Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

December 2019 January 2020 Newsletter

FROM PASTOR DAVE

Advent and Christmas 2019: God with Us!

Christmas at its deepest level is "God is with us!" This affirmation of God's presence in our lives changes everything. This year during our worship in Advent, Christmas and Epiphany we will listen to Mathew's eloquent description of how God is with us specifically at some of the deepest edges of our lives. My prayer for all of us is that these principles would be a lived curriculum of God's presence. The Lord be with you!

Matthew 1:21-23

God with us in Jesus

(4th Sunday of Advent, December 22)

²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

Matthew affirms that "Emmanuel, God with us" happened in the 8th century BCE when the Assyrian army threatened Israel, in the 1st century CE in the birth of Jesus the Christ, and in 85 CE in Matthew's worshiping community in Syria. God's presence is carried by a person, Jesus, crucified and risen, alive and present with us in 2019. His presence changes everything!

Matthew 2:11-12

God with us in worship

(Epiphany of Our Lord, January 6)

¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The magi were foreigners who came to worship the true king, Jesus the Christ. The worldly king, Herod, hypocritically claimed that he also wanted to worship Jesus, when in fact he wanted to destroy him. Worship is one of Matthew's favorite themes. He affirms that in the act of worship, we experience "God with us!"

Matthew 2:13

God with us in exile

(1st Sunday of Christmas, December 29)

up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him."

Jesus began his life as a refugee! Vulnerable before the malevolent power of the evil king, the true king's young life was preserved in Egypt, site of God's act of deliverance in the Exodus. This truth leads us to the affirmation that our true home is not any physical place, but a living relationship with the living God who is with us. On our recent trip to Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, Pastor Julio Caballero affirmed that "we are all refugees" in this world.

Matthew 2:16-18

God with us in death

(1st Sunday of Christmas, December 29)

and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.

Continued on pg 2...

¹³ Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent

We can trust that God is with us, even in the most painful times of our lives. A unique part of Matthew's Christmas story is that God is with us even in the death of our children. Rachel died around 1600 BCE and was buried in Ramah. In 586 BCE Ramah was the place that the Jewish exiles gathered as they were going into exile in Babylon. Jeremiah describes that event poignantly as Rachel, from her tomb, weeping for the exiles. Rachel weeps again from her tomb in the 1st century when Herod kills the children. In all of these times, and in our own losses, we are not alone. God is with us.

Matthew 28:19-20 God with us always!

(Holy Trinity, June 7)

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

In the final scene of the Gospel of Matthew the risen Jesus states emphatically, "I, with you, I AM!" The last word of Matthew reaches to us explicitly in the commissioning of the disciples, which has become the biblical foundation for our mission and vision. God is with us in making disciples by going (reaching out), baptizing (experiencing God) and teaching (nurturing faith).

May God be with you in worship, exile, death and mission this Christmas!

Pastor Dave

Come join us for a special Wednesday night worship on Wednesday, December 4! At 6:00, our Confirmation students will be leading a Christmas Worship in the Sanctuary. Highlights include: a taste of what they've been learning in Confirmation this fall, the Christmas Story (of course!), Bible readings, music, and a closing candlelit prayer time. Your presence in this youth-led worship expresses a strong message to our young people: your leadership matters, your stories matter, your faith matters, YOU matter. So please come and support our Confirmation youth! Wednesday, December 4th at 6:00 pm. My hope and prayer is that this service could launch us all into a December that is focused on the heart and depth of this season.



WE DID IT!! YOU GAVE TO THE MAX!!

Thanks to the generosity of our members, their families, and friends (both near and far), LCGS was able to meet the \$15,000 goal. That means that \$30,000 was raised for God's mission!

And to the anonymous donors who offered matching funds...Wow! You are so appreciated!

Thank you all for making this happen! Give to the MAX Day was November 14th. It is a state-wide day of giving in Minnesota for our wonderful non-profits! Give to the MAX has been going several years now but this is the first time that LCGS has participated!

I'm afraid to say it, but once the aisles brimming with Halloween candy are cleared, they'll probably be filled with...Christmas items! I'm shaking my head just thinking about it, but the holidays are upon us — or, at least, retailers want us to think they are.

In today's post, Rev. David Loleng considers what simplicity and "creating margin" might have to do with stewardship and generosity.



It's a great message for any time of year, but particularly when the candy cane decorations are threatening.

