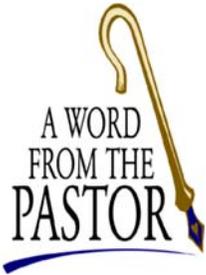


The Messenger

A newsletter of the people of First Lutheran Church, Waltham

The First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waltham
The Rev. Thomas E. Maehl, Pastor
www.firstlutheranwaltham.org

December 2018
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We have entered Advent, a season of repentance and hope. The repentance of Advent is different than that of Lent which is more focused on our self-centered ways, our consumption, our greed. In Lent repentance is active; one may choose to give something up or take something on.

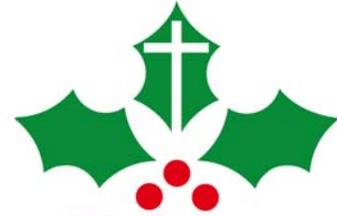
The repentance of Advent, however, with its emphasis upon patiently waiting and watching, is more passive. Yet there is mystery here, for passive waiting - sitting in silence, contemplating in darkness, noticing - is a form of action; and for many of us stillness can be harder than any Lenten discipline of our choosing. As Pascal one mused, "I have discovered that the unhappiness of human beings comes from just one thing; not knowing how to remain quietly in a room."

The call of Advent - to prepare for the coming of Christ who is paradoxically already with us - is ultimately a call to pay closer attention to mystery. In his book, God is in the Manger, Reflections for Advent and Christmas, the great theologian and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes,

"The lack of mystery in our modern life is our downfall and our poverty. A human life is worth as much as the respect it holds for the mystery. We retain the child in us to the extent that we honor the mystery. Therefore, children have open, wide-awake eyes, because they know that they are surrounded by the mystery. They are not yet finished with this world; they still don't know how to struggle along and avoid the mystery, as we do. We destroy the mystery because we sense that here we reach the boundary of our being, because we want to be lord over everything and have it at our disposal, and that's just what we cannot do with the mystery.... Living without mystery means knowing nothing of the mystery of our own life, nothing of the mystery of another person, nothing of the mystery of the world; it means passing over our own hidden qualities and those of others and the world. It means remaining on the surface, taking the world seriously only to the extent that it can be calculated and exploited, and not going beyond the world of calculation and exploitation. Living without mystery means not seeing the crucial processes of life at all and even denying them."

On Wednesdays we will gather for evening prayer. With times of silence & speaking, darkness & light, we will seek to attend to the mystery of God's love come among us. You are invited.

Faithfully, Pastor Maehl



Christmas Worship Opportunities

Christmas Eve, December 24
6:40 pm Pre-service music
7:00 pm Worship

Join us on Christmas Eve for our traditional worship with special music, candle lighting, carols, Holy Communion, and the proclamation of the Christmas Gospel. Pre-service music will begin at 6:40 and there will be light refreshments following. Consider inviting friends and neighbors who may not have a worship home, and consider bringing a refreshment to share.

Christmas Morning, December 25
10:00 am

Join us for a service of lessons and carols with Holy Communion. Feel free to dress informally, kids can even come in their pajamas.

Sunday, December 30
9:30 am One Service

We will have one service at 9:30 pm with Pastor Ángel Marrero preaching and presiding.

Nurturing Faith



Advent Wednesdays

December 5, 12, 19
7:15 pm

"For God alone I wait in silence; from God comes my salvation." (Psalm 62)

On the **Wednesdays in Advent** we will have a contemplative evening prayer service beginning at 7:15 pm, followed by refreshments. During each service there

will be times of silence, speaking, and singing; and there will be an opportunity for individual prayer and anointing for healing for anyone who would like.

Amidst the increased pace and demands of the season, considering carving out this time to attend to the waiting, prayer, repentance, and hopefulness to which the season calls us ... and at the same time mysteriously offers.

Adult Forums Sundays 9:15am

December 2, 9, 16: Same gender relationships and the Bible. We will be discussing interpretations of scripture taking into account science, historical understandings of gender, the witness of the Protestant Reformation, and more.

December 23: Christmas Pageant: during the learning hour the children will enact parts of the Christmas story in Founder's Hall with the adults joining in the singing of some of the best loved Christmas carols.

