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CLC NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER, 2023



Pastor Kenneth Lentz - 928-970-1313

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The story I told a few years ago is worth repeating. I once met a woman who was raised in Vienna as a child. On Christmas Eve, 1946, she and her family were gathered in their cold apartment in front of a tree which the mother had gotten from the woods. Like many others, they were the surviving victims of a disastrous war. In spite of the temptation to wallow in despair, they gathered to sing Christmas carols. When they had gone through a round or two of old favorites, they feasted on pudding made from cornstarch without sugar and they drank unsweetened tea.

They were happy. They sang and sang and sang. They had a roof over their heads when many did not. Although Dad was lost in the war, they still had each other; many had lost many more family members in the war. And most important, they had the Christ child in their hearts when many did not on that evening in the rubble and ruins of post-war Europe. And when they went to bed at 2 a.m., they were still happy and they kept right on singing and singing warmed by each other under their Federbetten.

And so did the shepherds, so long ago, bed down that night with their flocks, singing in their hearts the song of the angels and the glory of a baby in the manger. Reduced to its simplest component, Christmas is about the celebration of the Christ child in one's heart.

We will gather in a few weeks on Christmas Eve and sing (in English) some of the same songs sung by the children of Vienna. But we will not be huddled together comforting ourselves in a war-torn nation. Some will. Many Christian families will attend services in the midst of flickering candles in old churches with ears listening for air raid sirens in Ukraine. Some Christians in Bethlehem will gather in the centuries-old Church of the Nativity. Although not likely to celebrate the birth of the Christ child, some (Muslims and Jews) within a few miles of his birth place will know that two billion people in the world will mark His birth in some way. They are uneasy or perhaps even unable to worship. The bombs are imminent. Some will mourn the loss of friends and family; many in the Gaza Strip will be searching for food, water, or medical attention.

But we will worship or, at least, have the option of worship. I will pray at the altar that Jesus, the Prince of Peace, will come into the hearts and minds of the leaders of this world and turn their thoughts of fear, worldly power, hate, revenge, and retribution into thoughts of reconciliation, diplomacy, and forgiveness.

Sadly, we will not see world peace in our remaining years. But we know what peace is. We know that forgiveness, mercy, lives given over to love for others, works. At Christmas, we see that which will come. We will gratefully acknowledge the coming of the Savior in Bethlehem, the coming of the Savior on the clouds of glory in the future, and, most important, the coming of the Savior into our experience of the present. We will come to the altar to experience a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. We will celebrate the passage of COVID and Hurricane Ian. But those events of recent memory are merely rough spots on the road compared to the ongoing violence in Ukraine, in Israel, and in Gaza.

Christmas is a time to think and pray about peace on earth. Surely, this year, we have much to think and pray about. May our prayers reach to the highest heaven and may they be returned to change the hearts of those who know no peace, who want no peace, who glory in chaos and death. We who are people of peace have seen peace in the form of a baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes in the straw of a manger. His peace will come. If nothing else, the survivors of war-torn cities and communities have that to hope for.

Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Ken

Music and Worship

The Hymn of Praise has been changed and can be found on page 139 of the red hymnal, and music will be printed in the bulletin. Additionally, the Agnus Dei will now be sing by the congregation immediately following the Lord's Prayer.

Christmas décor (tree, creche etc.) will be done voluntarily immediately after service on Dec. 10th. Please volunteer. The décor will be taken down (also voluntarily) on January 7th after service.

Christmas Eve Candlelight service will be at 7 PM on Dec. 24. There will be no Christmas Day morning service.

After the carpeting is installed and the organ then voiced, there will be a dedication service (TBD). Guests will be invited (bishop and other dignitaries). Pastor Lentz will preside.

A tentative date of March 3rd has been set aside for a Gala Organ Concert given by our professional organist, Richard Benedum. This is a major event and many volunteers will be needed. A reception will follow in the newly renovated Fellowship Hall. This will be an amazing Marketing Opportunity to help our congregation population grow. Please consider volunteering for this event. Contact Lois Greene

*Lois Greene,
Chair Music and Worship*



OUTREACH MINISTRY TEAM



CAROLS AND POINSETTIAS - Please save the date-December 21 at 10am. We will carpool from the church parking lot and have a joyful time visiting our Homebound members and sharing Christmas cheer. After our visits, we will plan to enjoy lunch together at a local restaurant, too.

