkuk 2:1-5	Philippians 3:7-11
11 Psalm 126	Habakkuk 3:2-6	Philippians 3:12-16
12 Psalm 126	Habakkuk 3:13-19	Matthew 21:28-32



### 13 Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11   Psalm 126   1 Thessalonians 5:16-24   John 1:6-8, 19-28

14 Psalm 125	1 Kings 18:1-18	Ephesians 6:10-17
15 Psalm 125	2 Kings 2:9-22	Acts 3:17 — 4:4
16 Psalm 125	Malachi 3:16 — 4:6	Mark 9:9-13
17 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26	2 Samuel 6:1-11	Hebrews 1:1-4

18 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26  
19 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

2 Samuel 6:12-29  
Judges 13:2-24

Hebrews 1:5-14  
John 7:40-52

**20 Fourth Sunday of Advent**

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 Romans 16:25-27 Luke 1:26-38

21 Luke 1:6b-55

1 Samuel 1:1-18

Hebrews 9:1-14

22 Psalm 96

Zephaniah 3:8-13

Romans 10:5-13

23 Psalm 96

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Romans 13:11-14

**24 Nativity of Our Lord - Christmas Eve**

Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-20



**25 Nativity of Our Lord - Christmas Day**

Isaiah 52:7-10 Psalm 98 Hebrews 1:1-12 John 1:1-14

26 Psalm 148

Jeremiah 26:1-9, 12-15

Acts 6:8-15 ; 7:51-60

**27 First Sunday of Christmas**

Isaiah 61:10 — 62:3 Psalm 148 Galatians 4:4-7 Luke 2:22-40

28 Psalm 148

Jeremiah 31:15-17

Matthew 2:13-18

29 Psalm 148

Isaiah 49:5-15

Matthew 12:46-50

30 Psalm 148

Proverbs 9:1-12

2 Peter 3:8-13

31 Psalm 148

1 Kings 3:5-14

John 8:12-19

**January 2021**

**1 Name of Jesus**

Numbers 6:22-27 Psalm 8 Galatians 4:4-7 Luke 2:15-21

2 Psalm 148

Proverbs 1:1-7

James 3:13-18

**3 Second Sunday of Christmas**

Jeremiah 31:7-14 Psalm 147:12-20 Ephesians 1:3-14 John 1:10-18

4 Psalm 110

Proverbs 3:1-12

James 4:11-17

5 Psalm 110

Proverbs 22:1-9

Luke 6:27-31

## **6 Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord**

Isaiah 60:1-6 Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12

7 Psalm 29

1 Samuel 3:1-21

Acts 9:10-19a

8 Psalm 29

1 Samuel 16:1-13

1 Timothy 4:11-16

9 Psalm 29

1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12

Luke 5:1-11



## **10 Baptism of Our Lord**

Genesis 1:1-5 Psalm 29 Acs 19:1-7 Mark 1:4-11

11 Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36

Genesis 17:1-13

Romans 4:1-12

12 Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36

Exodus 30:22-38

Acts 22:2-16

13 Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36

Isaiah 41:14-20

John 1:29-34

14 Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

Judges 2:6-15

2 Corinthians 10:1-11

15 Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

Judges 2:16-23

Acts 13:16-25

16 Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

1 Samuel 2:21-25

Matthew 15:1-13

## **17 Second Sunday after Epiphany**

1 Samuel 3:1-20 Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 John 1:43-51

18 Psalm 86

1 Samuel 9:27 — 10:8

2 Corinthians 6:14 — 7:1

### **Readings for the Confession of Peter**

Acts 4:8-13 Psalm 18:1-6, 16-19 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 Matthew 16:13-19

19 Psalm 86

1 Samuel 15:10-31

Acts 5:1-11

20 Psalm 86

Genesis 16:1-14

Luke 18:15-17

21 Psalm 62:5-12

Jeremiah 19:1-15

Revelation 18:11-20

22 Psalm 62:5-12

Jeremiah 20:7-13

2 Peter 3:1-7

23 Psalm 62:5-12

Jeremiah 20:14-18

Luke 10:13-16

## **24 Third Sunday after Epiphany**

Jonah 3:1-5, 10 Psalm 62:5-12 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 Mark 1:14-20

