

THE VINE



MERRY
Christmas

DECEMBER 2019

Ministry Team

All members of Lutheran Church of Our Saviour

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Tuesday–Thursday

Church Board 2019-2020

Brent Anderson
Alfred Forbrich
Doug Gerbrandt
Jens Kaack
Dale Mass
Iain McKay
Garry Mihaichuk
Shirley Moule
Nick Perchthaler
Darren Tenor
Les Walker

Transition Team

Jaqui Anderson
Andrew Little
Terrylee Mckay
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Call Committee

Jens Kaack
Alex McKay
Garry Mihaichuk
Bob Montgomery
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Pastor's Reflections by Pastor Julianne Barlow

Parts of a Whole

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:1-11 (NRSV)

'A Slice of Life' -- By Carol McAdoo Rehme

Jean heaved another world-weary sigh. Tucking a strand of shiny black hair behind her ear, she frowned at the teetering tower of Christmas cards waiting to be signed. What was the point? How could she sign only one name? A "couple" required two people, and she was just one.

The legal separation from Don had left her feeling vacant and incomplete. Maybe she would skip the cards this year. And the holiday decorating. Truthfully, even a tree felt like more than she could manage. She had canceled out of the carolling party and the church nativity pageant. Christmas was to be shared, and she had no one to share it with.

The doorbell's insistent ring startled her. Padding to the door in her thick socks, Jean cracked it open against the frigid December night. She peered into the empty darkness of the porch. Instead of a friendly face -- something she could use about now -- she found only a jaunty green gift bag perched on the railing. From whom? She wondered. And why?

Under the bright kitchen light, she pulled out handfuls of shredded gold tinsel, feeling for a gift. Instead, her fingers plucked an envelope from the bottom. Tucked inside was a typed letter. It was a...story?

The little boy was new to the Denmark orphanage, and Christmas was drawing near, Jean read. Already caught up in the tale, she settled into a kitchen chair.

Pastor's Reflections (continued)

From the other children, he heard tales of a wondrous tree that would appear in the hall on Christmas Eve and of the scores of candles that would light its branches. He heard stories of the mysterious benefactor who made it possible each year.

The little boy's eyes opened wide at the mere thought of all that splendour. The only Christmas tree he had ever seen was through the fogged windows of other people's homes. There was even more, the children insisted. More? Oh, yes! Instead of the orphanage's regular fare of gruel, they would be served fragrant stew and crusty, hot bread that special night.

Last, and best of all, the little boy learned, each of them would receive a holiday treat. He would join the line of children to get his very own....

Jean turned the page. Instead of a continuation, she was startled to read: "Everyone needs to celebrate Christmas, wouldn't you agree? Watch for Part II." She refolded the paper while a faint smile teased the corner of her mouth.

The next day was so busy that Jean forgot all about the story. That evening, she rushed home from work. If she hurried, she'd probably have enough time to decorate the mantle. She pulled out the box of garland, only to drop it when the doorbell rang. Opening the door, she found herself looking at a red gift bag. She reached for it eagerly and pulled out the piece of paper.

...to get his very own orange, Jean read. An orange? That's a treat? she thought incredulously.

An orange! Of his very own? Yes, the others assured him. There would be one apiece. The boy closed his eyes against the wonder of it all. A tree. Candles. A filling meal. And an orange of his very own.

Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others (Phil 2:4).

We talk about the me generation, and individualism is evident in many parts of our culture. Followers of Jesus in Philippi were encouraged to share in the Spirit, with the same love of Christ, and to do nothing from selfish ambition or deceit.

The language of being in one body, united by one faith, one Lord, one baptism challenges our self interest. At Christmas, giving generously is a common practice and we are encouraged to think of others in need. This is not simply about giving gifts and shovelling snow. The deeper possibility is to see each other as a slice of the whole, as connected by the Holy Spirit in Christ, as the Body of Christ.

During this season of Advent as we anticipate the celebration of Christ's birth, we can watch for opportunities God presents to recognize and value others all around us.

Blessings for you, your family, neighbours and friends this Advent and Christmas season, from the staff at LCOS.

Pastor
Julianne

Judy

Johanne



Family & Youth Ministries by Pastor Julianne Barlow

There is no doubt that Jesse Ramson, Director of Family and Youth Ministries will be missed. Our prayers continue as he follows the leading of the Holy Spirit and we wish him the best wherever God leads.

