

The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

In Memory of Ron Evers

Ron Evers passed away peacefully on the morning of Thursday, November 30. His granddaughter Stephanie wrote to the church: *"He was finally comfortable enough and at peace to pass."* Ron served our church as a counter, alongside Nancy Johnson, who passed in 2019. There will be no service for Ron, and the family appreciates our prayers as they say goodbye to Ron.



Christmas Eve Worship

Please note the schedule for the Fourth Sunday of Advent & Christmas Eve, on Sunday, December 24, 2023.

In the morning, at 9:30 AM, we plan on observing the Fourth Sunday of Advent with a short "Service of the Word". This service will be led by Pastor Pam Brouker. It will just be several short readings and prayers, with no communion or hymns. This service will *not* be livestreamed.

At 5:00 PM, join Pastor Luther Zeigler for our Family-centered Christmas Eve service. This service will be kid-focused, but a great worship service for anyone of all ages! At our children's tables, will be several age-appropriate Christmas-themed activities for your child to enjoy. There will be no communion at this service. This service will be recorded and posted online on Christmas Day.



At 8:00 PM, we will have our Candlelight Christmas Eve Service, led by Pastor Luther Zeigler. Together we will sing our favorite Christmas Hymns, read about the birth of Jesus, including in a candlelit hymn of "Silent Night". This service will be livestreamed.

Pastor Luther's Article: November 30, 2023

As we enter this season of Advent, the world around us seems to be falling apart. But then you didn't need me to tell you that. We are bombarded incessantly by one piece of bad news after another. Where can we find hope in the midst of such darkness?

The poet and South African clergyman, the Reverend Allan Boesak, has written a gospel-centered "credo" that gives me such hope. Boesak worked alongside Nelson Mandela and others in opposing the apartheid government in South Africa, and his "Advent Credo" is born of that experience. These truths are worth holding close to our hearts in our own troubled time.



Advent Credo

It is not true that creation and the human family are doomed to destruction and loss—This is true: For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction—This is true: I have come that they may have life, and that abundantly.

It is not true that violence and hatred should have the last word, and that war and destruction rule forever—This is true: Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, his name shall be called wonderful councilor, mighty God, the Everlasting, the Prince of peace.

It is not true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil who seek to rule the world—This is true: To me is given authority in heaven and on earth, and lo I am with you, even until the end of the world.

It is not true that we have to wait for those who are specially gifted, who are the prophets of the Church before we can be peacemakers—This is true: I will pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions and your old men shall have dreams.

It is not true that our hopes for liberation of humankind, of justice, of human dignity and peace are not meant for this earth and for this history—This is true: The hour comes, and it is now, that the true worshipers shall worship God in spirit and in truth.

So let us enter Advent in hope, even hope against hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and justice. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus Christ—the life of the world.

Pastor Luther's Article: December 14, 2023

Even though we Protestants have our differences with our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters, at this time of year in particular I think we can learn something from them. One of the great strengths of Roman Catholicism, I submit, is its reverence for Mary, the God-bearer, the young woman who dared to say 'yes' to God and agreed to bring our Savior into the world.

This coming Sunday, in lieu of reading a psalm, we will instead hear the *Magnificat*, Mary's great song of praise in response to the news that she is bearing God's child. When you listen to this great song this week, I invite you to consider what your response is to God coming into your life. Does your soul magnify the Lord? Does your spirit rejoice in the reality that God in Christ is your Savior?



You might also try inviting Mary into your prayers during this holy season of Advent. For if you do, you just might hear her soft voice, reminding you that you too are God's holy, blessed, and beloved child.

Finally, our own Yvonne Topping has written a poem about Mary that beautifully captures the profound complexity of her role as the God-bearer. With Yvonne's permission, I share it with you....

Not A Silent Night

By Yvonne Topping

It was a holy night.

It wasn't a silent night:

Sounds of traveler's feet on rocky pitted roads
Sounds of weary sighs and tears
Sounds of mutterings, complaints, and questions
Sounds of hungry animals.

People inside shelters:

Sighs of relief, tears, and laughter
Sharing food
Drinking wine
Talking with family, friends, and strangers.

