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December 2022 Newsletter

“Encouraging faith and proclaiming God’s love by Gathering, Growing and Giving.”

THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR MARY

Advent and Christmas Greetings everyone!

You’ve heard me say it before, but it continues to hold true...I cannot believe how fast 2022 has flown by. I mean, how is it possible that we have entered into the final month of the year?? But then again, I don’t want to complain too much about being in the midst of the Season of Advent or preparing for Christmas. Why? Because despite my regular struggles through this physically dark time of the year...I can’t get enough of all the colors and music of the season. *(Imagine me typing this with a big smile on my face).*

This year we will be able to have a LIVE Sunday School Christmas Program, which is something we’ve desperately missed these past two years. *“Jesus, Me, and My Christmas Tree”* will be a fun program that is directly based on the book by the same name, written by Crystal Bowman. We have copies of the book for each of the families participating in the program, and hope the book will be a fond reminder of the message they will convey to us on Dec. 18th at our 10am worship service. On that same morning, the women’s group will be selling lefse and baked goods...so come with your “Christmas Gift List” for those last few people you want to give a gift to this year.

Now be sure to mark on your calendar (and share with your neighbors/family) the worship times for Christmas Eve (Saturday at 4pm) and Christmas Day (Sunday at 10am). We will have our traditional Candlelight service on 12/24 and sing lots of Christmas carols on 12/25. Again, please share this news with lots of people, because you just never know who the Holy Spirit is nudging and who is looking for a place to celebrate the True Reason for the Season...the birth of Jesus our Savior...Emmanuel...God among us.

Randy and I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year,

Pastor Mary and Randy Eide



"From Worry to Wonder"

A Christmas Message from Bishop Laurie

On June 19, 2020 our granddaughter was born. She was born three months into the pandemic. Her parents were worried. Her grandparents were worried. It is challenging enough to be pregnant and give birth in the best of times but to give birth in the middle of a worldwide pandemic is an even greater worry. We worried about the unknown dangers this virus might present to the mother, the unborn baby, and the new born baby. Our worries kept us up at night. Our worries were relieved when she was finally born, perfect in every way. Our worry gave way to wonder-filled joy. Worry transformed to wonder as we looked back to see how God was holding and carrying them through the unavoidable worry. Our worry transformed to gratitude and wonder watching for what God would be up to next in her tiny life. It's December 2022. We prepare to celebrate the birth our Lord Jesus. This Advent we come with our fears and worries too. We are living in the midst of challenging times in our country. The very foundation of our nation seems less stable. We each come with our own personal set of worries and fears about our families, health, finances, work, safety, the future...What is it that keeps you up at night? What are you worried about today?

Folks across our church are experiencing doubts and uneasiness about the future of their church. Does it keep you up at night? What are the threats to your church's future? How can the conversation move from fear and worry to wonder? As the miracle of Christ's birth is celebrated this season, we can move from worry to wonder. We wonder what God is up to now in this day and age. Together we wonder what God's will is for the future of our church. Together we wonder; how can we use the abundance and blessings, (what we do have and opportunities in front of us), to make a difference in Jesus' name.

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. Luke 2:8-10a

Shepherds living in the fields watched over their sheep to keep them safe. There were dangers that kept the shepherds up at night and plenty of things for the shepherd's to worry about in the cold night like wild animals, predators, thieves, & bad weather. There was so much to worry about, but one night an angel of the Lord, all shiny and bright appeared and transformed their fears and worldly worry to divine wonder.

To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" Luke 2:11-14

Friends, you are precious, beloved, baptized children of God. We know that the antidote to worry is to trust in God. During this Advent, Christmas and Epiphany season I pray that your worries will be transformed to wonder at what God **is** doing and promises **to** do in your lives and in our churches. May the miracle of Christ's birth transform your worries to wonder! I am grateful for your partnership in ministry.

