

NOVEMBER 2021

COSLC Nuggets & News

The scoop on how we, the hands of God at Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church are praising, nurturing, and serving.



"WE ARE INVITED INTO SILENCE"

By ELCA Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton

There are very few times in my life when I experience silence. There is the ever-present ambient noise of the city or the office: traffic, planes, power mowers, power tools, the intrusive alerts from computers signaling new emails or texts, ringtones. I find myself obsessively plugged in to the news, Twitter and YouTube—all available all the time, portable and near at hand on my cellphone.

And then there is the noise in my head: racing thoughts, internal conversations, grocery lists, music. Even—or perhaps especially—when the world around me is mostly still, I notice that I am not.

I'm not sure what drives this acoustic and mental busyness, but I know I'm not the only one who so seldom experiences silence. Maybe we are just trying to get more stuff done. Maybe it's FOMO—fear of missing out. Maybe it's habit.

I do know that this constant noise and stimulation can be exhausting and stressful. The more noise, the louder we become in order to be heard, which leads to more noise.

In recent weeks we have been overwhelmed by disasters, natural and human-made. The West Coast is burning, and the Gulf Coast and East Coast are drowning. The elected Afghan government has fallen, and that 20-year war has come to an end. We are still stuck in this pandemic. We worry about our children who are too young to get vaccinated. We worry about our elders with comorbidities. We worry about ourselves.



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"WE ARE INVITED INTO SILENCE"

continued...

In an effort to make sense of all this, we seek to gather more information and more data, which we hope will give us answers or show us a way out. There is no shortage of voices. We are bombarded with experts and pundits analyzing everything, talking and talking and talking. STOP.

The prophet Elijah had a profound experience of silence. He was fleeing for his life from the wrath of Jezebel. I imagine the stress was generating a lot of internal noise. But the word of the Lord came to Elijah and said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by" (1 Kings 19:11).

And then we read: "Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence" (11-12).

Wind and earthquakes and fire all seem reasonable when God makes an entrance. There are many instances in Scripture when God is announced in sound and pyrotechnics. But this story from 1 Kings has always caught my attention. The phrase in verse 12 is often translated as the sound of "a still, small voice." Yet it wasn't the sound of a voice that indicated that God was present. It was the sound of sheer silence. "When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and stood at the entrance of the cave" (13).

Spending time in silence is a spiritual discipline.

Silence.

Spending time in silence is a spiritual discipline. My spiritual director urges me to spend 20 minutes in silence every day. I can do about five. Silence is not a technique but a way of being in God's presence. It's pretty simple, but it's not easy. Sheer silence silences us—all of our defenses and self-justifications. It can be terrifying because in silence there is nothing between the soul and its source of being. No wonder that Elijah, when he heard the sound of sheer silence, wrapped his face in his mantle. He was in the presence of the Holy.

We are invited into silence. In the words of the hymn: "Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand; ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in his hand Christ our God to earth descending comes full homage to demand" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 490).

SUNDAY WORSHIP – 10AM

Both in the "room" and on Zoom!

If you need to or wish to join worship via Zoom, visit www.coslc.ws/worship-info for the Zoom link. This site also has more information about in-person worship such as: our "masks on at all times!" policy and our communion practices during a pandemic.

FELLOWSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT:

Based on the current strain to our hospitals from COVID-19 patients,* we will be cancelling in-door/unmasked fellowship after worship until such time as the hospitals are no longer rationing life saving care. We must do our part to help our medical providers and our community get through this pandemic. After worship, visiting is still encouraged in the narthex, fellowship hall, or outside. But masks must remain on and shared food will not be consumed.

*<https://www.alaskapublic.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Signed-MEC-Letter.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3hdEz-MZOCDCgUfDKzTw2svtsYSzFxo0gWYRHnD7TKZrOsdBLtw5z6JSl>

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

November 7th

(Note: Daylight Savings Ends)

Do you have a loved one who has passed away?

We would like to lift them up on November 7th when we remember and thank God for all who have come before us and are now at rest. Email us at office@coslc.ws with your loved ones' name and a little about them.



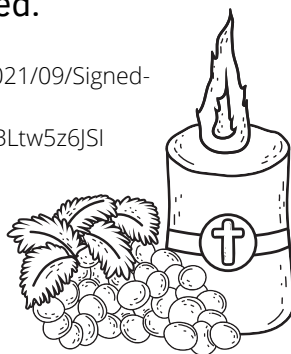
FIRST FRUITS SUNDAY

Sunday, November 14, 2021

First Fruits is an ancient practice in which people gave a religious offering of the first agricultural produce of the harvest. In classical Greek, Roman, and Hebrew religions, the first fruits were given to priests as an offering to deity.

In Christian practices today, since many of us are not harvesting crops, we have adapted this ancient practice to fit into our holiday season of gift giving. On a Sunday prior to Thanksgiving (and Black Friday), we join thousands of other Christians in giving God our first fruits of the season. I invite you to consider what you can give to God as your first fruits – your first gift – of the holiday season.

— Pastor Erika





ADVENT MIDWEEK SERVICES

- Wednesdays from 5:30-6pm
- Holden Evening Prayer
- On Zoom and in the "room"



ADVENT:

A Silent Night, Day, Season, Time...

