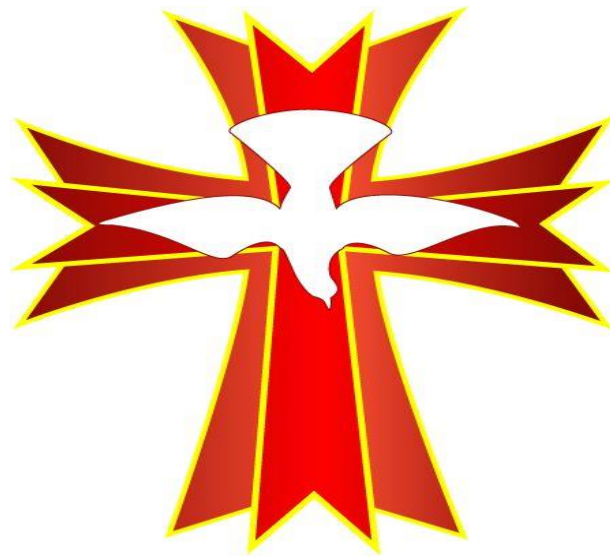


CLC NEWS

December 2020

*A newsletter from Christ Lutheran Church
Englewood, Florida*



Published by Jeannie Caporaso, Office Administrator



Pastor's Message

FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR KEN

A few years ago I 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 her 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. They had each other; many had lost 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 so 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.

Christmas has lost its simplicity and its focus on the birth of a baby in long-ago Bethlehem. C. S. Lewis once pointed out that the exchange of gifts was a very small ingredient in the older English festivity. Scrooge ordered a turkey for his clerk and toys and fruit were given to children but that was about it. And the same was essentially true for the older American colonial celebration of Christmas. Again according to Lewis, the contemporary idea "that not only all friends but even all acquaintances should give one another presents...has been forced upon us by the shopkeepers."

Lewis points out that the magi gave gifts to the Christ child and that the gift came from God to us: the gift of the child of peace given to all humankind. It seems to me that the gift giving should not be the exchange of gifts (sometimes only suitable for "re-gifting") with each other but should be gifts to Jesus in the form of gifts to the less fortunate. Primary is the giving of our hearts, our time, our prayers, our meditation at Christmas. Parties, gift exchanges, cards, rich foods, and shopping are not excluded but worship and inward "songs of the heart" will best serve the "reason for the season."

When life was reduced to the basics after a horrible war, the hearts of the children in that cold apartment in Vienna were forced by circumstances to find expression in the true meaning of Christmas. Forced by circumstances in this year of COVID-19, we will have to adapt our usual Christmas plans to avoid unnecessary contact with our family and friends. But the Christ child will warm our hearts and minds nevertheless. Perhaps we will be forced to discard some of the usual trappings of the holidays and enjoy the opportunities forced upon us by a pandemic to behold the gift of God, the baby in the manger. May the peace of the Christ child be with you and yours this Christmas. Our Christmas Eve services will held at 6 p.m. If you feel safe, please join us to welcome the child of Bethlehem again in mutual fellowship, word, and sacrament.

Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Ken

ATTENDANCE AND FINANCIALS

November 1, 2020	33	\$	2,421.00		
November 8, 2020	41	\$	2,216.61		
November 15, 2020	44	\$	840.00		
November 22, 2020	44	\$	1,240.00		
November 29, 2020	35	\$	750.00		
TOTAL		\$	7,467.61		
Income		\$	7,467.61		
Expenses		\$	8,406.99		
Balance		\$	(939.38)		

The monthly breakdown of expenses for November 2020 is available in the office.

COUNCIL KEY POINTS

NOVEMBER 2020 COUNCIL MEETING KEY POINTS

BIBLE STUDY: With the completion of the Bible Study of the book of "Romans," Pastor Lentz will begin the next Bible Study of "Lutheran Heritage" in January, 2021.

EVANGELISM: Volunteers from the Council will meet to address "Invitation Postcards," inviting new residents to the Englewood Community. These postcards, featuring our beautiful sanctuary cross are being sent in an attempt to attract more visitors to the church. Barbara McAlister made a generous donation to purchase 200 postcard stamps for this project. If anyone knows of new residents in the area, please contact the church office or Pastor Lentz with the address and/or name of the new residents.

DISCRETIONARY FUND: During the month of December, blue envelopes will be available in the pews for contributions to provide for those in need for the holiday and gifts for our staff.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRY TEAM UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2020

Congregational Care Ministers are still unable to do many visits until the pandemic ends or assisted living facilities lift tight restrictions. Pastor Lentz will continue to do all communion visitations. The Social Ministry Team along with all interested will be delivering poinsettias during the holiday season to our "in home" congregants. Other than calls or cards, CCM activities remain on hold for now.

Love and joy to all during this blessed Christmas season,
Charlene Seltz, CCM Team Leader

KIDS' NEEDS of ENGLEWOOD

We have received a Thrivent Action Grant to assist us in this years' collection for Kids' Needs of Englewood. We will be collecting new undies, socks and shoes for school-aged kids from kindergarten through grade 12. All sizes are needed. The large Christmas stocking and bag are in the narthex to collect your donations.

We have a wonderful congregation that always supports Kids' Needs. We look forward to great participation again this year. The campaign will run all of December through January 3rd.

Thank you for your assistance! Many local children and families will benefit from your generosity.

Love, Peace and Joy!
Mary Anne DiGrazia, Thrivent Member

QUILTING, KNITTING and CROCHETING

Our Comfort Quilters and Knitters meet every 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month. Since we meet in the large Fellowship Hall, it will be possible to socially distance. Masks are recommended. Hand sanitizers will be available.

If the spirit moves you, please join us. Bring a snack for our socially distanced break time. Sewing skills are not a prerequisite. We have a variety of tasks for you to choose. It is just a joy to be together, using our hands, sharing our time, inspiring each other and creating quilts and prayer shawls that will bless people in need. Prayer shawls are made available to anyone needing warmth, love, hope and prayer. Quilts are given both locally and globally (through Lutheran World Relief).

Love, Peace and Joy!
Social Ministry Team

WORSHIP & MUSIC MINISTRY TEAM KEY POINTS

We will be learning a new Kyrie for Sundays. The Advent wreath is up and ready to go for Advent. Christmas décor will be put up after service on the 13th. Priscilla Fullerton will be playing for the Christmas Eve Service. The church will be beautifully decorated with poinsettias and candles lining the center aisle.

Respectfully, Lois Greene, Chair

FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR ARE TO THE GLORY OF GOD

If you would like to purchase flowers for the Altar, please add your information in the "Flower Book" in the Narthex. The cost is \$15. Use an envelope in the pew and mark ALTAR FLOWERS on it. Thank you for contributing to our worship.

CLC MINISTRY TEAMS NEEDED

According to the Constitution, the following ministry teams are also required and are not currently active at CLC:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Audit | Memorial Garden |
| Christian Education | Nominating |
| Evangelism (Outreach) | Personnel |
| Fellowship | Property |
| Financial | |

If you would like to volunteer to be on any of these ministry teams, please contact any Council member or Pastor Ken.



BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Ed Bohon	12/04
Jan Bishop	12/08
Jeannette Harpley	12/20
Shirley Herman	12/22

If you would like to share your birthday / wedding anniversary, please contact the office.

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Remember,
if you have an interesting story,
an inspirational article,
a moving experience,
or a touch of humor to share,
we would love to hear from you.
