



Saint Luke Lutheran Church

1807 Field Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55116 | 651-698-9443 | saintlukechurch.org

December 2024 Newsletter



The Pastor's Perspective

Pr. Bristol Reading

Preparing for the coming of Christ

The season of Advent begins this year on Sunday, December 1. Advent calls us to prepare for the coming of Christ. Of course, I am talking of the coming of Christ as the little baby Jesus, born and laid in a manger, which we celebrate at Christmas. But the scope of Advent is more far-reaching than that. We are called also to prepare for the coming of Christ *today*, right now, in our time.

We're well accustomed to preparing for Jesus the baby born in Bethlehem. We set up our nativity scenes. We sing carols about angels and donkeys. We hear the story from Luke about how there was "no room at the inn," so familiar many of us could recite it from memory. But preparing for Christ to come in *our* time is a little bit trickier. What might that look like in practice? Let's take some words from our scripture texts for this coming Advent season to guide us.

SERVE OTHERS

May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all. – 1 Thessalonians 3:12 (read on Advent 1)

The crowds asked John the Baptist, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." – Luke 3:10-11 (read on Advent 3)

Caring for those in need is a wonderful way to observe Advent.

December Volunteers

**Thanks for
your participation!**

IN PERSON USHERS

First and Second Sundays:

Doug Nelson, Larry Raasch

Third and Fourth Sundays:

Mary Jo Brandt, Carol Vigdal

ONLINE USHERS

1st Sunday: David Tews

2nd Sunday: Sue McNeill

3rd Sunday: Raulie Ruiz

4th Sunday: David Nedrelov

SUNDAY AM READERS

1 Cristina Dredla

8 Wendy Bjorklund

15 Dan Vigdal

22 Kay Reich

29 Christine Olson

SUNDAY AM COMM. ASSTS.

1 Cristina Dredla

8 Wendy Bjorklund

15 Doug Klein

22 Kay Reich

29 Christine Olson

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE READERS, 12/8, 6PM

Wendy Bjorklund, Cristina Dredla, Jo Klein, Christine Olson, Kay Reich, Dan Vigdal

Participating in gift drives can be an easy and direct way to serve your neighbor. There are many options with different organizations at this time of year. At St. Luke, we've been collecting donations for Lutheran Social Service to distribute to young adults experiencing homelessness. (Thank you to those who have contributed!) Our drive to collect socks and undies for our partners at The Drawer is right around the corner, so you can stock up now if you'd like.

Materials gifts aren't the only need. This is a time of year that is hard for many, so sending a note or making a phone call to someone who is grieving or lonely can be another way to "abound in love," as Thessalonians says, during this season. When you do the work of welcoming those in need, you are doing the work of welcoming Christ. As Thomas Merton wrote, "Christ is born to us today, in order that He may appear to the whole world through us." (from *Seasons of Celebration*, pg 112)

PRAY ALWAYS

Jesus said, "Be alert at all times, praying that you may have strength..." – Luke 21:36 (read on Advent 1)

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. – Philippians 4:6 (read on Advent 3)

Alertness is always a theme of Advent. We are called to pay attention to the surprising ways Christ shows up in our lives. One way to create this state of attentiveness is through prayer. Jesus tells us to pray for strength to face difficult times. Paul reminds us to offer both our thanksgiving and our supplications to God constantly. We pray for others, for ourselves, for our world.

Over the next few weeks of Advent, make an extra effort to pray with more intention – whether your prayer is saying to God "thanks," "help," or just "wow." Or even if your prayers have no words at all, they can still be an offering of your attention to God who receives every prayer. If you're someone who uses an Advent calendar, use the daily event of opening a window as a moment to pray. If you're someone who uses an Advent wreath, simply lighting a candle can be your prayer.

Some words from the late priest and writer Edward Hays: "Take time to be aware that in the very midst of our busy preparations for the celebration of Christ's birth in ancient Bethlehem, Christ is reborn in the Bethlehems of our homes and daily lives. Take time, slow down, be still, be awake to the Divine Mystery that looks so common and so ordinary yet is wondrously present." (from *A Pilgrim's Almanac*, pg. 196)

CHRISTMAS EVE READER

12/24, 6PM

Julie Gaarder

ALTAR GUILD

Kay Reich

COFFEE HOSTS

- 1 Laurie and Rob Herrmann
David Nedreelow
- 8 Junella Litzkow
Jo and Doug Klein
- 15 Susan Lorenz
David Elliott
- 22 Joyce Bluel
Carol Hornung
- 29 Christine Olson
Julie Ellingson



Bun Run

Many thanks to our Bun Run volunteers for December: Kay Reich, Julie Ellingson, Mike Hegdahl, and Volker Landenberger.

December Birthdays

- 4 Olivia Peterson
- 5 Douglas Nelson
- 7 Raul Ruiz
- 18 Holly Schultz
- 23 Deborah Vigdal
- 30 Roger Diestler

December Anniversaries

- 17 Doug & Karen Wasko, 1960

Supper With Saints

There will not be a Supper with Saints luncheon in December due to the holidays. We will resume our get togethers on January 18th at noon. There will be more details coming next month. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

WORK FOR PEACE

Because of the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us... to guide our feet in the way of peace. – Luke 1:78-79 (read on Advent 2)

He shall be great to the ends of the earth. He shall be the one of peace.

