



December 2019

# FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH The PULSEBEAT

## Advent & Christmas 2019

### December 1 – First Sunday of Advent

9 & 11 a.m. – Holy Eucharist

10 – 12:30 p.m. – The Fair Trade Alternative Gift Fair

+

### December 8 – Second Sunday of Advent

9 & 11 a.m. – Holy Eucharist

10:10 a.m. – Congregational Meeting-Part I

+

### December 15 – Third Sunday of Advent

9 a.m. – Holy Eucharist

11 a.m. – Holy Eucharist & Children's Christmas Pageant

+

### December 22 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

9 & 11 a.m. – Holy Eucharist

+

### December 24 – Christmas Eve

7:30 p.m. – Christmas Eve Festival Candlelight Service

+

### December 29 – First Sunday of Christmas

10 a.m. – Holy Eucharist

11:30 a.m. – Holiday Potluck Brunch



#### Thoughts on Advent, and a Lift

*The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." Isaiah 40:3-4 KJV*

**Friends in Christ, sisters and brothers in faith, grace to you and peace**

**The days of Advent are here! Alleluia!**

Beginning with the above well-known text from Isaiah we are invited, in these Advent days, to prepare the way



of the Lord. My whole life I have enjoyed the Advent texts from Isaiah. For 30 years I've used them to prepare Advent seasons for God's people. One would think I'd know them well, and yet this year I have heard a new voice crying out in the wilderness. I have heard these texts afresh and anew. I am humbled. The voice is lovely and I am invited again into Advent.

A pastoral colleague recently presented a set of devotions on the Isaiah Advent texts. This colleague uses a powered wheelchair to maneuver through the world. Her devotion was to consider these *prepare the way of the Lord, make straight a highway* for our God texts from her perspective. Speaking from her wheelchair, she told us about stairs, thresholds, curbs, and even the unfortunate placement of furniture that often impede her way. She was not complaining, just inviting us to imagine a world without those impediments. "Imagine a world," she said, "where the rough places have been transformed and made plain. Imagine a world where someone has taken the gaps and filled them up or bridged them. Imagine a place where clutter has been removed so clear and easy access is possible. It would be like heaven." I am grateful that she took the text literally. The spiritual metaphor is important, but the scripture is also about a real and physical place.

She was not finished. "Now imagine our churches," she said. "Imagine all the ways which people are kept out, or away, physically and spiritually, because of the obstacles we maintain. Stairs, thresholds, and curbs are real things which impede real people from gathering with us in community. The obstacles are real, they not metaphors."

"Now also imagine," she offered, "all the obstacles to faith we have created and maintained that keep souls from entering the kingdom." Spiritual stairs, confessional curbs, generational gaps, and liturgical furniture, all of which exist for good reason, can also unnecessarily hinder many from making their way, on The Way, with God. Can we imagine making way for spiritual ramps, lifts, and handrails for them?

Friends at First, we have literal Lift Off. Yes! The construction of the lift to the second floor is finally underway! Your resources are, in these Advent days, building a lift up so that more people may reach the offices, clinics, and assistance of TACO. This is literally preparing the way of the Lord! Let us also now build faith lifts for those who feel lost, for those who desire a smooth path to God but do not know the way. May First also become a heavenly place for the spiritually hungry and homeless; lifting up those who are open to faith but only see an impassible and dangerous road. Let us build ramps, curb cuts, handrails, and lifts so all might know the glory of the Lord.

Advent Peace,  
Pastor Kurt

## Council Update: Giving Thanks

by Carol J. Schultz, Council Secretary

Thanksgiving will be over by the time you read this update, but, hopefully, you'll still feel a sense of thankfulness. At First Lutheran, we have much to be grateful for. We have a settled pastor who appreciates who we are as a congregation and offers ideas to broaden our horizons. We enjoy the musical talents of two individuals serving as interim organist and choir director. We continue to benefit from a small army of dedicated volunteers who spend uncounted hours and energy on everything from painting walls to drafting budgets to assisting in worship services. Thanks be to God, indeed!

Your Council is part of that army of volunteers. At its monthly meeting on Nov. 19, 2019, Council members discussed the following topics.

**Financial Report.** At the end of October, First Lutheran had an operating deficit of \$86,700 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 \$104,000, double the anticipated deficit adopted in the 2019 budget.

**Budgeting.** The Council finished drafting the 2020 budget, which projects a deficit slightly less than \$48,000

### 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.



due to declining revenue. From 2016 through 2018, First Lutheran's expenses increased only 4.8% and revenue declined 17.5%. The Council and Financial Stability Team presented the proposed 2020 budget to congregation members between worship services on Nov. 25 and will propose its adoption at the congregation meeting on Dec. 8.

