

**PASTOR'S REPORT
FOR VOTERS' MEETING
CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH, SEAFORD, DE
DECEMBER 1, 2024—12:00 P.M.**

February 2—Retirement Dinner for Pastor Dave and Michelle Nuss
Thanksgiving Day 2023 a phone call went out that none of us expected. It was Michelle telling us that Pastor Dave was about to undergo emergency surgery. All of Pastor Dave's plans to spend one last Christmas in the pulpit here at Christ Lutheran Church before retiring had to be set aside. My serving full-time did not begin until January.

The retirement dinner for Pastor Dave and Michelle on February 2nd was full of happy memories of their service and many expressions of thanksgiving and love for Pastor and Michelle, but it was also a very bittersweet time. We only wish Pastor and Michelle had had more time to enjoy retirement together, but that was not to be. Pastor Dave heard Jesus welcome him into His heavenly kingdom and received Jesus' words of welcome that we all desire to hear one day: "Welcome, good and faithful servant."

Through it all, we have continued the process of gathering information for our congregational profile, in preparation for calling our next pastor. During all of 2024, I have been serving you, my brothers and sisters, full-time. And you all of have made my service a joy, supporting me in so many ways with your prayers, your cards, your visits, and your gifts of appreciation.

Therefore, it is with some sadness that I announce my intention, after prayerful consideration, to transition to part-time service on January 1, 2025. Out of concern for my wife Linda and for other members of my family, including my brother, Pastor Mark Rogers, who will be undergoing a second stem cell transplant for myelofibrosis (a form of bone marrow cancer) I would like to serve you all on a part-time basis (20 hours per week), with my schedule to be something like that printed below:

Preaching and Teaching—6 hours per week

Sermon and Bible Class Preparation

Administration—3 hours per week

Bulletin preparation (Prayer requests, announcements, Prayer of the Day, Prayer of the Church)

Newsletter and other communications

Record-keeping and reports

Council/Call Committee Meetings
Lay Ministry
Stephen Ministry

Worship—6 hours per week

Midweek & Sunday Services (Midweek Bible Study when there are no midweek Advent or Lenten services)
Hymn Selection

Visitation—4 hours per week

Hospital
Sick and Shut

New Members: We welcome into our fellowship two members, who come to us from Our Savior Lutheran Church, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware; and another couple with two children, who come to us from Christ Lutheran Church, East Moriches, New York.

I taught a new member class, using a book titled *Lutheranism 101* (CPH), with Nan Boyd, Ginny Gray, Linda Rogers, and Joel and Candy Lichtenberg attending. Nan Boyd and Lita Jackstat have now been brought into membership.

Visits and Communions: 71 thus far in 2024

Funerals:

December 30—Funeral for Earl “Dinky” Bradford at Holloway Funeral Home, Salisbury, MD.

January 5—interment of Rosalee Jones at Spring Hill Memorial Park, Hebron, MD.

January 23—attended services for Bea Derickson at the Manor House

February 19—Visit with Jane Drace family to plan funeral.

February 22, 2024—Jane Drace at Christ Lutheran, 2 p.m. Interment in Pennsylvania.

Susan Buscemi—May 8, 2024

Walt Moyer—June 14, 2024

Pastor Dave Nuss—June 28, 2024

Robert Schulz—June 29, 2024

Ronald Jefferson—July 8, 2024

Rosemary Horn—graveside service on October 9, 2024; Judy Bruhn read prayers while Linda and I were on vacation.

Recognition of our Organists: I would like to recognize Bonnie Rose and Carol Harris for their faithful and skillful playing for our worship here at Christ. We are in the planning stages of a special recognition.

Church Choir: Roy Lamberton is ably directing our choir, which was formed in response to the special job fair we had in January of 2024. We have been accompanied by Bonnie Rose, Carol Harris, and most recently by Katherine Tooley. What a joy to again have a choir here at Christ. Also blessing our worship is the Men's Quartet, accompanied by Carol Harris.

Call Committee—God bless all the members of the Committee for their diligent and careful work assembling the profile of our congregation and forwarding this information to the Southeastern District, so that President Bill Harmon might prepare for us a list of candidates. Special thanks to Madeline Dunn, our chairperson, and to Pastor Mike Thress of Faith Lutheran Church, Bear, DE, our Circuit Visitor, for advising us in all these preparations.