25 Psalm 46

Genesis 12:1-9

1 Corinthians 7:17-24

### **Readings for the Conversion of St. Paul**

Acts 9:1-22 Psalm 67 Galatians 1:11-24 Luke 21:10-19

26 Psalm 46  
27 Psalm 46  
28 Psalm 111  
29 Psalm 111  
30 Psalm 111

Genesis 45:25 — 46:7  
Proverbs 8:1-21  
Deuteronomy 3:23-29  
Deuteronomy 12:28-32  
Deuteronomy 13:1-5

Acts 5:33-42  
Mark 3:13-19a  
Romans 9:6-18  
Revelation 2:12-17  
Matthew 8:28 — 9:1

### **31 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

Deuteronomy 18:15-20   Psalm 111   1 Corinthians 8:1-13   Mark 1:21-28

**“That the Creator himself comes to us and becomes our ransom  
— this is the reason for our rejoicing.**

—Martin Luther

### **Life Is An Advent Season**

Life is a constant Advent season: we are continually waiting to become, to discover, to complete, to fulfill. Hope, struggle, fear, expectation and fulfillment are all part of our Advent experience.

The world is not as just, not as loving, not as whole as we know it can and should be. But the coming of Christ and his presence among us—as one of us—give us reason to live in hope: that light will shatter the darkness, that we can be liberated from our fears and prejudices, that we are never alone or abandoned.

May this Advent season be a time for bringing hope, transformation and fulfillment into the Advent of our lives.

HOPE

# Enjoy the Poetry of Hymns

## Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come  
Let earth receive her King  
Let every heart prepare Him room  
And Heaven and nature sing  
And Heaven and nature sing  
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing



Joy to the World, the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy  
Repeat the sounding joy  
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy

No more let sin and sorrow grow  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make his blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness  
And wonders of His love  
And wonders of His love  
And wonders, wonders, of His love

— Isaac Watts

Fellowship Hall Floor original 1962 Will patch asbestos floor and put down carpet squares which are replaceable if ruined.

Sanctuary original 1970 Carpet

Church Pews and Choir Chairs 1970 reupholster both

## Joy to the World!: The Story Behind the Hymn

*Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth; Break forth in song,  
rejoice, and sing praises. Psalm 98:4*

Until Isaac Watts came along, most of the singing in British churches was from the Psalms of David. The church – especially the Church of Scotland – had labored over the Psalms with great effort and scholarship, translating them into poems with rhyme and rhythm suitable for singing. As a young man in Southampton, Isaac had become dissatisfied with the quality of singing, and he keenly felt the limitations of being able to only sing these Psalms. So he “invented” the English hymn.

He did not, however, neglect the Psalms. In 1719, he published a unique hymnal – one in which he had translated, interpreted, and paraphrased the Old Testament Psalms through the eyes of New Testament faith. He called it simply, *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament*. Taking various Psalms, he studied them from the perspective of Jesus and the New Testament, and then formed them into verses for singing.

“I have rather expressed myself as I may suppose David would have done if he lived in the days of Christianity,” Watts explained, “and by this means, perhaps, I have sometimes hit upon the true intent of the Spirit of God in those verses farther and clearer than David himself could ever discover.”

Watt’s archenemy, Thomas Bradbury, was greatly critical of Watts’ songs, which he called *whims* instead of *hymns*. He accused Watts of thinking he was King David. Watts replied in a letter, “You tell me that I rival it with David, whether he or I be the sweet psalmist of Israel. I abhor the thought; while yet, at the same time, I am fully persuaded that the Jewish psalm book was never designed to be the only Psalter for the Christian church.”

“Joy to the World!” is Isaac Watts’ interpretation of Psalm 98, which says: “Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth” (verse 4). As he read Psalm 98, Isaac pondered the real reason for shouting joyfully to the Lord – the Messiah has come to redeem us. The result, despite the now-forgotten criticisms of men like Bradbury, has been a timeless carol that has brightened our Christmases for nearly three hundred years.

—Robert J. Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul*





*"Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces,  
I would still plant my apple tree."*

~Attributed to Martin Luther

Dear Northern Great Lakes Synod,

Have you ever seen a new tree planted that has two supports added? I'm thinking of a young tree that stands between two poles to which are attached a tether, each pulling the tree in the opposite direction. Not only do these supports help guard against windstorms, but they ensure that the young tree grows up straight and true between the opposing tensions of being pulled in opposite directions.

