

OPENDOOR

WINTER 2022



HOLY TRINITY
LUTHERAN CHURCH

From the Pastor

While summer is my favorite season, with its long hot days filled with outdoor activities, it is Advent and Christmas that are my favorite liturgical seasons. November will bring the end of the liturgical year and welcome the new one. As people gather around tables and computer screens with family and friends, we will give thanks for what we have. We will reflect on the good of the past year, as well as the rough patches, with a moment of recognition, and maybe some celebration, that we made it to this day. For each of us the year has brought joy and sorrow. We have been challenged, and we have succeeded. In these final weeks of the liturgical year, we reflect on the realities of our lives and the world we live in. As we stand at the edge of what was, we also get to step into what is to be. This is the season of Advent.

Advent is a time of expectant waiting and preparation. The word “advent” comes from the Latin *adventus* and means “coming” or “arrival.” Hence the season of Advent is all about the coming and arrival of Christ, both at his birth in Bethlehem and his eschatological or second coming. The liturgical color of Advent is blue because it represents hope. Advent is all about living into the hope of a God who is with us, “Immanuel.” It is also a reminder that we need to be purposeful in our preparations for this coming, not only as we remember Christ’s birth so long ago but as we live into the reality of Christ’s second coming.



One of the best-known customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The wreath and winter candle-lighting amid growing darkness strengthen some of the Advent images found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is an image of ever-lasting life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ leads us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light. We will begin our Sunday worship services with an Advent Wreath Lighting Litany and Hymn that gives a very real reminder of God’s life and light entering into our world and lives (John 1:1-4).



We will have opportunities for worship, contemplation, and fellowship. We will have a midweek Advent service each Tuesday (November 29, December 6, 13, and 20). Everyone is invited for a soup lunch at noon and worship at 12:45pm. This year's theme is "The Gifts of Advent," and the series highlights four aspects of Advent that become blessings and gifts in our lives: patience, speech and silence, hope, and family. On the same Tuesday evenings, Facebook and YouTube will have an Advent video of me reading a children's story, sharing a message, and prayer.

We will be sending home from Sunday School a weekly "Adventures in Advent Newsletter" with activities for families to do at home. Each newsletter includes a time to learn, create, serve, and explore that can be done at home. Additional copies will be available for anyone who would like to participate. Luther Seminary has created a daily devotional titled "Fling Wide the Door". Everyone can download a free copy at <https://www.luthersem.edu/godpause/advent-devotional/>. Paper copies, including large print, will be available at church beginning November 20. Copies will also be by the home communion kits that are available for pickup at your convenience.

Advent preparations also include decorating and social gatherings. A full list of Sunday and Tuesday worship and events is included in this newsletter. Some highlights: we will be decorating the church on Sunday, December 4th following the Family Faith Formation at 1:00pm. On Sunday, December 18th, the Sunday School students will be singing during worship, and Bibles will be given out to our youth. Following worship there will be an Intergenerational Christmas Event that everyone is encouraged to attend.

Our Advent preparations come to an end at Christmas. On Christmas Eve we will gather in-person and online at 7:00pm for a service that includes candle lighting. This is always a special worship service, and this year I will be sharing a service that I have created. Along with Easter, Christmas Eve is one of my favorite worship services of the year. There is so much joy and meaning that we celebrate on this night! The worship includes many readers and ways for people of all ages to participate, so be prepared that I will be asking many of you to be Involved.

I very much look forward to preparing with you for the coming of our Lord!

Shalom,
Pastor Elizabeth





ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Worship and Activity Schedule

Sunday, November 27th

No Sunday School
10:00am Advent 1 Worship

Tuesday, November 29th

12:00pm Soup Lunch
12:45pm Midweek Worship
Advent Video on HTLC Facebook and YouTube

Sunday, December 4th

9:00am Sunday School
10:00am Advent 2 Worship
11:15am Family Faith Formation with meal and childcare
1:00pm Decorate the church for Christmas

Tuesday, December 6th

12:00pm Soup Lunch
12:45pm Midweek Worship
Advent Video on HTLC Facebook and YouTube

Saturday, December 10th - Jubilee Christmas

Sunday, December 11th

9:00am Sunday School
10:00am Advent 3 Worship
11:15am Council Meeting

Tuesday, December 13th

12:00pm Soup Lunch
12:45pm Midweek Worship
Advent Video on HTLC Facebook and YouTube

Sunday, December 18th

9:00am Sunday School
10:00am Advent 4 Worship with children singing and students receiving Bibles
11:15am Intergenerational Christmas Event