Rev. Laurie Sta. Olesen

DECEMBER DATES

Wed. Dec. 14th Noon Women (and men's) Christmas Potluck gathering

Fri. Dec. 16th Noon until done Peel, boil and prepare potatoes for lefse making

Sat., Dec. 17th 9 am-Noon Lefse making (*ONLY IF we get enough people signed up to help*)

Sun. Dec. 18th 10 am Christmas program during worship with women's lefse and bake sale afterwards

Mon. Dec. 19th 6:30pm Council meeting

Wed. Dec 21st Noon-6pm. Blood Drive; NO Confirmation Class

Sat., Dec. 24th 4pm Christmas Eve Worship

Sun. Dec. 25th Carol and Lessons Worship; NO Sunday School

Sun. Jan. 29th, 2023 Annual Meeting and Mortgage Burning Party!!

USHERS NEEDED: You will notice on the list below, that we have no ushers assigned for the weeks ahead. Could you please assist in this role? Maybe even as a family or friends? Please contact: Tim Jenson our Head Usher at tjenson2@hotmail.com

WORSHIP LEADERSHIP IN **DECEMBER** (Please note **OPEN** positions, and volunteer)

December 4th: ACOLYTE: Cade and Dru READER: **Need 1**
ADVENT READER/CANDLELIGHTER: Keith & Rita Lee
USHER: Gordy COMM. ASST: **Need 1** VIDEO: Randy

December 11th: ACOLYTE: Khloe READER: **Need 1**
ADVENT READER/CANDLELIGHTER: Bobbi & Curtis Carothers
USHER: Gordy VIDEO: Dave

December 18th: ACOLYTE: Morgan READER: Program
ADVENT READER/CANDLELIGHTER: Kris Jenson & Acolyte
USHER: Gordy VIDEO: Dave

December 24th Christmas Eve Service 4:00pm
ACOLYTE: Cade & Marcus READER: **Need 1**
ADVENT READER/CANDLELIGHTER: Sarah & Cade Larson
USHER: Gordy COMM. ASST: **Need 1-3** VIDEO: **Need 1**

December 25th: ACOLYTE: Colton READER: **Need 1**
ADVENT READER/CANDLELIGHTER: Kris Jenson & Acolyte
USHER: Gordy COMM. ASST: **Need 1** VIDEO: **Need 1**

January 1st: ACOLYTE: Colton READER: **Need 1**
USHER: Gordy COMM. ASST: **Need 1** VIDEO: **Need 1**

PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES TO ASSIST IN WORSHIP.

...why not sign up together with families and friends to help lead worship: acolyte, read/lector, usher communion assistant (Confirmed 10th gr.- adults). Sign up sheets are in the Gathering Area. Feel free to ask questions about what is expected in this role.

Usher contact: Tim Jenson at tjenson2@hotmail.com

Acolyte, Lector/Read: Keith Lee at keithlee0051@gmail.com

Technology Team Members NEEDED: Randy Eide rdeide@charter.net



GATHERING

ADVENT WREATH READERS/CANDLELIGHTERS needed for Nov. 27th, Dec. 4th, 11th, 18th, and 24th and 25th. Signup sheet and readings will soon be on the bulletin board in the Gathering Place.

Sat. 12/24 CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP -- 4PM Come alone or bring your family and friends to this special night of celebration and worship, as we remember the GOOD NEWS that the Son of God came to live among us...and changed everything!

Sun., 12/25 CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP 10am -- There never seems to be enough Sundays in a year to sing all the Christmas hymns we love...but we will squeeze in as many as we can on this special morning of celebration of Jesus coming into the world.

GROWING

EDUCATION

SUN. DEC. 18th Sunday School students are presenting a CHRISTMAS PROGRAM entitled "*Jesus, Me, and My Christmas Tree*". *After 2 years it will finally be in-person again.*

GROWING IN GENEROSITY: The Sunday School Children's offering have been generous enough to reach their first two 2 Generosity Goals: **\$50** was raised enough money to purchase a pig and bees through ELCA Good Gifts; **\$100** for a goat, seeds and gardening tools. NOW they are pursuing their 3rd Goal: **\$150** to for Pastor seminary classes. Thank you so much kids...you ARE making a HUGE difference in peoples' lives.

There will be No Sunday School classes December 25th, 2022, and January 1st, 2023. Classes will resume Sunday January 8th, 2023, at 8:45 AM.

