

The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

In Memory of Marilee Clark

On Sunday, November 13 in the afternoon, Holy Trinity member Marilee Clark passed away peacefully, surrounded by family. Marilee was an avid baker for our church, and she always donated food and helped out for funeral refreshments. Marilee most recently was a team member of our church's Safety Task Force in 2017.

Please keep Marilee's family in your prayers at this time.



Toys For Tots

The holiday season is approaching and we will once again be collecting new, unwrapped toys for the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program. Please bring your unwrapped toys to donate to our box in the Gathering Area. All donations must be received by December 11 for timely delivery to the Marines. A suggestion list is available. Thank you for your generosity.



Advent Schedule

Beginning on Wednesday, November 23, and lasting through all of Advent, Bible Study will meet at 4:30 PM instead of its usual time. All are welcome to stay after Bible Study for a Soup Supper at 6:00 PM, and Holden Evening Prayer at 6:30 PM. After Christmas, Bible Study will plan on meeting at its regular time. For a full list of all of Holy Trinity's Advent schedule, please see the back cover of this bulletin.



Pastor Luther's Article: November 3, 2022

This Sunday we will celebrate All Saints' Day. Among other things, we will sing that great Ralph Vaughn Williams' hymn, *For All the Saints*, and include in our prayers the names of all those loved ones whom we have lost these past few years. Everyone will also be given the opportunity to light a candle for a 'saint' dear to you if you so wish during communion. All of which raises the question: so, who exactly is a 'saint' within the meaning of All Saints Day?

According to the New Testament, there is an important and primary sense in which *all faithful Christians*, both those living and the departed, are 'saints' because they share in the life of Christ by virtue of baptism. Thus, the term 'saint' is applied to all faithful Christians throughout the Acts of the Apostles (see, e.g., Acts 9:32, 26:10), and Paul routinely addresses the members of the Christian communities that receive his letters (see Rom 1:7, 1 Cor 1:2, 2 Cor 1:1, Eph 1:1, Phil 1:1, Col 1:2) as 'saints.' We are 'saints' on this view not because of the merits of our behavior, but only because Christ makes it possible for us to be saints by allowing us to share in his life, initially in baptism and then with the nourishment of the Eucharist. We are, in Paul's language: washed, sanctified, and justified "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor 6:11).



As the church evolved throughout history, however, the term 'saint' came to have another meaning: referring to "elite" Christians whose lives were distinguished and exemplary because of their self-sacrifice, witness, virtue, or accomplishments. Special recognition was given to the martyrs of the early church. The saints and martyrs were in a sense the heroes of the church. The medieval church also developed a theological framework for understanding this distinction, one that is still enshrined in official Roman Catholic theology. The Roman Church divides the faithful departed into two categories: *the church triumphant* – that is, those exemplary Christians (i.e., full-fledged 'saints') whose lives were sufficiently holy to warrant immediate entry into heaven; and *the church expectant* – those departed Christians whose lives were faithful but not yet quite holy enough for heaven, and who reside in an intermediate state of purification called 'purgatory,' as they make their way toward heaven. For this reason, Roman Catholics venerate, and pray to or with 'saints,' because they are believed to be in more intimate relationship with Christ, and can intercede on behalf of all

Christian pilgrims, both living and dead, who are still moving toward purification. Accordingly, the Roman church has developed an elaborate and complicated process for canonizing those persons to be named saints. For Roman Catholic Christians, saints are more than just witnesses of the faith; they are also protectors and intercessors. Saints' days proliferated in the western church during the Middle Ages. Churches and institutions were named for saints. Many faithful people made pilgrimages to shrines of saints.

The Reformers strenuously objected to this understanding of 'sainthood,' believing it to be grounded in an unbiblical theology of 'works righteousness.' In Luther's famous phrase, we are all simultaneously both 'saints and sinners'; only Christ is purely saintly. It is our faith in what Christ has done on our behalves that saves us; not our works, which inevitably fall short, even the works of heroic Christians. Heroic Christians from the past, for Protestants, have no 'special status' in heaven or intercessory power. In keeping with this view, the Reformers also emphatically rejected the idea of 'purgatory,' and believe that all faithful Christians enjoy a life in Christ after death without distinction.