Yours truly, Adam Copeland, Center for Stewardship Leaders

Generous Space

Rev. David Loleng

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth ... but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. — Matthew 6:19-21

Among the shifts in religious giving, the church must transition away from seeing stewardship as focusing on "funds development" towards a stewardship that focuses on "people development." Best practices, new strategies, and deciphering giving trends are helpful, but our focus needs to be on **forming generous disciples of Jesus Christ**. The language about creating a "culture of generosity" in our churches is ubiquitous, but we can't lose sight of the fact that transformed lives have to be at the very center of any culture change. How can the church encourage individuals in this process of spiritual formation?

For real and lasting change to happen in our churches and in people's lives, we need to see a change not only in our beliefs but also in our behaviors. So, I wonder, what are some spiritual practices that will help cultivate generosity and Christ-centered stewardship in the lives of those in our churches? Next, I'll briefly share two spiritual practices that have become important for me as I have thought about how to be a steward of my time, talents, and resources.

Living with Simplicity

The first is the spiritual discipline of *simplicity*. Simplicity helps us to let go of our inordinate attachment to things (possessions, experiences, achievements) and our insatiable desire for more. Simplicity embraces the uncluttering of our lives of excess and practicing things like frugality, contentment, thankfulness, sustainability, integrity, and generosity.

(Continued)

Richard Foster describes the importance of simplicity in his book *Freedom of Simplicity: Finding Harmony in a Complex World*, writing:

The complexity of rushing to achieve and accumulate more and more threatens frequently to overwhelm us...Christian simplicity... brings sanity to our compulsive extravagance, and peace to our frantic spirit...It allows us to see material things for what they are-goods to enhance life, not to oppress life. People once again become more important than possessions...it is the Spiritual Discipline of simplicity that gives us...a strategy of action that can address this (poverty and hunger) and many other social inequities.

Simplicity helps us to re-calibrate our lives back toward God and God's will. It frees us to be more generous and mission focused.

Creating Margin

The second spiritual practice is closely related to simplicity. It is creating *margin* in our lives. Creating margin makes space in our lives. As Dr. Richard Swenson describes in his book *Margin*, it is like the margins on a piece of paper: there is no text on the top, bottom and sides, just empty space. As James Bryan Smith explains, Swenson "believes our lives are like that. We add so much to our schedules that we have no 'margin,' no space for leisure and rest and family and God and health."

Just as simplicity addresses the insatiable desire for more things, creating "margin" addresses what some have called the great enemy of our spiritual lives, which is "hurry." Hurry is symptomatic of a culture that, as James Bryan Smith states, "rewards busyness and overextension as a sign of importance."

Creating "margin" means uncluttering our schedules, our time, and our lives. When we have more "margin" in our lives, we can be more generous with our time and our talents. Creating margin affects our relationship with God and others, our health, and our ability to join in Christ's mission in our communities and world.

The spiritual disciplines of simplicity and margin not only help to cultivate a culture of generosity, they also help support people in our churches who are growing as generous disciples of Jesus Christ and who then might impact our communities and world.

Rev. David Loleng is the Director of Church Financial Literacy and Leadership at the Presbyterian Foundation (PCUSA). He is the co-author of the <u>Engage</u> Curriculum and Resources.

Reprinted with permission. This Luther Seminary Stewardship posting is from October 2016.



Sunday School

Sunday, December 8 - Christmas Worship Practice!

During Sunday School (10:00 am), we will do a full run through practice of our Christmas Program. We will practice sitting, standing, walking, talking, and singing. After practice, stay for...

"The Advent Workshop" Christmas Crafts!

We will have a variety of gifts and crafts for all ages to create!

And, we'll even have a station for kids to wrap their crafts to give to others!

We'll provide all of the craft supplies.

Please bring something to share for lunch!

Crafts from 11:00 – 1:00 (or whenever you finish...)

Potluck lunch around 12:30.

Sunday, December 15th Sunday School Christmas Worship!

8:45 – Sunday School Children Lead Worship

Please arrive at 8:30 to put on costumes and line up!

10:00 – Family Activities

Play Bingo, watch a movie, and eat Christmas treats!

11:00 - Sunday School Children Lead Worship

There will be NO Sunday School December 22, or December 29



Sunday School Service Project Sundays

January 5 – January 12 – January 19

We will have hands-on projects for the whole family to help make a difference in our community. Designed for all Sunday School ages – from 3 year olds to 6th graders – plus parent/adult helpers.