At the end of November, we begin the season of Advent. It's a season of anticipation, hope, waiting, joy, and preparation for the Christ child to be born. It is also a season of silence and darkness as the winter solstice approaches, and we dream of the days when the sun enters our homes from more than just the south-side windows.

Bishop Eaton invites us into the practice of silence – something she struggles with but is encouraged to keep attempting. In her article "We are Invited into Silence" she says: "Silence is not a technique but a way of being in God's presence. It's pretty simple, but it's not easy. Sheer silence silences us—all of our defenses and self-justifications. It can be terrifying because in silence there is nothing between the soul and its source of being."

This Advent, I echo Bishop Eaton's invitation to respond to all that is happening, by sitting in silence and having nothing between us and our God as we await Christ's birth.

With love unending,
Pastor Erika





CHRISTMAS EVE

5:30pm – Kids & Family
8pm – Lessons and Carols

IN-PERSON
AND ON ZOOM

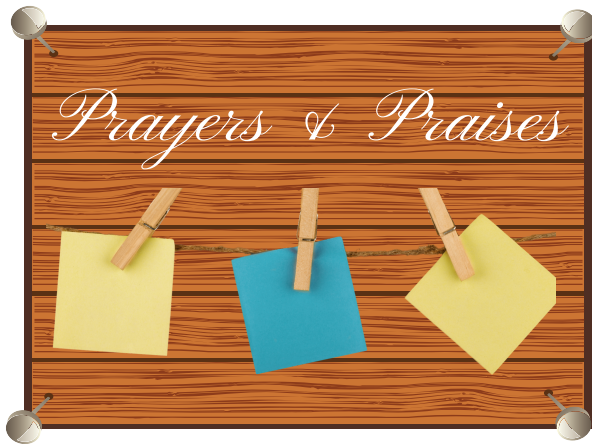
www.coslc.ws



NURTURING FAITH ...in the building and beyond...!

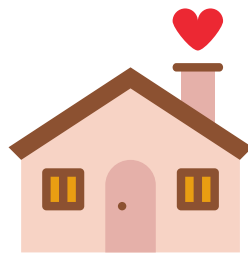
A NEW ADDITION IN THE NARTHEX!

This year at the council's annual retreat they created a beautiful Prayers & Praises board. The board is a wonderful way for everyone to write down and share all of life's joys and needs with each other. It also reminds us how we can support each other and that we are rooted in Christ together.



CHOIR

Choir is resuming on November 3rd! It'll be a simple time of fellowship and singing through some hymns. All are welcome to come, sit spread out around the sanctuary, and start re-learning how to read music!



HOME VISITATION

Home Visitations to bring Holy Communion to our home bound members and friends has resumed. If you know of someone who could use a visit, please let Pastor Erika know. If you are feeling a pull to bring some joy and friendship into someone's isolation, we welcome your saying "yes" to that pull and joining us. Contact Pastor Erika for more information. We will be observing very strict COVID precautions when visiting.

FAITH + LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

THE BLESSED MESSIES

- *First Tuesdays from 5:30-7pm*

Being a parent or a primary care giver to a child or children is hard and messy work but also so very holy. The Blessed Messies is a parent support and faith learning group where we will share our joys and our sorrows, our love and our frustration. Bring your dinner! Childcare will be provided. Zoom-in option is available.



BIBLE BABBLERS

- *Wednesdays from 6-7pm*

Let's babble and learn about God's Word together! We'll be reading books about the Bible and the Bible itself while talking about how God is at work through it all. All ages are welcome! Bring your dinner, your Bible, and a heart to learn!

OUR NEIGHBORS Presents: “Oliver Twist”



November is the month when we are going to take seriously the verse,
“Make a joyful noise.”



For a week in November, COSLC’s sanctuary will become the stage for 70 young people performing a modern adaptation of the play, “Oliver Twist”, a combined effort of the OUR NEIGHBORS ministry and the school, Pacific Northern Academy. On Saturday, November 13, the COSLC sanctuary will be transformed into New York City’s Time Square! When we worship in that space on Sunday, the 14th, perhaps we can be reminded of Christ’s presence in all places.

During the week of November 15-19, the cast of 3rd – 8th graders will be recorded by the COSLC tech team who are being so generous with sharing their time and knowledge of the new video and sound system. It is my hope that we can envision this as an opportunity to welcome these families into a place where they feel the kindness, joy, and compassion of Christ through the natural building of friendships and contacts that we share with one another. It would be wonderful if you would be willing to help by being a greeter and congregational representative at the following times:

***Saturday, November 13- Oliver Twist Stage Preparation**

10 am to noon – Set Building- Moving sanctuary furniture.

Carpenters are needed to raise and brace the backdrop and walls.

Noon to 3 pm – Props arranged and set design completed

3 – 5 pm – Tech meeting for video cameras, sound and recording coordination

***November 15 through 19- Congregational greeter to help support the teachers.**

(Please contact me for the schedule.)

***Saturday, November 20 at 10 am- Stage Tear Down**

Thank you for sharing Christ's love with the kids!

For more information, contact Sister Annette.

Text or call (907) 885-8750

Email: sisterannette6@gmail.com OR ourneighborsanchorage@gmail.com

Website: our-neighbors-anchorage.org

(Masks are mandatory in the church building.)