**Council Seats.** At the end of 2019, four Council seats will be open. The Council reviewed applications and prepared a slate of candidates for the congregation meeting. The four candidates are Allison Emery, Kara Oien, David Pohl, and Kem Taylor. Allison Emery served on the Transition Team that prepared First Lutheran's Ministry Site Profile at the beginning of the interim period. Kara Oien joined the Council a year ago to complete the term vacated by a resignation. David Pohl served on the Transition Team as well as the Call Committee. Kem Taylor has been on Council three years and has served as Treasurer. This slate represents a broad range of experience both on Council and in other roles.

**Constitution.** In August, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted revisions to the Model Constitution. In order to keep First Lutheran's Constitution up-to-date, the Council will present these revisions for congregational approval at the annual meeting. The introduction to the revised Model Constitution describes the changes this way: "... the 2019 Churchwide Assembly authorized the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to: strike "synodical" and replace with "synod;" strike "the congregation" and replace with "this congregation;" and where appropriate make editorial changes so that the Model Constitution for Congregations follows the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Constitution for Synods."

**Upcoming Events.** Mark your calendars now for these events.

- Dec. 1 – Fair Trade Fair between worship services at First Lutheran.
- Dec. 8 – Annual congregation meeting between worship services at First.
- Dec. 15 – Christmas Pageant at 11:00 worship service
- Dec. 29 – Holiday meal following single worship service at 10:00 a.m.

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

## Stewardship 2019

*by Frank DeLouise*

.....wait for it.

As we move into Advent, we wait in hope and anticipation: what JOY we will celebrate in the coming season. What anticipation there is in the coming of the newborn Jesus and the rebirth of First. Such blessings to be grateful for. Not the least of which are the Estimated Giving cards we have received that will contribute to the many wonderful things that happen at Third and Ash. You still have the opportunity to submit your Estimate of Giving cards.

Just as a reminder, if you have an electronic GIVE+ account (formerly Simply Giving) you will need to update your account. If you give electronically through the church system, contact Hannah DeMers in the church office to schedule an end to your current payments. You will need to log in to your account through the website (using your email address) and set up your 2020 giving.

If you would like to use this quick and easy payment method, instructions are available. Please see Pastor Kurt, Hannah, or me.

Emmanuel is coming!

## 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](http://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.



## Welcome the Babe Advent Outreach

In 2014, our FLC family first assembled Lutheran World Relief Baby Care Kits for newborns around the world, something done for more than 60 years by countless other Lutheran groups and individuals. Through the generosity of our sponsors that year we provided 23 kits to infants born into less than ideal, and sometimes desperate, circumstances. Since then, that number has grown each year, reaching our record high of 53 kits last year.



We invite everyone to join our Advent outreach event, "Welcome the Babe," again in 2019. There are many levels of participation, ranging from shopping for single items, to providing partial or entire kits, to having your own "personal shopper" do the shopping for you. You can also send your loved ones a personal gift card if you sponsor a kit in honor of them. After Christmas, the Baby Care Kits will be blessed then packed together and sent to the St Paul, MN, Lutheran World Relief warehouse, where they will be shipped to refugee camps, hospitals and villages around the world as needed.

Every mother worries about her baby's health and well-being. Our Baby Care Kits help families in poverty by providing the things every newborn needs. Please stop by the "Welcome the Babe" table at the Fair Trade Alternative Gift Fair on December 1st, or on any Sunday in December, to find out about this project and to learn how you can support it. More information is available from Mary Krueger or at the Lutheran World Relief website, <http://lwr.org/babycarekits>

## Lounge & Restroom Sport a New Coat of Paint

A crew helped spruce up the lounge and women's restroom at the *All Souls' Painting Party* held on Saturday, November 2. The walls and ceilings in women's restroom and the lounge were repainted with a fresh coat of paint to keep these heavily utilized areas in good repair and looking their best. Many thanks to the painters who participated.

There are several outstanding projects that need to be conducted around our church facility that are available for adoption. Support can be provided by adopting a project or providing the funds to have the project completed. An updated list is posted in the kiosk in the narthex.



*Jim Friedrich and Marty Topp working at the All Souls' Painting Party*

## Sunday School Christmas Pageant

**Calling all kids! The annual children's Christmas Pageant is fast approaching, and children of all ages are welcome to participate!**

**Here is a schedule for the Sundays in December:**

December 1: meet in library at 11:00 during regular Sunday School time to get role assignment and costumes. Joe Slevcove is once again organizing/directing the pageant and will be on hand to let us know what he's got in store for everyone.