So exercised was Luther about this issue that he once preached an *All Saints' Day* sermon in which he famously objected to the veneration of departed 'saints.' With characteristic directness and hyperbole, he wrote:



"I have previously and often said how the saints should be honored. That is, you must make a distinction between the saints who are dead and those who are yet living, and what you must do for the saints. You must turn away from the dead and honor the living saints. The living saints are your neighbors, the naked, the hungry, the thirsty, poor people; those who have wives and children, who suffer shame, who lie in sins. Turn to them and help them. That is where you are to apply your works. . . . You have God's command to help the living but He has not commanded you to do anything for the dead. There is no command that you should honor dead saints so . . . let go of that and turn to those whom you know God is pleased that you honor. Don't we have enough to do pursuing what God has in fact commanded us to do?"

This, of course, slightly overstates the case. Luther was certainly right that we should direct most of our energies to those living who are in need of our help. But that doesn't mean we can't from time to time – including on All Saints' Day – pay honor to the lives of those who have gone before us so that we can learn from them. Thus, despite Luther's diatribe in this one

sermon, Lutheran and Episcopal churches still observe All Saints' Day and continue to believe that remembering 'holy lives' can be helpful in learning what Christian discipleship can look like. Understood in this sense, saints are not superheroes but *witnesses of the faith* who can teach us about discipleship in different historical and cultural contexts.

In short, then, on Sunday we will honor *all the saints*, both the dead and the living, as we give thanks for and learn from the myriad, beautiful ways in which flesh-and-blood human beings have lived, and continue to live, into their faith.

Pastor Luther's Article: November 17, 2022

This coming Sunday (Nov. 20) marks the end of the liturgical year and is often called "Christ the King Sunday" or the "Reign of Christ Sunday." You will be hearing more about the history of this feast day during my sermon, but whatever we make of its origins, the day closes out the Christian year by inviting us to reflect on what it means to call Christ our "king."

Then, the following Sunday (Nov. 27), right after our Thanksgiving celebrations with our families, we turn the page on the Christian calendar, and begin a whole new liturgical year (Lectionary Year A) with the First Sunday of Advent.

As I was thinking about this transition in our sacred seasons, it occurred to me that it might be helpful if I offered an Adult Forum devoted to the topic of "Christian time" and how Christians organize the year a little differently from the secular calendar. And so, if you're interested, please stay around on Sunday for this discussion, which I have entitled "Living into the Christian Year."



As a teaser, I will say this much now, in the hope you may be interested in learning more: the Christian year is divided into seasons – Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. These seasons follow the basic shape of Jesus' life, beginning with Mary's pregnancy, his birth, his public ministry, his journey to the Cross, the miracle of his Resurrection, and then, after his ascension, concluding with the birth and mission of the Church.

Each of these liturgical seasons has its own symbolic color, which we often mark visibly with church decorations – the frontals of the altar table and lectern; the stole the pastor wears; the banners which sometimes hang in the sanctuary.

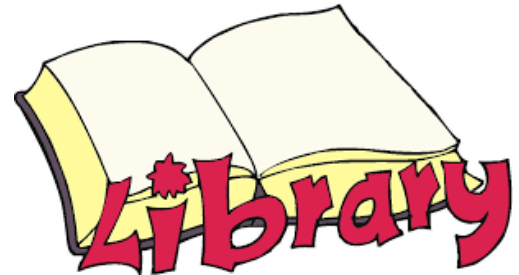
Thus, the blue of Advent reminds us that we are waiting for royalty – Christ our King. The white or gold of Christmas marks the light that has entered the world as God becomes human. Green during Epiphany reminds us that as we meet Jesus in the gospels we grow in Christ. Purple for Lent is the color of repentance, that time of year when we take stock of our lives and seek ways to return to God. White for Easter (like Christmas) is a color of joy, when we celebrate that Christ has risen and a whole new creation comes into the world. Red for the Day of Pentecost reminds us that God has given us the Holy Spirit and “fired us up” to spread the good news throughout the world. Finally, the green for the Sundays after Pentecost marks the longest season, inviting us to grow even more deeply in Christ – to do the hard work of building up his kingdom.

