



**The
Mustard Seed**
December 2020
The Monthly Newsletter
of
**St. John's Evangelical
Lutheran Church**

47 McLachlin St. S., Arnprior
Ontario K7S 2Z1

Pastor:

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Church Office: 613-623-4562

Church Council

Randy Zimmerling	623-9733
Jeff Kargus	623-0192
Dave Burkett	618-5729
Cory Weckwerth	793-3701
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"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which indeed is smaller than all seeds. But when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches."

Matthew 13:31-32



Pastor's Message



"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel: ...which means God is with us" Matthew 1:23

Greetings in the name of the Christ Child Jesus, who lives and reigns in our lives. I pray that God will bless you and your families this Advent Season, as you prepare and await the birth of the Christ Child in your heart.

St. John's Church Council extends a sincere invitation for you to join us for worship during this Advent and Christmas season. Dates and times are listed in the newsletter calendar. All worship services will be livestreamed and available on YouTube. (see the links on the website for St. John's Lutheran Church, Arnprior: stjohnsarnprior.com)

Some of our younger families participate in a relatively new secular Advent/Christmas tradition in their own homes. Since about 2005, **"The Elf on The Shelf"** has landed in many households. The book, written in rhyme, tells a Christmas Story that explains how Santa Claus knows who is naughty or nice. The Elf figure stays in the household from late November until Christmas Eve. The concept was developed from the Aebersold's family tradition in Georgia, U.S.A.

What caught my attention was part of a letter that accompanied one of these Elves to a house.

"I know this year has been very different and at times not much fun. So, we promise to make the next month as festive and playful as can be done. This year has also taught us to be thankful for all that we have. Our family, our friends, our homes, and we are so glad."

This Advent and Christmas season will urge each of our families, young and old, to be cautious and creative in our preparations and celebrations. We may all be creating new traditions for our families. I imagine that we will all make the time to cherish loved ones and the time spent in their company. We are thankful for all that we have, and all that we can share with others.

May you and yours have a blessed Advent season and a Merry Christmas!
Sincerely, Rev. Norine Gullons

December Event Schedule

DATE	EVENT
Sunday Nov 29 th	10:30a.m. ADVENT I—Worship Service of Word & Prayer.
Sunday Dec 6 th	10:30a.m. ADVENT II—Worship Service of Word & Prayer.
Thursday Dec 10 th	Ottawa Valley Pastors meet in Pembroke.
Sunday Dec 13 th	10:30a.m. ADVENT III—Worship Service with Holy Communion.
Monday Dec 14 th	7 p.m. Church Council
Sunday Dec 20 th	10:30a.m. ADVENT IV—Worship Service of Word and Prayer.
Thursday Dec 24 th	5:00p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE—Worship Service with Holy Communion.
Sunday Dec 27 th	10:30a.m. Worship Service of Word and Prayer.
Sunday Jan 3 rd	10:30a.m. Worship Service of Word and Prayer.

PRAYER LIST



We normally have this list on our Sunday bulletin. Please pray for these people in your daily prayer:



From both congregations: Chris & Kathy, Ed & Rosemary, Lucas and family, Fred, Gladys, Joe & Shelley.

Friends of the Parish: Elvira, Annie, Joan, Leslie, Ron K., Tere B., Lorraine, Barb L., Jodie, Diane D. & family, Jason, Claudette

We pray for all those who are working on developing a vaccine for Covid.

Bless you for believing in the power of prayers.

If you wish to add a name to this list, please contact Pastor Norine.



Council Meeting Minutes

November 16th 2020

Attendance

Randy Zimmerling
 Cory Weckwerth
 Guest: Andy Kalnins

David Burkett
 Enid Blackwell
 Guest: Alison Burkett

Pr. Norine
 Jeff Kargus

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 and Pastor opened with devotions and a prayer.

