



November 2019

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH The PULSEBEAT

Friends in Christ, grace to you and peace

November's Sundays begin with All Saints and close with Christ the King. In between we hear Jesus call us to live life in its fullness and to practice endurance in the face of adversity. Christ the King Sunday, November 24, marks the last Sunday of the church year. With Thanksgiving on the 28th, this will be a rich month. Opportunities to rejoice, find comfort, reflect, and grow abound. My hope and prayer for you, dear friends, is that you take these days of relative quiet before the holiday storm to worship with one another and prepare your souls for the coming of Christ. What I mean by that is to take these days to prepare for Christmas.



Once upon a time, Advent was a season of preparation for the twelve days of Christmas. The four weeks before the 25th were days of penance and devotion so that body and soul would be ready to receive the great gift of God. Then Christ's mass would come busting forth, and many days of feasting would ensue. But almost no one enjoys the twelve days between December 25 and January 6 anymore. For all practical social purposes, once we hit the 26th, Christmas is over. Times have changed.

Now, please do not think I am griping or bemoaning this change, nor am I celebrating it. I am simply recognizing what is. We live in a society that celebrates Christmas from the Sunday after Thanksgiving all the way until New Year's, or until people wear out. This means we now have something like the 30 days of Christmas. (I predict this will never become a song.) These 30 days now come before Christmas not after it. This is simply the reality in which we live, and we have all made adjustments to fit into this reality.

The personal, spiritual adjustment I want to you to consider is this: that you treat this coming rich month of November as your Advent. I am inviting you to use these days to prepare the way of the Lord, to intentionally take time each day to make way in your soul and life for Christ to enter in once again. I do not mean to suggest that you employ all the typical trappings of the season; on the contrary I am inviting you to take a quieter path, maybe even a faithfully clandestine path. Like the Lenten admonition to pray in secret (Matthew 6) no one will likely know, but you and your Lord will indeed.

For my part I am going to use two Advent devotion books which over the years have been meaningful to me. But rather than beginning on the First Sunday in Advent I am going to begin using them Monday morning, Nov. 4. I will adjust the dates and dive in. I will adopt a spiritual practice, like fasting, to practice in November. I believe this will allow me to be more prepared, in a classical sense, to receive Christ and enjoy more fully and faithfully the joy of the season. Again, like the promise which follows the admonition which we proclaim at Lent, there will be a reward.

I believe a good Advent is a time to prepare before the busy-ness of December takes hold. Once that is done, the celebrations, feasts, and delight of the season become that much more rich, wonder-filled, and overflowing with joy. May you find time to prepare a way for the Lord so that your Christ's-mass may come without worry and full of peace.

In the season's wonder,
Pastor Kurt

Annual Congregational Meeting Part I

The Annual Congregational Meeting Part I will be held between the services on December 8 (10:10 a.m.). At this meeting, we will approve the 2020 budget, elect Council members, and adopt updates to the Constitution recently approved by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Church Office Closure

The First Lutheran Church Office will be closed November 11 for the Veterans Day holiday, and November 28-29 for Thanksgiving.



Council Update: Planning Ahead

by Carol J. Schultz, Council Secretary

Surely I'm not the only one who saw Halloween and Christmas items side-by-side in stores in October. Seems like retailers can't wait for one holiday to pass before they start tempting us with items geared to another holiday. Maybe that's good planning in the retail world. In the world of First Lutheran's Council, we are unabashedly focusing on the year to come as we delve into budgeting and planning for ministry in 2020.

At the Council meeting on Oct. 15, 2019, we opened with a devotion by Frank DeLouise that centered on stewardship and having an "attitude of radical gratitude." That topic was relevant to much of the discussion that followed.

Financial Report. At the end of September, First Lutheran had an operating deficit of \$71,225 for the year to date. If the same ratio of revenue and expenses were to continue through December 2019, First Lutheran would end the year with an operating deficit of \$95,000, almost double the anticipated deficit adopted in the 2019 budget. Although First Lutheran is fortunate to have sufficient reserves to sustain operations and payroll at present, we cannot continue to support ministry at our corner of Third and Ash if we do not provide the necessary funding.