So too, I imagine, do the opposing pulls of the Democrat and Republican parties do the same for our country. Blue and red need each other; right and left, conservative and liberal. We need the dichotomy, the tension of opposing forces, the disagreement, so that we can grow, straight and true somewhere in the middle.

I can only imagine what the tree feels as it is being pulled in two opposite directions, but I would guess it is something like what our country is feeling now. When considering the election results, some feel relief and even elation, others feel disappointment and even anger. Never before have so many voted. Never before has the country offered such clear and disturbing statistics for how many are pulling in opposing directions. We are polarized, standing in support on opposite sides of the tree, pulling with all we've got, and yet, if one side has too much influence, the tree will bend. There is value in having each side pull, so that our country can grow straight and true somewhere in the middle.

What then does this mean for ministry?

It is curious to me how 100% of our congregation members can agree that Jesus Christ is Lord, but we do not agree on what that means, how that impacts our vote, and how we embody that conviction in our ministry efforts. But then again, the church is not known for its level of agreement *except* for the conviction that Jesus Christ is Lord

When political convictions run deep, when we feel the tension of being pulled in opposing directions, when we are grieved by the lack of agreement and the swirl of emotions and the resentment towards those who are pulling the opposing tether, I urge you to extend some grace.

Forgive others for not voting as you did. Forgive others for not championing the same convictions that you hold dear. And turn your efforts, your attention, your energy to push and pull the growth toward and into the work of Christ.

We are not going to agree as a country, and not even as congregation, but we can agree that we are invited to participate in the breaking in of the kingdom of God. We are called to bear the light of Christ. And our efforts in ministry are strengthened when we work together towards some goal, some embodiment of the presence of Christ in the world. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Comfort the afflicted. There is blessing and life-giving growth as we concentrate on the nuts and bolts of our faith.

Yes, there is still the pandemic which is no small challenge. But consider that it is an additional tether, another added tension. Don't let that get in the way of you and your congregation growing straight and true and keeping the thing, the thing. Jesus Christ is Lord. And more than that, Jesus Christ is your Lord, your Lord and Savior. The rest is just...tension, albeit challenging, grieving, thick, and concerning tension, but through which we grow straight and true.

In the midst of this tension, God is at work. As we consider our own convictions with humility, and the convictions of our friends and neighbors with grace and forgiveness, we will find our way forward, as a country and as congregations called to serve the work of Christ.



And whether or not you believe the world is going to pieces, I am glad to remind you that the Northern Great Lakes Synod has indeed already planted an apple tree. In November of 2018, I was invited to participate in the retreat for newly elected leaders sponsored by the Lutheran World Federation. In observance of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, I planted an apple tree on behalf of our synod in Wittenberg, Germany. We are Tree #468, and if you are ever in Wittenberg, please feel free to find our tree and take a picture.



Because even if the world goes to pieces, Jesus Christ is Lord and you and I are invited, encouraged, indeed, we are called and equipped to be his presence in the world. And that, my dear friends, colleagues, and congregational members, is no small thing.

Yours in Christ,  
Bishop Katherine Finegan



**“For last year's words belong to last year's language  
and next year's words await another voice.”**

—T.S. Eliot

## Ordinary Holiness

Wonder  
is at the root  
of praise.  
Wonder  
is at the heart  
of Christmas,  
and not for one day only  
but for each waking day.  
At the heart  
of Christ's incarnation  
is the truth  
that God makes extraordinary things  
happen  
in ordinary places,  
that heaven and earth  
    holy and earthly  
    God and human  
are intertwined  
The wonder of Christmas  
desires to creep  
into every living moment,  
so that we behold  
the glory of God.  
The wonder of this holy day  
points to the wonder in all days;



the wonder of the Bethlehem stable  
teaches us to find  
the wonder in all places;  
the wonder of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus  
leads to the wonder  
in the faces of ordinary people.  
(O Mary,  
Life  
Is  
Holy...)