CONFIRMATION CLASS SCHEDULE

NO CLASS on Dec. 21st and 28th. We will resume classes on January 4th.

These 7th and 8th graders continue to share generously with others, even after raising \$465 for Hurricane Ian relief. NOW they are going to put together a Christmas Day Food Box for a community member. Well done class!

GIVING

...of TREASURES

OCTOBER GIVING:

\$ 15,313 Income

\$ 14,561 Expenses

\$ 1,258 Net Gain September

Year-to-date DEFICIT \$3,684)

Independent SB - General Operating balance \$16,951.39 Mortgage Balance \$ 5,859.43
YES...we WILL PAY OFF OUR MORTGAGE before the END OF 2022

SPECIAL OFFERINGS (These do NOT include Love Lights Donations)

#Giving Tuesday 2022

Michael & Edie Litzkow

SPECIAL THANK YOU to...Culver's on Folsom Street in Eau Claire.

They selected the Elk Mound Community Food Pantry as the recipient of "CONCRETES FOR A CAUSE" for 5 days in November...where \$1 was donated for every Concrete mixer sold during the designated period of time. They sold 247 Concrete Mixers...and now donating \$247 dollars.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY 12/18...just bring in/mail in your INTENT FORM along with your Time and Talent Sheet

CHECK OUT OUR NEW GIVING PAGE at www.sothem.org/give where you can find an explanation for each of the funds you can contribute to with your offerings. You can set up one time or repeated giving through this secure site from Vanco. If you are a current user of Give +, you may be directed to set a new password when using the new site.

These transactions are all tracked in your giving record and including in your giving statement for tax purposes. This is an easy way to ensure the donation you are making for God's work is placed into the church account. **Start small if you like, and then build on your generosity as time goes on.**

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

DOING SOME CHRISTMAS SHOPPING ON AMAZON? Don't forget to register as a donor for our church on **SMILE AMAZON**. Go to the Smile Amazon site, search for us as *Shepherd of the Hill Lutheran Church Elk Mound*, SELECT. Then every time you go to shop on Amazon...be sure to log onto your SMILE AMAZON page. Everything is exactly the same, EXCEPT qualifying purchases will cause Smile.Amazon to donate a percentage of the purchase to US!!!

...of TIME & TALENTS

Lefse Making: We are looking for individuals who know how to roll lefse for to join in other necessary duties related to this activity. **Saturday, Dec 17th 9am-Noon** is the time BUT ONLY if we get enough people committed to the task. Please sign up at



church OR contact the church at 715-879-5115 or sothic@sothem.org to let us know if you can help.



BLOOD DRIVE Wed. December 21st from Noon to 6pm YOU have an opportunity to save a life, and ensure medical facilities have the blood resources they need, for the people they are serving. Go to this link to make an appointment <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=Elk%20Mound>

OUTREACH

CHRISTMAS LOVE LIGHTS The holiday seasons are a time when we remember our loved ones...those that have gone before us, someone we do not see as often as we'd like or a special someone nearby. As a congregation, we would like to honor those in our hearts during the Christmas season. We will have "Love Light" tree in front of the church with different colored bulbs to remember our loved ones and the special light they have been in our lives. Please see the sign up sheet towards the end of this newsletter. The \$10 donation will be split between God's ministry her at SOTH and the Christmas for Kids program to support local families for Christmas.

SIGN UP to purchase items for the families we are assisting this Christmas will be in the Gathering Place on the table where bulletins are located in the next couple of weeks.

LIFE WELL LIVED

It is with a sad heart that we share the news of the passing of JOANN KNUTSON on Wed., Nov. 23rd. There will be a funeral/celebration of her life **HERE Wed. Dec. 7th at 11am, with visitation beforehand 9-11am.** You can find her obituary at this link from Evergreen https://www.evergreenfuneralhome.com/print_obituary.phtml?obituary_id=EFDB777A

GRIEF SHARE...