Mary and Joseph:

Moans of not now

Gasps of intensity

Distress and no place to rest:

Frantic search

Accepting whatever

Making do.

The awaited King came.

How much did you understand, Mary? Were you taxed to your limit and beyond or did you experience a quick and easy birth? Was the presence of God strong or elusive?

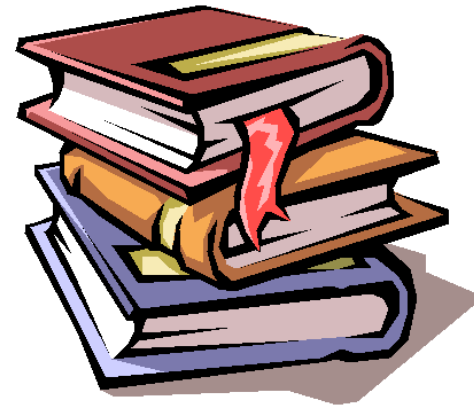
Your soul magnified the Lord and all generations call you blessed!

BG Library

“We care for God’s creation and each other by being good stewards.” (From Holy Trinity’s “Guiding Principals,” last statement under “Serve the Lord”)

I’m sitting at my computer, attempting to write a short Tidings article about the latest BGLibrary news. There’s a fan inches away blowing cool air directly into my face, but, still, sweat pours off my forehead, threatening my eyesight.

This summer the entire world is breaking temperature records week after week. Here in New England we’re experiencing unprecedented flooding, broken dams, washed-out roads, and rising sea levels. Across southern U.S., people are dying from heat stroke in unremitting 100+ degree temperatures. Climate change is undoubtedly the world’s biggest threat. Climate experts warn us that things are only going to get worse unless we humans immediately change the ways we use (and misuse) energy.



This morning on the radio I listened to a report that the United States and China are the world’s largest consumers of fossil energy, the largest source of climate change. Ugh. That includes me. I can’t blame this on Europe or Russia or Asia or any of the under-developed nations.

I think of my future. Personally, with the years I have left to live and enjoy this beautiful earth, the changes might not impact me so much. On excessively hot days, I’ll just carry along my tiny personal battery-powered fan. I’ll enjoy an icy drink. I’ll get along. That story I heard this morning said we have a few more years—maybe 20—before the damage is irreparable.

But. Twenty years from now my kids and grandkids will just be in their prime. And I want them to have a beautiful world.

So what can I do? What can we do? As an individual, no matter how much I care, I'm pretty much powerless to change or stop the fuel industries.

Here's what I *can* do: I can become informed. The BGLibrary has a section labeled "Creation Care." It's not yet very large, but the set contains several wonderful books specifically about climate change. The more we know, the more informed we become, the better equipped we'll be. Only through knowledge will we be able to activate. In a democracy, an individual has a vote, and we need to use that vote to advise both politicians and industries.

Four BGLibrary books that will help me grasp a better understanding of what we're dealing with:

- The Sixth Extinction by Elizabeth Kolbert
- The Water Will Come by Jeff Goodell
- On Fire by Naomi Klein
- The Green Consumer by Elkington, Hailes, and Makewer

These aren't necessarily "fun" summer reading, but I guarantee that each has valuable information, the kind of information we all need now at this dire time in our earth's history.

"In the Holy Scriptures, God assigns a sacred responsibility to human beings: we are to care for and keep God's creation for future generations." (Opening statement from Earth's Climate Crisis, a message from the ELCA, page 1.) For further reading, there's a copy of Earth's Climate Crisis on the library desk. Check it out, or go on-line at ELCA.org for a personal copy.

Creation Care

“Nature, Advent Meditation, and Climate Change”

“We are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth.” (from the ELCA Social Statement)

“This summer of 2023 climate change moved from the abstract to the concrete.... While some of us still deny it, the rest of us look on with sober fear.... The evidence of our impact on the planet is clear.” (Bishop James Hazelwood).