Budgeting. The Council drafted the expense side of the 2020 budget and will address the revenue side at its November meeting. Realistically, the Council is anticipating a third year of deficit spending due to declining revenue. From 2016 through 2018, First Lutheran's expenses increased only 4.8% and revenue declined 17.5%. The Council will propose the 2020 budget at the congregation meeting on Dec. 8, 2019, and expects to make copies available several weeks in advance to any members who want to review it.

Financial Stability Task Force. Council President Dick Krueger and congregation members Chuck Leib and Richard Phillips have formed a task force to analyze financial trends at First Lutheran and recommend ways to improve financial stability. They are reviewing a number of current and potential revenue sources including: increasing rates for using First Lutheran's meeting rooms and parking lot; charging for parking during Downtown events on weekends and evenings; seeking a line of credit; and encouraging donations through Thrivent Choice Dollars and Amazon Smile.

Council Seats. At the end of 2019, four Council seats will be open, and a number of congregation members have expressed their desire to serve. They have received applications, which the Council will review at its November meeting. The congregation will elect members to fill the open seats at its annual meeting on Dec. 8, 2019. Council members are volunteers who serve three-year terms. They meet monthly to carry out the church's mission and provide legal accountability for its operations. Between meetings, Council members work independently or in committees to carry out the decisions they make as a Council.

Upcoming Events. Mark your calendars now for these events.

- Dec. 1 (Sunday) – Fair Trade Fair between worship services at First Lutheran.
- Dec. 8 (Sunday) – Annual congregation meeting between worship services at First Lutheran to vote on the 2020 budget, elect Council members, and adopt updates to the Constitution recently approved by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

As you can see, Council members handle a wide variety of leadership and operational matters. Representing the interests of our fellow congregation members is a privilege and a responsibility we take seriously. We invite you to share your questions, concerns, or appreciation with any Council member.

God's Peace to you all,
Your 2019 Council

2019 Council Officers:

President: Dick Krueger

Vice President: Frank DeLouise

Secretary: Carol Schultz

Treasurer: Kem Taylor

Financial Secretary: Anke Hartung

Council Members:

Kara Oien, Melinda Person, Marjorie Wahlsten, and Susan White.



Fair Trade Fair

Save the Date! Sunday, December 1, 2019, First Lutheran will be holding its annual Fair Trade Fair after each service. This is the perfect opportunity to buy Christmas presents and hostess gifts for the holiday season. We also invite other non-profit organizations to participate with their offerings. Proceeds from the FLC items benefit Lutheran World Relief.

But we also thought members should know of the additional benefits of purchasing at the fair.

As background, we order items from Servv, a fair trade non-profit based here in the U.S. They have been doing this work for 70 years and currently employ nearly 8,000 artisans and farmer in 25 countries.

Here are some of the countries we indirectly support by buying items along with some salient statistics (information provided by Servv):

- The Philippines-the residents prize their woodworking and weaving traditions and it shows in their beautiful items. Population living below the poverty line: 22.8 million.
- Bangladesh-brightly colored paper and wood items are highlighted from this country where 38.7 million people live below the poverty line.
- Nepal-despite its breathtaking views of eight of the world's tallest mountains, Nepal is working to remove itself from one of the United Nations' Least Developed Countries List. There are 7.5 million people living below the poverty line in this small country.
- South Africa-this country boasts a uniquely diverse cuisine and much-needed income comes from food exports. There are 9.2 million people living below the poverty line.
- USA-it's shocking, but true. In a country of wealth and prosperity, almost 50 million Americans are living below the poverty line. That means that nearly one out of six Americans struggle to make a sustainable

wage.

We hope you'll participate in our small, but important, effort to support these artisans.

