



Life of Faith

January 2022

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PASTOR'S BLOG

We welcome 2022 with the season of Epiphany; in worship we will be celebrating the light of Christ that has come into the world. We didn't imagine we would spend another Christmas separated from family and friends to prevent the spread of the pandemic. In this new year, what can we count on?

Like Mary and Elizabeth, we can count on God to keep God's promises. Like these faithful women, we can accept with thanksgiving the challenges and opportunities that await. We, too, are on a path we have never traveled before. The Gospel of John gives us a message of hope: [John 1: 3b-5]... "what has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it." We will face shadowy, scary places on our journeys; that seems to be the way of the world. The good news is that the light of Christ, defeats the shadows we encounter; we are not alone.

In 2022, make time to meet Jesus again in the gospels. Fill your hearts with the love of the Son, that God sent to live among us, teaching us how to live in the light. Hope and pray for a world living in the light of the kingdom of God!

Isaiah 60: 1-3: "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.

Let us make 2022 count!!!

DATES TO REMEMBER

January 5 – Immigration / Race Justice Group Book Study

January 11 at 6:30 – Church Council

January 20 – Immigration / Race Justice Group

January 23 – Annual Meeting after worship



From Mary Schramm.....

'God my friend
I offer you this day.

Let all my prayers, joy, suffering today
join with the other lives offered to you by
all the people of God..." (Wm. O'Malley)

I'd like to say I begin each day with this short desire, but I don't. Some days I forget. Many days I'm preoccupied with other thoughts: how to get the driveway shoveled, should I call the doctor about my physical problem, can I make dinner from what's left in the refrigerator? Nothing is that important, only fragments which are distracting and have little consequence in my daily life.

So....I try to remind myself the reason why God put me here. What is my role as a human being, living with others, being part of a community of faith? What gifts do I have that will help build community, give support to those who feel alone or useless, those in need of affirmation, a friend, or counselor.

It might be important to reconsider how our day is spent. At my age, much of my time is spent around self-care, self-gratification, self-enjoyment. Perhaps it has always been this way. Retirement should be a joy but I've discovered it is so easy to let that "joy" be severely limited to what makes me happy and what makes me glad to have another day centered around myself, my desires.

We are not space-takers without purpose. God, in God's grace, has given us the privilege and responsibility of being put on this earth to show the path of love and forgiveness to our fellow inhabitants. This can be our special assignment as we begin another year.



CHURCH COUNCIL December 2021

Annual Meeting: January 23
after worship in Fellowship
.. ..

- Pastor Nancy continues to contact the congregation members, past as well as present. She has purchased Sunday School supplies and takes flowers to Cascade Medical Center periodically.
- Our bank balance is stable. The Endowment fund fluctuates with the market. Giving was stronger in November but still below budget. Expenses continue to be down for now but deferred maintenance on the church buildings will be needed in the future.
- A \$1400 grant was received from the Synod for sun shade sails for outdoor worship.
- Annual benevolence giving was reviewed. The Backpack Ministry is being funded and listed in the financial report under "Other".
- Preliminary plans for the 2022 budget were reviewed with projected income greater than 2021 but not at 2019 levels yet.
- The Faith Action Network is disbanding so our giving will be redirected. The Tanzania school funding will continue for at least another year. At this time, we anticipate budgeting the same level of benevolence which may be more than 10% of projected income.
- Mortgage payoff was again discussed. The monthly interest payment for the parsonage property is about \$115 with the balance below \$30,000. Discussion about full payoff will be brought up at the Annual Meeting. Council recommends payoff.
- Faith volunteers are responsible for snow removal of less than 4". Members are asked to sign up.
- The Endowment committee is active and meeting monthly. The ELCA Endowment Fund paperwork has been reviewed and the

committee is working to rewrite the continuing resolution and determine amounts to spend each year. Their recommendation will need a 2/3 vote from the Council to approve. Committee member, Lisa Therrell, will attend the next Council Meeting for a question and answer session.

