

# The Friendly Visitor

First Lutheran Church  
Louisville, KY

December 2023



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## Message from the Pastor

Howard Thurman was an American theologian, pastor and civil rights leader. His theology and radical nonviolent views influenced and shaped the civil rights movement and its leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr. Thurman was the deans of Rakin Chapel at Howard University and Marsh Chapel at Boston University.

In 1973 Thurman published the book, *The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations*. Contained in this wonderful collection is a piece called, "The Work of Christmas."

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among others,  
To make music in the heart.

I was in Miami a few years ago, part of an annual pilgrimage I make every year, to spend time in prayer and reflection as I discern how God is calling me to lead in the coming year. This particular year, 2019, I had the good fortune of attending a concert of the St. Olaf College Choir, who happened to be in town at the same time. It was there that I was introduced to these words by Howard Thurman set to a beautiful choral piece.

I wrote to Dr. Anton Armstrong, the Director, to express my appreciation. In part, I wrote:

*Thank you for a worshipful evening of music that gathered me in and included me, reminded me of my calling of compassion and care for neighbor, children and siblings of color, and sent me out into the world hopeful and filled with God's love.*

My prayer for each of us is that we, too, experience the blessings of Christmas; that as we worship, we may be renewed in our commitment to embody love's service in this world. This indeed, is that Good News of Christmas: Love, Emmanuel, has come to be with us!

Merry Christmas!

John



## Message from the President

Dear Friends,

As the Christmas season arrives, we think of our loved ones and all the things we are grateful for. I am grateful to be married to the most understanding of husbands and be mother of two daughters who seem to have their feet firmly on the ground. I am thankful to be a member of a congregation of friends and to have the ability to serve this congregation as president and currently, bookkeeper.

The Food Pantry continues to thrive, thanks to the hours volunteered by members of the congregation – Vicky Frank, Stephanie McCoy, Lori Caron, Nola Lillie, Glenn Peavy, Jay Lillie and Doug Gill. I am grateful for each and every one. Our Pastor, John Bell, and our custodian, David Patton, also step in if we are busy.

As a child, I looked forward to Christmas, but mainly for the presents. As an adult, I realize that that longer-lasting than anything that can arrive in a box, tied up with a bow and with a receipt somewhere in its background, is the support and friendship of my sisters and brothers in Christ.

With prayers for peace and understanding in the season,

Sharon Lillie



## From the Minister of Music

December brings the season of Advent, the season of celebration anticipating Christ's coming. We are anxiously watching and waiting for the coming of the Savior. Our worship reflects this time and you may notice that the liturgy changes to reflect the seasonal emphasis of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. We add the lighting of the Advent Wreath to the liturgy, one of the most visible signs that we are in the beginning of the Christian Year. The color of the paraments and worship banners changes to blue, the color for Advent, which suggests hope. For the Advent, Christmas and Epiphany seasons we change to Liturgy Setting 9, which has an air of mystery and expectation quite appropriate for the season. The Preface and the Thanksgiving at the Table also change for Advent. As we sing familiar Advent hymns of hope and expectancy, we look forward to Christ's arrival. On our journey through this Holy season, let us remember the words of hymn #238, *People Look East*, "People look east, and sing today – Love, the Guest, is on the way".

David McNease, Minister of Music and Organist



## More about Advent

Ancient peoples huddled in darkness waiting for the return of light and life to a bleak world. Today, we see Advent as a season of waiting and watching together, anticipating signs of life returning to not only a dark, dormant land, but also to our lives, waiting for the One who brings forth light and life to a broken world. During the Advent season, the sanctuary and the flowers on the alter will reflect this. A dark, dormant arrangement becomes greener and more alive each week until the light of the world returns with the birth of the Christ child. It is a gift to teach ourselves the ability to wait. Christmas is coming, it's just not here yet.

One of the best-known customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The wreath and winter candle-lighting amid growing darkness strengthens some of the Advent images found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is clearly as image of ever-lasing life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light. Sometimes the wreath is embellished with natural dried flowers or fruit. Its evergreen branches lead the household and the congregation to the evergreen Christmas tree. In many homes, the family gathers for prayers around the wreath.

During the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, we will be celebrating communion with a different wine for the holidays. Our Communion wine will be Camelot Mead Honey Wine from Oliver Winery, located in Bloomington, Indiana. This continues our goal of supporting local wineries. Oliver Winery has been producing their Camelot Mead since 1072, but the tradition of honey wine goes back to at least 7000 BC. It is even mentioned often in the Bible. For communion, we will also continue to use naan, a kind of flatbread that resembles pita bread. So as we experience something different this winter, let us do so with the knowledge that we are following in the footsteps of our forebears in faith.