...starting back up on **Sun., January 8th 1:30-3:30pm at Trinity United Methodist Church, 105 S. Holly Ave., Elk Mound.** We will meet weekly to watch the week's video, discuss it and our previous week's reading. The only cost for this 13-week support group is \$15 to purchase the workbook. You can reserve a spot and pick up a book at the church by calling 715-879-5596. If you, a loved one or friend is struggling with the loss of a loved one, please consider attending this group. You can also go to www.griefshare.org to locate another group that is meeting in-person or online.

FROM COUNCIL: Upcoming proposal for Annual Meeting.

The council wants to propose a change to the bylaws of the constitution. This will be presented to the congregation in the next two newsletters and in the agenda that will be sent out prior to the Annual Meeting. The proposed change will then be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

The proposed change is to Chapter 18, Part IV, Line 4

Current: At its annual meeting, the congregation shall elect a Church Council of fifteen (15) members.

Proposed change: At its annual meeting, the congregation shall elect a Church Council of up to fifteen (15) members.

**Shepherd of the Hill Council Minutes
October 24, 2022**

Meeting called to order at 6:34 by President Barb Vadnais

Members present: Carol Carlstrom, Kris Jenson, Clauden Oebser, Alison Young, Marshall Fuhrman, Barb Vadnais, DiAnna Scheffler, Stephany Grossbier, Steve Sweeney and Pastor Mary Eide

Members absent: None

Devotions: Talked about Sunday School songs that made an impression on council members when they were young.

Mutual Ministry: Kay Tubbs is at Oakwood. Diane DeMoe is at Chetek but is hoping to be transferred.

Approval of Agenda: Amendments to the agenda: Stewardship Sunday. Alison Young made a motion to approve the agenda with additions and Dianna Scheffler seconded. Motion carried.

Secretary's report: Stephany Grossbier made motion to approve the minutes as submitted and DiAnna Scheffler seconded.

Treasurer/Financial Report: Kris Jenson made a motion to file the financial report as presented and Marshall Fuhrman seconded.

- A. PROFIT & LOSS September 2022
 - September Income \$21,270; Expenses \$17,441
 - Net Ordinary Income \$3,829
 - Summer Challenge \$10,665
- B. PROFIT & LOSS BUDGET PERFORMANCE January through September 2022
 - Current DEFICIT for the year is (\$4,942) was (\$6,858)
 - YTD Income \$114,645; YTD Income \$116,475
 - YTD Expenses \$119,587; YTD Expenses \$122,503
- C. DEDICATED ACCOUNTS Month End Balances
 - Checking for *General Operating* \$8,440
 - Money Market for *Dedicated Funds* \$17,792
 - *Mortgage Balance* \$11,713
- D. PROFIT & LOSS Previous Year Comparison
January through September
 - General Income 2022: \$114,645 General Income 2021: \$104,807
 - Total Expenses 2022: \$119,587 Total Expenses 2021: \$111,288
 - General Income up \$9,837 Total Expenses up \$8,298
 - Deficit 2022: (\$4,942) Deficit 2021: (\$6,481)
- E. OTHER POINTS OF DISCUSSION
 - Autumn Fest Net Gain 2021 \$5,389 Autumn Fest Net Gain 2022 \$6,467

New Business:

Benevolence:

Alison brought up the possibility of donating stuffed animals to the Menomonie ER to be sent with sick children that are being admitted, transferred, or going through a painful procedure. Kris Jenson made a motion

to donate \$150 towards the purchase of small toys and stuffed animals to be donated to Mayo, Menomonie. 2nd by Claudeen Oebser. Motion carried.

Pastor Mary brought up Chippewa Valley Street Ministry needs donations. They have a list of needs on their website. Kris Jenson made a motion to donate \$100 to CVSM. 2nd by Alison Young. Motion carried.

Pastor Mary 2023 Compensation package: The executive committee met prior to the council meeting to discuss Pastor's Health insurance. Due to changes Pastor Mary needs to purchase health insurance and the Open Enrollment ends in a few days. Although there was some cost for health insurance built into the compensation package it had not been updated in many years and no longer covered the actual cost of the packages. Pastor Mary is requesting the Gold Plan. The executive committee looked at the different plans what they cost and covered and has made the recommendation that SOTH pays the additional cost to cover the Gold plan. Carol Carlstom made a motion to approve the executive committee's recommendation. 2nd by Stephany Grossbier. Motion carried.