Advent Devotional

For those who would like, we have copies at church of an Advent daily devotional book from Luther Seminary. For those who would prefer an on-line version, you can access it via this following link:

<https://www.luthersem.edu/advent/>



CAROLING

Christmas Caroling

Sunday, December 16
3:00 PM

All are welcome to join us for our annual afternoon of Christmas caroling. We will gather at the church, leaving at 3:00 pm to carpool to a variety of residences. Note that children are most welcome. Caroling is a great way to bring Christmas cheer to others, and a way to enter into the season more deeply ourselves. Please join us.

Danish Christmas Service

Sunday, December 23, 3:00 pm

The Danish Society of Massachusetts is offering their annual Christmas service in Danish here at First Lutheran Church.



Wow! Here's good news from the Children's Library

We now have a new section of books by Ashley Bryan. Many of these book are about African American spirituals-so you can read them and have a family sing along!

New books by Ashley Bryan

"All Night All Day," "What a Morning," "Climbing Jacob's Ladder," "Walk Together Children," "I'm Going to Sing," "I am Loved," "Beautiful Black Bird," "Words to Life's Song"

Other New Library Books

"Otis Gives Thanks," "Growing with God-devotions for girls," "Thank You God-prayers for little children," "In Every Tiny Grain of Sand-a child's book of prayers," "The Easter Story," "The First Noel," "Love, The Gift I Can Give."

Happy Holidays to all
and keep on reading and singing!

Doing Justice, Serving All



Thanks to everyone who brought in bags of personal care items as part of our **Thanks For Giving Challenge**. We've had a good response collecting roughly 25 bags with personal care items. All of the items collected will be donated to Ascentria Care Alliance and will be distributed to resettled refugees and other persons in need in various communities in Massachusetts. **Thanks for Giving!**

Maker Fair

Sunday, December 9

On December 9th we will be holding a "Maker Fair" where handmade items, baked goods, (and other gift items) will be offered for sale; with proceeds going to support the Camp Calumet Scholarship Fund. We invite the contribution of handmade items, baked goods, and other giftable items. . Items may be donated between now and the day of the sale. Items may be purchased beginning at 9:15 am (after the early service) through noon on the day of the sale.

Flash Event

On Sunday, December 2 following each worship service there will be an opportunity to write Christmas cards to refugee families in detention centers, also to families in the Waltham Family School, and to a relative of someone in our community who is currently in prison and would benefit from knowing he is being thought of. Christmas cards will be provided.

Pledge Update

We've had a strong response to our stewardship appeal. Thank you to so many of you for taking so seriously our responsibility to provide for the mission of the church and for your faithful financial giving. The following are statistics from our Fall appeal:

- Thus far, this year we have received 42 pledges totaling \$223,352
- Given increases and decreases, new pledges and people who have moved away or died, we have a net increase of \$7,516 over last year.
- However, with the Korean Hope Church leaving we currently have an anticipated deficit of approximately \$14,000 in our 2019 budget.

For any who are in a position to increase their pledge, that would be a great help at this time. The finance committee is now at work preparing a draft budget for 2019 that will be reviewed by the church council and presented at the congregational meeting. Please plan on attending the annual meeting following worship on January 27. Members of the finance committee include: Scott Niemann, Susan Pintus, and Brad Nederhoff.

Intern Update

We are delighted to report that along with the pledges to the general budget there were also pledges of \$27,300 to the Intern Fund. This will allow us to begin making plans for an intern for the 2019-2020 academic year. We are so grateful to all who support this important ministry that:

- Blesses each intern with an opportunity to learn through their year of full-time work at First Lutheran,
- Blesses First Lutheran with the unique gifts for ministry that each intern brings
- Blesses the wider church by providing a robust site for ministry.

Walking Together in God's Love

Winter Clothing Drive Update

Thanks to all who donated winter coats, hats, scarves, mittens, sweaters, and boots for Brandeis international students and Waltham Family school students. We had two car loads of adult items that were delivered in Brandeis and several bags of children's items that were brought to the Waltham Family School. We hope to do it again next year.

Thank you!

Thanks To ...

Sam Thomasson-Bless for leading the PFLAG training after worship on November 25; and for offering to

have follow up conversations with youth and adults.

Julie Weeden and **Kathryn McCowan** for leading children's activities after worship on November 25.