NURTURING FAITH – Prayer



Please pray with us for those on our Prayer List:

Holy and Gracious God,

You forget no one and you accompany the lonely.

Be present with those on our prayer list who are sick, suffering, or in need of support:

Amber and her son Barrett; Michael Hartsfield & family; Pastor Karin Albaugh; Joy Vaughn; Erik Gullickson; Faye H.; Bill Kennedy; Faye & Walter McCrumb; Kathleen Gregg; Kay Hall; Inge Hallum; Greg Oyler, Sheryl Collum & Kylie Hellmich; Ronda Hughes; Nikkeya Berryhill; Beth Tobin; and all those we name now (*silently or aloud*):

Provide for those needing homes or medical care and point us towards life-changing responses to these needs in our own communities. Bless the ministries already providing that much needed assistance. Be with the ministries of our church and our building and synod partners:

Rabbit Creek Preschool, Boy Scouts Troop #209, Turning Point Community Church, Redeemer URC, the OUR NEIGHBORS Program, & Joy Lutheran Church in Eagle River. Support us in our missions of spreading your love in the world.

Amen.

How can we pray for you?



Your church family at Christ Our Savior, is here for you! We want to extend prayers, phone calls, and encouragement to you when you need them.

Please contact the church office as soon as possible when:

- A member of your family or a friend dies;
- Hospital or home visitation would be a blessing;
- You or someone you know is having surgery;
- You or someone you know wants to plan a baptism or wedding;
- You or someone you know is ill or grieving;
- You move or change your telephone numbers or email.



Pastor Erika and / or our Home Visitation Team will

visit, pray, and support you – whatever feels most appropriate to you. We are family.

You are not alone.

Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church and LSSA are working together this Thanksgiving to provide dinner to 1,550 families.

Your Goal: **1,200 cans of corn**

Deadline: **Sunday, November 14, 2021**

Distribution Site: **Central Lutheran Church**

Date: **Monday, November 22, 2021**

Help us make this holiday a special one for families in need in our community.



LSSA THANKSGIVING BLESSING

COSLC'S GOAL:

1,200 CANS OF CORN

by November 14th

Fred Risch is coordinating our Corn Collection. Please contact him at 907-344-1081 or 907-563-3266 to drop cans of corn off with him or request an amount for him to shop for on behalf of you. Thank you, Fred!

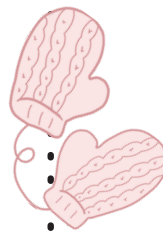


Lutheran Social Services of Alaska is also looking for volunteers to help with the set up and distribution of the Thanksgiving baskets at Central Lutheran church. If you are interested in helping in this way, please contact James at LSSA by calling 272-0643 ext. 10, or email us at lssa@gci.net

Together caring for others.



SOCKTOBER & GLOVEMBER



Help us collect socks, gloves, hats, scarves, coats, hand warmers, etc. for those in our community that need them. Donations can be placed in the black wagon in the narthex.

CLARE HOUSE UPDATE:

COSLC has been providing monthly meals to Clare House for many years. We guesstimate that we have helped provide over 500 meals for women in our community. What a gift we have been able to provide with the grace of God! Thank you to everyone who has shopped, planned, delivered, gathered, coordinated, donated, and prayed for this ministry! Your generosity, time, energy, and love have changed lives. You have truly been the hands, feet, and hearts of God.

After much reflection about these countless years of service, we have decided to take a step back from providing meals to Clare House. Listening to and following where our energy is bubbling over means that sometimes we have to let wonderful ministries go. In so doing, that the wellspring of energy can be more fully tapped into and God's call to our church can be responded to with our whole beings, with intentionality, and with integrity.

Please join us in prayer, reflection, celebration, and thanksgiving for all that God called us to do in partnership with Clare House, for the next church or individual who can now take our place, and for the space we now have to invest our energy in other ministries.

SERVING OTHERS – COMMUNITY GARDEN UPDATE



The garden committee met on Saturday, October 23rd, and discussed three items:

- **Finances –**
 - Total Income to Date: 35,000
 - 15,000 – Rasmuson grant
 - 20,000 – allocated by congregation (from memorial fund)
 - Total Expenditures to Date: 21,127 (there may be a few small expenses not included)
 - 17,400 – fence
 - 928 – water tank
 - 200 – fence banner
 - 3,499 – raised beds
 - Balance Available: 13,973
 - Note: We have applied for a federal/state agriculture grant of \$5,000 but have not received a decision. We are continuing to research other funding possibilities.
- **Gardener's Application Form and Garden Rules/Policies –**
 - We reviewed and discussed samples from other gardens
 - Jeanette used our ideas to develop the “Christ our Savior Lutheran Church Community Garden Guidelines” which will be included on our website soon.
- **Garden Design –**
 - Decided Memorial Garden area will be outside of the garden fence, probably to the south
 - Settled on a garden design which places raised beds with their short ends, side-by-side, paralleling the sidewalk along Old Seward Highway. (Design will be included on the website soon.)
 - Discussed having 30 raised beds and potentially some higher beds
 - Discussed building a center bed, maybe 6'x6' with a pergola and flowers or other plantings as a focal point, maintained by the church
 - Discussed COSLC having one or more beds for the LSSA food bank
 - Discussed placement of porta-potty, trash can, the water tank, composting bins, a picnic table or two, some small benches

Please send any questions, ideas, feedback, etc. to garden@coslc.ws or visit our website: www.coslc.ws/community-garden

Thanks,
Gary

SERVING OTHERS –

Lutheran Social  Services of Alaska

Thanksgiving Blessing

We are finalizing our plans with others in the faith-based community of Anchorage for this year's Thanksgiving Blessing food basket distribution. This year we are planning to serve 1,550 families at our site and over 8,000 citywide. Last year we served 1,350 families and are planning for more this year. LSSA is the site coordinator for the distribution at Central Lutheran Church and need your help in many ways. As usual we are asking our Lutheran congregations to collect the corn, green beans, stuffing mix or gravy mix that your congregation has been assigned.