Two New Stephen Ministers were consecrated on Pentecost, May 19th: Joan Kresefsky and Art Payne. Thanks to them and to all our Stephen Ministers who have served so faithfully. Thanks to Kathryn Lamberton for training Joan and Art. Thus far, I have had one meeting with the Stephen Ministers and plan to do this one Sunday a month on an on-gong basis, immediately after the 11 a.m. service.

The Lay Ministers of our Church do a wonderful job making contact with the members of their "flocks," showing concern for their physical and spiritual well-being.

New Church Directory: Many thanks to Kathryn Lamberton and Jean Lohmeyer for getting people signed up to have me take their pictures September 3rd, 4th, and 8th. There were over 75 sittings for this directory! Thanks to Jean Lohmeyer for helping setting up the schedule of appointments and to Kathryn Lamberton for making a multitude of phone calls to line up people for these appointments. Thanks to Lynn Kirk-Flury, our secretary, for incorporating all the new pictures and revised address information in the new directory, 100 copies of which have now been printed. Thanks to the Lay Ministers for contacting members of their flocks to obtain the most up-to-date contact information.

Job Descriptions: Using information from the Missouri Synod and with input from Lynn Kirk-Flury our Church Secretary, and from our organists Bonnie Rose and Carol Harris, I've written job descriptions for the Organist, Church Secretary, and Pastor.

Midweek Lenten Services: For our 12 pm and 7 pm services, we used CPH materials entitled "Singing with the Exiles," based on Isaiah 40 to 55, one of the richest Old Testament portions on the Messiah.

Adult Bible Class: We took a break during Advent from our study of the life of David. We looked at the Magnificat, the Benedictus, and two very powerful carols called "In the First Light" and "This Little Babe."

We completed a study of 1 John, followed by a study of Philippians entitled Joy by Deb Burma (Concordia Publishing House). Next, we used a study of 1 Corinthians, using a book from Intervarsity Press.

A well-received video/book study on prayer entitled, "Before You Say Amen," by Max Lucado was very well received here in October.

In November, I used a Bible Study from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund called "Faithful Stewards of God's Grace."

In December, we are using Bible Studies that coordinate with the Advent Midweek services, entitled "This Is My Son." The services, which are based on the stories of Cain, Ishmael, and Absalom will show the tremendous contrast between the offspring of sinful human beings like ourselves and Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God.

Midweek Bible Study: Meeting on Wednesdays when we were not having midweek Advent or Lenten service, we have thus far-viewed and discussed Season 1 and Season 2 through episode # of "The Chosen."

Sunday School & Children's Church: How blessed we are to have Carol Byrd and Carol Miller preparing a lesson every Sunday on the appointed Gospel lesson. They also make their own crafts to go along with the lesson. Danielle Dempsey and Jean Lohmeyer have just begun a children's church in the Nursery/Sunday School area, which children may go to with their parent's permission after participating in a newly instituted children's sermon which Pastor Ray (and perhaps other volunteers) is giving right after the "God at Work" part of the Praise Service and right before the Sermon Hymn in the Traditional Service.

Vacation Bible School—It's truly gratifying to see the many willing volunteers who have signed up to help for both sessions of VBS. I taught the Bible Lesson for the first VBS and then taught couple of nights for the BSSP VBS.

Church Prayer Ministry (Prayer Chain Prayer Warriors, Standing in the Gap, and Prayer of the Church): We began the year, having a monthly prayer time once a month on Saturday, but due to low attendance, we stopped meeting. We have continued to share prayer requests through the One Call system, and I'm pleased to announce that Michelle Nuss has now taken over responsibility for receiving and relaying prayer requests. She is doing a wonderful job!

We tried a "new thing" in February: a Church Job Fair. People were invited to sign up for various responsibilities in the church. We never could have imagined the interest that would be generated in areas of service, especially in a church choir, which is now being directed by Roy Lamberton. A second Job Fair was held April 21st.

Ministry in Our Community: LOVE In the Name of Christ and Redemption City (LOVE INC).

For the **L.W.M.L. Meeting on Thursday, April 18th, at 2:00 p.m.**, our special guest was Pastor Giovanni Otero of Love In the Name of Christ. I have since had breakfast with Pastor Gio and taken a tour of the LOVE INC facility. Pastor Gio has introduced me to all the staff of LOVE INC, as well as another pastor in the Seaford area, with whom we might share mutual encouragement in the mission of Christ.

