

St. Thomas Lutheran Church News

St. Thomas Lutheran Church is a Christ-centered community that lives, shares, and celebrates God's grace with all people!

November 2021

XXXXIII Issue 11



From the Pastor

Yes, this another “From the Pastor” about the pandemic. Each month, I am so sure I will be done writing about it. Each month, I am hopeful that a real end to *this* will soon be in our sights. Of course to see that end, I probably need to define the *this*. Is *this* the COVID virus and disease? Social distancing? Masks? Fear? The ever-growing chasm that has formed along what were once cracks between us? Most likely, we will each answer this differently. Some of us may even feel like the end is near—that our life has vastly returned to normal. Some of us still do not feel safe, and we will be unable to truly move on until we feel secure. Eventually, we will all do the work of integrating this time into our selves.

The Council has begun the work of assessing what we have and are learning from this time. We’ve partnered with the Indiana-Kentucky Synod’s *Beginning Anew* initiative. Together, we are reading the book *We Shall Be Changed: Questions for the post-pandemic church*. The pandemic has brought us back to the basics, not unlike the reformation. We’re asking, “What does it mean to be the church?” “What is the role of the pastor and the people?” “How does celebrating the sacraments differently change our understanding of them?” At the end, we’re hoping to ask and answer questions like:

- What has sustained us through the pandemic?
- What new thing did we add during the pandemic?
- What should remain, be changed, or modified now?
- What did we let go of? Should we pick it up again?
- What have we learned about what it means to St. Thomas?
- What do we want to try now?

Perhaps these questions will be helpful for you, too, in your life.

We seldom choose change. We find comfort in rituals and routines. Yet, our faith is based on the idea that we will be changed. St. Paul writes, “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” This is the transformation that happens daily because our baptisms. The question isn’t, will we or won’t we change? The question is, how will what happens to us become a part of our transformation in Christ? How will *this* help me see who I am, fully, in Christ?

Beloved, *this* feels new, but these *questions* are old. We are not the first humans to experience such rapid and life-altering changes. All of the gospels were written in the shadow of the fall of the Jerusalem. The words of Jesus we have preserved best were recorded and gifted to congregations struggling to know who they are when their world had become completely unrecognizable. We will answer these questions about our community together, and you will likely have to answer these questions about yourself, too. While no one can answer these questions for you, we gather—in person and online—each week so that none of us has to be alone in doing this work. We are, for one another, the visible part of the “great cloud of witness” of Hebrews 12, so, Beloved, “let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”

God be with you,

Pr. Adrienne

From the Minister of Youth and Christian Nurture Celebrating Growing in Faith Together

When children are presented for baptism, their parents are asked to make several promises: to surround them with a Christian community, to teach them the Gospel and the way of Christ and to nurture their faith so that their children may learn to trust God, proclaim Christ, care for others and the world, and work for justice and peace.

Parents can often feel overwhelmed by caring for their children and the many decisions that must be made along the way. The good news is that they are not alone in these promises. When children are baptized in this community, along with their sponsors, we promise to support them as they live among God's faithful people and pray for them in their new life in Christ.



This fall has been full of opportunities for us to fulfill those promises. In September, we began youth and children's Sunday School classes with eight teachers and over twenty-five students as well as our adult class. We presented story Bibles to all the children who joined our Godly Play class this year. We recognized and blessed our confirmation students as they continue on their journey of formation. We will celebrate with three students who will make Affirmation of their Baptisms as we celebrate Reformation Sunday.

We are blessed to have so many children and youth in our midst - and to have a community that is ready to encourage and love them. If you are interested in actively supporting parents and children as they grow in faith, I would be glad to help you learn how you can use your gifts and passions. There are many ways to be involved, individually or in a group, regularly or just occasionally. God can use you and what you can offer.

Your partner on the way,

Pastor Lucia

From the Director of Music

The St. Thomas adult choir is excited to welcome some additional voices! With the approval of the Council and the Worship Committee, we are moving forward with hiring singers from the Jacobs School to give extra support to our choir during the months of November and December. We plan to hire four singers in total, one per voice part, to join us for several Sunday morning services and to sing with us for our Advent concert on December 12. Personal introductions of our guest singers will be printed in the bulletin on their first week with us, and we hope that our church members will join the choir in extending them a warm welcome.

Our goal is that these guest singers will help to provide additional stability for the choir through the continuing uncertainty of Covid, and as cold and flu season ramps up. We also anticipate that these singers will be a valuable resource in helping our volunteer singers deepen their own musical skills and be even better equipped to lead our congregation in song. Feel free to reach out to [Mike Powell](#) if you have any questions or would like to know more!