Sally Ann Biter, Eliza Dickert, Isaac Maehl, Julia Niemann, Maggie Niemann, and Kayali Pandian for hosting a *Parent's Night Out* for nine children on November 17. Through their efforts \$168 was raised for the Camp Calumet Scholarship Fund.

Members of the Justice and Service Team for coordinating the card writing Flash Event on December 2 and the Thanks4Giving drive.

Mary Ellen Adams, Carol Hansen, LuAnn Kimker, Meg and Isaac Maehl, Janice Ostrander and Ann Sjodin for "greening" the church in preparation for Advent.

Doris Speer for donating a book to our Children's Library from the "wish list."



SENIOR CLASSICS CHRISTMAS PARTY

Christmas Party

December 20th

11:45 am

Our annual Senior Classics Christmas Party will be held on Thursday, December 20. The meal will be pot-luck. Anyone who has the time (and inclination) is welcome to join us.

Fall Retreat Update

A group of 12 participated in our annual Fall Retreat in Londonderry, Vermont. We focused on the parable of the Prodigal Son. And how all of the various personality traits (dutiful, rebellious, resentful, remorseful) in ways exist in each of one of us. We also enjoyed great food, games, conversation, and one another's company. Our next Fall retreat is scheduled for November 8-10, 2019.

Calumet Winter Retreat

February 22-24

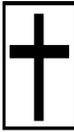
Our annual winter retreat to Camp Calumet is scheduled for Feb. 22-24. Everyone is welcome to this retreat, children and adults. Mark your calendars and watch for more details about signing up coming in January.



Chaplains on the Way Gift Cards

Once again we are collecting \$5 or \$10 gift cards to Dunkin Donuts or McDonalds, as well as \$8-\$12 Charlie Cards (for transportation). These will be given to persons in need in our community through the ministry of Chaplains on the Way. Gift cards may be mailed or dropped off in the church office.

Walking Together in God's Love



*From the
Vicar*

It is Advent! A time where we look ahead to Christmas and wait for the coming of Christ. But we know that not much waiting actually happens in this time of the church year. The hustle and bustle of the Christmas season is hard to avoid. Between Black Friday, traffic around shopping centers, internet advertisements, and expectant receivers of gifts it is hard not to get sucked in. To me, this time of the year is made extra hectic and troublesome by my anxiety around climate change.

On Thanksgiving of this year, the government released a report about climate change and the devastating effects it has and will have on our world. Of course, this report came out before the biggest day of consumption in the whole year, Black Friday. I am not in the business of giving a lecture here, and I understand that Christmas and traditions are incredibly important to families! But, I do feel called to lift up something I am calling "A Christmas List to Combat Climate Change." So here are some suggestions and guidelines, take them or leave them.

- Look for things that are high quality and/or secondhand
- Experiences rather than things can be great gifts. Including museum memberships, tickets to sporting events, plays, or concerts. AirBnB and Groupon also have some great outings that you can purchase in any city including things like cooking classes, pottery classes, etc.
- Water bottles and coffee thermals' make great gifts and can help reduce waste
- Books, E-books, and used books make great gifts
- The old fashioned homemade coupon book is still relevant
- Seed packets, indoor plants, and potted herbs

These are just a few ideas, and like everything in life, this is all about balance and it is different for every family. Yes, corporations cause the most damage to the environment, but that does not mean we are free from reducing, reusing, and recycling this Christmas. I had a professor who spoke about the "paradox of practice" saying, "the small things are not going to change the world, but they are also absolutely vital." After all, through the incarnation, when baby Jesus is born, God meets us in earthly matter. God meets us in the bread and wine of communion. God meets us on walks through the woods, or mountaintop views, or with our toes in the ocean. This advent season as we wait for God to meet us yet again in earthly matter through the incarnation, let us consider the ways that we are caring for that very earthly matter.

Faithfully, Vicar Athena

Changes to Constitution & Bylaws

We have begun a process to change our constitution and bylaws. The changes to the constitution are recommended by the ELCA and will be in keeping with a new ELCA model constitution. The bylaws are being edited mostly to reflect changes to committee structures that have occurred since the last update in 1999.