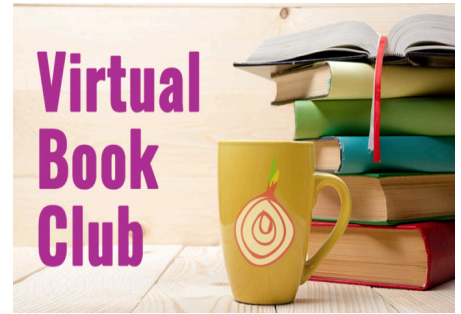
– Micah 5:4-5 (read on Advent 4)

During Advent, we hear about God's dream for our world, one in which all people can live in peace. Revisit Mary's Magnificat in Luke 1:46-55, for instance, and notice how it is a blueprint for a world in which justice and peace are available for all. Advent is a season for us to wonder how we might be part of bringing that dream to reality, and to ask God to guide us in that work. Our community, our nation, and our world are all in dire need of peace, and, as the saying goes, "peace begins with me."

Another passage from Edward Hays about being a peacemaker in Advent:

"Advent is the perfect time to clear and prepare the Way. Advent is a winter training camp for those who desire peace. By reflection and prayer, by reading and meditation, we can make our hearts a place where a blessing of peace would desire to abide and where the birth of the Prince of Peace might take place. Daily we can make an Advent examination. Are there any feelings of discrimination toward race, sex, or religion? Is there a lingering resentment, an unforgiven injury living in our hearts? Do we look down upon others of lesser social standing or educational achievement? Are we generous with the gifts that have been given to us, seeing ourselves as their stewards and not their owners? Are we reverent of others, their ideas and needs, and of creation? These and other questions become Advent lights by which we may search the deep, dark corners of our hearts." (from *A Pilgrim's Almanac*, pg. 196)

I hope these three practices – service, prayer, and peacemaking – might be part of your Advent season this year and that they might be an encouragement to your spirit.



Book Club

We invite you to our St. Luke Book Club, on Sunday, Jan. 5, 6:30pm, via Zoom, to discuss "State of Wonder", a best-selling, novel Ann Patchett, a provocative novel of morality and miracles, science and sacrifice set in the Amazon rainforest: "Patchett exhibits an extraordinary ability to bring the horrors and the wonders of the Amazon to life, and her singular characters are wonderfully drawn. . . . Powerful and captivating." — Library Journal. The Zoom invite will be emailed to you shortly before the meeting. All are welcome; join us!



Notes from the Music Director

As I thought about Advent this year, I thought it would be fun to work with the kids in Faith Formation to write an Advent Wreath Lighting song. For a couple of weeks, we talked about what we do to get ready for Christmas, things we do during Advent and what we do during worship together. Ideas ranged from short yet sweet ("Yep, God") to some more wordy phrases that didn't always make the final cut. "Whither will he come?" is a great line, but a little hard to work with :)

President's Corner



December is a time when we often reflect on the year that is winding down. One of the good things that happened at St. Luke this year is the chance to welcome so many new people to the St. Luke family, including Bonnie Jellinek, Dennis and Ruth Olafson, Larry Raasch and Nancy White, our newest members. But members or not, we welcome all the new people who joined us for worship and fellowship this year. You have truly enriched our community.

I also wish to thank the top-notch members of the church council whom I had the pleasure to work with this year. Four of us will be returning to the council next year—Treasurer Joyce Bluel, Mike Hegdahl, Carol Hornung, and me (although I will be serving as secretary instead of president). Special thanks to Volker Landenberger and Doug Nelson, who are not returning to the council next year. Their service is much appreciated! St. Luke will be well served by the new and returning members of the 2025 church council. (More on that next month.)

Jar donations in November supported the Lutheran Social Services program for homeless youth. In addition to cash donations, we collected holiday gifts for homeless youth. Thanks to everyone who supported this worthy cause and special thanks to Wendy Bjorklund for coordinating the effort. In December, jar donations will support The Link, a nonprofit founded by former Minnesota Vikings Jim Marshall and Oscar Reed. The Link provides housing and support services to young people in the Twin Cities area who are facing homelessness, sexual exploitation, and/or involvement in the juvenile justice system.

December brings Advent and the Christmas season, a time when days grow shorter, and we anticipate anew the coming of the Christ child. The candlelight at the Christmas Eve service is a fitting symbol for the arrival of baby Jesus, light of the world. Let us treasure this special time with our friends, our families, and the good people of the St. Luke community. Merry Christmas!

Yours in Christ, David Tews

I took their ideas and played around with them until we created the song we're singing this season! I hope you enjoy learning our song and how talented our kiddos in Faith Formation are!

On Sunday, Dec. 22nd, I'll be having my usual Christmas Warm-up from 4pm to 5pm.. It's a fun way to get rid of the performance jitters where I'll run through instrumental music and we'll sing a verse from (almost) the entire Christmas section of the hymnal! Stay for the whole hour or drop in for a bit - it's a casual hour where you can enjoy some music and relax. -Becca Ruiz



All are invited to Game Day at St. Luke, Friday December 6 and 20 at 12:30pm. Bring a snack to share and your favorite game and settle down to an afternoon of fun...join us!



Offering Envelopes There are boxes of offering envelopes for 2025 for those interested on the table in the social hall. These are generic with no numbers or dates. Be sure to date your offering and put your name and amount on the front of the envelope.

Connect, Grow and Serve.