—Susan Palo Cherwien, *From Glory to Glory*

## *Happy Birthday!*

- 2 Kay Skytta
- 2 Lindsay Waters
- 2 Amber Sodergren
- 3 Irene Portale
- 3 Jordan Anderson
- 4 Donald Liljequist
- 6 Emily Vallier
- 8 Ida Anderson
- 8 Cheryl Sleeman
- 9 Karen Mattson
- 9 Ian Bivins
- 10 Sheree Mariani
- 11 Lynn Healey
- 11 Daniel Kaukola
- 11 Todd Pohlman
- 11 Meredith Seppanen
- 11 Justin Young
- 12 Richard Meyer
- 12 Delanie Rhoades
- 13 James Chapman
- 13 Jerald Hager
- 15 Mindy Harrington
- 17 Holly Bjorne
- 19 Ann Carne
- 20 Kayla Kaukola
- 20 Knut Strom
- 21 Cheryl Frederickson
- 24 Tonya Perry
- 24 Megan Hough
- 25 Carol Waters
- 26 Travis Wooden
- 28 Lisa Ombrello



## *Happy Anniversary!*

Roy & LaVerne Koski  
12/1/1984 36 years

Jerry & Karen Plaisier  
12/1/1990 30 years

Joe & Addy Lemire  
12/3/2011 9 years

Kimberlee & Bryan Smith  
12/4/2010 10 years

Ray & Sandra Sundquist  
12/12/1975 45 years

James & Jane Anderson  
12/21/1968 52 years

Larry & Ann Alexander  
12/27/1986 34 years



## *Happy Birthday!*

- 1 Samuel Stahlmann
- 1 Betty Geier
- 4 Maurice Hansen
- 5 Ruby Kaukola
- 5 Erick Pohlman
- 7 Jacob Clark
- 7 Daniel Sleeman
- 8 Colleen Sundblad
- 11 Debbie Bussone
- 11 Marilyn Pontti
- 12 Robert Nadeau
- 15 Elizabeth Aho
- 16 Hillary Bjorne
- 17 Claire Urcavich
- 18 Jeffrey Harma
- 19 Matthew Skewis
- 20 Rachael Chartré
- 21 Mindy McComb
- 21 Jennie Dault
- 23 Tori Connors
- 24 Brian Ulrickson
- 27 Christina Mariani
- 29 Bernadette Frustaglio
- 31 Sabrina Bordeaux
- 31 Norman Lind



## *Happy Anniversary!*

Roger & Ruth Solberg  
1/2/1954      67 years





*John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness,  
proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4).*

In the wilderness and in the river, on the margins of society, John the Baptizer offered faithful witness to the ongoing work of God. People went beyond the borders of their familiar lives to hear the words of a prophet, to seek renewed faith, to begin new journeys and to be transformed through baptism.

What does it mean to offer faithful witness today? As we ponder this question together as national church leaders, we experience shared challenges, new insights, mutual encouragement, deeper faith and common callings. Our common witness is bound not by ecclesiastical or national borders but by our common baptism. As leaders of four churches on a shared continent, and with shared complicity in the legacies of the Doctrine of Discovery, the enslavement of Black people and the mistreatment of all people of color, we hear the prophets and the Spirit speaking clearly when we listen together.

This Advent, we feel called to name the truth that the sin of racism and white supremacy is ongoing. People continue to be subjected to and oppressed by these systemic evils, even within our own churches and the ecumenical movement.

For the sake of our common mission and witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, we share a commitment to dismantling racism and combating white supremacy, and we actively seek opportunities to engage more deeply. We bind ourselves together in this work, even as we are bound together by a common history of complicity with evil. We look forward to meeting with members from the Black, Indigenous and other communities of color within and beyond our churches to help us develop specific goals and actions. We know this will not be easy, but it is essential. It happens only by moving beyond the borders of the familiar, encountering the truth, trusting God's grace and being transformed. We have much to learn from and with each other.

The birth of Christ to dwell among us holds the hope for our own rebirth. Our faith is in God's ongoing work that establishes God's kin-dom of equity, equality, justice and liberty for all. Our calling is to prepare the way of the Lord by embracing truth, promoting healing and acting in love.

As you make your Advent preparation this year, what do you need most? Forgiveness, repentance, healing, renewal of baptismal vocation, time in the wilderness or a word from a prophet? We are confident that God will grant us all that we need to be transformed for faithful witness.