Due to Covid 19 restrictions we will be doing distribution just like last year. We will be pre-filling boxes with the dry goods on Saturday, November 20th and distribution will be on Monday, November 22nd from 2pm to 8pm. We need help on Saturday from 10am to 12noon or 1pm to 3pm filling the boxes and this can be a family event. On Monday for distribution shifts will be from 1pm to 4:30pm and 4pm to 8 pm in the parking lot at Central Lutheran Church are we ask that you are high school age or older. Clients will not be leaving their vehicles. You will need to dress for the weather and we will have food and beverages available for breaks inside the church. To register to help please call Lutheran Social Services of Alaska at 907-272-0643 ext. 10.

Christmas Stockings

It is a tradition to present Christmas stockings to the families with young children who visit our food pantry during the month of December. Thank you to all the groups and individuals that make stockings for this ministry. We ask that you include a story or activity book about Jesus' birth in the stockings. If you need instructions or a template of the pattern, please contact the LSSA office. Distribution of stockings will begin on December 1 and go through December 23rd.

Food Pantry

The Food Pantry continues to see large number of families who are seeking food assistance. We find our shelves especially low on the following items. Tuna, Spam, canned soups and chili, canned fruit, oatmeal, cereals, peanut butter and jelly, macaroni n cheese and packages of ramen are some of the more popular items that we are low on or have none on the shelves. Please remember the Food Pantry the next time you are shopping and simply bring the items with you to church or drop them off at the LSSA Food Pantry.

Please keep our ministry and staff in your prayers.

Together caring for others,

Alan Budahl
Executive Director LSSA
907-272-0643





COUNCIL CORNER

At the beginning of October, the council held its annual retreat. We look forward to this time together as it helps strengthen and nurture us in our roles. Each individual helps create a well-rounded team of people who strive to accomplish tasks promptly, listen to one another while respecting all ideas, and always work in the best interest of the church. At this year's retreat, we focused on identifying how COSLC, the community, and God interact with one another, what expectations each of us might have for these relationships, and how each group might view the other from their respective points of view.

The council also took some time to work together in a more hands-on fashion and decide, as a team, how best to construct the new prayer board. By the end of the meeting, the main build of the project was complete. John & I added the decorative touches, and now it proudly hangs in the narthex for all to use and enjoy. To wrap up the retreat, we discussed community outreach. The discussion included ways to educate the community about our ministries and how to encourage others to get involved. I would say this year's retreat was a success and I look forward to all the great things ahead.

Highlights from our last council meeting: the council approved the purchase of a new office computer. Mercy, the Pig donations are going to the OUR NEIGHBORS program.

If there is anything you would like the council to discuss, all are welcome to attend a meeting or to reach out to a council member.

Blessings,
Jessica Morrison
C.O.S.L.C. Council President

WE'RE HIRING!

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church is seeking candidates for a part time Administrative Assistant to be filled as soon as possible. This position supports the mission of the congregation by providing clerical and administrative services and assistance to the pastor, congregation members, visitors, and church partners. Applications (cover letter and resume) should be sent to our main email address: office@coslc.ws. A complete job description of essential functions and minimum qualifications is available upon request.

For more information visit: coslc.ws/job-opportunity



COSLC UPDATES

FINANCIAL UPDATE



Good and gracious people of Christ Our Savior, God bless you for your continued generosity that enables us to do God’s work in our community!

Thank you also for your feedback regarding our financial reporting. To that end, we hope this revised quarterly report contains the information you are seeking and provides a better picture of where we stand.