- The Nominating committee is looking for 1-2 candidates for Council. There is also need for Nominating committee members.
- Council continues to require mandatory masking for all attending indoor worship and will continue the online video for those who would prefer not to attend in person. We are resolving the technical issues of livestream into the fellowship hall. Pews have been moved to increase the distance in-between which provides safer seating.
- Pantry box is complete and in use.
- Ushers / Greeters will be needed to direct people to the live stream area. A schedule will begin this month with a sign-up sheet. A Volunteer Coordinator would be welcome.
- Recording attendance numbers: Greeters will take the count, record on the card provided and put in the envelope in the Fellowship office hallway, to be counted for the year-end report.
- Morgan Frazier would like to continue her use of the Fellowship Hall through June.

Lauren Head would like to use the hall 2 nights a week as a tutoring space. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday nights are open. Council agrees to all of these.



IMMIGRATION/RACE JUSTICE GROUP (I/RJG) December 16, 2021

- A grant from the NW Intermountain Synod has been received.
- *The 1619 Project*, a Pulitzer Prize winner, begun by NY Times will be discussed at book study.
- We will apply for \$1000 from the FLC Endowment to assist an immigrant family rebuilding their home after a fire.
- Alex will meet with Immigrant Justice leaders to prepare for the Feb. 3-4 workshop at Wenatchee Valley College.
- Direct Service:
 - A member working with the Migrant Education Program at Cascade School District (CSD) indicated that several of her students and their families have food insecurity. In addition, 4 students are needing help with Driver's Ed registration due in early January.
 - The I/RJG decided to give each of the two families resources for food and give the Migrant Program a substantial amount to help with Driver's Ed as were reminded how important it is for immigrant families to have someone in the family who can drive.
 - We will also check with MEND to see if any of the families with food needs might access the WIC or SNAP programs.
 - The first Leavenworth Library evening of mentoring for scholarship applications was postponed until Wednesday, January 12.
 - I/RJG has checked with the CSD AVID director regarding special student needs but hasn't heard back yet.
 - One of our immigrant single moms still has an ICE check-in date pending causing anxiety. Her attorney has been contacted. Medical issues continue.
- One of our members volunteers for NWIRP as she continues to prepare her law school applications, desiring to focus on immigration law.
- Another of our members attended her first Wenatchee Valley College President's Advisory Committee on Equity and Inclusion. She was also accepted as a mentor in the WA Center for Nursing's Diversity Program and will begin "listening sessions" for students of color soon. Some of her students are now working for Parque Padrinos in promoting health information and vaccinations and are being paid. She is a member of the Rural People's Voice.

Next book study: January 5, 2022
Next meeting: January 20, 2022



HISTORY CORNER: Part 1 of 3 submitted by Danny Thomassen

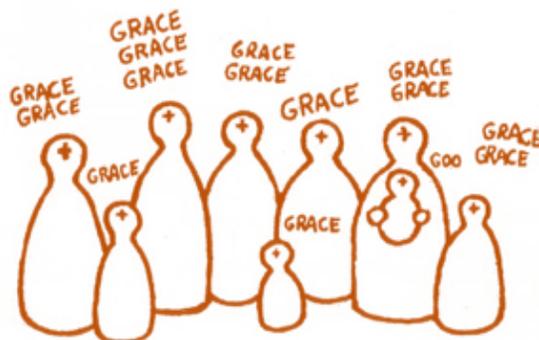
*Can I be free from sin? **No!** Is there a day of judgement? **Yes!** Is God indifferent to sin? **No!** Must I be damned? **Yes!***