Pastor's update:

- Debbie Witt & Andy Kalnins have agreed to join 2021 council.
- Both Renfrew and Arnprior churches have agreed to maintain their usual Christmas Eve service times with St. John's keeping the earlier time at 5:00

Financial Update:

- Our net deficit to the end of Oct is \$1,700.
- In addition to her responsibilities for accounting Alison Burkett has agreed to take on the responsibilities for treasurer. Alison and Randy will be working out a transition plan for related work.
- Alison outlined the 2021 budget process and made specific requests of council members to review some targeted line items for the budget.
- Our overriding assumption is that Covid-19 restrictions will apply for at least part of the year and we will be deferring any additional costs we can (including the basement renovation project).

Communications:

- Enid updated on Facebook content and responses. In addition she summarized her dialogue with some of the members who are not on internet. Randy suggested we follow up with the retirement homes in town to see if they are willing to put the Sunday service on smart TV or tables for viewing by members who are residents there. He will reach out to administrative staff at each facility,
- Dave updated council on YouTube viewing statistics. One of our challenges is to get a trained back up for Dave for Sunday music and recording. Jeff has agreed to start training. Randy will send a note to the local high school to see if there are any qualified technology students looking for volunteer hours.

Outreach:

Snack pack grant application submitted on behalf of local Food Bank. All donations for *"chickens for foodbank"* due Dec.7th.

Property:

Leaky toilet repaired thanks to Gerald F.

New Business:

- Members will be asked to confirm their attendance on Christmas Eve with Randy by phone or email so we can ensure we do not exceed 50 person maximum capacity under current Covid -19 restrictions.
- Council will discuss process for new council chairperson selection at next meeting.



Should have thought of this for the Bazaar



After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” — (Matthew 2:1)

O morning stars together / Proclaim the holy birth (from the carol “O Little Town of Bethlehem)

On Christmas Cards, in Christmas Carols, on the tops of Christmas Trees, in Christmas Movies, the Star of Bethlehem is a ubiquitous image. Is it a metaphor, is it a fable, is it historical fact? I am not sure if that will ever be revealed, or figured out, but this Christmas we will have a reminder in the sky of this story, for just about the entire month of December.

Jupiter and Saturn have been with us all summer in the south and now in the west. Jupiter is the brightest of the pair, but Saturn is still bright enough. In early December they will be close to each other in the south west, and you will spot them, low in the sky, as soon as it darkens.

Each day they will sink lower into the horizon. Each day, they will move closer to each other, and make an outstanding sight in the sky, especially when viewed via binoculars or a small telescope. Astronomers call this a conjunction but it is just an illusion; Saturn and Jupiter are just lined up from the perspective of the earth, but they are still 655 million kilometres apart. (and Jupiter is currently 455 million miles away from earth)

They will appear to be the closest around December 21st (the day of the Winter Solstice). And this could be a nice reminder of the story of the Christmas Star. But could there be an actual connection? In 7 BCE, 2027 years ago, we know for sure that there was a December Great Conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter. In fact, the two planets convened three times that year.

One of the things that the ancient astronomers / astrologers would have paid a lot of attention to was the helical rising of objects in the sky. A helical rising is the appearance of a star or planet in the eastern sky just before it is obscured by the light of morning. It was a glimpse of the future, a foreshadow of what was to come. Egyptians would diligently watch for the rise of Sirius, the brightest star of winter (more on that next month). As soon as they spotted it in the dawn sky (maybe in late July or early August) they knew the Nile was about to flood and they took the appropriate action.

In April of 7 BCE Eastern Skywatchers would have seen, just before the night sky disappeared in the morning light, the Jupiter/Saturn pair and they knew that meant something. After a month or so the pair started to drift apart, but then a while later they started to come together again yet again ... only to move apart. But they weren't done! In the autumn the pair converged again for the third time in one year! What could this mean? (The boring answer is this; it what is called a Triple Conjunction. Just as when you look out a train window at some trees, it will look like they are converging, and if you go around a curve it may look like they are moving to and fro. It is an illusion. But it is absolute fact that this Triple Conjunction did happen)

To the sky observers of two millennia ago, it was a sign that something was going to happen somewhere somehow. We can only speculate on what they thought, but was there an incentive for scholars, from what now is Western Iran, to travel to Jerusalem to check in with Herod to see what wondrous things were going on his realm? That answer is probably yes.

