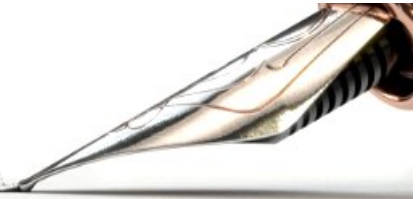
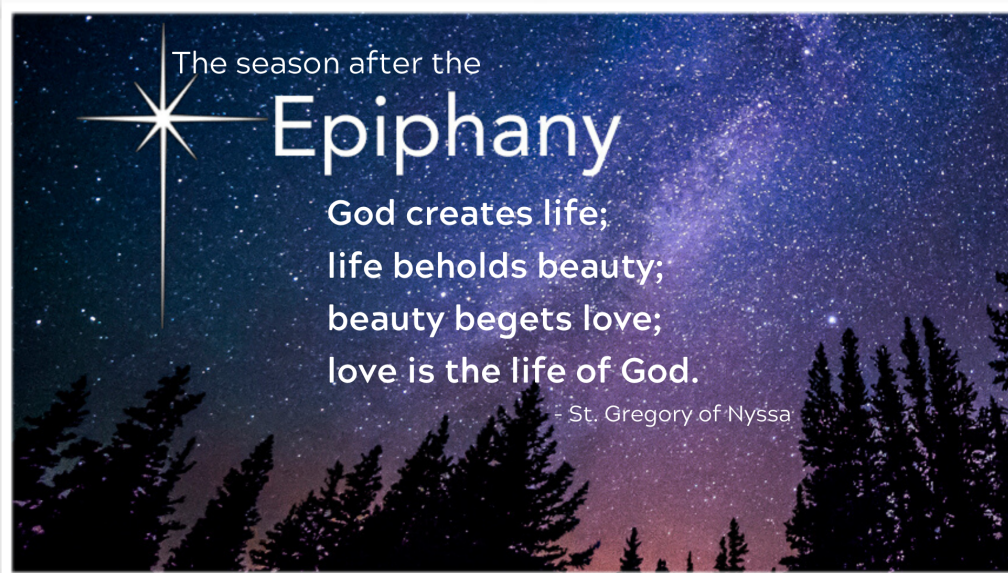


Grace Notes



A publication of Shades Valley Lutheran Church + ELCA + Birmingham, AL + January 2020



ELCA presiding bishop signs on to Golden Rule 2020 initiative.

Christians from a wide range of theological and political views have kicked off a year of activities for the initiative *Golden Rule 2020: A Call for Dignity and Respect in Politics*.

Through this initiative, individuals and congregations are asked to affirm the use of spiritual principles in public life, to help heal political divisions through prayer and to promote the use of Jesus' teachings, especially the Golden Rule, in political discussions and election activities.

To help launch Golden Rule 2020, ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and other Christian faith leaders have signed a statement of support. The leaders emphasize that "churches have an important role to play in helping to heal America, and we hope and pray that local congregations will be active in efforts to increase understanding and bridge divisions in our country between now and the 2020 election."

Statement of Support: Golden Rule 2020

We are Christians with different theological and political views who have come together to express

concern about the polarization and incivility that is tearing our country apart. We are also deeply troubled by the prospect of an angry and hateful political campaign season in 2020 that will further divide us as a nation.

We believe that we can find guidance through this national dilemma in the teachings of Jesus. In particular, we believe that Jesus' command to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" should be taken seriously by Christians who engage in political activity. We also believe that if enough people follow this "Golden Rule" principle, it will help generate the respect and civility we so desperately need in our country.

Churches have an important role to play in helping to heal America, and we hope and pray that local congregations will be active in efforts to increase understanding and bridge divisions in our country between now and the 2020 election.

GOLDEN RULE
2020

A CALL FOR DIGNITY AND RESPECT IN POLITICS



Pastor Eric Murray

CONJECTURES

**Emmanuel:
God (has been and still is) *with us!***

Back at the beginning of Advent, we here at SVLC set out our manger scene on the large round table in the Gathering area. Of course, we could not yet put Jesus in the manger. No, it was only Advent, and Christmas was still four weeks away. So..., as is the custom, we would wait and place Jesus in the manger at just the right time, ...on Christmas Eve.