—Martha Radatz, Sharon Province, and Kara Oien, FLC Fair Trade Committee



above: writing Christmas cards to immigrants in detention

below: Finding Fair Trade goodies!



left: Enjoying food samples
right: learning about non-profit organizations

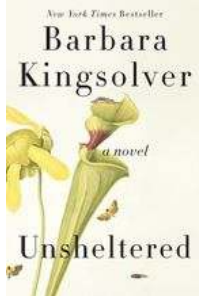


Installation of the Rev. Kurt R. Christenson
Sunday, October 20 2:00 p.m.
Thanks to Therese Botz for the pictures



Choir! Choir! Choir!
Sunday, October 13 3:00 p.m.
Thanks to Bill Radatz for the pictures





Book Group News

Unsheltered, from crackerjack storyteller Barbara Kingsolver, is our November selection. It's the tale of two families, in two centuries, who live at the corner of Sixth and Plum in Vine-land, New Jersey, navigating what seems to be the end of the world as they know it. A "startlingly relevant portrait of life in precarious times," as usual Kingsolver's story conveys an urgent social message for us. It also conveys hope. As a *Newsweek* review said, "Kingsolver has a way with miracles. One is how she opens her plot to them, and the other is the way she makes us believe." Please join us for warm fellowship and stimulating discussion on Thursday, November 21, 7:00 p.m. at the home of Jess Friedrich.

All our welcome!

PLEASE NOTE: At this meeting, we will be choosing our book selections for 2020. Please come prepared with two or more recommendations!

There will be no meeting in December, to allow us to honor the season of Advent.

Jared Jacobsen Memorial Fund

We have created a Jared Jacobsen Memorial Fund. Money donated to this fund will be used for the music program here at First Lutheran, especially repairs to the organ and piano.

If you would like to contribute to this fund, you may put either cash or checks in the offering plate—just be sure to clearly mark that it is for the Jared Jacobsen Memorial Fund. If you would prefer to contribute electronically, please contact the church office.

Stewardship

Because of you...ministry at First continues to thrive and grow.

Because of you... lives are changed, healing takes place, love is known, and faith is nurtured.

Because of you...the hungry are fed, the thirsty are given drink, the naked are clothed, the sick are visited and those who live in bondage to sin are set free.

Last month you may have picked up an "Estimate of Giving Card." If not, you will be receiving one in the mail. Please reflect on the power and resources you have been given to make a difference in God's world. Know that your personal stewardship has a mighty impact on all of First's vibrant ministries.

On Nov. 3, All Saints Sunday, if you are able, bring your cards to worship so they may be placed on the altar and dedicated to God's service through this place.

Electronic Giving

First Lutheran Church has an electronic option for making regular offerings. Contributions can be debited automatically from your checking or savings account, or put on a credit card. The program is called Vanco Give+. You can sign up for it through the "Give" section of the newly redone First Lutheran Church website (www.firstlutheransd.org). You can schedule a single payment or a recurring payment, using either your bank account or a credit card.

Those who are already paying through Vanco can use their email addresses to access their accounts and make any changes or updates as needed.

Church Cell Phone Numbers

Pastor Kurt: 619-990-4589

Hannah: 619-977-2646

Church Email Addresses

Pastor Kurt: pastorkurt@firstlutheransd.org;

Hannah/Church Office: administrator@firstlutheransd.org

November Birthdays

4: Jenny Mehlow

5: Lori Gremel

7: Rachel Alli

9: Isabelle Lovell

9: Donn Rosenauer

10: Owen Carter

13: Amy Munroe

19: Mark Deffner

21: Mary Ann Horton

22: Dorothy Hunter

23: Dreceon Richards

25: John Poeschl

25: Michelle Vitale

26: James Lovell

26: Gretchen Ravenscroft



TACO Corner



From Volunteer Coordinator Brad Young:

"I will never forget Christmas Day 2016... Walking to my apartment Downtown, I heard a man's voice in the darkness... "Merry Christmas" ... I stopped and looked over to see his breath still hanging in the air, and a man with no blanket, curling back up on the sidewalk. He wasn't going to engage me further or ask for anything... The man with no heavy jacket sleeping on a sidewalk simply wanted to wish me a Merry Christmas. Unfortunately this scene plays out entirely too much in today's world."

