



January 2020

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH The PULSEBEAT



*“Oh, star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright;
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light!”*

*“There’s a star in the east on Christmas morn,
rise up, shepherd, and follow.
It will lead to the place where the Christ was born,
rise up, shepherd, and follow.”*

Two different songs, two different traditions, only one star. The one star of Bethlehem that shone forth in the night providing biblical direction that first Christmas still shines for God’s people. Long ago both the shepherds, the lowest of the low, and Magi, seers from foreign lands whom if they hadn’t been laden with precious cargo would have been deeply suspect, found their way to the manger birth of the infant savior. These unlikely and diverse leaders in worship were guided by a common vision to offer their praise and awe. The Christmas story is a surprise, through and through.

Today it can again be the same. The star of Bethlehem can still surprise us. It can still bring diverse and unlikely leaders to give thanks to the manger of Christ. But it sure doesn’t feel like it can. It feels like our culture is so diverse, so disconnected, so fractured right from left, wealthy and poor, us and them, that there is no way we can come together. Maybe the star isn’t bright enough anymore. Maybe the truth of faith isn’t true enough. Maybe the truth of God’s surprise has lost its luster.

I believe otherwise. I believe in the power of God’s light to bring diverse people together in one hope, in humility to the manger where they might experience the power of awe, the pleasure of praise and the promise of abundant joy. I believe that the Gospel truth entrusted to us is bright enough to gather people from diverse places and cultures and open their lives up to the child of God, Jesus.

Today, as I write, it is the third day of Christmas. Somewhere someone is giving three French Hens to their true love and someone somewhere else is getting nothing. For every person celebrating in these days, there is another who dwells in darkness but yearns for light. For every person feasting with friends and family, there is another person who is hungry for someone to know their name and to whom they may share their story. We are surrounded by those who would love to be known and to know the bright light of God’s love. I believe it is time to be surprised.

Epiphany is upon us. On Sunday, January 5, we will celebrate the homage story of the Magi. In the weeks we will follow the star. May we be deeply surprised by what we see.

Merry Christ’s Mass,
Pastor Kurt

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.

Lenten Devotional

As we move forward to a New Year and a new chapter in the life of First Lutheran Church, we’ll keep the things that have served us well. One of these things is our Lenten Devotional. Ash Wednesday is February 26, 2020. This is a heads-up request to prayerfully consider submitting your creative gifts as you have done in the past. Scripture passages will be made available at the 10:10 on January 12 as we’ve done in the past. Devotionals will be due on February 16.



Council Update: Another Revolution Around the Sun

by Carol J. Schultz, Council Secretary

As I sat down to write this update, I remembered some of the events First Lutheran experienced during the revolution around the sun that has been 2019. Most obvious, of course, were changes in our leadership. Pr. Darryl Kozak accepted a settled call to Peace Lutheran in Corona CA in March. After a few months with Pr. Rich Ajer as bridge pastor, we welcomed Pr. Kurt Christenson as our settled pastor in September. Just as Pr. Kurt arrived, we had to say a sad farewell to our Director of Music Jared Jacobson, who died in a traffic accident. Bob Plimpton agreed to come out of retirement to serve as interim organist, ably assisted by congregation members who accompany and direct the choir. And those events are just the tip of the iceberg. (You'll find the rest in the annual report to the congregation at the meeting on Jan. 19, 2020.) My point simply is, whatever the circumstances, First Lutheran remains steadfast and hopeful.

At the Council's monthly meeting on Dec. 17, 2019, Pr. Kurt Christenson opened the meeting by reading an excerpt from the last chapter of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" and reflecting on the elements of redemption and new life in the story. Council members then focused on the following topics.

Financial Report. At the end of November, First Lutheran's operating deficit remained the same as it was at the end of October. From 2016 through 2018, First Lutheran's expenses increased only 4.8% and revenue declined 17.5%. The Financial Stability Team continues to examine ways of balancing revenue and expenses, and the Council will consider this issue further at its annual planning retreat in January.

Congregation Meeting. First Lutheran conducts its annual meeting in two parts. The agenda for the first part in December includes electing Council members and adopting a budget. The agenda for the second part the following January includes the annual report and other business requiring congregational action. The upcoming meeting on Jan. 19, 2020, will include voting on (1) amendments to First Lutheran's Constitution mandated by the ELCA and (2) revisions to the Bylaws intended to clarify existing procedures. Please contact the First Lutheran Office Administrator for copies.