Our L.W.M.L. has made a \$4,000 contribution from the Easter Egg Sale to LOVE INC. Many thanks to all those who prepared the eggs and purchased and sold them.

Nikki Gonzalez, executive director of Redemption City, came and spoke at our church. Speaking in both worship services and in the Adult Bible Class, she explained how Redemption City's program for men and women gives them lodging, life skills, spiritual grounding in faith toward Christ, and assistance in finding jobs and permanent housing. Over \$200 were contributed in the door offering.

Members of Christ sponsored me on a 65-mile ride through the Pocomoke State Forest and Furnace Town on August 24th. Donations totaled \$948!

A Monthly Brunch, held for many years at Stargate Diner, is now being held at Pizza King on the 3rd Tuesday each month at 11:00 a.m.

Church Thanksgiving Dinner: November 24th at 4:00 p.m. Many thanks to Doris Farace, our longtime director of the church Thanksgiving dinner, and to Joel Lichtenberg for stepping up to make this dinner such a success. Volunteers including Don and Carol Miller, Carl and Linda Boone, and Linda Rogers and myself were able to take platters to our shut-ins.

Thanksgiving Baskets: Thanks to the generous donations of you, our congregation members, we were able to put together 6 baskets, four of which also included turkeys. Two baskets went to the men's and women's house of Redemption City; two baskets went to LOVE INC for the staff there to give to families in the greatest need; and two baskets went to members of Christ.

Angel Tree—Carl and Linda Boone, who have spearheaded our efforts to collect food for LOVE INC, also have set up a Christmas tree outside Luther Hall, so that we might buy gifts for two needy families (each of which have four members) this Christmas. Thank God for reviving this outreach effort which has been done a number of Christmases in the past here at Christ Church.

Christmas Fruit Baskets: We are also partnering with the Powellville Ruritan, which prepare Christmas Fruit Baskets for "seasoned saints" all up and down the Eastern Shore. We will be passing out 12 baskets to our shut-ins shortly after the baskets are put together on December 5th. I can tell you that our shut-ins are very excited about being recognized both at Thanksgiving and at Christmas.

Circuit and District Activities

Our Circuit 1 Pastors meet monthly at St. John, Lutheran Church, Dover. The pastors on the southern end of the circuit, representing Bethany, Salisbury; Christ, Seaford; Immanuel, Preston; and Immanuel, Easton have been meeting every couple of weeks and Pastors Klettke and Wackett have been active in the group as well. Out of our "mini" Circuit meeting have grown a pulpit exchange in February; two social gatherings of pastors and their wives; an afternoon of cornhole play and music at Immanuel, Easton; and a joint Christmas musical entitled "It Was a Silent Night," to be offered to the public at Immanuel, Easton on December 13th and at here at Christ on December 15th at 4 p.m. Without the ties we have formed in the Circuit, we never would have been alerted to DCE Katherine Tooley's desire to share her gifts in music with us here at Christ!

Southeastern District Activities: Many thanks to Christ Church for sending Linda and me to the Professional Church Workers' Conference in Ashville, NC, April 8th to 10th. This conference marked the 85th Jubilee Anniversary for the Southeastern District. Our guest speakers were President Michael Newman of the Texas District, who presented a Bible Study based on the Book of Daniel, under the theme, "7 Storm Shelters to Help Us in the Struggle"; Pastor Andrew Jones, from the California-Nevada-Hawaii District, who spoke on the "Sabbath Rest" that all God's people need and "Ten Questions to Ask When Reading the Bible"; and Deaconess/Psychologist Megan Meisel, who spoke on "Mental Wellness"

(including an inventory to help oneself and one's parishioners assess the degree of trauma that has been suffered growing up and how that impacts one's relationships in the present). I have written resources for all these presentations and used Pastor Newman's notes for a summer sermon series

Leadership Conference at St. Andrew, Silver Spring, MD, October 5th. Attending were Joel Lichtenberg, Jean Lohmeyer, and Pastor Mark & Katherine Tooley.

Circuit Forum: Scheduled for Sunday, November 17th at 3:30 p.m. at St. John's, Dover, this meeting is in preparation for next year's District Convention.

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