In Advent we're called to meditation. We're called to evaluate our place and our accountability in the world. But slowing ourselves down in present times, let alone in December, is hard. We have so many responsibilities—shopping, wrapping, mailing—and so many activities—office work, meetings, neighborhood parties. It's *hard*. Add to this the fact that the larger world is filled with terrible, frightening events, and we can't escape them. Here in New Hampshire, it's political fighting. Throughout our country, children are hungry and people are homeless. Around the world, we see wars and rumors of wars. And everywhere, nature is threatened by climate change.

But ironically, while we know nature is in danger, there's no better way to slow down emotionally, to calm ourselves, than to be in nature.

So, let's take the nature walk. We go into the woods and hold very still, and we're blessed with the sounds of nature. We watch the birds. A squirrel scampers by. We wait; we keep silent. There's a snowshoe hare, almost hidden in the snow. Then leaves rustle and a raccoon appears. A red fox chases a woodchuck.

After a while we drive to the seacoast to watch the waves. Overhead seagulls squawk before they dive to fish. A great blue heron wades near the shoreline. We hear barking and turn our heads to find a harbor seal.

Feeling calmer, feeling filled by nature, we head off to church for yet another activity. There we find the Climate Care section in the BGLibrary displayed on the carousel. There's a book that draws our attention: *Behold the Lilies: Jesus and the Contemplation of Nature* by H. Paul Santmire. In it he describes that when he stays in his rustic vacation home in New Hampshire, when he works the fields and digs into the dirt, he discovers how to meditate, how to be in holiness.

Santmire's book is just one of many in the Climate Care section that teaches us about how we can care for the earth. Caring for the earth is meditation. I urge you to check out Santmire's and some of the other caring books on this carousel.

Prayer Concerns

Health Issues: Franklyn Vosburg, Jerry Schock, Alice Peterson, Don Gindlesperger, Richard Anderson, Dave Smith, Hazel Larson, Leo Larson, Geri Seig, Rani Marcus, Shirley Jackson. **Homebound:** Carol Saufley, Barbara Werdelin, Dave & Joyce Rivoire, Anita Lindstrom, Judy Hollister, Jean Klein, Steve Bush, June Slipp. **Military:** Josh Bretz, Jacob Schankis, Jessica Chabot, Ian Connors.

Partners in Ministry: ELCA, New England Synod, Ismani Congregation in Tanzania, Imanuel Indonesian Lutheran Church, Ascentria Care Alliance, Camp Calumet, Operation Blessing, Crossroads, Dover Friendly Kitchen, Good News Garage, Seacoast Family Promise, Salvation Army, & Lutheran World Relief.

Friends: Carol Dumican (friend of Bobbie Febbo), Scott Andrade (Bobbie Febbo's friend), Phil Cahners (Bobbie Febbo's son-in-law), David Roth (Bonnie Sanders' brother), Janis (friend of Eileen & Carl Kackenmeister).

Monthly Attendance & Offering

Sunday, November 12:	97 (<i>In-Person</i>) + 23 (<i>Online</i>) = 120	Offering:	\$8,255.85
Sunday, November 19:	78 (<i>In-Person</i>) + 34 (<i>Online</i>) = 112	Offering:	\$6,593.25
Sunday, November 26:	104 (<i>In-Person</i>) + (No Livestream) = 104	Offering:	\$3,703.85
Sunday, December 3:	97 (<i>In-Person</i>) + 15 (<i>Online</i>) = 112	Offering:	\$5,919.70
Sunday, December 10:	110 (<i>In-Person</i>) + 16 (<i>Online</i>) = 126	Offering:	\$3,819.25

Calendar at-a-glance

- Sun. Dec. 17, 10:30 AM:** New Member Class #3
- Sun. Dec. 24, 9:30 AM:** Service of the Word
- Sun. Dec. 24, 5:00 PM:** Christmas Eve Service – FAMILY (no communion)
- Sun. Dec. 24, 8:00 PM:** Christmas Eve Service – EUCHARIST
- Sun. Dec. 31, 9:30 AM:** A Service of Lessons and Carols

Sunday Worship, Sundays at 9:30 AM

Wednesday Bible Study, Wednesdays at 9:30 AM

Property Team, Thursdays at 9:00 AM until *about* noon.