



Saint Thomas Lutheran Church News

December 2019 XXXXI, Issue 12

Pastor's Column...

I love Advent. There. I said it. Don't get me wrong, I love Christmas as well, but there's something about Advent that soothes my soul. Much of the reason for this is that I have seasonal depression, aka Seasonal Affective Disorder.

And as much as I love Advent, I dislike the "official" name for this particular manifestation of depression. The reason for my dislike is that I do not consider it to be a disorder. I believe that it is a naturally occurring phenomenon; I also believe that the liturgical calendar developed in response to this, as was explained to me by a seminary professor, Duane Priebe.

This particular expression of depression is prevalent among people whose ancestry comes from lands much closer to the Arctic Circle than from the equator. When you think about how dark it gets in Norway (Land of the Midnight Sun is only half the story!), for instance, the people who got energized by darkness probably didn't live long enough to procreate. The ones who thrived in this dark environment were those whose genetic makeup caused them to get "depressed" during these dark times, where sometimes the act of getting out of bed in the morning can be a herculean act.

The church is always at its best when it meets people where they are at, and so we begin church calendar deep in the darkest time of our planet's journey around the sun. Approximately four weeks before the winter solstice is when we light the first candle – exemplifying that the light shines in the darkness, indeed – and light two, then three, then four, then...we light every candle in the place, giving every man, woman and child their very own candle at the culmination of this season of hope!

(By the way, we do not know when Christ was born, but we *do* know that he wasn't born at the end of December. This is, in my mind, the perfect time for the angels to sing that the birth of this child is, in fact, "good news of great joy" for all people.)

This season of light and hope and joy continues through the twelve days of Christmas and, to a certain extent, through the season of Epiphany as well. These seasons are designed to fill us with good hope, to lift up our eyes to the hills, from whence our help comes.

The most dangerous time for one suffering from clinical depression is not, I have been told, when they are in the depths of depression, but when they have gained more energy with which they can act upon the self-deprecating feelings that come with this disease. This is when many suicides take place. With seasonal depression, this takes place as the days get longer. The name of the church season that we keep during

these lengthening days is named after what is happening to the sun – Lent literally means to lengthen. And the season of Lent throws the worshipping community into a sort of artificial depression, forgoing the celebratory “Alleluia” that is sung with great regularity throughout the rest of the church year. This liturgical depression has its focus upon the source of our salvation – Christ crucified – and our culpability in this redemptive act. This season lasts for forty days, echoing the years of wandering in the wilderness and, more particularly, Christ’s forty days in the wilderness where he grapples with what it really means to be the beloved child of God.

Then, when the days are longer, the air is softer, and the ground is ready for the seed, we celebrate with great joy the exceedingly good news of the Resurrection. And we do this for fifty days, ten days longer than the season of Lent.

Finally, we enter into “Ordinary Time” as the other half of the church calendar used to be called; the days after Pentecost. This long season’s color is green, the color of living, growing things.

So I love Advent! Even the color of this blessed season – blue – is echoed in the color of the light prescribed by my doctor to help alleviate my seasonal depression.

Oh! And I look really good in blue, so I got that going for me as well!

I hope that you will join with me in celebrating this season of hope, and not just on Sunday. We have midweek services every Wednesday at noon and 7:00 pm. I hope to see you then.

Peace, joy and hope in Christ,
Pastor Darby



Advent Midweek Worship

Noon and 7:00 p.m. on December 4, 11, and 18.

Older Wiser Lutherans (OWLS) host a light luncheon after the noon Advent service. Please sign-up in the narthex to volunteer to bring soup, bread, or dessert.



Sunday, December 1, the First Sunday in Advent, after the 11:00 service, please stay to help decorate the sanctuary and narthex. No experience required!

Advent Family Dinner & Activity is December 1st from 6:00 – 7:30 pm in Community Hall!

This well-attended event is for *all* ages! If you’d like to contribute to the meal, please sign up in the Narthex.

Come to share a meal, fellowship, an Advent craft, and

return home ready for the Advent season with family devotions. Our Advent craft this year will be an Advent Candle (see picture for example). A good time is always had by all! Vegan and gluten-free meal options will be available.



St. Thomas Choir Advent Concert is Sunday, December 8 at 4:00 p.m.

Christian Ed and Youth Group Schedules

No Sunday School classes on December 1.