Upcoming Events. Mark your calendars now for these events.

- Jan. 19, 2020 – Congregation meeting between worship services.
- Jan. 26, 2020 – RIC Sunday celebrated during worship.

Following adjournment of the meeting, the Council enjoyed a Swedish holiday meal hosted by the Christenson family.

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.

P.S. This Pulsebeat article is my final one as Secretary of the Council. I will remain on Council, but I'm termed out as Secretary. Writing these updates has been a learning experience for me, and I hope it's given you some measure of insight into Council activities.

Wanted: Worship Assistants

We really need some new volunteers, especially for the 11:00 service. The positions are **assisting ministers, lectors, ushers, greeters, nursery assistants, and altar guild.**

If you are willing to fill one of these vital roles, please contact the church office.

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.

God's Peace to you all,

Your 2019 Council

Annual Congregational Meeting Part II

The second half of the Annual Congregational Meeting will take place at 10:10 a.m. on Sunday, January 19. We will be approving the 2019 Annual Report.

Please plan to attend.



Congregation Meeting: Business "As Usual"

by Carol J. Schultz, Council Secretary

When should a congregation schedule its annual meeting—in December so members can plan for the coming year or in January so members can review the past year? First Lutheran's answer is, "Yes!" And, no, we don't meet at midnight on New Year's Eve. Our Bylaws specify a two-part annual meeting. The first part is held in December with an agenda that prepares for the coming year, and the second part is held the following January with an agenda focused on reviewing the past year.

On Dec. 8, 2019, First Lutheran's congregation held Part 1 of its annual meeting and conducted the following business.

Electing Council Members

President Dick Krueger presented a slate of four candidates recommended by the Council to fill four vacant seats in 2020, three for three-year terms and one for a two-year term. Candidates were: Allison Emery, Kara Oien, David Pohl, and Kem Taylor (two years). Congregation members offered no additional nominations, and they elected this slate by unanimous verbal acclamation. Kara and Kem already serve on the Council. New Council members Allison and David both served on the Transition Team that prepared the Ministry Site Profile during First Lutheran's interim between settled pastors and David served on the Call Committee.

Adopting the 2020 Budget

The congregation adopted the budget presented by the Council by unanimous voice vote. For the third year, First Lutheran anticipates a budget deficit, which the Council and Financial Stability Team are addressing. Because more than 85% of First Lutheran's expenses are fixed rather than discretionary, e.g., salaries, insurance, utilities, and taxes, opportunities to reduce spending are constrained. The congregation affirmed by consensus that (a) distributing the draft budget two weeks in advance of the congregation meeting and (2) including notes for the line items were useful and advantageous to continue.

Part 2 of the annual congregation meeting is scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 19, 2020, between worship services. The Council will present the 2019 annual report, including actual budget numbers for the past year, as well as proposed amendments to First Lutheran's Constitution and Bylaws.



Sunday School Brings Christmas Message

On December 15, during the 11:00 service, Sunday School students presented their annual Christmas Pageant. Many thanks to Joe Slevcove who once again produced and directed the pageant, and to Hannah and Martha DeMers who prepared a delightful table of holiday refreshments for our stars.



Thanks to Bill & Martha Radatz for the pictures.





Meet & Greet Mayoral Candidates!

We have an exciting opportunity to hear and speak with four of the City's mayoral candidates between services each Sunday in FEBRUARY. Invite your friends to make this event an informative dialogue within our congregation and as outreach to the community at large. Flyers with the schedule are available at the church.

Here is the line-up of candidates:

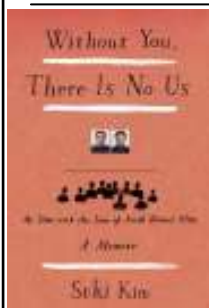
February 2: Scott Sherman

February 9: Barbara Bry

February 16: Todd Gloria

February 23: Tasha Williamson

Questions? Want to help with one or more of these dates? We need greeters, set-up people, and refreshments. Contact Colleen Howard at colleenhoward1@gmail.com.



Book Group News

Start your New Year off with a fascinating book about North Korea entitled *Without You There Is No Us*, by Suki Kim. In 2011 Kim, an American investigative journalist, spent six months undercover in North Korea as a missionary and a teacher of English at Pyongyang University of Science and Technology, a school for North Korea's elites. The book gives a captivating insight into the mindset of the North Korean culture and has many extraordinary tales to tell. The author reveals how repression shaped her student's daily lives, but also bears witness to that part of the human spirit that no oppressor can ever claim.