**A Huge Thank You to everyone—
especially our tireless and eager set up and tear down crew—
for making our outdoor worship possible.**

Upcoming Events

Announcement of Annual Budget Meeting

The Annual Budget Meeting of St. Thomas Evangelical Lutheran Church will be held on Sunday, November 14 at 1pm on Zoom. The agenda will include the 2022 Budget and two maintenance projects: replacing the Heritage Hall roof and replacing the HVAC systems that service Community Hall. An agenda along with copies of the budget and maintenance bids will be sent directly to members via email and paper copies will be available in the church office. The Zoom information for this meeting is as follows: <https://bit.ly/3pJNQyG>

Meeting ID: 819 8139 7308

Passcode: 454859

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 819 8139 7308

Passcode: 454859

Prayer at Noon on Zoom

This calm, quiet moment in the middle of the week provides a space for participants to rest with God. Join us for a simple service praying the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, and requests of those gathered on the **first Wednesday** of the month. Our next gathering will be **Wednesday, November 3 at noon** on [Zoom](#).

Fiber Arts Tree Decorating

The Fiber Arts Spiritual Growth Group has joyfully crafted handmade bird ornaments over the course of this year, and plans to donate a tree to give to New Hope for Families' annual fundraising auction on November 18, [New Hope for the Holidays](#). Come gather at St. Thomas **Saturday, November 6th from 10am-12pm** to decorate the tree. Those fully vaccinated and masked are welcome! Questions? Contact Leah Iversen at 812-320-2017.



Daylight Savings Time Ends Sunday November 7

Remember to set back your clocks or update your phones. Otherwise, you might be here an hour early on Sunday!

Women's Bible Study

WBS (men are welcome too!) meets on the Second Sunday of the month in room 17. The next meeting is **Sunday, November 14**. Any questions: contact Kari Esarey at kesarey@mccsc.edu or kariesarey@gmail.com or 812-219-4177.

Lantern Walk

Join us and other Bloomington faith communities for the Interfaith Friends Lantern Walk on **Sunday, November 14 from 4:30pm-6:00pm** at the Switchyard Park playground area. All ages are welcome! Drop in for lantern making and snacks from 4:30pm-5:30pm and then we'll walk and sing with our lanterns in the park and along the B-Line from 5:30pm-6:00pm. Bring a mug to enjoy a hot drink while you make your lantern. Please bring a donation of a winter accessory (hat, gloves, scarf, socks) to help those in need this winter.



Word in the Woods

Encounter God in the changing seasons as we gather at a new day and time. Gather on **Sunday, November 21 at 3pm** at Griffy Lake Boathouse for a worshipful hike. We will contemplate scripture together, pray, and celebrate communion across the 1.5 mile trail. Please RSVP to [Pastor Lecia](#) by November 18.

Sunday Night Youth Group

High School students are invited to meet on the fourth Sunday of each month! On **Sunday, November 21** we will gather at church from **5:30pm-7:30pm** for dinner and some post-Thanksgiving fun! Please let [Pastor Lecia](#) know if you can join us!

Advent Mini-Retreat

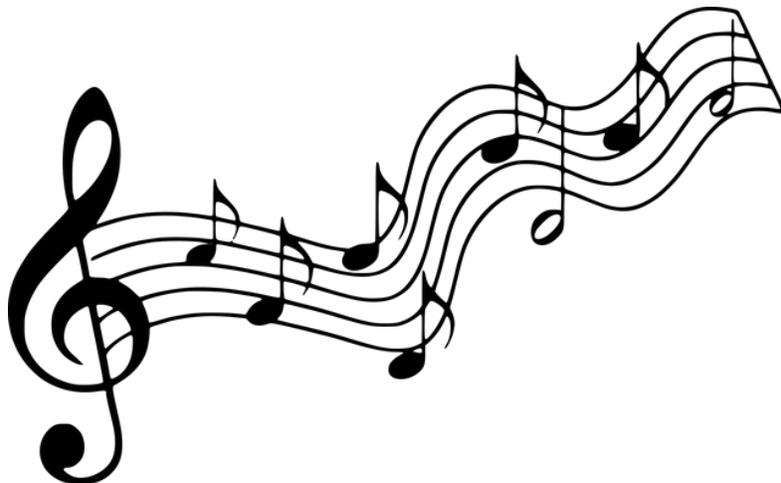
Prepare for Advent with a Mini-Retreat on the **first Sunday in Advent, November 28**. Join us in **Heritage Hall from 9:45am-10:45am** for activities and practices to use at home as we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth. You can come for the whole hour or just part. Because this is for all ages, children will enjoy this more if they participate with an adult. If you prefer to experience the Mini-Retreat without a crowd, that will be available through Wednesday, December 1. You can sign up for a time [here](#).