Only, we had a problem. We couldn't find Jesus. Ironic isn't it? THE place of all places where Jesus should be found is the church. And yet, we had lost Jesus. Or, so we thought. Turns out, one day, suddenly, Jesus was just there...in the side-table drawer.

Jesus has a way of doing that — just showing up. Yep, in unexpected places and in unexpected ways Jesus is just there.

In any event, we found Jesus. So when Christmas came, then *away in a manger no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head* right there in SVLC's manger scene.

But, the problem is, much quicker than it had arrived, Christmas is, for all intents and purposes, over. At least it is according to the stores, the media outlets, and most of our neighbors, friends, and family. For proof of this, why don't you try wishing someone a "Merry Christmas" on the 5th of January. Or, try noticing the many after Christmas sales that begin on the 26th of December, if not before.

It's as if we look at our "to-do list" and,

Advent

Christmas

On to the next thing

It's like we get Jesus out of the drawer and then, quicker still, put him away again. Jesus safely stowed in a drawer. Christmas celebrated just one day a year. Faith expressed on a Sunday. And, God-in-a-box, just where we like him.

The problem with this approach is that it is not the approach of Christianity. As Christians, we believe that God is with us, having come up from the first incarnation, God, according to The Message translation, "*became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.*" God is with us and heaven and earth are, in the words of theologian N.T. Wright, *overlapped and interlocked.* God is

Table of Contents

Page 2...Pastor's article
 Page 3...Worship & Music ...
 ...Spiritual Life Ministry
 Page 4...Church Family Ministry
 Page 5...Birthdays & Gratitudes
 Page 6...Scripture Readings
 ...Prayers & Practices
 Page 7...Synod News
 Page 8...Server Schedule

with us, not just on Sundays and not just in the places and ways we want God to be with us. God has been and still is with us today and will be with us each and every day to come.

Our faith then is also an everyday activity. It is not a one-day, Sunday only expression. It is not hidden away in the drawer of our hearts or the shelf of our home and taken out only occasionally. Faith is expressed in daily life, in our everyday home life, in our work-a-day world, and in our various relations. Faith overlaps and interlocks with all that we do and everything that we are.

So as this new year dawns, let us...

...receive the gift of Christmas, God with us,

...and, take up the gift of faith, letting it overlap and interlock, inform and direct our every day.

Peace and every good in the new year,

Pastor Eric

WORSHIP & MUSIC

What is the pattern of worship?

The basic structure of worship— gathering, word, meal, and sending—has been in place since the early centuries of the church. This pattern is a gift to the church, best to be understood as one flowing action...As described in The Sunday Assembly:

...a single event, around a single gospel. The pattern is one of flowing, communal action....given in order to bring us to faith and form us for love toward neighbor (p. 49).

What is this pattern in detail?

Gathering: “The Holy Spirit gathers us in preparation for hearing God’s word and receiving God’s presence in Holy Communion. Elements of the gathering may include song, prayer, confession/ baptismal remembrance. It may be very brief or extended depending on the season of the church year or other factors.

Word: The corporate hearing of God’s word has its roots in Jewish tradition. From the earliest times, reading -- singing -- reading -- singing created a natural rhythm of proclamation and response. The rhythm provides quiet time for worshipers to listen attentively and active time to respond, reflect, and prepare for what is coming -- preaching on the proclaimed texts. In a world of short attention spans, it is a pattern worth keeping. Within the liturgy of the Word, the traditional order has been Old Testament reading, psalm, New Testament reading, gospel acclamation, Holy Gospel, and sermon.

The Word section also includes a pattern of responses from the assembly including the Hymn of the Day. More than a hymn based on

the sermon, this hymn or song brings together the themes expressed in the biblical texts and the season of the church year. By singing together, the assembly adds its voice to the proclamation of God’s word.