ENGLEWOOD HELPING HAND - THANK YOU for all the “Little Red Wagon” donations and to our recent pantry volunteers, Joyce H., Carol R. and Jim S. Our next pantry days will be in January, but the dates are not yet known.



QUILTING AND KNITTING

Please join us for a time of Christian fellowship and service...no skills necessary. We meet every Wednesday, from 9-Noon, in the Fellowship Hall. All willing hands and hearts are welcome. Most of our quilts are donated to Lutheran World Relief. Knitted and crocheted Prayer Shawls and Lap Robes are donated locally. Looking ahead, our annual Quilt and Prayer Shawl Blessing will be on Sunday, January 14th.



THRIVENT

Are you a Thrivent member? Please remember to direct your Choice Dollars each quarter. Christ Lutheran would feel blessed to receive these gifts. Also, please consider applying for a Thrivent Action Grant (value of \$250) to support a special project for our church and/or the community. Need a project idea? The Outreach Ministry Team will help.

KIDS' NEEDS of ENGLEWOOD - Throughout Advent and the Christmas season, Nov. 26-Dec. 31, we will be donating SHOES, SOCKS, UNDIERS (boxers for boys), SWEATSHIRTS and JACKETS to KIDS' NEEDS. Items are needed for kids of all sizes. These gifts of necessity show our love and care for local children and families. Please place your donations in the gift-wrapped collection box in the narthex

TROSHUK FAMILY - Our Ukranian family is doing well! Please continue to support them with your prayers.

*Our next Outreach Ministry Team meeting is on Thursday, January 11th at 11am. All are welcome on our team. Please share your ideas for reaching out into our community with Christ's love.



Peace and Joy!

Carol Rice for the Outreach Ministry Team



Things you need to know!

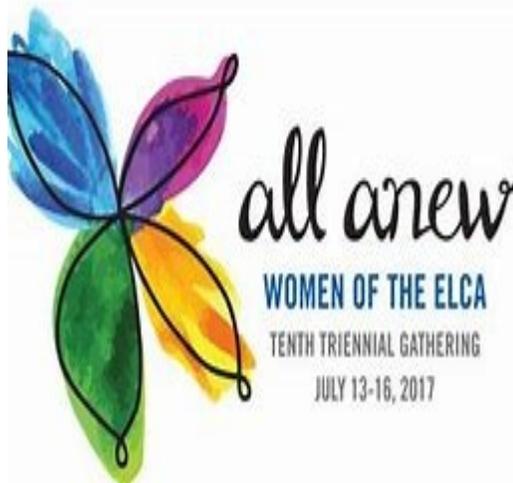
If you are planning to bring baked goods to church for fellowship after service, please text or call Angie Ziegler at 941-525-7829

Joyce Hanisits, council rep to Fellowship Ministry



Christ Lutheran Church Privacy Statement . . .

The Church Directory of Christ Lutheran Church is provided to the members for the purpose of conducting church business only. The church Directory is not for sale and use of the information; including names, telephone numbers, emails or web addresses for purposes other than church-related business is strictly prohibited.



Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. Philippians 1:3-6

Dear Friends,

This is the season where women are often at their busiest: holiday planning, extra events, extra people to feed, unexpected family issues. It is easy to lose our spiritual selves. But it is also a time when Mary shows us that we can bring amazing things into being

if we focus on the will of God rather than just what is around us. That is where the real joy of the season is found. Mary's song in Luke, also called the Magnificat, says this: (the Message version): "I'm dancing with the song of my Savior God.....what God has done for me will never be forgotten." I invite you to take some time with the God of Joy and your friends in Christ in the time ahead:

-Wednesday December 13 Women's Advent Tea 1 pm in the Parish Hall, food and fun.

-Thursday January 11 Women's Circle 10 am, guest speaker TBA (more soon)

And take a look at Luke 1: 46-55. What would you do if an angel talked to you?