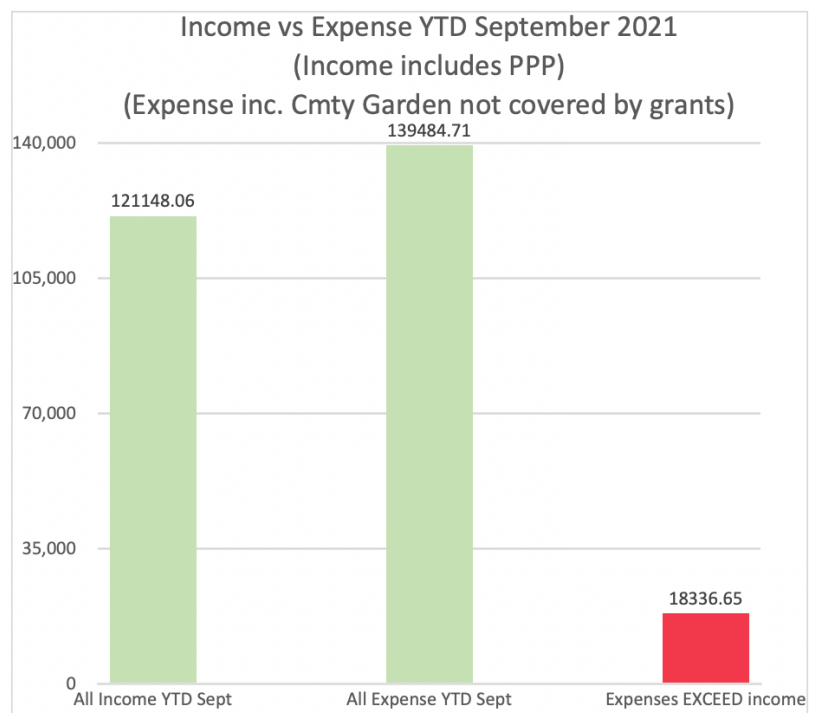
You may remember that our approved budget for 2021 included reducing our savings by \$21,350.50, if needed to meet our anticipated expenses. While we have continued to be able to meet all our obligations, that has only been accomplished by nibbling away at our checking account balance each month. We are very fortunate to have savings available, due to our thrift in the past, and we may soon find it necessary to beginning drawing on them.

(Please note that these funds will only be withdrawn from our regular savings account, not the Memorial Fund.)

Account balances	
Checking	\$ 7,861.52
Regular Savings	\$ 52,048.12
Memorial Fund	\$ 52,194.43
Mortgage balance	\$ 230,595.05

With care,
 Jessica Morrison, Council President
 Carol Bras, Council Treasurer

Memorial Fund Detail		
2018	135,867.71	Memorial gift from Paul Lemp
2018	(3,396.69)	LSSA - gift authorized 8/26/18
2018	(3,396.69)	AK Synod - gift authorized 8/26/18
2018	137.78	Interest 2018
2019	(7,264.90)	Sanctuary windows
2019	184.28	Interest 2019
2020	(3,594.00)	Outdoor shed
2020	124.94	Interest 2020
2021	(66,500.00)	Audio/Visual upgrade
2021	32.00	Interest YTD 9/30/21
	52,194.43	Balance



UPCOMING EVENTS



MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR TODD ALBAUGH

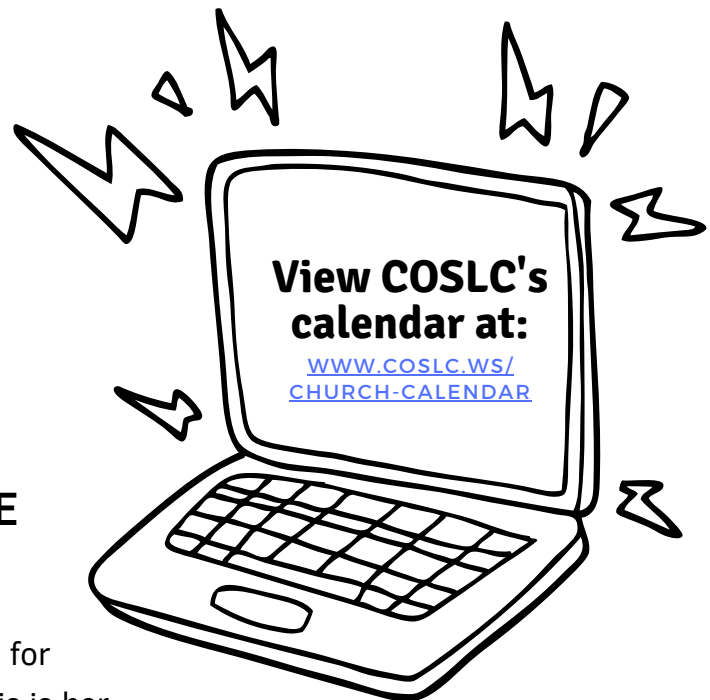
November 6, 11am at Gloria Dei

Todd Albaugh was the spouse of Pastor Karin Albaugh (Intentional Interim Pastor at Gloria Dei Lutheran on Jewel Lake). Todd passed away from COVID pneumonia on September 4th. Pastor Karin is moving to South Carolina to be near family. She flies out on November 16.



WOMEN'S VIRTUAL RETREAT & ASWO CONVENTION

- Saturday, November 13
- 10 am - 2 pm
- For all women of ELCA Alaska churches and their friends
- on Zoom
- Free!



PASTOR ERIKA OUT OF THE STATE

November 15-30, 2021

Pastor Erika will be away, down in Washington (State) for First Call Theological Education, November 15-18. This is her final required year of this event. After that, she will be on vacation in WA and Oregon to see family until the 30th of November. She will be gone for two Sundays and will miss us all terribly! But she is looking forward to seeing many family members she hasn't seen since moving up here. It'll also be Otilie's first plane ride – send prayers! ;)



Save the date!

40th Annual Lutheran Women's Advent Brunch



Colors of Advent

**Saturday, November 27, 2021
10-11am**

Bring Your Own Brunch!