The service of the word concludes (sometimes) with the reciting of the creed and most always with the prayers of the people. The exchange of peace bridges the word portion of this pattern with the meal portion.

Continued on page 5

SPIRITUAL LIFE MINISTRY

Pub Theology

**January 9, 2020
7:00-9:00PM**

Hickory Tavern

Pub Theology is an informal gathering of seekers, questioners, religious, spiritualists, humanists, believers, and non-believers, any who are interested in discussing culture and faith in a PUBLIC setting.

All are welcome to join us for great company, conversation, and theological/spiritual discussion on January 9 from 7-9pm at **Hickory Tavern** across the street from church at Brookwood Village.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR...

SVLC’s next

***Saints Alive** luncheon is**

February 13, 2020

Noon-1:30pm

* *Saints Alive* is a ministry with and for people age 50+. Bring a friend and join us!

FAMILY MINISTRY



Children's Church

We will have Children's Church during the WORD section of worship (following Children's Message up to the Offering

time) children (PreK-5th grades) have the option of moving to the chapel for an abbreviated Sunday school lesson and craft.

Children's Church is based off of the Whirl Lectionary series from Sparkhouse. It follows the Year A lectionary that is being followed in our worship service.

Children's Church Stories

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| January 5 | The Wise Men | Matthew 2:1-12 |
| January 12 | A Light to the Nation | Isaiah 42:1-9 |
| January 19 | The Lamb of God | John 1:29-42 |
| January 26 | United in Christ | 1 Cor. 1:10-18 |

Middle School Catechism -

MLK Weekend Retreat

Sunday, January 19 ~ 7:00pm
to Monday, January 20 ~ 2:00pm
(time may change on Jan. 20)

Senior High Bible Study

Wednesday evenings at 5:30PM.

Jr. & Sr. High Youth Activities

January 19-20, 2020

Lock-in and MLK Jr. Day of Service

February 9-10, 2020

All GA (Camp Grace, Roberta, GA)

March 13-15, 2020

SESLYO Assembly (Lutheranch)

June 14-19

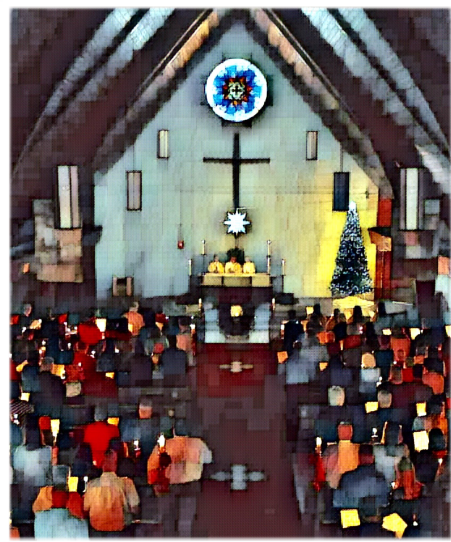
Affirm (UWA)

The Children's Choir and Bell

Choir...performed December 15. They sang the songs *To Bethlehem, Shine!, Hear the Angels Sing, and Do You Know?.* The children also played *Good King Wenceslas* and *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen* on the hand bells. Kaitlyn Hall sang *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen* as the children played the bells.

A special thank you to Debbie Reid and Rebecca Rehorst for directing the choirs and to Dot Underwood for accompanying the children.





THANK YOU!

Dear Members of Shades Valley,

We wish to thank all of you for your kind Christmas greetings, wishes and your very generous gifts of love. We consider it a blessing each and every day to be in ministry with you—but your overwhelming outpouring of love and concern during this joyous season truly touches our hearts and warms our souls.

Thank you, and Merry Christmas!