Europeans of course were not in Arnprior in 7 BCE. But the indigenous peoples here would have seen the same stars, the same dance in the sky between Jupiter and Saturn in the sky. What would they have thought?

So do get out and watch the pirouette between Saturn and Jupiter. The closer they get, the lower they will sink in the sky. But what wondrous event does this foretell for us? (I like to think along the lines of a COVID Vaccine)

(I was able to generate a graphic of what we will see in the west on December 21 just as it darkens, and my software was able to generate what things looked like on the same day 2027 years ago, in Arnprior. I welcome comments on the accuracy of the current chart, and I really look forward to comments on the accuracy of the latter chart).





CAMP LUTHERLYN RAFFLE

It's time for the

Camp Lutherlyn Raffle.

Tickets are \$10 each or three for \$20 (which is a good deal!).

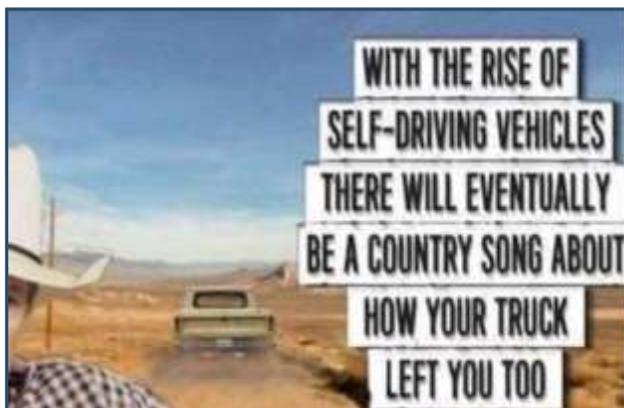
GOOD LUCK!

You can pay by e-transfer (info@lutherlyncamp.ca) or cheque.

PRIZES:

- 2- night stay in Four Seasons Lodge (8 bedrooms, full kitchen, great room and washrooms). (value: \$1,150)
- 2- night stay in the Bancroft Cabin – on the beach with a gorgeous very private view of the lake. Sleeps up to 8; Kitchenette; nearby new compostable toilets. (value: \$300)
- 2- night stay in Repheal Cabin – lovely for a single or couple retreat; nestled in the pines with a lovely big deck; sleeps 2-3 in bed-sitting room; kitchenette; brand new 3-piece washroom. (value \$250)
- “Cat in the Hat” twin bed quilt (value \$100)
- “Dogwood” limited edition matted photograph (value \$150)
- Golden Lake prize pack (value \$200)
- Queen sized quilt, hand embroidered (value \$300)
- Cobden prize pack (value \$350)
- Oil change & wheel alignment (Murphy’s of Renfrew) & McDonald’s gift certificate (value \$170)
- Double bed quilt (value \$400)
- Memory foam pillow & Golf print (value \$150)
- Two tickets to Stone Fence Theatre Dinner & Show (value \$120)
- “Spring Aspens” limited edition matted photograph (value \$150)

See pictures of the different prizes on www.lutherlyncamp.ca/news/ and select Raffle.



CHRISTMAS BAZAAR



Proceeds of the Nov 14th "Online" Bazaar are **\$830.50**. And we're hoping to sell some additional items over the next few weeks. That's not too bad for the "year of the pandemic"! We got good comments from our buyers on figuring out how to hold the sale a different way and be safe!

Many thanks to the twenty volunteers who made this possible – helping out with baking, preserves, knitting, donation of other items, online support, help at the church or delivering orders. That's the spirit of St. John's!