As we prepare for the Mini-Retreat, we ask crafters to check your stash! We are looking for an assortment of ribbons and picks to decorate Advent wreaths, so this is a great use for your random bits of ribbon and other decorative items. If you have any items to contribute, please drop them off for [Pastor Lecia](#) by November 15.

Advent Midweek Service

As the nights lengthen, we are called to wonder and wait. It is in this time that we recall a great mystery: that into this world Christ came to dwell among us. Advent is a time for preparation for this mystery. Advent makes holy the waiting and wonder we all experience in this life. Advent gives space for the dark nights of the soul, which, so often, are the very places of God's great revelation. To aid your waiting and wondering, we invite you to **Midweek Services at St. Thomas**.

There will be two opportunities for worship on Wednesdays: noon and 7pm. At noon, a simple spoken service will blend poetry and scripture. At 7pm, the gathering will sing *Holden Evening Prayer* with opportunities to reflect on this year's Advent theme, Dwell. Please note, there will be no meals to accompany these services, but we do encourage those who wish share table fellowship with one another to make arrangements with each other to do so. **These services will be held December 1, 8, and 15.** In lieu of a regular midweek service in the fourth week of Advent, a Longest Night Service of Remembrance is planned. Details will follow.



Music at St. Thomas

The Bloomington Bach Cantata Project

Bloomington Bach Cantata Project invites you to join us here at St. Thomas in the worship space on **Sunday, November 7 at 2:30pm** for the third concert of the 2021-2022 season, featuring "Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan," BWV 99. The Bloomington Bach Cantata Project brings together students and faculty from Indiana University, as well as professional artists from around the region, to present cantatas by J. S. Bach in performances modeled on his own.



Friday Musicale

The Friday Musicale cordially invites you to join us at St. Thomas for our November Program on **Friday, November 12 at 1:15pm**. The program will feature Bach's Brandenburg Fifth Concerto, as well as works performed by the composer/pianist, Don Freund.

We welcome you in person, but ask that you abide by these [Covid Protocols](#) set by the Friday Musicale board. Can't make it in person? The program will be live streamed on the [Friday Musicale YouTube channel](#), as well as recorded separately and uploaded for viewing following the event.

Questions? Reach out to [via email](#). We look forward to seeing you!

Friday Musicale is affiliated with the National and Indiana Federation of Music Clubs

Ministry Opportunities for Getting Involved

Christmas Eve and COVID

In order to provide a safe space for gathering on Christmas Eve, please complete [this brief survey](#) on possible worship times. The first two options (4pm, 6pm, and 8pm or 4pm, 7pm, and 9pm) would be identical festival worship services. The third option (2pm, 4pm and 8pm) would have a brief service with carols and communion at 2pm and festival worship at 4pm and 8pm (these services would be the same). All options would include a livestream of the first festival service, which would stay up for viewing at a time of your choosing.

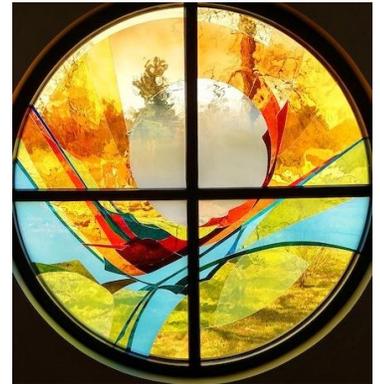


Stewardship

Thank you to everyone who pledged to St. Thomas during our annual stewardship drive. We are grateful for the congregation's promise of support for 2022. We are looking forward to the coming year with hope, confident in our mission to be a Christ-centered community that lives, shares, and celebrates God's grace with all people. If you have not yet pledged, pledge cards are still available in the narthex, or you can pledge online [here](#).

Sunday mornings are for faith formation!

Have you ever wondered what the liturgy is? Or why some parts of the worship service are *exactly* the same every week? Would you like to dive deeper in understanding worship to aid your own spiritual life? During the month of November, join us for a three-session look at Lutheran worship. This session is our first intergenerational forum, where voices of new and experienced Lutherans, young and aged will be about to discuss the many meanings of worship and liturgical life. Join us Sundays at 9:45am beginning November 7.



