



St. Luke Lutheran Church
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Connect, Grow and Serve.

Parish Times December 2019



The Pastor's Perspective...

Greetings O Favored Ones!

In looking at old photos recently, I was remembering the stage when our children lost the baby teeth we waited for when they were, well, babies. Losing a tooth is a milestone in itself, but I hadn't realized how impacting it was until I watched my children's mouths change. There was some great wisdom and insight passed onto me when I observed what happened when that very first tooth fell out. For one of our boys, Nestor, the loss was huge. He remarked, "Everything is different. I look different. I don't want other people to see me. It makes me sad." Losing something that is a part of you forces you to change and it alters you forever.

Loss goes beyond teeth and affects us in a multitude of ways. The Advent and Christmas season is one of the hardest and most challenging times of the year, especially for those who have experienced a loss. It is a season that brings shorter and darker days. Winter and cold set in and for those who have experienced a loss, there can be deep grief. Loss can mean many things; the death of a loved one, going through a divorce or relationship break up, moving to a new place or grieving the loss of good friends who have moved away, a change or loss in jobs, failing health or illness, or even being bullied at school or work. Studies show that depression and suicide rates hit an "all-time high" during the month of December. The reality is, the holidays bring about memories of people we lost or experiences we had.

Like my son's lost tooth, there is an empty space where something used to be. It's hard to move beyond that empty space and often our memories bring us back to what once was. During the holiday season, the loss and grief we experience, regardless of how long it's been, comes back to us, stinging us like it did when it first happened.

When Nestor lost that first tooth, his mouth had to make way for the bigger, adult tooth coming in. The truth is, we can't stop the loss, no matter what it is because it simply happens, even when we don't want it to. We won't look or feel the same because we are different.

Yet, something new comes forth from underneath. Change is always uncomfortable and hurts, but something different emerges from within. We become different people and God continues to mold and shape us. Our experience of loss and grief provides us with an opportunity to see things with different lenses.

There have been many times in Old Testament readings we have heard about God's loss. God's story has reminded us that God grieves the loss of the people he created when they go their own way, when they run away from him, when they worship other gods, when they complain, and when they simply forget his great love for them. God spends a lot of time trying to figure out how to get them back. Advent and Christmas is God at work preparing the world for a change, for something different, something new. The old world can no longer continue as it has been.

So, God surprises us with something that is Good News and scares the living daylights out of Mary: a baby. ☺ God breaks into our world with a child, his child so that we might remember we are not alone, and he loves us to the very core of who we are. God's story is full of loss and grief and promise. God promises to be with us and through the birth of Immanuel, births the meaning of "God with us".

The Good News this Advent and Christmas season is that God's story connects to our own. When we experience loss, God finds us and when we grieve, God comforts us. When we are in our darkest hour, God brings us light so that we can see. God graces us with a community that surrounds us and fills the space with love and support as something new emerges. God does this through Jesus' love, grace and presence.

As we all know, the Christ Child walked a life-long journey which involved loss, grief, and pain, but out of that came new life, Good News and hope for us. As the new tooth emerged from my oldest son's gums, a new smile came too. I look at those photos and remember that all along life's way, the loss of teeth is just the first loss of many. As he grows in years, he is becoming the child of God that God has created him to be. I think we all are, wouldn't you agree?

May God bless you this Advent and Christmas season as we prepare our hearts and minds to receive the Christ Child. May he surprise us with wonder, light, hope, comfort, peace and most of all, love.

In Christ, Pastor Emily



A big thank you to our December Bun Run volunteers: Ken McGrew, Doug and Jo Klein, Larry and Junella Litzkow, Julie Ellingson.



Usher Notes

Many thanks to our ushers for December: Jill Burchill, Doug Nelson, David Nedrelow, MaryJo Brandt, Carol Vigdal, Pam Ballis, Katy Eggert.



LOAVES AND FISHES

108 hungry men, women and children were fed dinner on October 28th at the Loaves and Fishes program at St. Matthew's Church. Workers from St. Luke were Nestor Rova-Hegener, Larry Litzkow, Verdel Humburg, Joyce Bluel and Pastor Emily Rova-Hegener.



Our next Makerspace is December 14th at St. Luke with a new time: **11 am until 3 pm!** It is a knit-a-thon. Even if you haven't tried knitting before, there will be people on hand to help you out! If you are an experienced knitter and would like to help out, please let Becca Ruiz know. We will be looking for knitting needles and yarn to help our endeavors! We are also looking for volunteers for the Makerspace whether it's in promoting the events, helping the day of or finding Featured Makers; please email Becca at bunkamade@gmail.com.