A team consisting of Angela Neal, Susan Pintus, and Ann Sjodin have been working on a draft that will be reviewed by the Church Council in early December. Then the proposed changes will be emailed to active members who have email, and mailed by USPS to those who do not. If you have email, but still would like a hard-copy you may contact the church office and we will mail you one. The changes to the constitution and bylaws will then be discussed and voted upon at our annual meeting on January 27, and may be approved by simple majority.

Walking Together in God's Love

Prayer Concerns



New to our Prayer List: Penny Alexander (surgery on 12/18)

Members of our First Lutheran Community: Marquette Alexander; Sally Ann Biter; Ernie Gaiser; Christina Danielson; Connie Danielson; Rosy Hebert; Steve Latter; Lorne MacArthur; Kathryn McCowan; Cynthia Niiler, Joan Niiler, Pam Sperry.

Friends and Family: Christiansen family (*friends of Jennifer Lambert*); Donna (*friend of LuAnn Kimker*); Magnus Forsman (*great-nephew of Rut Johnson*); Pelle Geholm (*twin brother of Rut Johnson*); Susan Goslin (*friend of Joan Clemens*); Norma Huisman (*aunt of Brad Nederhoff*); Miriam Klapper (*friend of Paul & Susan Pintus*); Terri Koopman (*aunt of Matt Jerram*); Emily Lewis and her parents (*friends of Paul and Susan Pintus*); Joy Lewis (*friend of Joan Clemmens and Curt Schroeder*); Eudeen MacSweeney (*friend of Rut Johnson*); Stephen Manz (*nephew of Paul and Susan Pintus*); Jason Mihalko (*friend of Matt Jerram*); Nellie Pintus (*sister of Paul Pintus*); Ralph Platfoot (*uncle of LuAnn Kimker*); Sally Raymond (*Jen Biter's mom*); Stacey Reed (*sister of Penny Alexander*); Betty Schroeder (*aunt of Cury Schroeder*); Doug Sewich (*brother-in-law of Meg and Tom Maehl*); Maria Silva (*aunt of Olga Jimenez*); Judy Vichniac (*friend of Susan Pintus*), Jim Wroe (*cousin of Carol Hansen*).

For our partners: For the Rev. Ángel Marrero and Santuario Luterano, the Spanish speaking Lutheran congregation in Waltham. For other organizations we actively support: the Waltham Family School, the Waltham Community Day Center, Chaplains on the Way, the Waltham Alliance to Create Housing, and ELCA World Hunger.

If you would like to add/remove a name to/from the prayer list, please inform the church office.



Annual Meeting

Save the Date

Annual Meeting

after worship

Sunday, January 27, 2018

Celebrations

Senior Classics



To begin our November 15th meeting, we helped make the surprise gifts that Pastor Maehl gives the children at Christmas; the Thursday morning knitting group has also been participating in this project. Pastor Maehl reported on who's recently moved where – Reinhold to an assisted living apartment and Connie to the Scandinavian Living Center; both seem pleased with their new arrangements. Thanks to Larry, chicken tetrazini and some delicious cakes were on our luncheon menu to celebrate Larry's birthday. The fewer of us than usual adjourned early, perhaps because some had Thanksgiving errands to complete before an expected nor'easter could make driving hazardous and store shelves empty, but the storm fizzled.

A Christmas **pot luck luncheon** is scheduled for December 20th, 11:45 a.m. So, seniors, exercise your imagination and/or your culinary skills to come up with a favorite Christmas dish. An entrée and beverages will be provided.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waltham

Ministers: The people of the congregation

Staff: The Rev. Thomas E. Maehl, Pastor
tmaehl@rcn.com

Ms. Cynthia Niiler,
Director of Music and Parish Secretary
firstlutheranwalthamoffice@gmail.com

Vicar Athena Bless, Intern
abless@ses.plts.edu

Council: Kevin Dickert, President
Brad Nederhoff, Vice President
Eben Rauhut, Secretary
Scott Niemann, Treasurer
Erika Jerram
Jennifer Lambert
Angela Neal
Janice Ostrander
Susan Pintus
Ann Sjodin

Sunday Worship:

8:15 and 10:30 am
9:30 am on December 30—last Sunday

Sunday Learning Hour:

9:15 am

Visit us on the Web at:



www.firstlutheranwaltham.org

and on Facebook at First Lutheran Church - Waltham, MA

Our Mission: We discern that Jesus Christ is calling us to:

Walk together in God's love: nurturing faith, doing justice, serving all.