*This will be a **FREE** virtual event. You may view the event live or later via either Facebook or You Tube. Find one of the following pages and "subscribe" or "like;"*



<https://www.facebook.com/LWABAK>

or go to www.youtube.com and search for LWABAK to find our channel and short promo video.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/907297236566126>

We will be collecting diapers (all sizes are needed, small to extra large) and baby wipes to be donated to LSSA. These may be dropped off at your church or at LSSA for collection. Monetary gifts may be made to LSSA for diapers and wipes by visiting their website: www.lssalaska.org



BONHOEFFER, THE CHURCH AND THE CLIMATE QUESTION

Pacific Lutheran University's 2021 Annual
David & Marilyn Knutson Lecture

Tuesday, November 2, 2021 at 7:00pm PST on Zoom

The 16th annual David and Marilyn Knutson Lecture begins with Dietrich Bonhoeffer's provocative 1933 essay on "The Church and the Jewish Question" and draws parallels to climate change. Where virulent anti-Semitism was the most important issue facing the church in Bonhoeffer's day, Rev. Dr. James Martin-Schramm '81 argues Bonhoeffer would have grave concerns about the impacts of climate change on present and future generations. Martin-Schramm explains how Martin Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms shaped Bonhoeffer's critique of the church and state in his day regarding "the Jewish Question" and ponders how Bonhoeffer might challenge the feeble responses of both the state and the church to the climate crisis. The lecture explores tensions between patriotism and resistance and considers how God is at work in the world today among all who are striving for climate justice.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, this year's Knutson Lecture will take place over Zoom Webinar. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information and to register. Please feel free to contact Tracy Williamson, Assistant to the Dean of Humanities (williamson@plu.edu) or Dr. Agnes Choi, Chair of the Religion Department (choiaa@plu.edu) with further questions about the lecture.

The lecture is free and open to the public, and is made possible by the generosity of David and Marilyn Knutson.

DAYS FOR CELEBRATION IN NOVEMBER

Birthdays, Anniversaries, Graduations, Baptisms, etc.

2nd – Lorie Hovanec's Birthday

2nd – Bishop Shelley Wickstrom's Birthday

4th – Holden Morrison's Birthday

27th – Lee Stark's Birthday



Do you have a date to celebrate? Email us so we can add you to our list! office@coslc.ws

SYNOD AND CHURCHWIDE NEWS



About the Alaska Synod

The Alaska Synod is the 64th out of the 65 synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) in membership, but the largest in geographic size. We stretch from Shishmaref to our congregation in Ketchikan 1400 air miles away. These 30 congregations range in size from an average worship attendance of 15 (Wales, on the Bering Sea) to 275 (urban Anchorage area). We have the largest and only Inupiat (Alaskan Inuit) population of the ELCA who make up almost 20% of our baptized membership and 24% of ELCA membership of native heritage. Those members are concentrated in our northern Seward Peninsula area where historically Norwegian reindeer herders and teachers brought their faith with them in the early 1900s. Sitka Lutheran Church, founded in 1840, was the first Protestant church founded west of the Mississippi. The diversity and large distances between congregations enrich our mission and ministry.



Synod Updates – Pastoral Farewells

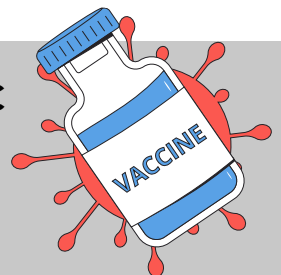
- Pastor Karin Albaugh, interim with Gloria Dei-Anchorage, is moving to South Carolina to be near family. She flies out on November 16. Her husband Todd's memorial service is November 6, 11am at Gloria Dei.
- Pastor Eric and Carol Olsen are leaving on the barge from Petersburg on November 10. Eric's last Sunday is November 7.
- Pastor Amanda Kempthorne's last Sunday with Lord of Life-North Pole is November 14. Amanda, Jason, Jonathan and Evan will drive down the AlCan after Thanksgiving. Amanda has accepted a call to serve with Salem Lutheran Church, Deerwood, MN.
- Pastor John Strand has died. John was the mission developer for Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Wasilla and served with that congregation from 1978-1989. John is survived by his wife Angie and their children Jennifer and Johnathan and grandchildren.



ELCA social teaching on vaccines during a Pandemic

Click here to learn more:

https://www.elcaalaska.net/uploads/2/4/9/1/24917993/talkingpoints-vaccinations_elcasoc_teaching.pdf



A MESSAGE FROM OUR SYNOD BISHOP:



How is Faith Tended?

by Bishop Shelley Wickstrom

Our synod congregations are in the dance of meeting in-person, meeting in a hybrid mode, meeting only online, not meeting in any way for worship. In some communities, the incidence of COVID has been so low and the rate of vaccination so high that folks have felt comfortable meeting in-person for worship. When you are used to being in a worship service Sunday morning, and the availability or delivery of that service changes, it is not unusual to feel like your own weekly rhythm has been thrown off.

Sometimes, participating on-line slides into a spectator experience. Your participation matters to your congregation. Take note of who you get to worship with that day. Pray for them, pray with them. Notice them. They matter. Keep the practice of weekly worship with whatever version is available to you. God is able to work wherever, whenever, however God wants to. Recognize that God can work through this pandemic worship pattern.

Let the scripture read that day, the sermon shared stew in you that week. Meaning comes in layers. Allow scripture to work with you and through you.