In Christ, Pastor Linda



December

| | |
|-------|-------------------------|
| 12/04 | <i>Elizabeth Waring</i> |
| 12/07 | <i>Duane Martin</i> |
| 12/08 | <i>Jan Bishop</i> |
| 12/13 | <i>Donna DeFiore</i> |
| 12/19 | <i>Gary Meeks</i> |
| 12/25 | <i>Emma Egeland</i> |
| 12/25 | <i>Larry Froemming</i> |
| 12/21 | <i>Lizzy Egeland</i> |
| 12/27 | <i>Val Egeland</i> |

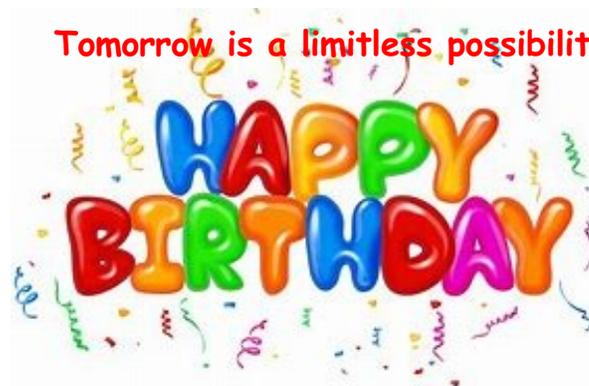
*If your birthday is not listed, and you would like it to be,
please contact the office*

(via e-mail at . . . office@christlutheranfleng.org) to share your special day.

Yesterday is a beautiful reflection.

Today is a new beginning.

Tomorrow is a limitless possibility!





& Attendance

Treasurer Report

| Nov | Attendance | Giving | Dec | Attendance | Giving |
|-----|------------|--------------------|-----|------------|-------------------|
| 5 | 75 | \$2,309.00 | 3 | 60 | \$2,811.00 |
| 12 | 73 | \$5,524.50 | 10 | 60 | \$3,074.00 |
| 19 | 67 | \$2,052.00 | 17 | | |
| 26 | 61 | \$1,351.00 | 24 | | |
| | | | 31 | | |
| | 276 | \$11,236.50 | | 120 | \$5,885.00 |



ORGAN DONATIONS -

You are invited to make a contribution for our new organ to be installed by mid 2023. Please make checks to Christ Lutheran Church with "organ fund" in memo section.





| | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Tai Chi 10:00-11:00 ^{am} / Bridge Club / Bridge Club Tournament 8am - 7pm |
| 2 | Bridge Club Tournament 8am - 7pm |
| 3 | Worship Service 9:30 ^{am} / Bridge Club Tournament 8am - 7pm |
| 4 | Lutheran Heritage Class at 10:00am / Venetian Harmony 6:30-9:30pm |
| 5 | Bridge Club Class 9:30-11:30 / Bridge Club noon - 5pm |
| 6 | Quilting 9-noon / 2:00pm Fellowship Committee |
| 7 | Country Line Dancing 9-noon / Bridge Club noon-5pm |
| 8 | Tai Chi 10:00-11:00am / Bridge Club |
| 9 | Saturday - no activities |
| 10 | Worship Service 9:30 ^{am} / Deck the Halls / Bible Study at 11:00am / Bridge Club noon - |
| 11 | Lutheran Heritage Class at 10:00am / Venetian Harmony 6:30-9:30pm |
| 12 | Bridge Club Class 9:30-11:30 / 10:00am Evangelism Committee / Bridge Club noon - 5pm |
| 13 | Quilting 9-noon / Advent Tea 1:00pm |
| 14 | Country Line Dancing 9-noon / Bridge Club noon-5pm |
| 15 | Tai Chi 10:00-11:00 ^{am} / Bridge Club |
| 16 | Saturday - no activities |
| 17 | Worship Service 9:30 ^{am} / Bible Study at 11:00am / Bridge Club noon - 5:00 ^{pm} |
| 18 | Venetian Harmony 6:30-9:30pm |
| 19 | Bridge Club Class 9:30-11:30 / Bridge Club noon - 5pm / Church Council 1:00pm |
| 20 | Quilting 9-noon |
| 21 | Country Line Dancing 9-noon / Bridge Club noon-5pm |
| 22 | Tai Chi 10:00-11:00 ^{am} / Bridge Club |
| 23 | Saturday - no activities |
| 24 | 7:00pm Christmas Eve Service / NO MORNING SERVICE / NO BRIDGE CLUB |
| 25 | Christmas Day |
| 26 | Bridge Club noon - 5pm |
| 27 | Quilting 9-noon |
| 28 | Country Line Dancing 9-noon / Bridge Club noon -5pm |
| 29 | Tai Chi 10:00-11:00 ^{am} / Bridge Club |
| 30 | Saturday - no activities |
| 31 | Worship Service 9:30 ^{am} / Bible Study at 11:00am / Bridge Club noon - 5:00 ^{pm} |