With the holidays coming up, TACO will again be raising money for our Concrete Christmas. This money funds a practical gift for each of our guests (backpacks, sleeping bags, tents), and provides a special day for them to celebrate the holidays. For many without friends or family, this is the ONLY Christmas gift they may receive.



We will be setting up a funding link on our Facebook page and at our website (www.tacosd.org) to help us attain our goal of \$5,000. This provides for a \$25 gift for each of our guests. We would be most appreciative for your donations.

TACO wishes everyone a beautiful Advent, a Merry Christmas, and very happy holiday season, and ask that you keep the people we serve in your thoughts.

Remembering November 9, 2019: 30th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall

Excerpted from Bishop Gronberg, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod

Many of us may remember or have heard the stories of the dramatic fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. For most in the West the sudden collapse of the communist regime in East Germany seemed abrupt and surprising. But in fact it was of course the result of years of resistance and in fact prayer. Many Lutherans do not even know the role their church played in the fall of the wall. Beginning in 1982 groups had gathered at St. Nicholas Church (where Bach was once music director) in Leipzig to pray for peaceful revolution. They gathered on Mondays in a time when gatherings of more than a few people were suspicious to the Stasi secret police. They gathered and prayed for human rights and an end of the barrier between East and West Germany. By 1988 larger and larger groups were gathering to pray for peace and human rights. By September of 1989 these groups were growing bolder and by October 9th became a movement. Monday, September 9, 1989, seventy thousand people gathered against fear and oppression and faced the armed security forces chanting "We are the people." This bold stand, that began in prayer groups on Mondays in a Lutheran Church helped lead to the events a month later when the Berlin Wall fell on November 9th.

As we remember the courageous people of Leipzig and all those who resist we encourage our communities to consider how barriers and walls continue to separate us. Some of these walls are more obvious than others. As a bishop I have seen the walls of separation in the Holy Land that keep our Lutheran Palestinian sisters and brothers from one another and from their historic lands. I have stood at the border wall between Texas and Mexico and heard and prayed over the refugees seeking due process. But closer to home I also know there are walls within our own cities and towns. Separation between rural and urban and suburban communities. Interstate highways that cut communities off from one another often on economic or racial boundaries. Public school boundary lines drawn strategically to include some and exclude others. Separation based on race, class, sexuality, gender, religion, partisan politics, all are realities in our lives. Yet we have a God who calls us to overcome boundaries, to break down walls.

As we give thanks for the brave people of Leipzig thirty years ago we remember how Christ breaks down the walls of division between us through the waters of baptism. His death and resurrection are to bring new life and hope not just for some but for the entire cosmos (John 3:16). As Christ's disciples we are invited into relationship with God and one another and called to break down the barriers, physical and otherwise, that separate us from one another. To cross borders and break down walls. To be a people of hope.



First Lutheran Worship Assistants – November & December

ALTAR GUILD

NOVEMBER
9:00 a.m. Service
Peggy Quintana
11:00 a.m. Service
Ruth Clayton

DECEMBER
9:00 a.m. Service
Dorothy Hunter
11:00 a.m. Service
Ladonna Piper

USHERS

NOVEMBER
9:00 a.m. Service
Tony & Peggy Quintana
11:00 a.m. Service
Ruth Clayton & Marty Topp

DECEMBER
9:00 a.m. Service
Dan & Rebecca Kjonegaard
11:00 a.m. Service
Melinda Person & Ladonna Piper