Your Church Staff

Pastor Eric Murray, Sarah Beth Hall, Rebecca Rehorst,
Charlie Venable, and Johanna Graham

January Birthdays

- 1/3 Pam Bolt
- 1/6 Amy Cristofani
- 1/7 Sallie Buchanan
- 1/9 Yon Snider
- 1/10 Mitchell Plamondon
- 1/11 Chloe Plamondon
- 1/11 Noah Smith
- 1/13 Lane Graham
- 1/13 Adam Trombley
- 1/13 Luke Trombley
- 1/14 Lucia Hopkins
- 1/15 Carson Rehder
- 1/15 Lauren Rehder
- 1/18 Kennedy Weismore
- 1/20 Charlotte Curlings
- 1/23 Darlene Lawrence-Blanton
- 1/27 Blaine Minton

What is the pattern of worship? continued

Meal: The pattern surrounding the meal finds its prototype in the scriptural accounts of the institution of Christ's supper: Jesus "took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it." The table setting, great thanksgiving, breaking of bread, and communion is how Christ's command to "do this in remembrance of me" is lived out today, as it has been for centuries.

Sending: The objective of the sending is to empower the assembly to take God's message into the world. This is typically the briefest portion of the service, often consisting of a blessing, sending, song and communion.

It cannot be overstated that the content of worship within the framework of the four-fold pattern will vary from place to place. As is typical of Lutheran-Christians, there is always room for freedom and flexibility.

Adapted from **Worship Formation & Liturgical Resources: Frequently Asked Questions** at elca.org

Prayer & Practices:

Love & Compassion

by James Finley

Meditation allows us to see the world through the eyes of compassion. This compassionate vision of the world impels us to live in ways in which our words and behavior toward others embody compassion. Compassion forms the essential bond between seeking God in meditation and all forms of social justice. For the more we are transformed in compassion, the more we are impelled to act with compassion toward others. [1]

When you sit in meditation, your breathing naturally slows. Quietly focusing your attention on your breathing is a way of slowing down and settling into a deep meditative awareness of oneness with God. Breathing out, be quietly aware of breathing out. Breathing in, be quietly aware of breathing in. Each time you realize you have drifted off into thoughts, memories, sensations, and other ego-based modes of being, simply return to your breathing as your anchoring place in present-moment attentiveness.

Your efforts in following the path of breath awareness might be enhanced by repeating a word or phrase with each breath. A practice I have found particularly helpful is to pair breath awareness with the phrase “I love you.”

Continued on p. 7

Thoughts & Prayers

Please join us in praying for the following:

Members...

Marti Rowe, Gerry Arndt, Ann Veren, and Marie Dubois

Friends and relatives...

The family of Phyllis Rehorst William Bobo, The Family of Joanna Aben, The Family of Donna Snider, Kathy Kersten, Dawn & John Lester, Rosa Chapman, Cindy Hilton, Kinsley Green, Suzie Easterling

Our Church...

Our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and our Bishop Elizabeth.

Our ELCA – Southeastern Synod, and our Bishop Kevin.



Sunday Worship Scripture Texts for January

| Date | First Reading | Psalms | Second Reading | Gospel |
|---------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Jan. 5 | Isaiah 60:1-6 | Psalms 72:1-7, 10-14 | Ephesians 3:1-12 | Matthew 2:1-12 |
| Jan. 12 | Isaiah 42:1-9 | Psalms 29 | Acts 10:34-43 | Matthew 3:13-17 |
| Jan. 19 | Isaiah 49:1-7 | Psalms 40:1-11 | 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 | John 1:29-42 |
| Jan. 26 | Isaiah 9:1-4 | Psalms 27:1, 4-9 | 1 Corinthians 1:10-18 | Matthew 4:12-23 |



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

SYNOD NEWS

Official Notice of Meeting
2020 Southeastern Synod Assembly

June 5, June 6, and June 7, 2020

Chattanooga Convention Center
 1150 Carter Street
 Chattanooga, TN 37402

Pursuant to the bylaws of the Southeastern Synod (S7.11.01.),

you are hereby given notice that the 2020 Southeastern Synod Assembly will be held June 5, June 6, and June 7, 2020 at the Chattanooga Convention Center ~ The Rev. Randy T. Jones, Synod Secretary

The Assembly will be focused around the theme:

"Weaving God's Story and Ours into the World."

Additional information, including registration, will be available in early 2020. Please contact the Rev. Jill Henning at 404-589-1977 should you have questions.