December 8: rehearsal during Sunday School time at 11:00, in the library

December 15: rehearsal between services (10:00-11:00 a.m.) in the sanctuary. Pageant at 11:00 service.

December 22: Sunday School as usual

December 29: No class

January 5: Resume regular classes

### Church Email Addresses

Pastor Kurt: [pastorkurt@firstlutheransd.org](mailto:pastorkurt@firstlutheransd.org);

Hannah/Church Office: [administrator@firstlutheransd.org](mailto:administrator@firstlutheransd.org)

## December Birthdays

1: Pricilla Alli

3: Ladonna Piper

17: Emmet Coffey

22: Dan Kjonegaard

2: Debby Hays

11: Kimberly Tozer

21: Glenn Orris

31: Marta Monroe

3: Matthew Boomhower

14: Isabelle Paul

22: Nicholas Fekas



## Boulder County Pastor Becomes Lutheran Denomination's First Transgender Clergy Member of Color

By SAM LOUNSBERRY | *Boulder Daily Camera*

Her advocacy in the 2000s for the denomination's allowing transgender people, and the spectrum of the LGBTQ community, to become pastors resulted in Garcia's profile quickly catapulting in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a group that includes more than 10,000 congregations and 4 million members across the U.S., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Garcia, a transgender Latina woman who turns 60 next month, at a Saturday ceremony at Christ the Servant Lutheran Church in Louisville, took advantage of the ELCA's 2009 decision to allow transgender people and people in same-sex relationships into its pastoral ranks. With her ordination, Garcia became the first transgender woman of color to be called as a pastor in the ELCA. She is set to lead the newly formed Westview Church.

Garcia's journey with her faith and identity began as a "good Catholic boy" born and raised in Boulder. Although Garcia always loved church, she strayed from Catholicism in her 20s, after she said she realized "God wouldn't fix me." Struggles with alcohol and a nine-year marriage to a woman ensued before Garcia, then known as Michael, ended the relationship and began exploring her gender, transitioning into womanhood from 2003 to 2006.

In 2003, Garcia became a Lutheran after again immersing herself in church through St. Paul Lutheran Church in Denver. Her advocacy for LGBTQ people in the massive Evangelical Lutheran Church in America denomination began shortly after, and in 2008, she was appointed transgender representative to the national board of directors of ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation.

"Probably in about 2012 I started thinking I really wanted to do more with the church, but I didn't know what I wanted to be doing," Garcia said. She hesitated to apply for seminary, but eventually settled on applying at Luther Seminary in Saint Paul, Minn.

"I thought to myself, 'At least I can apply,'" Garcia said. "Because it would be a really good dog-and-pony show to go wandering around to all these different churches (saying), 'I wanted to be Lutheran pastor but the church said no, we have to keep pushing.' And they said yes, I'm like, 'Oh my gosh they said yes.'"

"I've always considered myself just a big goofy Jesus freak," Garcia said. "I think being so comfortable with who I am, and knowing that I am perfectly made in my mother's womb and made in the image of God, and I know Jesus loves me, and you need to know that, too, that is infectious, and it helps people open their hearts and open their minds."

"By being a brown, transgender woman at the altar, I give people hope," Garcia said. "It means the church is opening their eyes and seeing the talents of all people. ... The people here (at Westview) are just loving. They have supported me, nurtured me, and seen me grow. It is such an honor to be called as their pastor."

Read the entire article at <https://www.denverpost.com/2019/11/24/boulder-county-pastor-becomes-lutheran-denominations-first-transgender-clergy-member-of-color/>

### Book Group News

The book group met in November to select titles for 2020. Look for the list in the January Pulsebeat.

In the meantime, if you'd like to get a head start, the selection for January is *Without You There's No Us* by Suki Kim, and you can mark your calendar for our first meeting of the new year on Thursday, January 16. There will be no meeting in December.

### Lunch Bunch

**Q:** Do you know what the Lunch Bunch is?

**A:** It's a group of fearless people coming together the first Tuesday of each month to have fun conversation and good food.

It's not the same people every month, but it's always lively! Think about coming in 2020. Put a little spunk in your life. Billie can answer your questions at [thompsonbilliek@gmail.com](mailto:thompsonbilliek@gmail.com)

### Church Office Closure

The First Lutheran Church Office will be closed December 25-January 1, reopening January 2. If you have an emergency, call Pr. Kurt.