December Birthdays

- 4 Olivia Peterson
Stacy Alcenot
- 5 Helen Bye
Douglas Nelson
- 7 Alina Alcenot
Raul Ruiz
- 18 Holly Schultz
- 23 Deborah Vigdal
- 30 Roger Diestler
- 31 Al Fredrickson



December Anniversaries

- 17 - Doug & Karen Wasko: 1960



December Acolytes

- 1 Alek Landenberger
- 15 Tatum Herrmann
- 24 Alek & Victor Landenberger



Ladies Night Out will go on hiatus for November, December and January. We will resume Ladies Night Out again in February. Watch the January newsletter for details on where we will be dining in February.

December WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Readers:

- 1 Joyce Bluel
- 8 Laurie Herrmann
- 15 Kay Reich
- 22 Sue McNeill
- 24 Wendy Bjorklund
- 29 Barb Jensen

Communion:

- 1 Joyce Bluel
- 15 Kay Reich



Dec The Halls!

All are invited on Sunday, Dec. 1 after worship to decorate our church home for the Advent and Christmas seasons. After decorating, we will all enjoy a potluck lunch together. Donations of Poinsettias to adorn our altar are greatly appreciated. Join us for this cherished, time-honored St. Luke tradition...it is sure to put you in a festive mood!

Glory to the newborn king!



SAVE THE DATE!

Come one, come all to our ever-popular ALL MEMBER WINTER CHURCH RETREAT at Camp Onomia, Feb. 7-9. Young and old, parents or singles, all are welcome! Want to get away from your busy life, and just relax and have fun? Or do you want to have some great family time with your kids? There is something of everyone! To RSVP, please sign up on the kiosk asap.



Christmas Baskets

As is the St. Luke tradition, we will be collecting donations for Christmas Baskets, which will be distributed to members of our community. Donations will be accepted through Sunday, December 15. If you would like to make a monetary contribution to filling these baskets, please indicate "Christmas Basket" on the memo line of your check. Thank you!

**O Come
Let Us Adore Him!**
*Join us as we celebrate
Advent and Christmas!*

Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 8 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Luke

Sunday School Christmas Program

Sunday, December 15 at 10:00 a.m. at St. Luke
(As part of our Sunday service)

Advent Quiet

Tuesday, December 17 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Mark

Christmas Eve Worship

Tuesday, December 24 at 6:05 p.m. at St. Luke

Christmas Day Worship

Wednesday, December 25 at 9:00 a.m. at St. Luke

St. Luke/St. Mark Joint Worship

Sunday, December 29 at 9:30 a.m. at St. Mark



**Important Dates
and Worship Times to remember:**

~December 8th at 7pm at St. Luke:

Advent Candlelight Service

O Come, All Ye Faithful! Join us for our time-honored service in which we celebrate the Advent season with many beloved hymns. Please bring 2 dozen cookies to share, if possible, for the fellowship time following the service.

~December 15th at 10 am at St. Luke:

Shared Children's Christmas Service

(Worship led by the families and children of St. Luke and St. Mark congregations.)

* Please note that WORSHIP is at 10 a.m. this day and both congregations are invited to celebrate the Advent and Christmas story with our youth and families.

* Please note that ALL youth and families involved with the service need to be at St. Luke at 8:45 a.m. to run through their parts.

~Tuesday, December 17th at 7:00 p.m. at St. Mark:

Shared Service of Advent Quiet

This is for both congregations and the wider community. This service will be a time for anyone who would like to gather together for a few quiet and reflective moments in the midst of the crazy Advent season. We will center around scripture readings, music, silence, and focusing our hope in the Christ Child. Please come and bring a friend!

~December 29th at 9:30am at St. Mark:

Cookies of the Past, Hopes for our Future

This will be an informal worship service. You are invited to come in your pajamas and bring your leftover Christmas cookies! Come and enjoy stories of our past, eat cookies and celebrate the birth of the Christ Child among us! Everyone is welcome and invited!



*Musings from
the Music Director*

As Advent begins, I'm looking forward to the music we will share this season. A season of peace and light that will be represented in what we sing and hear throughout the month. To reflect on this special season, we will use the Holden Evening Service for our liturgy. The other music in church will repeat the idea of light as our days grow shorter and darkness lingers longer. I also look forward to all the special times we can gather together, whether it's the Advent Candlelighting Service on December 8th, or the family led service on the 15th, or our shared service at St. Mark to end the month. A big thank you to all musicians and the work they put in for this busy month! I hope you will be able to use our worship on Sunday to pause and have a breath, to reflect and remember that light is coming.

Mitten and Hat Tree During the Advent season there will be a Christmas tree placed by the pulpit where we will be collecting hats, mittens, and scarves. The congregation will watch the tree become colorfully decorated each Sunday as these items are placed on the tree, and we ask that members bring forth their donations to hang on the tree during the offering. Once the tree is decorated, we will then donate all the hats, mittens and scarves to Naomi Family Residence, a local homeless shelter for women and children. Thank you for participating in this worthy cause!