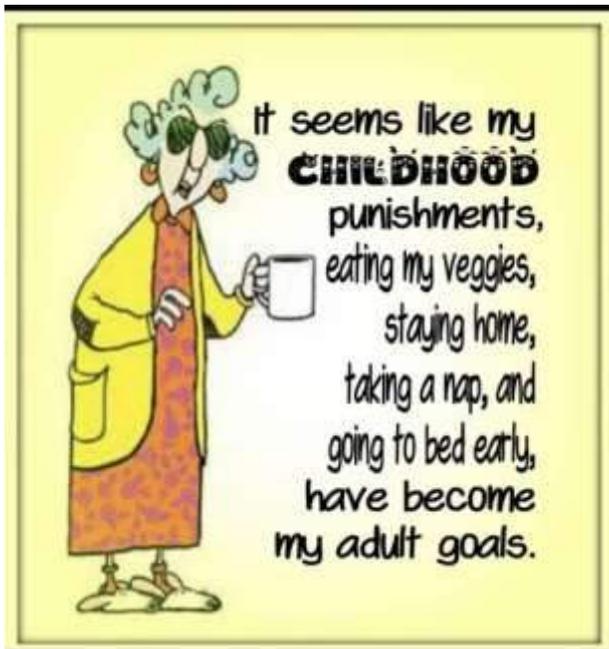
UNPLUG - and Connect with Nature in a Small Town Setting

We are pleased to share the wonderful news that, next year, 2021, St. John's Lutheran will be offering an exciting outdoor program for young children and youth from our congregation and the broader community. Having recently received news that our application for an ES-YAYA (Eastern Synod – Youth and Young Adult) grant has been successful, we will be launching 'Unplugged' in April, 2021. This pilot project is a 6-month nature-based program for two groups of children: younger and older, with 12 special, varied 'connection to creation' activities offered every second Saturday to each group. The plan is to engage two paid part-time young leaders, and involve congregational connected volunteers and parents and knowledgeable leaders from the area in COVID - safe experiences which build love and protection of nature, friendship and community contribution.

How would you like your child or grandchildren to help create a community garden at St. John's, explore and help clean a riverside, observe and learn about the daytime and night sky, do animal track learning and visit a farm? And be 'unplugged' from screens and on-line learning, in a low-cost program for families with limited outdoor opportunities or resources?

You will have the opportunity to help out, if you like, and also, we hope, to be part of a study group led by P+ Norine, exploring Diana Butler-Bass's book [Grounded: Finding God in the World, a Spiritual Revolution](#).

The Project Team, Ryan Zimmerling, Alison Burkett, Enid Blackwell and Pastor Norine Gullons look forward to receiving your ideas and questions, and to bringing you more news as Unplugged plans develop in January, 2021 and beyond.



December 2020

Happy Birthday!

Dec 11—Gerald Formuziewich

Dec 25—Jacob Elliot

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Dec 30—Alison & Dave Burkett

Canadian Lutheran World Relief

Gifts from the Heart

2020 CHRISTMAS CATALOGUE

Fight COVID-19 with a gift of clean water, inside on page 2

"My father said there were two kinds of people in the world: givers and takers. The takers may eat better, but the givers sleep better."

Marko Thomas
©THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT



NeighbourLink Fountain

The NeighbourLink Fountain has been operating on a limited basis since July 1st due to the COVID 19 restrictions in place in our area. The Board has implemented COVID 19 protocols to enhance hygiene. Many of our volunteers are among the more vulnerable population and are rightly being very cautious about being in the building. We are very grateful to those who are keeping things going.

As the pandemic continues we are exploring ways to expand our services. So far we have been operating a reduced program of services:

- We are accepting donated goods on an appointment basis, sorting them, and putting selected items on display. The Boutique is open on Saturday from 10 am to 2 pm only with appropriate COVID-19 controls in place.
- The Resource Office is open by appointment only. They are managing cases by telephone for the most part. Occasionally, people may be invited into the office for an in-person appointment.
- We are not able to offer our usual café services at the Fountain but we have entered into a joint venture with Antrim Truck Stop. NLF pays for the food, Antrim prepares the food for takeout and the Knights of Columbus organize delivery. Vulnerable people receive a free complete dinner delivered to their place of residence using all of the relevant hygiene protocols. For the fourth distribution under this agreement, 350 meals were given out before Thanksgiving.

Our next stage of reopening would be to have the Boutique open on a weekday in addition to the current Saturday hours. This depends on the availability of a team of willing volunteers.