Old Business:

Canoeing the Mountains conversations: Based on some of the conversations had with members of the church the following discussion items were brought up.

- The council is going to come up with the top 5 committee suggestions. Sign-up sheets will be placed in the church to get members to participate. Information on the committees will also be published in the newsletter and on the website.
- The council will be open to any opportunities we hear about Ruby's Pantry returning to the area; noting it is important to remember 6-7 people are needed as committed to be leaders for this endeavor, wherever it may be held.
- Other suggestions included updating the website with more recent photos. Include more photos of adults doing activities within the church.
- Luther Park is having recharge events coming up that could be offered to congregation and leadership.
- Accept that we can being a small congregation does not mean we can't be an active congregation and as a small congregation it is sometimes easier to coordinate big things.

Pop Up Pantry update: location changed to the village hall parking lot.

Committee Reports:

A. **Property Report:** Food Pantry/Basement Doors were repaired by Valley Builders, and they gave us an amazing discount on the cost of their services/supplies. *Change out of lights to LED* completed in a couple of locations in the basement. This will save us a great deal of money in the future. *New heater in Sunday School classroom* Cost be covered by a donation from member family.

B. Pastor's Report

- I present the *following names of students for Affirmation of Baptism/Confirmation:* Grady Larson, Cheyannah Millermon, Kenzie Peterson, Mason Mohr and Addison Stroh. Terra Millermon will also participate in this faith milestone, having participated in the 2-year Confirmation classes. Grady, Cheyannah, Kenzie and Terra will participate in the 10/30/22 service,
- *Halloween Bucket Sales* 7th-8th Grade Confirmation Class has been selling these to raise awareness and funds for helping those impacted by Hurricane Ian; FYI: *Surviving The Holidays November 20, 2022/GriefShare* Sunday, November 20, 2022 from 5:30-7:30 at Trinity UMC If you are not able to attend in person you may join us via Zoom. Please contact Denise at the office (715-879-5596) for a reservation and the book.
- *Wed., Nov. 30th Blue Christmas Soup Supper (6pm) and Service (7pm)* will be looking fo help with supper and service that evening.
- *Advent begins* Sunday, Nov. 27 so we need to set up time for TREE and DECORATING (the decorating COULD happen AFTER 11/30)

Next Meeting: November 28th at 6:30. Meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm with the Lord's Prayer. Respectfully submitted by Alison Young



DECEMBER 2022

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
				1	2	3
					10-12 Food Pantry <i>Pastor's Sabbath</i>	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8:45 Sunday School 10am Communion Worship	7pm AA Meeting	Pop up Pantry 11-12 pm @ Village Hall parking lot 4-6 Food Pantry	9-11am Visitation 11am Funeral & Luncheon Joann Knutson 3:20 Confirmation class		10-12 Food Pantry <i>Pastor's Sabbath</i>	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
8:45 Sunday School 10 Worship 11 Fellowship – Simpson & Sweeney	7pm AA Meeting	4-6 Food Pantry	12 Women's and Men's Potluck 3:20 Confirmation class		10-12 Food Pantry <i>Pastor's Sabbath</i> Noon until done Potato Peeling, boiling, prepping	9am to Noon Lefse Making (if we get enough volunteers signed up)
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
8:45am Sunday School 10 Christmas Program during worship Bake Sale/Lefse Sale	6:30pm Church Council Meeting 7pm AA Meeting	4-6 Food Pantry	12-6pm Blood Drive NO Confirmation Class		10-12 Food Pantry <i>Pastor's Sabbath</i>	4pm Christmas Eve Worship
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Merry Christmas 10 Worship No Sunday School	7pm AA Meeting	4-6 Food Pantry	NO Confirmation Class		10-12 Food Pantry <i>Pastor's Sabbath</i>	New Year's Eve

Do you want to learn more about our congregation and the ministry happening here? Do you want to find ways to make a difference in the Elk Mound Community, while also deepening your understanding of your Christian faith? Then contact us at sothlc@sothem.org or 715-879-5115

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