Youth Group Dec 1 – Advent Family Dinner: 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm in Community Hall! Families, couples, singles, youth, children are all invited! Come to share a meal, make an Advent project, and go home with advent devotions! Vegan and gluten-free meals will be available.



Dec 15 – Youth Group Christmas Party! 5:30 – 7:30 pm at STLC. Come for food, gifts, and reindeer games!

Keep your eyes open  for our Winter Break Youth Event! A Doodle Poll will be sent out soon with options of activities.

Adult Forum

- Dec 1 – Saving Jesus Redux
- Dec 8 – Adult Forum, Topic: New Hope for Families (see below)
- Dec 8 – Women's Bible Study
- Dec 15 – Saving Jesus Redux
- Dec 22 & 29 – Christmas Break (No Classes)

December 8 - Adult Forum on the New Hope for Families shelter

Families in crisis should not be separated! Since 2011, New Hope for has been the only emergency housing solution in Monroe County that keeps families intact - families with adults & children of all ages and any composition. To allow parents to work and to help children to catch up with other kids, they also offer quality day care and early childhood education.

Volunteers from St. Thomas have been part of New Hope from the beginning. Lately even more of us have been involved, through work days and through collections of household supplies. Those bins on the floor next to the welcome table? Those supplies go to New Hope - and the New Hope staff say they value our consistent support. The Mission Committee also supports New Hope financially on behalf of the congregation.

As a congregation, through your donations and your work, we are building a relationship of engagement and support with New Hope. Learn more! The Mission Committee has invited Emily Pike, New Hope's Executive Director, to speak about New Hope at the Adult Forum on December 8 in the Conference Room. The Forum runs from 9:45 to 10:45 but even if you can't stay for the full hour, please come, meet Ms. Pike, and catch some New Hope energy and commitment! You can also learn more about New Hope at newhope4families.org



Children's Christmas Program Rehearsal is Saturday, December 14, from 10 am – 12 noon. All children in the Christmas Program should attend.

Our Christmas Program will be held during the 11 am service on December 15th. Thank you to Sarah Ratzburg, Melissa de Graaf, the Sunday School children and their parents for all your hard work and dedication for this very well-loved annual event!

Mission & Ministry News



St. Thomas is collecting donations of winter coats, hats, gloves and scarves for students (and their parents) enrolled in the Newcomer Program at Northwest Middle School in Indianapolis. The Newcomer Program supports recent immigrants and refugees. It is open to students in grades 3–9 who are new to the United States within the last year. Students in the program learn English and core content at the same time. The program is free to all eligible Indianapolis Public School students. Many of the students and families who participate in the Newcomer Program are preparing to face their first cold winter. The Mission Committee will be coordinating the gathering.

We will also be working with our local Bloomington Refugee Network to assist any local immigrants with similar needs. The majority of immigrants are currently located in Indianapolis due to the current US immigration restrictions. The Mission Committee is working to identify ways we can be of support to immigrants consistent with the ELCA's commitment to provide sanctuary to those who seek relocation in the US. Children's coats size 6-16 and adult coats size S,M,L are needed. The Mission Committee thanks you in advance for your support of these struggling families. A coat rack will be located in the narthex to receive your donations.

Prayer Chain



Prayer is essential to our life with Christ. Jesus wants us to come with our hearts open, with our worries, our gratefulness, our struggles and concerns.

What is it? Essentially it's a group from St Thomas who will pray for you or someone you care about. We pray privately, at home, during our own devotional time. The prayer chain is separate from the Sunday morning prayers. We can pray for your concerns in addition to the Sunday prayers or separately and privately just through the prayer chain.

How is this done? Via email. You will contact Susan Colston, prayer chain coordinator, at skcolston@aol.com and let me know you'd like to make a prayer request. Please put PRAYER REQUEST in your subject line. I will then, that same day, send your request out to those who are on my list who have stated that they would love to pray for others and who have stated that they understand confidentiality.

Can I be a part of the group who prays? Yes, if you have a working email, if you are willing to check your email daily, and if you will, as best as possible, remember to pray through the prayer request list regularly. Please Susan Colston at skcolston@aol.com and let me know that you would like to join the prayer chain group.

What about a phone tree or texting? For the present, the prayer chain will be via email only. If someone would like to take on another form of communication, please contact me or contact the church office with your interest.

I invite anyone who has a heart for prayer to join us in the prayer chain. There is no deadline. You may join at any time.