There is also great joy and gratitude that people have stepped up to ensure these invaluable ministries continue. Six young adults (20-32 years) have offered to organize and lead youth and tween events.

December 1st at 10:00 am



December 7th at 7:00 pm



December 14th at 7:00 pm



Heather and Lauren are directing and coordinating the multi-generational Christmas pageant, "Santa's Favourite Story". There is deep gratitude also for those who have asked "What can I do to help?" Some are calling families, others doing costumes etc.

Most important, however, is that we continue to pray for LCOS.

**SERVICE
OF HEALING
AND
REMEMBRANCE
SUNDAY
DECEMBER
15TH AT 7 PM**



Operation Christmas Child Workbee

A Huge Thank You to All



Board & Call Committee Report by Garry Mihaichuk

Since there is an interconnection of the two reports this month I have decided to combine the report into one for November only. The attached was delivered to the congregation on November 24th as a Ministry Moment but since it may have been missed I am using it as the Vine report.

There is a sense of sadness at the departure of Jesse both in his role as Director of Family Ministry and at the hope that he could have been a candidate for our Senior Pastor vacancy. This has raised questions as to why did he leave and why could we not have Jesse as a valid candidate for our new Senior Pastor.

I expect the decision to leave was not easy for Jesse and he is not required to tell LCOS why he made that decision. We need to have trust that this is God's plan that Jesse is following and although we do not understand it, God holds both Jesse and LCOS close to Him. What is important on any departure is what we can learn as far as improvements for the Board, the staff, the congregation and the entire ELCIC. This will be discussed at his exit interview by the Board Executive and Pastor Julianne.

Jesse was nominated by several congregational members to be a candidate for the Senior Pastor role. The Call Committee discussed this with Bishop Larry and he explained that candidates need to be ordained pastors and need to be an ELCIC rostered pastor, a priest of the Anglican Church of Canada, or a rostered pastor of our sister church in the United States – the ELCA. The Bishop met with Jesse on October 18th following our Call Committee meeting. Prior to this meeting, Jesse had begun the application process with our Synod's candidacy committee and had been in conversation with Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon regarding the process.

The Call Committee has been working diligently at trying to advance the call and selection of the new pastor. The Congregational Mission Profile (the LCOS resume) has been received and reviewed by Bishop Larry. We reviewed the 15 LCOS nominees made by congregational members at our Call Committee meeting with Bishop Larry on October 18th. Three (3) of the fifteen (15) nominees are not available for call as they did not meet the roster status requirement. Six (6) of the nominees, in previous conversation with Bishop Larry, expressed that they were not open to seeking a call. Bishop Larry has contacted the remaining six (6) nominees directly and the Congregational Mission Profile and the Flourishing Congregation Survey have been forwarded to those nominees who asked to see these materials and to those who agreed to consider entering the call process at LCOS. To this list, Bishop Larry added one more name which he provided our profile and survey and they have expressed an interest. Therefore, we have 3 potential candidates and a possible 4th that are interested in continuing the call process with LCOS.

Once a candidate indicates their interest they provide the Bishop with their Mobility forms (which is their resume) for our consideration, who then shares them with the Call Committee. The Call Committee will review these candidates with the Bishop and the Call Committee will determine whether there is interest in further discussions and interviews. Next Saturday, November 30th, the Call Committee will meet again with Bishop Larry to receive and review the potential candidates' Mobility forms and to determine the next steps. We are now on God's path to finding our next Senior Pastor!

Board & Call Committee Report (continued)

We ask for your continuing prayers as the Call Committee and Bishop Larry meet and for the call process at LCOS in determining God's plan for our new pastor.

One of the congregational questions I get is: "Whether it makes sense to continue their involvement with LCOS?" My answer is a definite yes! As Pat Kaack pointed out in her terrific February 2019 Vine article based on Hebrews 10:23-25: *"And let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another."* We continue to be a fantastic congregational family with an amazing spirit and a history of resilience and faith. I do believe that God has a plan for us and our new Senior Pastor and I am excited by the possibilities. As Mother Teresa said, "God will never, never, never, let us down if we have faith and put our trust in Him."