Larry Askins  
Chair, Altar Guild



Since 1831 there has been a Lutheran publication in magazine format. As of January 1, 2024, the print issue of the *Living Lutheran* magazine will no longer be available. However, the magazine's content will continue to be available at [www.livinglutheran.org](http://www.livinglutheran.org) at no cost. No login information is needed to access the website.

Readers may sign up at [www.livinglutheran.org/subscribe](http://www.livinglutheran.org/subscribe) for the magazine's free e-digest, where you can get links to stores based on your preferences delivered to your inbox weekly, biweekly or monthly.

Jim Lille

Don't forget there will be a cookie exchange following the service on December 17!

## THE FRIENDLY PUZZLER

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Find the underlined words amongst the letter grid at the bottom.  
The remaining letters will reveal a hidden message.

Isaiah 11: 1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

R E S R E T A W A R K L E Y F C S E  
S I I H R I L M P N S B R E A T H Z  
T H G I L E D E O T N O I L I I O A  
R J N H A H N W O U E Q U I T Y O R  
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K D L R D E C I D E A H N E F D T N  
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W I C K E D P E L D E S S E R P P O

## December 2023

| Sunday   | Monday   | Tuesday                                       | Wednesday   | Thursday   | Friday  | Saturday   |
|--|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| <b>26</b><br>10:30am Worship Service   | <b>27</b><br>Food Pantry closed<br>5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here<br>7:30pm LYG | <b>28</b><br>10:00am Food Pantry              | <b>29</b><br>10:00am Food Pantry<br>6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial<br>6:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal                                      | <b>30</b><br>4:00pm Food Pantry  | <b>1</b><br>Food Pantry closed<br>6:00pm LYG  | <b>2</b><br>12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire   |
| <b>3</b><br>10:30am Worship Service  | <b>4</b><br>Food Pantry closed<br>5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here<br>7:30pm LYG  | <b>5</b><br>10:00am Food Pantry<br>7:30pm NA  | <b>6</b><br>10:00am Food Pantry<br>4:30pm LYG Staff Meeting<br>6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial<br>6:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal           | <b>7</b><br>4:00pm Food Pantry   | <b>8</b><br>Food Pantry closed<br>6:00pm LYG  | <b>9</b><br>9:45am NAMI meeting<br>12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire                                  |
| <b>10</b><br>9:30am Breakfast<br>10:30am Worship Service   | <b>11</b><br>Food Pantry closed<br>5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here<br>7:30pm LYG | <b>12</b><br>Food Pantry closed               | <b>13</b><br>10:00am Food Pantry<br>12:30pm Craft Day<br>6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial<br>6:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal<br>6:30pm LYG   | <b>14</b><br>4:00pm Food Pantry  | <b>15</b><br>Food Pantry closed<br>6:00pm LYG | <b>16</b><br>12:00pm Joint Council and Finance Committee Meeting<br>12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire |
| <b>17</b><br>10:30am Worship Service<br>1:00pm Cookie exchange                                     | <b>18</b><br>Food Pantry closed<br>5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here<br>7:30pm LYG | <b>19</b><br>10:00am Food Pantry<br>7:30pm NA | <b>20</b><br>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE<br>10:00am Food Pantry<br>4:30pm LYG<br>6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial<br>6:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal | <b>21</b><br>4:00pm Food Pantry<br>4:00pm Gather in front of church<br>6:30pm Service of Remembrance | <b>22</b><br>Food Pantry closed<br>6:00pm LYG | <b>23</b><br>12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire  |
| <b>24</b><br>10:30am Worship Service<br>7:30pm Christmas Eve Music<br>8:00pm Christmas Eve Worship | <b>25</b><br>Food Pantry closed<br>5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here<br>7:30pm LYG | <b>26</b><br>Food Pantry - closed             | <b>27</b><br>Food Pantry - closed<br>6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial<br>6:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal<br>6:30pm LYG                       | <b>28</b><br>Food Pantry - closed  | <b>29</b><br>Food Pantry closed<br>6:00pm LYG | <b>30</b><br>12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire  |
| <b>31</b><br>10:30am Worship Service   | <b>1</b><br>Food Pantry closed<br>5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here<br>7:30pm LYG  | <b>2</b><br>10:00am Food Pantry<br>7:30pm NA  | <b>3</b><br>10:00am Food Pantry<br>4:30pm LYG Staff Meeting<br>6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial<br>7:00pm Chancel Choir rehearsal           | <b>4</b><br>4:00pm Food Pantry   | <b>5</b><br>Food Pantry closed<br>6:00pm LYG  | <b>6</b><br>12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire   |