Our Reaching Out Leadership Team is helping to coordinate the service projects this year. We are so excited to partner for these amazing weeks! Thank you to everyone who has donated items to share with our neighbors in need!



POINSETTIA ORDERS

If you would like to share a poinsettia for decorating the altar at Christmas in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special occasion, please call the church office at 525-1922 or send this form and your donation to the church office by **Monday, December 11th, before noon.** The cost is \$15 which includes a poinsettia plant and a donation to CHUM.



HONURAN LUTHERAN CHURCH DONATIONS

This year we would like to offer an additional option for Christmas giving.
If you would like to make a \$15 donation to Companion Synod Ministry with
Honduras in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special occasion, please send this
form to the church office before Monday, December 11th.

Name:	
Phone Number:	
Number of Poinsettias requested:	
Number of \$15 Honduras gifts donated:	
Total amount of money enclosed: \$	
Please indicate what you would like your notation	to say:
given in loving memory of:	
given in honor (or other similar notation) of:	
given by:	



Mark your calendars and plan to join us for our

9th Annual Celebration of Light and Music

Sunday, December 8th - 2:00-7:00 p.m. at <u>Camp Hiawatha</u>
This family friendly event includes an afternoon of sleigh rides, cookie decorating, crafts, yummy food demonstrations, and a Christmas carol sing-a-long.

Worship and a festive holiday meal round out the evening.

Cost: \$5 per person for afternoon activities (\$20 family maximum) \$10 per person for meal (1/2 price for ages 6-11)

RSVP by December 4 if you plan to join us. 218-666-5465

Salvation Army Bell Ringing - December 1st and 8th

Are you looking for a way you can do ministry during the holidays? One easy way is ringing bells for the Salvation Army. Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd members, families and friends have the opportunity to donate one or two (or more) hours of time to assist with this critical work. We will cover two full days of bell ringing at one location: Cub Foods on Central Entrance (inside!).



The dates are Saturday, December 1st and 8th, from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM. Look for the signup poster, It will be on an easel in the gathering space. Please fill in your name for one or two one-hour time slots to offer your help for this worthwhile cause. Call Marcia Semerau at 722-1042 with questions

Pasty Bake Time! December 6-7, 2019. It's Pasty Bake time again! The Fellowship Hall will be filled with volunteers working together and those yummy pasties once again December 6-7, 2019. This fundraiser supports the 2019 Mission Plan (budget) approved by the congregation earlier this year. Here's how you can get involved:

- Order pasties for your family, friends or to donate to local charities. Pasties orders will be taken Sundays in November in the Gathering Space. An order sheet will also be in the office and available for download on www.lcgsduluth.org homepage to take orders at your family gatherings or business.
- Donate online to the Pasty Bake. Want to support this fundraiser without buying pasties? Donate to the Pasty Bake fund online at www.lcgsduluth.org/give. A check may also be sent to the church office or dropped in the offering plate.
- Volunteer sign up also Sundays in the Gathering Space or online at https:// signup.com/go/bbVvrWa. (This link will also be on our homepage along with emails and Facebook posts.) We need volunteers Thursday evening, December 5 from 5-9 PM to help peel vegetables and to set up our workspace. Volunteers are also needed for morning and afternoon shifts Friday and Saturday, December 5-7. Families are encouraged to volunteer together

Please Pick Up and Pay for Your Pasties!

Friday, Dec 6 from 11 AM - 6 PM Saturday, Dec 7 from 10 AM - 3 PM
The church has limited refrigerated storage. If you are unavailable during these times, please arrange for someone else to pick up and pay for your pasties for you. Thank you!





Create, Laugh, Learn!

Mmm (Making Mitten Ministry) Good!

Thank you to everyone who came to our last session of "Create Laugh and Learn" to make mittens for those with cold hands! Also a big thanks to those of you who donated materials, including the Needle Art Guild, which make this ministry possible. We will have two more work sessions to complete the task.



OUR NEXT WORKSHOP: Tuesday, December 10th from 9:00-4:00 in the Lower Lakeside Room. We have plenty of materials. All you need is a lunch or snack and stay as long as you are able to. We will find a job for you and teach you a new skill!

I've enjoyed meeting new church members through this activity and hope you will join us.

SHARE YOUR TALENT WITH US!

The gift of music is a wonderful way to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus. We will have several opportunities for you or your child to share a musical offering during the Christmas Season.