Let us pray

God of all, form us into churches beyond borders.  
When we feel stuck, amplify the prophet's word.  
When we are distracted by privilege, put us in the wilderness.  
When we need a new way, dunk us in the river.  
When we are wrong, move us down the path of truth-telling and repentance.  
When we need healing, sustain us with your love and hope.  
When we cannot see beyond ourselves, move us beyond arbitrary borders.  
Bless us with the Holy Spirit, that the good news may be for us a beginning.  
Amen.

Archbishop and Primate Linda Nicholls  
Anglican Church of Canada

Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry  
The Episcopal Church

National Bishop Susan C. Johnson  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



## Saints Commemorated in December/January 2020/21

It's hard to put myself in the Christmas mood with all the current Covid madness, so I'd like to harken back to the "we are surrounded" theme of early November to bring your attention to some of the capital "S" saints whose days occur over the next two months (jumping over Christmas altogether!!)



Of course you are all familiar with St. Nicholas (6 December)...he who has morphed into Santa Claus; but his message of gift-giving and helping those in need is still at the heart of Christmas. Completely unrelated to his "Santa Claus" image, Nicholas as Bishop of Myra attended the great Council of Nicaea and was a vigorous defender of the Trinity against the Arian heresy. He contended with fellow bishops and with the Emperor Constantine himself!! Truly one to be admired as an example of courage and charity.

Then there is St Lucy/Santa Lucia (13 Dec), beloved of Scandinavians...again for helping those in need. The story is that she brought much-needed food in a time of serious winter famine to the people of Scandinavia and an inspiring light in the depths of winter darkness. See more about her in the display of her image and related books in the narthex during the second week of Advent. Especially at this time of year and at this difficult time she continues to be a witness to the need to feed the hungry.



Perhaps not so well known is St. Stephen (26 Dec) who is known from scripture as one of the first Deacons of the early church and its first recorded martyr. Hear his last words as his life slipped away, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." -- Acts 7:59 -- a true example of a life lived for the Lord!



St. John, the Evangelist rounds out December on the 27<sup>th</sup>. He is credited with the gospel bearing his name and the Book of Revelation. Tradition also records him as caring for Mary, the mother of Our Lord, for the rest of her life, suffering a number of persecutions and imprisonments, but still living to an old age, with Revelations being perhaps his last great work.





Here's a special saint for Finland as we move into the new year: St. Henry/Henrik/Heikki, Bishop of Uppsala, Sweden, missionary to Finland, where he died a martyr on 19 January 1156. He is the patron of Finland and of the national cathedral in Helsinki. You may have heard of **Heikinpaiva**, which is the celebration of St. Henry's Day in Hancock (and Finland) commemorating his death (originally) and acting as a symbolic mid-winter festival, and way to escape encroaching cabin fever!! (Do we really think of January 19<sup>th</sup> as "Midwinter"??)



Finally we have a commemoration of some women of the early church on 27 January: Lydia, Dorcas/Tabitha, and Phoebe are celebrated as witnesses to the faith. Though the words describing the lives and faith of these women are few and from ancient times, they continue to guide us as co-workers in the work of the Church, illustrations of compassion and in using one's gifts and role models for women in business, social ministries and church leadership. Lydia, Acts 16, was a sponsor of Paul and the Philippian church. Dorcas, Acts 9, was so admired for her work in Joppa that when she died suddenly, Peter was called upon and raised her from the dead! Phoebe, Romans 16, was described by Paul as a servant of the church, possibly a deaconess. Perhaps she was the original deaconess, and the patron of the deaconess movement reborn in the German Lutheran church in the mid-nineteenth century and still active today.

There....enough from the Library....guess who was an avid reference librarian?? Think about these sainted people as you move through the winter months and through the continued trials of the pandemic. Theirs were not easy lives! They were truly exceptional folks and worthy of emulation as part of the great cloud of witnesses and guides on our own roads to salvation.

**A Safe and Blessed Christmas to you all and a New Year filled with love, hope, and joy!**



## Opportunities for Giving

**Giving Tree** - Bring in gifts to put under the Giving Tree. They will be delivered to the Salvation Army for families in need.

**Pajama Palooza** - Addy Lemire is collecting pajamas for kids of needy families. The most needed sizes are 3T to 8/10. Other sizes are needed also. A collection box has been placed in the narthex.