THE NEED IS GREAT!

Just returned from delivering our St. Thomas food donations to the MCUM food pantry. They are so grateful for our monthly donations and so are we. They informed us that 293 new families were added to their client list in September and October! This is true at all the food pantries in the city and county. And each month more are added! Please continue to bring food to add to our food baskets. They are located behind the welcome desk. The need is SO GREAT. Bless and thank you. Betty and Jerry Smith

From the Congregation Council:

Transition Update from the Council: Wednesday, November 13, members of the congregation council and the call committee met with Pastor Heather Apel of the IK Synod. The call committee's first task will be to conduct a discernment process with the congregation, leading up to the ELCA's Ministry Site Profile, which will go up on the ELCA's website for those pastors who are looking for a congregation to serve. The MSP is extensive and important: it will serve as the initial source of information on our congregation. Council will be available to advise and assist during this process, but the call committee now has primary responsibility for most of the transition process. Look for updates in newsletters, weeklies, and on the bulletin board outside the office in upcoming weeks and months.

Our Music Program: During November and December, Mike Powell is serving as organist at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Indianapolis, to assist that congregation while they search for a new organist. Susan Powell is serving as our Interim Music Associate: our organist on Sundays and for Advent services, choir accompanist at Thursday practices, and conductor for selections in the choir's December Advent concert. Thanks to Mike and Susan for sharing their talents with two ELCA congregations.

God of majesty, whom saints and angels delight to worship in heaven: Be with your servants who make art and music for your people, that with joy we on earth may glimpse your beauty; and bring us to fulfillment of that hope of perfection which will be ours as we stand before your unveiled glory. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—this prayer is from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship

A Brief History of a Nativity

The beautiful St. Thomas nativity was originally bought by Lois Selk, years ago, at the By Hand Gallery. When she realized it was too big for her home, she offered it to Pastor Walt for the church and he very sensibly said, "Yes!" He commented that it was a little plain, so Deb Selk added some color to the figures. (This is why one of the angels is singing out of a Lutheran Hymnal!)

In mid-November, Gayl Laughman and Kim Filiatrault unpacked the set and set it up with candles and fresh evergreens so Sandy Arnold could take the photograph that is featured on the poster I've made for this year's choir Advent concert. If you would like a digital copy of this very special photo for your Christmas letters or cards, please email me! Pamela Smith [narthex@baba-yaga.org]



A Note of Thanks

Thanks to all God's people at St. Thomas who communicated compassion when my husband Edwin Lee Caldwell, 71, died Oct. 25. Pastor Darby Lawrence & Oliver visited & Ned was commended to God. Liver cancer ended his life at home under IU Hospice care with peace & dignity.

Sincerely, Pauline W. Caldwell & Family.

New Addresses:

Margrethe O'Connor has a new apartment. Her address is 800 N Bell Trace Circle Apt. 201 Bloomington, IN 47408.

Dorothy Soudakoff has moved to Autumn Hills: 3203 E Moores Pike Room 35 Bloomington, IN 47401.

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

12/4 Chris Ogan
12/9 Rita Pavolka, Mike Witt
12/12 Charlotte Kagemann, Vicki Polansky
12/15 Carol Seaman
12/17 Jean Brown
12/19 Catharine Rademacher, David Rohlfing
11/25 Josh Ratzburg
12/27 Eliza Iversen, Tom Strentz
12/29 Katie Anderson, Ellen Mills
12/30 Chris Arterberry, Elaina Iversen,
Betty Smith
12/31 Kent Unger, Mark Braun

happy
birthday!

12/11 Zach & Veronica Brown
12/27 Nick & Naomi Sveholm

Happy
Anniversary

WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS DEC 8 - JAN 12 *=**Choir**