December 15 (Prelude before the Sunday School Christmas Program)

December 22 - (During the Carol Sing at 10:00am)

December 24 - Christmas Eve worship at 2:30pm; 4:30pm or 10:30pm

Dec. 29, Sunday morning 10:00am worship

Please contact Linda Turpening, 952-210-4211 or Debbie Sanders, 218-216-5366 by

December 16.





It's time for our <u>Annual Giving Tree for Safe Haven and Life House.</u> You can start selecting tags off the tree in the Gathering Space today! When you take a tag please write your name on the sheet next to the number of the tag you selected. When, you bring your gift back please have it in a gift bag or the knit stocking with the gift tag attached. It is important for the agencies to be able to see what is in the bag so they can match it with the right recipient. Gifts for Safe Haven usually cost \$25 or less and the gift cards for Life House run between \$10-\$15. Please make sure to have all gifts back to the church no later than Sunday, December 8th. That way they can be delivered in time for the Christmas parties at these

places. If you have questions you can call Cathy Kreft at 218.391.7310.

Are you doing your Christmas Shopping online? If you haven't yet, use our Amazon Smile link! A portion of your purchase amount will be given to Good Shepherd, at no extra cost to you!



go directly to: smile.amazon.com/ch/41-0872836



ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION & ENDOWMENT FUND ANNUAL MEETING -

The Endowment Fund Annual Meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Congregation are scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 9th, 2020, at 9:45 AM. There will be budget informational forums hosted by the Vision Council Sundays, January 19th, 26th, and Feb 2nd for any further conversation and questions.

2019 CONTRIBUTIONS - Contributions intended for the 2018 tax year must be postmarked on or before **December 31, 2019**, or placed in the offering plate Sunday, December 29th. No exceptions can be made due to IRS Regulations.

If you have not had a chance, **please turn in your 2019 pledge card**. It is needed even if you are staying on Simply Giving with the same amount. Extra pledge cards are on the nametag table in the Gathering Space and in the office. Pledges are essential for the Vision Council to plan the 2020 budget. Thanks! And thanks to all who have submitted their pledge already!

Confirmation Announcements



Wednesday Evening Candlelight Christmas Worship

Wednesday, December 4th at 6:00 pm in the Sanctuary ***Confirmation Students will be asked to arrive early to prepare, greet, etc... *** Our Confirmation Students will be planning and leading this event. Please join us!

> No Confirmation Dec. 11, Dec. 18, Dec. 25, or Jan. 1 January 8 – Confirmation Mentor Check In (Mentors only)

January 15th Optional: Book Group Discussion Night Parents and youth!

We'll be having a Parent/Family Night on Wednesday, January 22nd before the big Confirmation Retreat January 24-26th.

Wednesday, January 22nd – Confirmation Parent/Family Night 6:00 in the Fellowship Hall Please make sure a parent or other caring adult is present this Wednesday! We will be sharing important information about the rest of the Confirmation Year, including the Retreat.

January 24-26th – Confirmation Retreat

Led by our Peer Ministers at Camp Hiawatha! Always the highlight of our Confirmation year! We'll be sharing more information and logistics on Jan. 22nd

Please hold our Confirmation Students, Peer Ministers, and Adult Leaders in your prayers – especially during this special retreat time.

We will celebrate and bless our Peer Ministers in worship on Sunday, January 12th with the Peer Ministry Installation. Please join us and say "Thank You" to our Peer Ministers before launch into leading the Confirmation Retreat.



Register for Camp Today!! Invite a friend!

Check out all the activities happening at camp in the next few months! **Www.vlmcamps.org** Summer Camp Registration is open! Join us this summer at Camp Vermilion and Camp Hiawatha Spend time at Camp Hiawatha or Camp Vermilion this summer and you will experience a week of a lifetime! It's a chance to try some new things, meet new friends, explore your creative side, learn team

work, be silly, sing, laugh, and learn what it means to live as God's people in the world!

We have programs for all ages - a one day experience for those new to camp, a two night program for those not quite ready for a full week, and week-long programs for elementary, junior high, and senior high campers. No matter what option you choose, we will work hard to make it an experience to remember.

Register your camper before February 15th to receive \$100 off of your fee!

Don't miss the early, early bird deadline on February 15th!

Advent and Christmas Calendar All are Welcome!