Altar Guild

The Altar Guild prepares the communion elements and cares for the vessels, linens, and vestments. New volunteers are sought who are willing and able to set up communion several times a year. Training is available from experienced Altar Guild members. If you are interested, please contact Barb Unger [via email](#) or 812-325-4078.

Property Committee Work Day

The Property Committee hosts work days on the first Saturday and third Tuesday of the month at 10am. Volunteers are needed to paint—indoors and outdoors—or to assist with a small plumbing project. Additional projects added as needed. **Masks required.** For more information contact Sam Eichmiller at [via email](#) or 812-279-5197.

Prayer Chain

Want to join our St Thomas email prayer chain? Do you have prayer requests? Contact Susan Colston [via email](#) for further information.

Altar flowers

Please consider signing-up to provide altar flowers. The cost is \$18. You may take the arrangement home after the indoor service and then return the vase later. To sign-up: contact the church office [via email](#) or sign the sheet on the bulletin board behind the welcome desk.



Lutheran Campus Ministry at IU

Over the years I have learned from people much wiser than myself that having an attitude of gratitude does not mean that everything in life is working out well, nor that everything is positive. Rather, it is a daily reminder that God is present with us and that God's abundant love and grace abound even when the voices of the world cry out messages of scarcity and fear.

November is often a time for us to pause and give thanks to God for the blessings that we have received. What if we shifted that thought to think less about the tangible things that we have and more about those experiences where we are reminded of God's presence? What if our thankfulness was an attitude of gratitude not that we got an A on a test, but that God calmed our nerves so that we could remember the answers that we had studied? What if our thankfulness was an attitude of gratitude not of simply being thankful for family and friends, but rather that God has given us others to walk with us during different phases on this journey of life?

When we shift our viewpoint from thinking about God like a benevolent king or magic genie bestowing special things on some people but not others, to a viewpoint of how God is fully engaged with the ins and outs of our lives, we can look at the world differently. We can see that one of the true gifts that God has given us through sending Jesus Christ among us, is to see the world as God sees it-- a beautiful creation that God declares good, that is filled with beloved children of God and that is ours to be careful stewards of.

I would invite you all for the month of November to try practicing an attitude of gratitude. Each day before you go to sleep, think of one God moment from that day, no matter how small and insignificant it may seem. Think of a moment where hope or joy, comfort or peace, stillness or silence, reverence or revelry, were observed-- then give thanks to God for that moment knowing



that God was present with you in it. Know that whether you choose to accept this invitation or not, I will keep you all in my prayers that the grace of God surrounds you now and forevermore.

Peace,
[Pastor Amanda Ghaffarian](#)
Rose House LuMin

From Our Ministry Partners

A COVID Update from Missionaries Naomi and Nick Sveholm

Even after nearly two full years, COVID continues to pepper and sometimes dominate headlines. It has come to our household this fall, too, along with several other cold variations. In fact, our children (and their caregiver parents) have been out of school more than they've been in school this year.

On September 22nd our family became, as far as we know, both the first deployed ELCA missionaries and the first teachers at our bilingual high school this academic year to have a confirmed COVID case. Unlike so many people, we were very fortunate. Both the children had mild cases, and Nick's was a mild breakthrough case (thank you, vaccine!). Naomi had no symptoms at all, and even tested negative (again, thank you, vaccine!).

Because rules and regulations are constantly changing, and there were no set procedures for how and when to conduct hybrid teaching, everyone was a bit unsure about how to approach our isolation period, but we spoke with and emailed many helpful people, who aided us in navigating the procedures and paperwork.

Our family was in isolation for 10 days. By the grace of God we had just stocked up on several necessities and our memories of the time are full of the kindness of our students, colleagues, neighbors, and friends, including several who left fresh produce, bread, and a well-timed bag of activities for the children; potty training success for our new three-year-old; making fresh butter (Naomi has been reading *Little House in the Big Woods* with our six-year-old) and granola; and gratefulness for a large apartment that allowed the children to run around while outside was off-limits.

Our encounters with illness have not stopped there this school year. We feel both its positive and negative effects. Grateful our children have been only mildly sick, frustrated they have been coughing and snotty so consistently it's kept them home yet another week. Appreciating the peals of laughter ringing through the house, angry we're not fulfilling the purpose we're here for, teaching English.

Although really, our mission, God's mission, is greater. We may not be teaching language as much as we wish, but we are showing our students that it is important to shield the health of others and stay home while sick, that family is more valuable than work, that homework deadlines can and should be flexible in times of crisis.