## First Lutheran Worship Assistants – December & January

### ALTAR GUILD

**DECEMBER**

**9:00 a.m. Service**

*Dorothy Hunter*

**11:00 a.m. Service**

*Ladonna Piper*

**JANUARY**

**9:00 a.m. Service**

*Marjorie Wahlsten*

**11:00 a.m. Service**

*Melinda Person*

### USHERS

**DECEMBER**

**9:00 a.m. Service**

*Dan & Rebecca Kjonegaard*

**11:00 a.m. Service**

*Melinda Person &  
Ladonna Piper*

**JANUARY**

**9:00 a.m. Service**

*Pat Hendrickson &  
Carol McGrath*

**11:00 a.m. Service**

*Anke Hartung & Marty Topp*

Date	Time	Assisting Minister	Lector	Greeters	Nursery Attendants	Flowers
December 1	9:00 11:00	Jan Neuhaus Mary Ann Horton	Jim Boyd Jim Lovell	John Hoff Slevcovcs	Lee Kaercher Joe DeMers	_____
December 8	9:00 11:00	Richard Phillips Beth Slevcove	Jan Neuhaus Matthew Eckert	Jim & Jessica Friedrich Marlene Garich	Kathryn Kanaan Hannah DeMers	_____
December 15	9:00 11:00	Kathryn Kanaan Frank Jessie	Frank DeLouise Martha DeMers	Chuck Leib & Frank DeLouise Ruth Clayton	Kem Taylor Kathryn Kanaan	Hannah & Sam DeMers
December 22	9:00 11:00	Eric Sloniker Paul Finneseth	Carol Schultz Frank Jessie	Pr. George & Ethel Falk Shelly Schreiber	Dick Krueger Martha DeMers	_____
December 29	10:00	Frank Jessie	Sylvia Herman	Hanieh Kohan Khaki	Mary Krueger	_____
January 5	9:00 11:00	Nate Pratt Mary Ann Horton	Lynne Falcon Joe Slevcove	John Hoff Slevcovcs	Heidi Hoxie Joe DeMers	_____
January 12	9:00 11:00	Jeremy Kaercher Beth Slevcove	Chuck Leib Elizabeth Connolly	Loren Harrell Marlene Garich	Billie Thompson Paul Engel	Kjonegaards



# December 2019 Calendar of Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9 am Worship 10 Fair Trade Fair 10:10 Hospitality 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality	<b>2</b> 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	<b>3</b> 12 pm AI Anon	<b>4</b> 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	<b>5</b> 12 pm AI Anon	<b>6</b> 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality	<b>9</b> 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	<b>10</b> 12 pm AI Anon	<b>11</b> 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	<b>12</b> 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP	<b>13</b> 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality	<b>16</b> VETERANS DAY (office closed) 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	<b>17</b> 12 pm AI Anon 6:30 Church Council Mtg	<b>18</b> 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	<b>19</b> 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP	<b>20</b> 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality	<b>23</b> 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	<b>24</b> CHRISTMAS EVE 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm German Svc 7:30 Candlelight Svc	<b>25</b> CHRISTMAS DAY (office closed) 12 pm AI Anon	<b>26</b> (office closed) 12 pm AI Anon	<b>27</b> (office closed) 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS 10 am Worship 11:10 Holiday Potluck	<b>30</b> (office closed) 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	<b>31</b> (office closed) 12 pm AI Anon				

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

**The PULSEBEAT**  
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First Lutheran Church

The Rev. Kurt Christenson, Pastor  
 Hannah DeMers, Church Administrator  
 Robert Plimpton, Interim organist  
 Joe DeMers, Interim Choir Director

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  
1420 Third Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92101-3193

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## 13th Annual Fair Trade Alternative Gift Fair

**Sunday, December 1, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
in the Lounge**

Features handcrafted gifts from around the world and opportunities to learn about and support a variety of service organizations.

Fair  
Trade  
food sam-  
pling!



### Everyone Loves Leftovers!

If you are unable to be at the Fair Trade Fair on December 1 (and even if you are there!), there will be some choice leftovers to peruse on Sunday, December 8, 8:30-12:30. Come check them out!

*from Lutheran World Relief:*

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous gift to Lutheran World Relief's Quilt and Kit Shipping Fund! Your donation ensures that LWR Quilts and Kits get into the hands of a person who needs it.

With your help, we have delivered Quilts and Kits to families in Mozambique whose communities were utterly ravaged by Cyclone Idai. For refugee families, your gift means so much. A School Kit can make the difference between getting an education or missing out. A Personal Care Kit helps families provide for basic hygiene needs, freeing up precious resources. Quilts help families through cold winter nights.

Thank you for your generosity and partnership!

On behalf of LWR, our partners and those we serve together, please accept my heartfelt thanks once more for your gift and all that it will do.

Warm Regards,

Ambassador Daniel V. Spreckhard (ret.)  
President and CEO



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