Monk Martin Luther (1506) Erfurt, Germany, Augustinian Monastery

When Martin was very young superstitions about the world prevailed. Concepts of life on earth, God, and the afterlife were sensationalized. The Last Judgement with worldwide and cosmic catastrophes was a popular subject of God's retribution. During Luther's youth, minstrel street theaters traveled throughout Germany acting out skits in towns and villages portraying Satan with horns, thick red scaly skin, a spear-like tail, and saucer eyes searching for human souls to be thrown into the open descending dark void of Hades underworld for eternal suffering. The Catholic friar solicited the sale of indulgences in exchange for money from the audience. Hell was represented as unimaginable agonizing torments with sadistic fantasies modelled after the cruel punishments of the early European Middle Ages. Children like Luther suffered nightmares and adults were traumatized into delusions and insanity. God was portrayed as infinite; offenses against Him and demands for punishment infinite. Eternity of divine punishment was God's justice for all sins. These eternal punishments made God appear cruel, unjust, and deceitful. God's superiority reduced Him to a belligerent tyrant who would inflict eternal agonies on the wicked. The sinners would be cast into the mosh-pit of hell and the blessed would gloat over the torments of the damned, looking down on them from heaven with approval of their condemnation as they witnessed their eternal suffering.

For Martin Luther his times would shape his personality and interactions within the world that surrounded him. Luther was trapped between "four walls" (*quote above*), with no apparent way out struggling desperately to find assurance of salvation. He vigorously studied the Scriptures in Latin, original Greek, and Hebrew to find answers to his questions. He found his answer: "The righteous will live by faith" (Romans 1:17). "It is by grace that you have been saved, through faith not from yourselves; it is the gift of God; not works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Luther's struggle, study, and insights were clear; the Gospel of God's free and full forgiveness through Christ; the three "solos" (Latin for "alone"): We are saved by God's grace alone, through our faith alone; the Scriptures alone judge doctrine in the church.

For Luther salvation became attainable by grace through faith in Jesus Christ totally devoid of any human merit. All are sinners. Salvation is only obtained by belief in Jesus Christ crucified, buried, and risen: the Savior that forgives all sin and provides His gift of eternal salvation through faith only. These traumatic changes in the church did not bring about a disenchanting medieval world; it did not destroy the essential character of the church; it only meant that sacred religious relics, Catholic patron saints; the Pope and Roman Catholic Church leaders no longer had supernatural powers. The Reformation made people directly dependent on God who spoke with authority through the Bible and universal nature. (*To be continued with Part 2 next month*)



COMMUNION BREAD EXPERIMENT SURPRISES EVERYONE

Below is a letter draft penned by our Altar Guild leadership in mid-December. For those of you who were in attendance on December 5, we apologize. Lesson learned. We shall return to using our usual Body of Christ with renewed appreciation.

Dear Church Supply Company,

I would not be eager to assert that deliciousness or satisfying portions have any part in our Lord's Eucharist; nay, this notion could prove quite indefensible. Though at the same time, I may also beg to maintain that one could hope that the Body of Christ at least be palatable or large enough to see. Even as my fellow congregants and I might be well practiced in the disciplines of Nordic simplicity, blessed contentment and good Lutheran stoicism, we are sore pressed to confess that the level of asceticism that this gluten free, um, bread requires of us unfortunately exceeds our levels of gustatory tolerance.

If you could please remunerate us for this small 200 piece serving box, we would be most grateful.

Yours Truly,
Faith Lutheran Church
Leavenworth, Wa.



TREASURER'S REPORT



Thank you to all who gave throughout the year and also extra at the end of the year. Giving has been consistently below budget so additional gifts are helpful. With Covid and extreme weather, deferred maintenance on the Fellowship Hall was postponed so the budget was still able to be balanced. More information will be presented at the annual meeting on January 23. Your generosity is always appreciated. (Greg Steeber)

Thank you

SNOW SHOVELING!



Volunteers are needed to shovel walks around the church when snowfall is less than 4 inches. Please consider signing up – either on the sheet in the narthex or call Greg Steeber (509-548-6471)

Thanks to all who contributed articles and general interest information for this newsletter! Please forward contributions to Mary Steeber at mary.steeber@gmail.com by January 21 for the February issue.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

14 Stacy Barnhill
15 Mary Bywater
21 Laurie Reister
21 Christine Morgan
23 Jim Haberberger
30 Rosaleen Dickinson
31 Bill Moody