**The November/December Noisy Offering will be given to the Salvation Army Red Kettle. The January/February Noisy Offering will be given to the Warming Center.**

**Thanks for your generosity.**

## Food for our Neighbors



Reverse Advent Calendar  
Each day add an item to a box.  
On Christmas Eve donate the contents to a Food Bank.



Dec. 1 - box of cereal  
Dec. 2 - peanut butter  
Dec. 3 - stuffing mix  
Dec. 4 - boxed potatoes  
Dec. 5 - macaroni and cheese  
Dec. 6 - canned fruit  
Dec. 7 - canned tomatoes  
Dec. 8 - canned tuna  
Dec. 9 - dessert mix  
Dec. 10 - jar of applesauce  
Dec. 11 - canned sweet potatoes  
Dec. 12 - cranberry sauce

Dec. 13 - canned beans  
Dec. 14 - box of crackers  
Dec. 15 - package of rice  
Dec. 16 - package of oatmeal  
Dec. 17 - package of pasta  
Dec. 18 - spaghetti sauce  
Dec. 19 - chicken noodle soup  
Dec. 20 - tomato soup  
Dec. 21 - can of corn  
Dec. 22 - can of mixed vegetables  
Dec. 23 - can of carrots  
Dec. 24 - can of green beans

## Why Advent?

Waiting can be hard, and not just for children. But I do love Advent: this four-week time when the Christian church prepares for Christmas.



Maybe I like Advent so much because it involves active waiting, not thumb-twiddling. It is a gift the church offers the world, to be active (which isn't the same as busy) in ways that open our hearts — and the hearts we touch — to the true meaning of Christmas.

Mother Teresa said, “At this Christmas when Christ comes, will he find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God’s own love and concern.”

When I take time during Advent to remember in prayer and with gifts of money and time those who have less food than I do, those who are lonely, those without a home; when I pause to share love with a child or an elder, or gratitude for a healthcare worker, pastor or teacher; when I wait for justice to replace oppression but, while I wait, find ways to work for that result ... the Spirit’s warmth fills my waiting heart. I am ready to welcome Jesus.

—Heidi Mann

### **Bethany’s Christmas tree adorned with Swedish ornaments**



# Puzzle!

Use the code to complete Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus, our Savior.



CODE:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q

10 23 13      17 14      6 18 21 21

11 14      12 10 21 21 14 13

6 24 23 13 14 1 15 4 21

12 24 4 23 2 14 21 24 1 ,

22 18 16 17 3 8      16 24 13 ,

14 5 14 1 21 10 2 3 18 23 16

15 10 3 17 14 1 ,      25 1 18 23 12 14

24 15      25 14 10 12 14 .

I S A I A H 9 : 6 , N I V

## A Prayer for New Beginnings

In his book *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth* (Fortress Press), Walter Brueggemann writes in an Epiphany poem:

... this is a time to be born.  
So we turn to you, God of our life  
God of all our years,  
God of our beginning....  
We dare pray that you will do for us  
and among us and through us  
what is needful for our newness.  
Give us the power to be receptive,  
to take the newness you give ....  
There is a time to be born, and it is now.  
We sense the pangs and groans of your newness.  
Come here now in the name of Jesus. Amen.



How fitting that the Epiphany season and the new year coincide! Epiphany reveals a new King, the beginning of his ministry, his new disciples, his first healings, his “new teaching — with authority” (Mark 1:27). We, too, experience newness, now and year-round. But newness can be tough. So we trust that God, who “[makes] all things new” while banishing “mourning and crying and pain” (Revelation 21:4-5), walks with us in this new year — and always.



## Council Highlights—November 2020



- Received thank you notes from Keep Kids Warm, Salvation Army, and the New Free Store
- Received updates on change in the Outlook mailing policy, Paycheck Protection Program, and changes in church constitution and bylaws.
- New covid restrictions will prevent in-person worship for at least 3 weeks. Weight Watchers will not be meeting in our building. Bible Study will be canceled. Confirmation will meet for one additional Sunday. Quilters can meet if they are comfortable doing so.
- **Christmas Eve** – NGLS is recording and broadcasting a Christmas Eve service in partnership with TV 6.
- Bethany will have a Christmas Eve in-person service at 4:00pm.
- There will be mid-week Advent services on Dec. 10 and 17 at 630, assuming group limit restrictions are returned to current capacity.
- Annual meeting will be held January 31, 2021.
- Second set of Sunday School packets have been sent. Additional Advent materials will be mailed later.
- Confirmation will be held for the final time in 2020 on Sunday, Nov. 22.
- Discussed budget for 2021.
- Blood Drive—November 25, 3-6pm
- **Next meeting:** Tuesday, 15 Dec 20 at 6:30 p.m. (third Tuesday)