Please join us for a lively discussion of this book on Thursday, January 16, 7:00PM at the home of Pat Hendrickson.

If one of your New Year's resolutions is to read more, FLC's book group can help you do just that! We meet the third Thursday of the month for good conversation, good food and great fellowship. New members are enthusiastically welcomed at anytime!

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 in 2020 to have fun conversation and good food. It's not the same people every month, but it's always lively!

We will be meeting January 7 at the Chicken Pie Shop on El Cajon Blvd. at 12:30 p.m. There's a good menu and a parking lot ...two things that add up to a good time. Put a little spunk in your life. Make your reservations with Billie at thompsonbilliek@gmail.com

First Lutheran to Host Blood Drive

Friday, January 10

There is no substitute for human blood, is there? Can you imagine being in the emergency room and needing blood and the doctor telling you, "We don't have any of your blood type but we'll discount your hospital bill?" Wouldn't be very reassuring, would it? When you need blood, money is no help.

If you are a regular blood donor, blessings to you for sharing the irreplaceable gift of your own blood. It's sort of Christ-like in a little way! If you have given blood before, we hope you will save it up for the January drive here at FLC. If you haven't given before, we hope you may decide to try it. We will be providing more information on donor requirements and the exact time of day the blood bank will be here but this is just a first-notice asking you to save the date.

Can we count on a pint of your excellent blood? Want to sign up now? Got questions? Call me or email me. Contact info below and a sign-up sheet will be appearing soon.

Sylvia Herman
Sylvia@ascentrealestate.com
 619-980-4946

January Birthdays

1: Ariet Lero	11: Sophia Lovell	18: Matthew Carter	23: David Oakes
1: Akian Slevcove	11: Brehysyria Nodd	18: Brian Taylor	24: Diana Randall
2: Elijah Alli	14: Mary Claire	19: Debra Kudar	25: John Lester
2: Isaiah Alli	14: Rosemary Spruce	19: Kem Taylor	29: Caleb Jensen
3: Sabine Junginger	14: Waddell Wilcox	20: James Mehlow Morris	31: Kathryn Johnson
8: Richard Krueger	15: Renea Aswegan	20: Rob Paul	
9: Hanieh Kohan Khaki	17: James Geison	22: Kamaria Nodd	



Fair Trade Fair: Living Generously!

Thrivent Financial, who helped sponsor our 13th Fair Trade Alternative Gift Fair, has a theme that commands us to “Live Generously.”

I want to thank all our shoppers who *lived generously* by supporting our sale of fair trade items, and by donating to worthwhile local and global organizations represented at the Fair.

I want to say thank you to all the representatives of the various groups who *lived generously* by taking the time to be at our Fair, and to share with attendees about the life changing work being done by their organizations.

And finally, I want to say thank you to all our volunteers who *lived generously* by donating their time and energy to set up, serve food, pour coffee and hot chocolate, cashier, assist sales, and clean up.

Together, we were able to raise the following monies:



Bright Stars of Bethlehem	\$50.00
Habitat For Humanity	\$96.00
Heifer International	\$146.00
Kenya Maseno Mission	\$336.00
Lutheran World Relief	\$659.13
TACO	\$350.00
Triqui Indians	\$47.00
“Welcome the Babe” (LWR Baby Kits)	\$850.00



Martha Radatz



Pictures on left: some of the volunteers who made the Fair happen; Akian Slevcove shared the handiwork of the Triqui Indians of Baja California. Pictures on



right: items for sale being displayed; Martha DeMers & Carol McGrath staffed the sampling table.

Hope for the Holidays

We had another successful year of participation in the Hope for the Holidays program, sponsored by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. The program collects cards for distribution at migrant detention centers across the country and at shelters along the border, reminding individuals and families that they are not forgotten during the holiday season.

First Lutheran sent 80 Christmas cards this year, written by both children (with wonderful drawings included) and adults. Many of the cards were written in Spanish, and they all had a positive message of hope to individuals who are separated from their families this holiday season.

Thank you for your participation in this important program.