1ST SUNDAY IN ADVENT - SUNDAY DECEMBER 1ST -

WORSHIP AT 8:45 & 11:00

ADVENT NIGHT PRAYER

Wednesday, December 4th at 6:00 pm in the Sanctuary - Candlelight Christmas Worship lead by Confirmation Students

2ND SUNDAY IN ADVENT - ADVENT WORKSHOP — FOR EVERYONE!! Sunday, December 8th-Worship at 8:45 & 11:00AM

after Sunday School & 11:00 AM Worship Crafts: 11:00 – 12:00 (or whenever you finish...) Bring something to share for the potluck lunch after worship! We hope to see you there!

3RD SUNDAY IN ADVENT - SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS WORSHIP Sunday, December 15th 8:45 & 11:00

4TH SUNDAY IN ADVENT -

SUNDAY DECEMBER 22ND, 8:45 & 11:00AM WORSHIP **CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROL SING 10:00 AM** Hymn Sing between services in the Gathering Space. Refreshments will be served.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES
Tuesday, December 24th at 2:30 PM, 4:30 PM, & 10:30 PM

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE
Wednesday, December 25th at 10:00 AM

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29TH, 2019
Worship at 10:00 AM

LCGS IS PRAYING

Good Shepherd randomly prays for all its members.

During these weeks we are keeping the following in our prayers:

- Dec 1 Paul Vesterstein; Sandy Wallgren; Jackie & Darren Vogt, Peyton and Brynn
- Dec 8 Barbara & Tom Tomlinson; Pamela & Ryan Arola, and Henry; Karen Asanovich
- Dec 15 Our Sunday School children, and Sunday School volunteers
- Dec 22 Our Music Ministry members: choirs, Spiritsong, accompanists, and special music
- Dec 29 LCGS Pastors, staff, and leadership teams
- Jan 5 Lara & Charlie Ahrens, Dane and Peter; Patty & Bill Altonen; Audrey & Milt Amundson
- Jan 12 Amie & Joel Abenth, Ella & Isak; Kay & Tim Allen; Nan & Jerry Asperheim
- Jan 19 Jason & Bobbi Aulie, Elijah and Grayson; Taci & Tim Ball, Victoria and Matthew; Kathy & Bill Bellamy
- Jan 26 Sue & Steve Aulie; Dorothy Bergman; Amy Bergstrom, Adam; Ardy Bloomquist Prayer:

Forever, O Lord, they word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations...... Psalm 119: 89,90





<u>PRAYER REQUEST</u> - If you would like us to pray for a specific concern, please call the office at 525-1922 and your request will be shared with others who care about your needs and believe God will hear and answer. If you have a prayer request emergency and it is after church office hours, please email Patti at office@lcgsduluth.org.

PRAYERS FOR HOSPITALIZED PERSONS shared with the Prayer Chain (and in the Prayers of the Church) will begin with "God knows the names of all for whom we pray..." unless permission has been granted by the hospitalized individual or a family member of the individual. This is in keeping with our Privacy Policy. If you have questions/ comments regarding this policy, please feel free to discuss it with one of the pastors.

Worship Attendance

	<u>8:45</u> 147	11:00 68	11/10	<u>8:45</u> 110	11:00 66
11/17	8:45 145	only	11/24	8:45 146	11:00 36



Change Service Requested

NON PROFIT ORG **US Postage PAID**

Permit No 28 Duluth, MN

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd (ELCA)

1325 North 45th Avenue East, Duluth MN 55804-1507



Place address label here.

(new postal regulations)

Newsletter Deadline:

February

January 15

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

Sunday Services at 8:45AM and 11:00AM

Office Hours: M-Th • 9AM-4PM; Friday • 9AM—12 NOON

Phone: 218-525-1922

Website: www.lcgsduluth.org

MEET THE STAFF

Pastor Dave Mesner, Lead Pastor

(home) 218-529-9715

email: dmesner@lcgsduluth.org

Pastor Tim Berdahl, Pastor

(home) 218-728-4382

email: tberdahl@lcgsduluth.org

Katie Rich, Director of Youth & Family Ministry

218-525-1922

email: kkrich@lcgsduluth.org

Christine Whitcomb Office Manager

218-525-1922

email: office@lcgsduluth.org

Amie Abenth, Communications Coordinator 218-525-1922

email: communications@lcgsduluth.org

Stef Regenold, custodian

Greg Susens, custodian 218-525-1922

Beth Lee, Treasurer 218-525-1922

Sydney Fischer, Nursery Director 218-525-1922

Music Team:

Linda Turpening, Organist 218-525-1922

email: linda@archdirect.com

Debbie Sanders, Good Shepherd Choir Director

218-724-9065 email: debra.k.sanders@icloud.com