**Annual Meeting**  
**January 31**

**If you have been unable to turn in your pledge card, please consider mailing it or dropping it off at the church office. When we resume in-person worship, you could also put it in the offering plate. Thank you.**

**Answer to Puzzle:** And he will be called wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6 NIV

## Thank You from the Solbergs



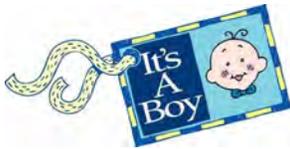
We would like to thank our bethany friends who sent us sympathy cards and messages and two beautiful prayer shawls for the recent death of our dear grandson Justin Nault. We appreciate your kind words and thoughtfulness. This has been so difficult for our family. Keep us in your prayers.

Roger and



Ruthie Solberg

**Advent Coin Folders**—This year the Advent coin folders will not be mailed. They are, however, available on the library cabinet where copies of *The Lutheran* and devotional magazines are also available.



**Congratulations! John Waters is a Grandpa.**

John's son Matt is now the proud father of a baby boy Silas Jack.



## The New Free Store

The New Free Store is an interfaith non-profit group supporting people who express a need for free clothing, linens, hygiene and cleaning supplies. Anyone in need is welcome. Free things are offered as “in God’s economy there is always enough.” The Free Store is located at 1420 East M28 next to Lakestate Industries. It is open Wednesdays Noon-4PM (1st, 2nd 3rd weeks of month) and the fourth Monday of the month 6:00-8:00 pm. Facebook@thenewfreestore.

There is a collection box in our church entry. Donation requests rotate on a monthly basis.

**December: Laundry Soap, Dish Soap, Bars of Soap**  
**January: Toothbrushes for Kids and Adults, Toothpaste, Denture Cleaner, Floss**

Worship  Options



In person worship at Bethany begins at 10:30 am each Sunday. (will resume December 13 if restrictions are lifted)

A worship service is also available on line each Sunday.



**Bethany’s Website**  
[www.bethanyishpeming.org](http://www.bethanyishpeming.org)

To view the latest edition of the Outlook in color, please visit Bethany’s website.



## Keep In Your Prayers

Remember our home-bound and nursing home residents:

**Valente:** Roy Koski

**Jacobetti:** Carol Waters

**Teal Lake Senior Living Community:** Jean Johns, Annette Larson,  
Ray Leverton (recuperating)

**Mill Creek:** Marilyn Pontti, Betty Geier



- Amanda Bivins
- Loreth Johnson
- Ruth and Roger Solberg who mourn the loss of their grandson
- Pat and Jaak Liivoja who mourn the loss of Pat's sister
- Jerry Plaisier
- Pauli Kniivila
- Paul Kish
- Garrett Frustaglio, D.J. Bivins, & Blake Forbes who are serving in the military
- Those who have contracted COVID-19
- Those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19
- Those who are on the front lines caring for the sick
- Those sheltering in place
- Roy & LaVerne Koski
- Marilyn Pontti
- Sandee Sundquist
- Cindy Warner
- Loreth Johnson
- Emilie Brown
- Mark, Kathleen, and Karmen Slown
- Ray Chartre
- Roger & Ruth Solberg
- Judy Hogan
- Mark
- Zander Atkins
- Jim Bjorne
- Angie Kempainen
- Those in the military that they may remain safe



Please **PRAY** for those  
affected by **COVID-19**

If you would like to make a submission, contact **Linda Dahl** by phone, e-mail, or by dropping a note in the newsletter mailbox at church.

**485-1625**  
**linkarzig@gmail.com**

Bethany Lutheran Church  
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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Parish Planning Council:  
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Asst. Exec. Director, Mark Slown  
Christian Education, Amanda Bivins  
Finance, David Leverton  
Personnel, Jim Bjerne  
Property, Robert Bruhnke  
Social Ministry, Jill Carter  
Stewardship, Ann Sundblad  
Worship & Music, Keenan Tunnell



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Northern Great Lakes Synod