So many things are out of our control right now. There is still a lot of uncertainty about how the pandemic will progress in Slovakia. As of October 20, only 45% of the population is fully vaccinated and just under 40% of the available hospital beds for covid patients are occupied, with the latter number rising steadily.

We pray now for health. Health for our family, health for you, health for Slovakia, health for the US, health for the world. Physical health, mental health, emotional health, spiritual health. In Jesus' name we pray for health. Please join us.

Nick and Naomi are teaching in Slovakia with their children as representatives of ELCA's Global Mission program. They've asked the people of St. Thomas to contribute towards their mission. Prayers and messages are always welcome. If you'd like to contribute financially, please mark SVEHOLM on the memo line of your check to St. Thomas.

An Update from Karen Anderson, ELCA missionary with Public Health Education for Health, Chile / Educación Popular en Salud (EPES)

EPES trains students, public officials, health and education workers, and women from vulnerable communities to advocate for the right to health care and quality, sustainable food, and to share their knowledge with others through workshops and community events. Karen shares: "For the first time in 19 months, Sonia, Hector and I drove to our center in Concepción to visit our staff there, to stay in our retreat center, participate in a workshop on community gardens and food sovereignty and visit community health promoters. Our Nutrition, Justice and Health Project in Santiago organized a workshop this past Saturday with a local indigenous organization on food sovereignty and sharing ancestral wisdom on food systems. Forty people attended this wonderful educational event. Staff who work on our Immigrants Have the Right to Health Project coordinated two half-day Service Festivals with the new municipal office dedicated to immigrant rights— together we provided educational information, legal advice and flu vaccines for immigrants from Colombia, Venezuela and Haiti. We are preparing for our second Latin American Women's Leadership Course in collaboration with the International Coody Institute of Canada. We had 150 women apply for the thirty slots. The course includes nine, three-hour sessions online during the month of November. The women participants are from Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Venezuela, Haiti y Chile. In terms of national news, we are just a month away from presidential elections in Chile and we are in the fourth month of the Constitutional Assembly that is writing a new constitution for Chile."

Watch the bulletin and our Weekly Announcements emails for information about an upcoming Zoom meeting where Karen will share with us the work of EPES.

Climate Change Advocacy with Beth Shalom

[Beth Shalom](#) has invited the members of St. Thomas to collaborate on a long-term letter writing campaign to advocate for climate change legislation on the **first Sunday** of every month around 9:30am. No need to sign up in advance, just stop by the table outside Beth Shalom to sign prepared letters. If you have any questions, please contact the church office [via email](#) or 812-332-5252.





New Hope for Families Update

When families with children are experiencing homelessness, one of the ways [New Hope for Families](#) welcomes them into the shelter is by supplying them with fresh clean sheets, towels, toiletries, and other items they need to make this place feel comfortable, peaceful, and safe. New Hope relies on donations of new and gently used items to provide this important support to the families they serve. Donations can be dropped off in the specially marked bins in the narthex. Checks are also welcome and can be made out to St. Thomas Lutheran Church with "New Hope for Families" in the memo line. Thank you for standing in the gap for these families.

Immediate Needs: Finger paint for children, Non-dairy milk for a family currently in shelter, AA and 9V batteries, Pack and Play, Pack and Play sheets, Crib mattress pads, Size 5 diapers and Pull Ups (any size), Pillowcases, Toilet bowl cleaner and toilet paper, Paper towels, Shower curtains/rings, Can openers.



[Hope for the Holidays](#) 3rd Annual Tree Extravaganza & Auction!

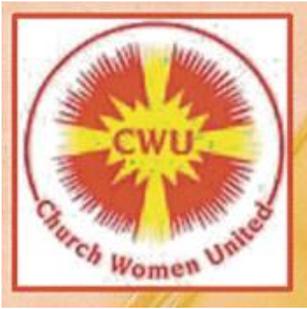
We are pleased to announce that St. Thomas has been invited by New Hope for Families to submit decorated trees for their "Hope for the Holidays" Tree Extravaganza & Auction. This year St. Thomas will have two decorated trees--one of which will have beautiful hand-crafted ornaments made by the Fiber Arts group. We are very excited to

have this opportunity to represent our faith community at this family friendly and socially distanced community event, and to show our continued support for the less fortunate among us.