Date	Time	Assisting Minister	Lector	Greeters	Nursery Attendants	Flowers
November 3	9:00 11:00	Frank Jessie Mary Ann Horton	Shaun Travers Joe Slevcove	Kathy Boeckelman Slevcoves	Kem Taylor Hannah DeMers	Kjonegaards
November 10	9:00 11:00	Jeremy Kaercher Beth Slevcove	Eric Sloniker Frank Jessie	Pat Hendrickson Marlene Garich	Dick Krueger Kathryn Kanaan	Marjorie Wahlsten
November 17	9:00 11:00	Nate Pratt Frank Jessie	Pat Hendrickson Elizabeth Connolly	Shaun Travers Shelly Schreiber	Mary Krueger Paul Engel	Melinda Person
November 24	9:00 11:00	Chuck Leib Paul Finneseth	Richard Elliott Nancy Eckert	Rebecca Kjonegaard Elizabeth Connolly	Billie Thompson Martha DeMers	_____
December 1	9:00 11:00	Jan Neuhaus Mary Ann Horton	Jim Boyd Joe Slevcove	John Hoff Slevcoves	Lee Kaercher Joe DeMers	_____
December 8	9:00 11:00	Richard Phillips Beth Slevcove	Jan Neuhaus Jim Lovell	Jim & Jessica Friedrich Marlene Garich	Kathryn Kanaan Hannah DeMers	_____
December 15	9:00 11:00	Kathryn Kanaan Frank Jessie	Frank DeLouise Matthew Eckert	Chuck Leib & Frank DeLouise Ruth Clayton	Kem Taylor Kathryn Kanaan	Hannah & Sam DeMers



November 2019 Calendar of Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	2 9 am All Souls' Day Painting Party
3 ALL SAINTS SUNDAY END DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality	4 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	5 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP	6 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	7 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP	8 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	9
10 TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality	11 VETERANS DAY (office closed) 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	12 12 pm AI Anon	13 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	14 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP 6:30 pm TACO Board Mtg	15 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	16
17 TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality	18 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	19 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP 6:30 Church Council Mtg	20 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	21 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP	22 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	23
24 CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality 3 pm German Svc	25 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	26 12 pm AI Anon	27 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	28 THANKSGIVING DAY (office closed) 12 pm AI Anon	29 (office closed) 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	30

Monday evening clinics include acupuncture, medical, dental, and legal services.

The PULSEBEAT
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Edited by Hannah DeMers

Serving Downtown San Diego Since 1888
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First Lutheran Church
The Rev. Kurt Christenson, Pastor
Hannah DeMers, Church Administrator

First Lutheran Church
A *Reconciling in Christ* congregation since 1989
Deadline for next month's Pulsebeat is **the 15th, noon.**

The Pulsebeat
First Lutheran Church
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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Dear friends in Christ,

We have so much to celebrate as we complete *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, the first comprehensive campaign for this church.

Through the generosity of members and congregations across this church, ELCA ministries received \$250 million—\$195 million in cash and multiyear commitments, as well as \$55 million in planned gifts—to continue, strengthen and expand their work here at home and with our global companions around the world. **Thank you.**

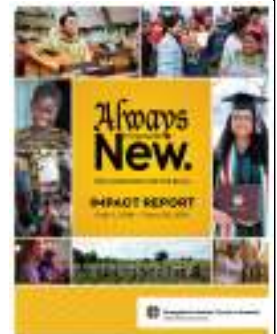
The final impact report will give you a glimpse of the campaign's impact on these crucial ministries.

The generosity of this church shows that, with God's blessing, our vision needs to be broader. Together, we have accomplished more than we ever thought possible — and this is just the beginning. This campaign has opened our imaginations and dreams for what more God is calling us to do in the years ahead.

Thank you for your ongoing support as we continue to mobilize the resources of this church to do God's work in the world. We are so grateful for you.

In Christ,

The Rev. Ronald T. Glusenkamp
Director, *The Campaign for the ELCA*



First Lutheran Church - the Heart of Christ in the Heart of the City