In closing, please continue individually and collectively to keep our pastor, Pastor Julianne; our terrific staff, Judy, Johanne; the Board; the Call Committee; and entire congregation in your prayers. May God bless you all.



FEEL THE JOY!

Annual Ladies Potluck

Monday, December 2nd at 6:00 pm

Cliff Blumhagen, Financial Secretary

2020 Pledge Update:

A total of 50 pledges have been received up to and including November 24 committing a total of \$134,248 for 2020.

This compares to last year where there were 60 pledges received committing a total of \$145,752.

This is a 7.9% decrease in the amount pledged.

If you would like to submit a pledge and have not had the opportunity yet, you may still do so. You can get a pledge card from the church office during office hours or from the usher at a Sunday service. Once completed, you may place it in the offering plate.

Giving Statement Changes Are Coming!

Changes in the format of pledge statements, quarterly giving statements, and annual tax receipts are coming for 2020.

LCOS has implemented a new software system called Realm in 2019. It is a transition from the previous software system called Helpmate that was used by the church office for tracking of information on people. It also incorporates the previous system called Donarius which was used by the Financial Secretary to record all giving and from which to generate pledge statements, quarterly giving statements, and annual tax receipts.

The new Realm also offers:

- online access for givers to view their giving
- option to email statements rather than printing them
- online giving and text giving (these options will be implemented in 2020)

So, in the short term, you'll see a new format pledge statement for 2020 pledges. And then in 2020, the quarter 1 giving statement in April will be the new format statement.

The format of your 2019 tax receipt will be unchanged as 2019 giving is still tracked in the former system. The tax receipt will have a new format for 2020 giving.

Please call the Financial Secretary, Cliff Blumhagen with any questions (in person, 403-936-0419, or blumhagencg@gmail.com).

Altar Care



Our Altar care group is always looking for new people to join. This is a lovely opportunity if you prefer behind-the-scenes volunteering. For more information, please contact Marg Hall - 403-256-4786 or Karen Smith - 403-271-1472.

Communion Assistants

If you are interested in assisting with Holy Communion, or wish to help coordinate the 11:00 assistants, kindly contact Kari Paul at 403-278-3561 for further details.



Christmas Pageant Practices



Sunday, December 8th at 10:00am

Sunday, December 15th at 10:00am

All adults and children are welcome!

Join our LCOS tradition of trimming our GIVING TREE in the lobby with MITTENS, SCARVES, HATS and SOCKS. Under the tree you may place small AFGHANS and BLANKETS.

The tree will be available for decorating from December 1st until December 15th. After the 15th the items will be delivered to various organizations including Ronald McDonald House, the Mustard Seed and CLWR.



Christmas Eve Services



Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

4 PM AND 6 PM
8 PM WITH HOLY
COMMUNION

**Please note that there will be
one service on Sunday,
December 29 at 11:00 am.**

Bishop's Message by Bishop Larry Kochendorfer (continued)



December 2019 Message for Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders

Dear Beloved of God –

May grace and peace be yours in abundance (1 Peter 1:2a).

Hanging in my office is the beautiful image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, also known as the Virgin of Guadalupe. The image is a reproduction of an original painting by a Roman Catholic Priest, Father Salvador, who my wife, Cathy, and I, and several other adults visited in 2001 in the community he served in the Parish of the Holy Spirit and St. Mary of Guadalupe in Ecatepec, Mexico.

According to tradition, an indigenous peasant, Juan Diego, had a vision of the Virgin in 1531. As he was walking among the hills, he heard a song which sounded like birds singing - a song soft and beautiful. He wondered if he was dreaming but he followed the sound and was met by the Virgin Mary who appeared to Juan Diego as she does in the painting - as an indigenous woman dressed in royal garments. She spoke to him in his native tongue calling his name and asking him to go to the bishop and tell him to have a shrine built in her honor on the place where she had appeared to Juan Diego. He went to the bishop and with great difficulty was finally able to see the bishop who responded with great skepticism to Juan Diego's request.