But alas, I am stealing my own thunder! If you want to learn more, and talk about ways we can live more meaningfully into these seasons, join me at the Adult Forum on Sunday.

Immigration and the BGLibrary

Barbara Galle—the person who designed Holy Trinity’s present library—and her husband Warren were deeply involved in HT’s immigration work. Through the ‘80s the Galle’s were instrumental in guiding HT in supporting a Vietnamese family who lived in public housing (now replaced by an office complex). A decade later, in the ‘90s they were instrumental in our supporting a family from the Middle East. That family eventually moved to Michigan to join more kin. In gratitude for our support, the father, a sculpture artist, gifted us with the large wooden lion above the library bookshelves.

When the Indonesian community who eventually became Imanuel arrived, our entire church community welcomed them with enthusiasm, quickly recognizing that their presence greatly enriches. Now our two congregations work together, fellowship together, and worship together. During the pandemic we companioned Claudine from Cameroon until she moved to Nevada. And this year we’re working together to help settle the Khybers, a family from Afghanistan. To continue celebrating our traditions and to help us all learn more about what it’s like to be an immigrant, the library has a couple new books, both great reads as well as being educational. They are:



The House that Love Built: Why I Opened My Door to Immigrants and How We Found Hope beyond a Broken System, by Sarah Jackson. Jackson is the founder and executive director of Casa de Paz, a hospitality home in Denver, Colorado, that has hosted more than 4,000 immigrant guests from 73 nations. Casa’s family of more than 2,000 volunteers ministers to immigrants and families separated by detention with visits, meals, shelter, transportation, and emotional support through the arduous experience of immigration detention, one simple act of love at a time. Besides reading the book, you can find more information at Casadepazcolorado.org

Underground America: Narratives of Undocumented Lives, compiled and edited by Peter Orner. The millions of undocumented immigrants who live in the U.S. are under constant threat of imprisonment or deportation. They survive underground, with little protection from exploitation by human smugglers, employers, or law enforcement. *Underground America* presents the remarkable oral histories of men and women struggling to carve out a life here, safe for themselves and their families.

Both books are on display; you won’t have to search through collections to find them. Enjoy!

Property Team

How does the song go? Turn, turn, turn, turn ... The season has surely turned. Thanksgiving and the Advent seasons are ready to call. Those seventy-degree-days in November are gone, but not forgotten. Property matters are reasonably under control and ready for another winter, although I have not yet seen the snow removal contract for renewal. We still have some work to do on leaves that linger in certain of the trees and a couple of outside fall chores to do, but ice buckets and shovels have been staged and are ready when needed. We have our various property tasks scheduled through Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. Bring it on!



From time-to-time, when we have heavy rains, we have some water buildup along one of the basement walls and experience some water intrusion (typically 5-10 gallons or so) that tends to flow diagonally across the basement floor, from the far side of the right wall to the near side of the left wall, where it mostly finds its way to the sump in the workroom. If you have need of going into the basement after heavy rain, be aware of the potential for wet and potentially slippery floors. There is no easy solution to this problem, though replacement of a missing gutter to the right side of the main entry may help. I have placed some water absorbing tubes on the floor at the base of the right wall where the water intrusion is known to occur. This may or may not keep water from flowing across the floor. Just be aware of the issue and also recognize that items stored directly on the floor may incur water damage.

I procured a new remote control for the ceiling fan in the sanctuary. My initial attempt to control the fan was unsuccessful with either the new or the old remote. We will keep working on the problem. I have another possible solution to attempt. If that one fails, we may have to resort to a circuit breaker to turn the fan and its light on or off. The possibility of a failed control unit in the fan itself cannot be ruled out. Replacement controls are available. Unfortunately, we cannot access the fan without staging or a lift. Should that extent of repair be needed, we would most likely elect to replace the entire fan unit.