As Christmas approaches our team of “elves” is excitedly making preparations for our children’s’ gift program. Jane’s Toy Room (Named after Jane Theaker) will, we hope, be stocked to bursting with toys donated by individuals, families and local stores like Giant Tiger, Canadian Tire, TD Bank and others; watch for donation bins at these locations.

We expect to be doing another meal distribution to shut-ins in need before Christmas and plan to continue this outreach in 2021.

As the pandemic grinds on, and emergency funds are cut back we anticipate that there will more demand for help of various kinds. As society tries to establish a “New Normal” and we all struggle adjust, NeighbourLink Fountain will do our best to help those who might get left behind.

Ways churches can help:

- Keep NeighbourLink Fountain in your prayers, our Calendar on your notice board and in your bulletin.
- Pray for wisdom for the Board and leadership to use available funds to the best advantage.

Ways individuals can help:

- Prayer for any volunteers that you know personally.
- Become a volunteer yourself. Immediate needs are for people to do sorting of donations as they come in (after a quarantine period), staff for the Boutique, a person who can take on the task of coordinating volunteers. Please call the office at 613-623-4200 to speak to Jo-Anne.

Advent Calendar

He will come like last leaf's fall.
One night when the November wind
has flayed the trees to the bone, and earth
wakes choking on the mould,
the soft shroud's folding.

He will come like frost.
One morning when the shrinking earth
opens on mist, to find itself
arrested in the net
of alien, sword-set beauty.

He will come like dark.
One evening when the bursting red
December sun draws up the sheet
and penny-masks its eye to yield
the star-snowed fields of sky.

He will come, will come,
will come like crying in the night,
like blood, like breaking,
as the earth writhes to toss him free.
He will come like child.

© Rowan Williams



Arnprior Food Bank Christmas Chicken Drive

In keeping with the spirit of Christmas giving alive we will be accepting donations towards the purchase of chickens for the Arnprior Food Bank again this year. If you wish to donate please ensure you indicate **"Chickens"** on your offering with the amount.

Thank you for your generous support in past years. It is very much appreciated by the families in our community needing a helping hand.

Please contact **Jeff Kargus (613) 623 -0192** if you have any questions

Note: The deadline for donations is Monday December 7th.



New Members: *On Nov 15th, the people of St. John's were delighted to welcome and receive Chris & Kathy Tonkin as new members. May they feel supported and blessed and experience the spirit of joy in God's presence within our family of faith.*

Special thanks to Lorne and Mel Bretzlaff who have designed and placed a special holder for the two brass candle lighters for the Altar Guild.



***To the good people of St. Johns & St. James
Lutheran Churches:***

Thank you so much, to all of you, for all of your support for both our churches' ministries over this past year. I am thankful for the financial support, but also for the resilience that has been exhibited in both places. You have individually found ways to keep moving forward. I have admired your abilities to pro-actively work together to maintain HOPE in our faith, our common life together and in our ministries. HOPE demands something from each one of us as individuals. I am filled with appreciation for every one of our members, and for your determination and creative imagination to thrive well and humbly during 2020. May we all be blessed, by grace, to continue walking in our faith life together into 2021.

Sincerely, Pastor Norine

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER 2020

DATE	USHERS	READING	ALTAR	COUNTERS
Nov 29 th	Lorne & Joanne Bretzlaff	Debbie Kargus	Barbara & Gerald Formuziewich	Elmer & Marion Leeck
Dec 6 th	Lorne & Joanne Bretzlaff	Randy Zimmerling	Barbara & Gerald Formuziewich	Elmer & Marion Leeck
Dec 13 th	Lorne & Joanne Bretzlaff	Maureen Rueckwald	Barbara & Gerald Formuziewich	Elmer & Marion Leeck
Dec 20 th	Beryl & Keith Richardson	Mark Boese	Barbara & Gerald Formuziewich	Elmer & Marion Leeck
Dec 24 th	Beryl & Keith Richardson	Joy Statham	Barbara & Gerald Formuziewich	Elmer & Marion Leeck
Dec 27 th	Beryl & Keith Richardson	Andy Kalnins	Barbara & Gerald Formuziewich	Elmer & Marion Leeck