—Jessica Grumm and Sheri Bengtson

Living Lutheran Renewal Time

The *Living Lutheran* magazine provides the latest news, regional and global mission stories, spiritual reflections, and resources from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The monthly magazine is an excellent means to receive information on our shared mission and ministry in the ELCA. The cost of a yearly subscription is \$15. This special rate covers the cost of the magazine and helps support subscriptions costs paid by the church. If you wish to re-subscribe, newly subscribe, or support this ministry please place a check for \$15 in envelope payable to “First Lutheran Church” noting in the memo line noting “Living Lutheran.”

Welcome the Babe Advent Outreach

This year the timing of the Pulsebeat mailing is before the Welcome the Babe blessing of Baby Care Kits so, as of this printing, the exact number of completed kits is unknown. More details will be shared in a full article in the February Pulsebeat, but please join us for the Baby Care Kit Blessing on January 5 to see the results of your generous donations.



First Lutheran Worship Assistants – January & February

ALTAR GUILD

JANUARY

9:00 a.m. Service

Marjorie Wahlsten

11:00 a.m. Service

Melinda Person

FEBRUARY

9:00 a.m. Service

11:00 a.m. Service

USHERS

JANUARY

9:00 a.m. Service

*Pat Hendrickson &
Carol McGrath*

11:00 a.m. Service

Anke Hartung & Marty Topp

FEBRUARY

9:00 a.m. Service

*Merv Rettenmund &
Kem Taylor*

11:00 a.m. Service

*Ruth Clayton &
Ladonna Piper*

Date	Time	Assisting Minister	Lector	Greeters	Nursery Attendants	Flowers
January 5	9:00 11:00	Nate Pratt Mary Ann Horton	Lynne Falcon Joe Slevcove	John Hoff Slevcoves	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
January 19	9:00 11:00	Jan Neuhaus Frank Jessie	Kem Taylor Nancy Eckert	Dick & Mary Krueger Elizabeth Connolly	Lee Kaercher Hannah DeMers	Kjonegaards
January 26	9:00 11:00	Chuck Leib Paul Finneseth	Hanieh Kohan Khaki Jim Lovell	Kem Taylor Ruth Clayton	Kem Taylor Martha DeMers	_____
February 2	9:00 11:00	Richard Phillips Beth Slevcove	Frank Jessie Joe Slevcove	John Hoff Slevcoves	Kathryn Kanaan Kathryn Kanaan	_____
February 9	9:00 11:00	Kathryn Kanaan Frank Jessie	Jeremy Kaercher Matthew Eckert	Marjorie Wahlsten Marlene Garich	Dick Krueger Joe DeMers	_____
February 16	9:00 11:00	Frank Jessie Mary Ann Horton	Dennis Arenas Frank Jessie	Dennis Arenas & David Oakes Marty Topp	Mary Krueger Paul Engel	DeMers



January 2020 Calendar of Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 12 pm AI Anon	2 12 pm AI Anon	3 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	4
5 EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD SUNDAY 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality	6 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	7 12 pm AI Anon	8 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	9 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP	10 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	11
12 BAPTISM OF OUR LORD SUNDAY 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 10:10 Lent Dev 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality	13 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	14 12 pm AI Anon 6:30 Church Council Mtg	15 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	16 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP	17 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	18
19 SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 10:10 Cong Mtg II 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality	20 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	21 12 pm AI Anon	22 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	23 12 pm AI Anon 1 pm HICAP	24 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	25
26 THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY 9 am Worship 10:10 Hospitality 11 am Worship 12:10 Hospitality 3 pm German Svc	27 12 pm AA 12 pm AI Anon 4 pm Free Meal 5:30 pm Evening Clinics	28 12 pm AI Anon	29 9 am Acupuncture 12 pm AI Anon	30 12 pm AI Anon	31 9 am Acupuncture 9 am Bread Day 12 pm AA	

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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San Diego Street Choir

On Sunday, December 15, the San Diego Street Choir (directed by Ron Bolles and accompanied by First Lutheran's own Joe DeMers) performed at the 9:00 service. The First Lutheran Choir joined them to sing *Shine Down* (Smiley, Gersmehl, & Farrell; arr. Mark Hayes), then the choir performed *Hallelujah to the Newborn King* (arr. Daniel Smith & Mark Condon) during communion, and finally led the congregation in singing *Go, Tell It on the Mountain*.

Thank you to the San Diego Street Choir, and thanks to everyone who donated money toward gift cards—each choir member received a \$10 Ralph's gift card!

Thanks to Martha DeMers & Bill Radatz for the pictures.



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