The Virgin appeared a second time and Juan Diego begged the Virgin to send someone more important. "I am insignificant," he said, "a piece of rope, the last rung of a ladder." She responded, "My child, the smallest, the least, I send you. I have many messengers, but I have chosen you." She said that she wanted a building to be erected where she could show and give love, compassion, help and defense to the inhabitants of the land; a place where people could listen and find solutions to their miseries, pain and sufferings. The bishop responded to Juan Diego insisting that he needed a sign.

A third time the Virgin appeared to Juan Diego this time asking him to collect roses which were nearby (very rare flowers not grown in the area) and to take them to the bishop as a sign. Juan Diego gathered the roses in his cloak and when he opened his cloak to show the bishop, out fell the flowers and imprinted on his cloak was the image of the Virgin. The bishop immediately fell to his knees and asked Juan Diego for forgiveness at not having listened to him. A church was built on the site where the Virgin had appeared and today, on this site, hangs the cloak and its image of the Virgin in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe - a worship site visited by more people each year than the Vatican in Rome.

One of the things that intrigued me about this story is that from the margins - the fringe - of his world, Juan Diego, an indigenous Mexican, was prodded awake by God's presence in the world through the appearances of Mary. Like many before him, Juan Diego was a reluctant prophet begging the Virgin to entrust the mission to someone of importance. But she would not take no for an answer, and Juan Diego's awakening to his mission would precipitate the awakening of all of Mexico to God's love through Christ.

Bishop's Message (continued)

As we journey this Advent and Christmas season, listen carefully - listen closely to how often God will chose someone on the margins to carry an important word: Mary - who gave birth to the Savior of the world; Zechariah - who, serving in the temple, is unable to speak until his son John the Baptist was born; Elizabeth - who gave birth to the one who would prepare the way for the Messiah - John the Baptist; and shepherds in the field - who were chosen to welcome and announce the birth of Jesus.

This Advent - this Christmas - listen carefully - listen closely - for God at work through the poor, the lowly, those on the outside, those on the edge and then ask the very Lutheran question: "what does this mean?" The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

In Christ Jesus -

Shalom,

Larry

The Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer, Bishop Synod of Alberta and the Territories Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

AN ANNUAL TRADITION!

CHRISTMAS CAROL SING

Let's celebrate with great
music,
and some small desserts!

SUNDAY DECEMBER 8TH AT 7PM

December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Communion 9:00 Worship Service 10:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Church Family Advent Craft 11:00 Worship Service	2 1:00 Memory Plus 6:00 Annual Ladies Potluck	3 1:00 Games Group	4 9:30 Experiencing God 10:00 Staff Meeting 11:00 Acadia Lunch Program 7:00 Drop In Dwelling 7:00 Al-anon 7:00 11:00 am Praise Team	5	6 7:00 Young Adults Christmas Party	7 6:00 Breakfast at The Seed 8:30 50+ Exercise 7:00 Tween Christmas Party
8 9:00 Worship Service 10:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 11:00 Worship Service 7:00 Christmas Carol Sing	9 1:00 Memory Plus	10 7:00 Today's Pilgrims	11 9:30 Experiencing God 10:00 Staff Meeting 11:00 Acadia Lunch Program 7:00 Drop In Dwelling 7:00 Al-anon 7:00 11:00 am Praise Team	12	13	14 8:30 50+ Exercise 7:00 Youth Classy Christmas
15 9:00 Worship Service 10:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 11:00 Christmas Pageant 7:00 Service of Healing and Remembrance	16 1:00 Memory Plus 7:00 Fireside Group January Vine Submissions	17 1:00 Games Group 7:00 Board Meeting	18 9:00 Staff Meeting 9:30 Experiencing God 10:30 Southwood 11:00 Acadia Lunch Program 7:00 Drop In Dwelling 7:00 Al-anon 7:00 11:00 am Praise Team	19 10:00 Falling Upward Book Study 7:15 Flock Care	20	21 8:30 50+ Exercise
22 Communion 9:00 Worship Service 10:00 Adult, Children and Youth 11:00 Worship Service	23	24 Christmas Eve 4:00 Christmas Eve Service 6:00 Christmas Eve Service 8:00 Christmas Eve Service with Holy Communion	25 Christmas Day Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27 Office Closed	28
29 11:00 Worship Service <i>We invite those who normally attend our 9:00 am service to join us at 11:00 am today.</i>	30 Office Closed	31 Office Closed	1 Office Closed	2 Office Reopens		