	DEC 8	DEC 15*	DEC 22	DEC 24	DEC 29	JAN 5*	JAN 12
	8:30 AM	8:30 AM	8:30 AM	4:00 PM	9:30 AM	8:30 AM	8:30 AM
ASST MINISTER	Natalie Schacht	Sonja Dorr Binder	Lindsey Smith	Natalie Schacht	Kris Stewart	David Rohlfing	Lindsey Smith
LECTOR	Del Newkirk	Carl Ziegler	Judy Bush	ML Nierzwicki	Letty Newkirk	Debbie Selk	Barb Unger
ACOLYTE	Max Arterberry	Audrey Knipstein	Sophia Rust	Irene Fogleman	Nina Daleke	Matthew Schacht	Audrey Knipstein
SERVER	ML Nierzwicki	K Boggess	Martha Selk	Drew Balcam	Tim Smith	Judy Bush	Kent Unger
USHERS	G/G Laughman	J/M Doering	F/ML Nierzwicki	J/M Doering	P/L May	G/G Laughman	F/ML Nierzwicki
GREETERS	D/A Balcam	Mary Sasse	M/J Laros	Kari Esarey	David Ellies	Shirley Mingee	J/J Bush
CRUCIFER							
FLOWERS					P/L Iversen		
BREAD/WINE	Jan Sinn	Karen Rohlfing	Mary Sasse	C/K McDonald	M/C Braun	D/S Arnold	L/U Coyne
COUNCIL CO	Tom Sinn	Ashley Ahlbrand	Judy Bush		Sam Eichmiller	Cindy Gallien	Tom Sinn
	Tim Smith	Liz Gaskins	Dean Arnold		XXXXXXXXXXXXXX		Liz Gaskins
ALTAR GUILD	Shirley Mingee	Barb Unger	Jean Brown	Cindy Gallien	Mary Sasse	Ute Coyne	Jean Brown
	Margaret Harter	Margaret Harter	Gail Seegert	Mary Sasse	Jan Sinn	Pauline Caldwell	Betty Smith
	DEC 8*	DEC 15	DEC 22*	DEC 24*	DEC 29	JAN 5	JAN 12*
	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	8:00 PM		11:00 AM	11:00 AM
ASST MINISTER	Amy Balcam	Tim Smith	Ashley Ahlbrand	Mike Witt	One Service at 9:30 AM	Tim Smith	Debbie Witt
LECTOR	Noah Smith	Dean Arnold	D Gerkenmeyer	M Thomason-Smith		Susan Hiller	D Gerkenmeyer
ACOLYTE	Molly Wyatt	Arno Risner	Kenna Dimick	Truman Daleke		Sophia Watters	Molly Wyatt
SERVER	Gail Seegert	Sandy Arnold	Lyman Hitchcock	Dean Arnold		David Daleke	Gail Seegert
USHERS	Baurle/Filiatrault	P/L May	Hill /Arnold	Baurle/Filiatrault		McDonald/Ohslund	Hill/Arnold
GREETER	Kari Esarey	G Moehlmann	Margaret Harter	R/N Nye		Jan Sinn	T/J Garl
CRUCIFER				Dean Arnold			

December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Worship 8:30 & 11:00 9:45 Saving Jesus 12:30 Hanging of the greens 6:00 pm Advent Dinner	2	3 10:30 UClub Yoga 6:00 PM Boot Camp 6:30 PM Worship Commte	4 12:00 pm Advent Worship 7:00 pm Advent Worship	5 6:00 pm Boot Camp 7:00 Choir rehearsal	6 4:20 pm Joni Chen rehearsal	7 10:00 am Property Comm. 10-12 Choir rehearsal 12-1 Soloists & instrumentalists
8 Worship 8:30 & 11:00 w/ hanging Chrismons @ both 9:45 Women's Bible Study; Sunday School 4:00 pm Advent Choir Concert	9 7:00 pm Piano recital	10 10:30 UClub Yoga 4:30 Earth Care 6:00 PM Boot Camp	11 12:00 pm Advent Worship 7:00 pm Advent Worship 6:00 pm St Vincent de Paul	12 6:00 pm Boot Camp 6:00 Finance Comm. 7:00 Choir rehearsal	13	14 10:00 am - 12:00 Children's Christmas Program rehearsal
15 Worship 8:30 & 11:00 Children's program @11:00 9:45 Saving Jesus 12:30 Council Mtg 5:30 Youth Group "Christmas"	16	17 10:30 UClub Yoga 6:00 PM Boot Camp	18 12:00 pm Advent Worship 7:00 pm Advent Worship	19 6:00 pm Boot Camp 7:00 Choir rehearsal	20	21
22 Worship 8:30 & 11:00 No Classes	23	24 Christmas Eve 4:00 pm Worship 8:00 pm Worship	25	26	27	28
29 Worship 9:30 only No Classes	30	31 10:30 UClub Yoga 6:00 PM Boot Camp				