The weekly practice of Sabbath reminds us all that we are not the creator of this world. The Hebrew people were told to take a day off to remind them they were no longer slaves. The practice of a seventh-year fallow year was to not plant or harvest for production and to allow the poor and wildlife to feast on what grew naturally. (Exodus 23:11) We aren't the center of our universe.

There are six other days of the week. How are you tending the fires of faith on those days? In Advent (November 28-December 24), we'll again share a synod devotional enriched written by people across our synod. A devotion will be posted every day on our Facebook Page and the whole document will be on the synod website. Thank you to Pastor Lisa Smith Fiegel for pulling this together for us.

There are numerous online devotions available. Favorite ones for me include Pastor Dan's 10W, Luther Seminary's God Pause, and Pray as You Go.

Every month our congregations have a partner congregation or those in specialized ministry to pray for. Imagine praying for that partner congregation every day that month. When you know what their ministry focus is, their joys and grief, your prayers for them shifts.

Disability Ministries

NOVEMBER 2021



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Dear friends in Christ,

Greetings! My name is Rev. Lisa Heffernan, and on June 1st I began serving as coordinator for ELCA Disability Ministries. I work remotely out of South Dakota, where I am also serving as a part-time interim pastor with a congregation. I began serving on the ELCA Disability Ministries advisory team about four and a half years ago, and I am thankful for and humbled by the opportunity to serve in this new role. As a person with a disability (spina bifida), this ministry is especially close to my heart and I'm excited for where God is leading us in 2022 and beyond.

We are excited to renew our commitment to create awareness about the church's call for inclusion, participation and faith and leadership development of people with disabilities. In my role, I will do this by supporting the volunteer advisory team and the ways our work can engage and connect disability ministries across regions, synods and congregations. As 2021 winds down, we will be reviewing grant proposals that came in during our time of transition and planning to create more grant opportunities in 2022. More information about this will come as soon as it is available.

ELCA Disability Ministries will also make a more visible commitment to addressing the intersectionality between disability, race, gender, and sexuality. We hope to expand our advisory team and partnerships to ensure that all people may have a place in our ministry and its mission of inclusion. We will also continue our ecumenical partnerships with other church bodies that are committed to this mission and specifically to ministries concerned with mental health.

It's a busy and exciting time for ELCA Disability Ministries. Not only is this a time of transition, but this is also a time when we are "under construction" as we do the holy work to which we have been called. In the coming months you will see changes to our website and the resources we share with you, which will better honor our commitment to recognizing and celebrating the diversity that exists among the people of God who have disabilities. One fun possibility on the horizon is a blog where you can catch up with Disability Ministries and hear from disabled leaders across all expressions of the church.

We thank you for your continued support of ELCA Disability Ministries and ask that you keep us in your prayers, share about our ministry and the seeds it plants across the ELCA, and continue showing your support and generosity. There is much more to come, and I cannot wait to see where the Spirit leads us as a ministry and as the body of Christ.



Peace,

Rev. Lisa Heffernan

Learn more & subscribe to updates at:

<https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Disability-Ministry>



Devotional: "Freed From Our Past"

(1/4)

by Andrew Tucker, Columbus, OH

Posted on October 27, 2021 by faithlens

Warm-up Question

Who comes to mind when you think of your ancestors?

Share or write a story about this person or group of people.

Why are they significant to you?



Freed From Our Past

When you think of a sloth, what do you think of? I'd bet a small, furry creature. Likely clinging to a tree with incredibly long claws. Probably munching on some leaves or flowers with a glib, goofy grin that God placed on its face through millions of years of evolution.

Not too long ago, at least in terms of the cosmic timeline, some ancient sloth ancestors were shaped more like tanks and, apparently, huge fans of old steak. Mylodons, or Giant Ground Sloths, bumbled around on the ground and ate meat as a part of their diet. Scavengers rather than hunters, the meat Mylodons consumed as a part of their diet was likely the leftovers from ice age predators like Saber-Toothed Tigers.

Still with long nails, fur, and we sure hope that glib, goofy smile, they were something like the sloths we know today, but they were bound to the ground, cleaning up others' old meals. Clearly Mylodons weren't exactly the same as their present-day counterparts.

To read more about these ancestors, check out this article (<https://news.yahoo.com/giant-ancestors-todays-sloths-stood-110400474.html>) or read the scientific research that led to this discovery (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-97996-9>). Fair warning: that second article is very dense, but for the scientists and historians among us, quite fascinating.





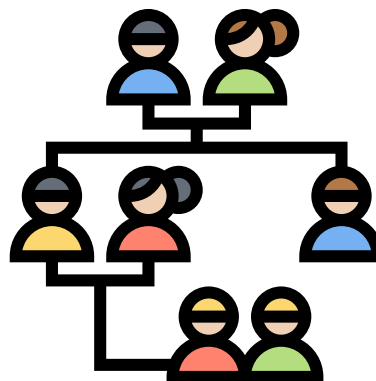
Devotional: "Freed From Our Past"

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Sloths are connected to their ancestors, but they're not carbon copies. The same is true for us. We are connected to our ancestors, biological and spiritual, and that shapes who we are today. But it does not mean we're just the same as those who came before us, nor do our ancestors absolutely determine who we will be.

Discussion Questions

- How would you feel if you came across a present-day sloth? How about a Mylodon?
- How do their differences change your reaction?
- What other present-day animals are connected to, but also very different from, their ancient ancestors?
- How are you similar to your ancestors? How are you different?