Practice Love & Compassion, continued...

As you inhale, listen to the incoming breath so intently that you can hear in it God's silent "I love you." In this moment, God is flowing into you as the source and reality of your very being. As you exhale, breathe out a silent "I love you" back to God. As you inhale, be aware of the air as being God flowing into you, as the divine gift of your very being. As you exhale, allow your silent "I love you" to be your very being, flowing back into the depths of God.

Simply sit, open to God breathing divine love into the depths of your being, as you breathe your whole being, as a gift of love, back into God.

This one practice alone, engaged in with heartfelt sincerity and devotion, can awaken you to God's total and complete oneness with you as the giver, the sustainer, and the reality of the sheer miracle of your very being. As this realization of God's oneness with you grows, you will begin to realize how foolish it is to imagine that God is, in any way, distant from you. You discover how foolish it is to imagine that you could in any way, hide from God, who is wholly one with all that is within your mind and heart, your very being. [2]

[1] Adapted from James Finley, Christian Meditation: Experiencing the Presence of God (HarperSanFrancisco: 2004), 286.

[2] Ibid., 30, 242-244.

Eagle Scout Project

Cash & Check accepted just outside the Front Entrance



Make Checks out to Troop 95

What to Bring



D-Ring Belts



Crew-cut Socks



Boxer-style Undies

Online Donations



<https://squareup.com/store/troop-95/item/patrick-boyd-eagle-project>

Donations will be accepted until January 12

Thank for your contributions

JANUARY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

| | 1/5 | 1/12 | 1/19 | 1/26 |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| COFFEE | Joan Carlisle Lois Luther | G&S Vitalis Susan Summers | Gaylia Malone | Candy Wallace |
| OPEN/ LOCKUP | J&S Trombley EJ Rauworth | J&S Trombley Beth Thomas | J&S Trombley Elissa Capps | J&S Trombley Kristin Bakkegard |
| FLOWERS | OPEN/OPEN | Pastor Pauline/OPEN | OPEN/OPEN | OPEN/OPEN |
| USHERS | Terry Carlisle Blaine Minton Phyllis Sullivan Jack Wallace | Joel Arnold Kristin Bakkegard Len Capps Rick Lampkin | Ed Kezar Caleb Hopkins Lucas McDonald Greg Vitalis | EJ Rauworth Bruce Montgomery John Trombley Scott Curlings |
| ACOLYTE | Kathryn Minton | Edward Cristofani | Lucia Hopkins | Mark Trombley |
| CRUCIFER | Olivia Minton | Denton McDonald | Carson Rehder | Charlotte Curlings |
| LECTOR | Ellen Brake | Stuart Hall | Sharon Lampkin | Blaine Minton |
| COMMUNION ASSISTANTS | Carolyn Galgano Amy Rauworth | Amy Cristofani Stuart Hall | Sharon Lampkin Bettye Neuhaus | Johanna Graham Kaitlyn Hall |
| LAY ASSISTANT | Stephen Schrader | Laura Kezar | Kaitlyn Hall | Gerald Parsons |
| CHILDREN'S CHURCH | Pastor Pauline Farrington | Gretchen Sexton | Sarah Trombley | Maria Hopkins |
| NURSERY VOLUNTEER | Caleb Hopkins | Carolyn Galgano | Susan Summers | Gail McCormick |
| ALTAR GUILD | Sharon Lampkin Cindy Graham | | | |

Shades Valley Lutheran Church

Ministers - Members of Shades Valley Lutheran Church

Staff

Office Professional - Sarah Beth Hall

Financial Secretary - Charlie Venable

Minister of H.S. Youth - Johanna Graham

Director of Music – Rebecca Rehorst

Parish Pastor – Rev. Eric L. Murray

secretary@shadesvalleylutheran.org

finance@shadesvalleylutheran.org

music@shadesvalleylutheran.org

pastor@shadesvalleylutheran.org

Our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

ELCA-Southeastern Synod Bishop -- Rev. Kevin Strickland

ELCA Presiding Bishop -- Rev. Elizabeth Eaton