St. Thomas' two decorated trees will be on display in the Pavilion at Switchyard Park from Tuesday, November 16 through Thursday, November 18. Last year there were over 50 decorated trees and wreaths donated by different organizations, businesses, and individuals. You will also be able to view the wreaths and trees online. There will be a live auction in the Pavilion on the evening of November 18. We invite you and your family to attend this auction and bid on St. Thomas' two submissions or any of the other many offerings. 100% of the proceeds will be used to support families in our community impacted by homelessness.

As you and your family enjoy this fun event, know that your participation will collectively bring joy and services in the upcoming year for families without a home this holiday season.

Please watch the bulletin and our Weekly Announcements emails for more information as it becomes available.



Church Women United Celebrates World Community Day

Eighty years ago, Church Women United (United Council of Church Women) was birthed at a time of grave concern for world peace. The next year, at the first biennial assembly, delegates called for “a just and durable peace” and for a day to be set aside in the fall for the study of peace. In 1943 the first World Community Day was celebrated, a united day of study for all the various denominations. Church Women United was asked to prepare the materials. Today, World Community Day is one of the ways in which we, as members of Church Women United, express our concerns about the changing landscape as it relates to peace in the global community.

This year, since we can't meet in person, the celebration, “Becoming One: New Places, New Faces at the Table” will be presented on Zoom on **November 5, 2021, from 11am-noon**. Anyone can attend (including men) by registering in advance [here](#). For questions, contact Gail Seegert [via email](#).

United Way Thank You and Volunteer Opportunities

Thank you for welcoming [United Way](#) to St. Thomas on October 24, and for all that you do to support folks in our community who are in need. We truly appreciate the financial contribution, as well.



We have upcoming announcements regarding volunteer opportunities with the Heading Home initiative launching in November. Currently, we have two opportunities to share with you:

- 1) Help families file their taxes through United Way's Free Community Tax Service (for low- and moderate-income households)

Not all heroes wear capes. Some volunteer to help hard-working families get ahead financially by filing their taxes for free! Hate doing taxes? Not good with numbers? No problem! IRS certification and training provided, and our tax software does the hard work. You won't be alone, join United Way of Monroe County's supportive team of volunteers and help others cross this dreaded task off their list. Complete the [online application](#) to become someone's tax hero today. Questions? Contact Amy Leyenbeck [via email](#) or 812-334-8370.

- 2) Help United Way invest in our community's most pressing needs

United Way's Community Impact Committee meets from November through February each year to review applications for funding from area non-profits and makes recommendations to our Board of Directors on investments which will help rebuild our community's resiliency following the pandemic. No specific prior knowledge required, just an interest in the work and ability to commit to the timeframe this winter. Training and resources will be provided. Meetings and independent review of applications will be held virtually. If interested in learning more, please reach out to United Way of Monroe County Executive Director Efrat Feferman at [via email](#) or 812-334-8370 x15.

MCUM Thank You and Update

Thank you for your recent donation. As we near the holidays, there will be a rise in local residents seeking assistance, and because of your support, we will be able to meet this need.

Did you know that [MCUM](#) has an Early Learning Center? [Compass Early Learning Center](#) is a year-round childcare facility. They are open from 7am–5:45pm Monday-Friday and have five classrooms: one toddler, one 2-3 years, and three pre-K rooms. Staff uses the Creative Curriculum alongside Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Conscious Discipline to ensure graduates are ready for kindergarten, setting them up for success throughout their lives. Through September Compass served 84 children and provided over 30,000 meals and snacks.



Indiana-Kentucky Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America God's work. Our hands.

Third Lutheran Church, Louisville, and **Grace & Glory Lutheran, Goshen**, have a monthly online book club, called **Ethos Book Club**. The group meets monthly on Zoom.

Ethos Book Club was formed as an online gathering, sponsored by Grace & Glory Lutheran and Shiloh United Methodist churches in Goshen, KY, for those interested in racial justice, anti-racism, race history, and race culture to learn how we, as people of God, might become better allies for our sisters and brothers of color, and to do this in a safe, non-judgmental setting.

It is an ecumenically diverse group that is focused on reading and discussing books that educate us further on systemic racism, racial discrimination, and learning more about the black experience.

We invite others across the Synod to join us by [pre-registering here](#).

**Due Date for December Newsletter Articles:
Friday, November 19, 2021**

**Due Date for Weekly Announcements:
Printed (Bulletins): Wednesdays
Emailed (MailChimp): Thursdays**

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parishadmin@stlconline.org**

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Dr. Katie Gardiner, Adult Choir Director

Melissa de Graaf, Children's Choir Director

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