Reformation Day Texts:

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Romans 3:19-28

John 8:31-36



Gospel Reflection

It's Reformation Sunday, where as a church we give thanks for the reform movement started by Martin Luther and others in the 16th century. One of the many themes that pops up at this time each year is freedom, often connected to these words in John: "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

It's important for us to ask two questions: What are we set free from? What are we set free for? All too often, Reformation becomes a chance to bash on other Christians. Often Roman Catholicism becomes a target, as though our freedom has fully severed us from our church ancestors. At other times, Evangelicals draw our angst, as though our spiritual descendants have no connection to the reform movement Luther started. Whatever our freedom is from, it is not from our connections, nor our history, nor those who come after us.



Devotional: "Freed From Our Past"

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But because of Christ's intervention, we are free for more than our ancestors could imagine or determine. Just a few verses before, some disciples wonder how they, descendants of Abraham, might still need freedom. Their confusion ultimately points to the crux of the scripture: we are connected to the legacy of our ancestors, but we are not absolutely beholden to it. Christ frees us from the worst and for the best.

This is true biologically. Think, for instance, of someone like me with a mental illness. Thanks to my DNA ancestry, I'm biologically predisposed to a shortage of natural serotonin that leads me to battle depression and anxiety disorders. That connection lives on in me. Yet, thanks to medication and counselors, changes to diet and exercise, and adding faith practices like meditation, my future is not determined by those ancestors alone. Reform is possible in my life thanks to the influence of others, especially through medical, relational, and physical intervention.

This is also true spiritually. Our tradition is full of profound contributions and desperate failures. The Lutheran reformation paved the way for some of the first schools for girls in Europe, robust social safety nets, and increased knowledge of religion by lay practitioners. But Luther's writings also included terribly anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim rhetoric, as well as critiques of peasants who took political authority into their own hands. Such passages became rallying cries for racial purists in Nazi Germany, the United States, and elsewhere.

Even in our Reformation celebrations, the goodness of our tradition is accompanied by the failures. We are not free from that tainted legacy. But, because of God's work in Jesus Christ, we are free for reform, to make a new way that admits our connection to that past and sets a different course for the future. Our ancestors' failures are real, as are their triumphs. But neither is certain for us at this present moment, in this new day calling for new reform. Like today's sloths, we can climb from the ground of our ancestors to the sky of our future, reforming and evolving into the creatures God calls us to become.



For more lectionary humor and insight, check the weekly comic: *Agnus Day*, at www.agnusday.org



Devotional:

"Freed From Our Past"

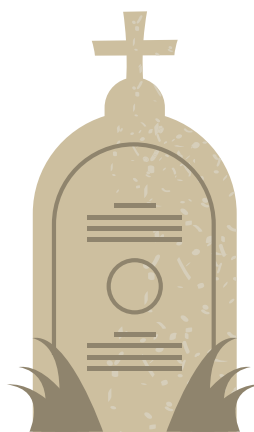
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Discussion Questions

- What does it mean to you that we have been set free by Christ?
- Why do you think it was so difficult for Jesus's disciples to connect the freedom he offers with the legacy of their ancestry?
- As we commemorate Reformation Sunday, what kind of evolution is God calling us to consider, even as we are connected to a legacy of reform?

Activity Suggestions

Spiritual Family Tree – Create a family tree of those forebears in faith who've shaped you into who you are today. This could include members of your family of origin, church members, authors, social media personalities, people from church and social history, and others. Use this as an opportunity to discern how you've been positively shaped by your ancestry and to consider the ways you've been negatively impacted by those who've come before.

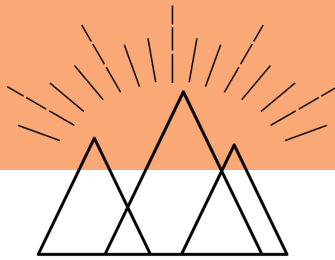


Gravestone Etchings – For a tangible activity of legacy, go to a local cemetery with paper and pencils (or charcoal or pastels) to make rubbings of the grave markers. Bring paper large enough to cover a tomb stone but thin enough to follow the contours of weather-worn material. Once the names and dates are covered by the paper, rub the paper lightly to reveal the characters in more detail. This is especially powerful with stones that are difficult to read due to years of weathering. Use this as an opportunity to ponder the legacies we leave and what people will remember, as well as how bound we are to the legacies of our ancestors.



Closing Prayer

Transforming God, we give you thanks for the good of reformation and we confess the ways that we've refused to follow your continued call for reform. Free us from the things that bind us to past failures, and free us for the future of blessing all creation, to the very ends of the earth. Send your Spirit of transformation on us, today and every day, through Jesus Christ our Liberator. Amen.



Christ Our Savior

Lutheran Church

CHRIST OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH

Where we are Inspired by God's Love to Praise, Nurture, and Serve

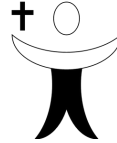
We Praise God in Worship, Song and Prayer

We Delight in the Diversity of All of God's Children

We Support & Nurture One Another through the Love of Christ

We Gather to Grow through God's Grace

We Reach Out, Serve, and Incite Miracles



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If you need pastoral care or help with anything, please call or text Pastor Erika.
May you feel God's peace this month and always.