Tuesday, December 20th

12:00pm Soup Lunch
12:45pm Midweek Worship
Advent Video on HTLC Facebook and YouTube

Saturday, December 24th – Christmas Eve

7:00pm Christmas Eve Worship with Candle Lighting

Sunday, December 25th

No Sunday School
10:00am Virtual Christmas: Scripture, Message, and Music (No in-person worship)



It's Jubilee Christmas time again at Holy Trinity

On SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10th, Holy Trinity will be hosting 22 families at Jubilee Christmas. This morning of joy and community will give our guests the opportunity to shop for gifts for their children, in addition to receiving clothing, food certificates, household supplies, and a hand-made quilt from our own HTLC quilters! This year will again be a "hybrid" Jubilee; we will not gather as an entire group in the fellowship hall, but will again host parents by appointment to shop for their children while still observing flu/covid precautions.

Jubilee Christmas is a partnership with the Lafayette Urban Ministry. Guests are low-income parents who have been registered by LUM and



assigned to HTLC. HTLC's Jubilee shoppers will purchase 1 gift for each child **as requested by the parents**. Our parent guests will select two additional small gifts for each child at our Jubilee event on the 10th. Each family will also receive food certificates for Christmas dinner, a tin of cookies, gift certificates for teens in the household, a laundry basket of household products, and a quilt lovingly made by HTLC Quilters. We need YOU to join us to make Jubilee a success:

VOLUNTEER: The sign-up sheet will be on the bulletin board in the narthex. We will need a few hosts, shopping area helpers and more! We begin about 8:30 that morning, and are generally done by noon.

DONATE: a **new, unwrapped** toy for a child 0-12 years of age. A shopping basket will be by the bulletin board in the narthex. This is a great way to involve your children or grandchildren!



SHOP ON AMAZON: to help us fill our laundry baskets of household products for each family. For your convenience, select “Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Gift Address” and your donation will be delivered directly to the church office. Please let us know what you are sending, so that we can check the order when it arrives.

The Amazon shopping link is:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/151ZFD3Y3J9ES?ref=wl_share



PROVIDE A CLOTHING GIFT: Take a mitten tag from our clothing tree and purchase a new shirt & pants for a child. Record YOUR name on the list provided, purchase the clothing and PUT THE TAG ON THE BAG; return to the church by Sunday, Dec 4th. If you are not able to attend in-person worship, please leave a message with the church office that you’d like a “mitten” and we will select one for you. We encourage you to consider buying a book for your child as well as the clothing. Appropriate reading levels will be suggested.

MAKE: a financial contribution. Envelopes are available in the rack near the office door, at the Welcome Center, or simply mark your donation “Jubilee.”

Jubilee is all about making parents the heroes of Christmas for their children. The parents will put these gifts under the tree on Christmas morning, fix a special Christmas dinner and perhaps play a new board game or snuggle under a new quilt. It takes a lot to make Jubilee happen! We hope you can find a way to be involved in this special ministry. If you have questions, please contact Mary Anderson (mm.anderson3600@gmail.com) or Sue Davis (morgie800@comcast.net). The rest of the elf team are Stephanie Crowe (Amazon orders), Judy Lokke (mitten tree), Cheryl Schrier (toys) and Missy Parrish (logistics). Thank you all!



My Jesus is Better than Your Jesus?

From “Morning Reflections” written by Glenn McDonald

Most of us have seen, if only in the movies, the drama of a “hostage statement.”

Unseen kidnappers force their hostage to sit in front of a camera and speak – perhaps assuring the world that he or she is alive and well, or to state the philosophy or demands or threats of those who have done the kidnapping. It’s a charade, of course. The hostage is being forced to talk.

These days you’re probably not the only person who wonders if certain groups have tried to kidnap Jesus.

They trot him out before the watching world. They make him endorse their group’s perspectives, using his own words as recorded in the Gospels. But of course they are careful not to empower Jesus to repeat *everything* he has ever said, omitting any sayings that might contradict the group’s most cherished ideals.

Are we talking about groups on the Left or groups on the Right? The answer to that question is Yes.

Conservatives are quick to pounce. “This is so true of liberals. They’re always quoting Jesus out of context.” Liberals pounce right back. “What a perfect description of the Right. They prop Jesus up as if he’s an official spokesman for their nonsense.”

But as author and pastor Scott Sauls points out in his book *Jesus Outside the Lines: A Way Forward for Those Who are Tired of Taking Sides*, it’s well worth the effort to try to stand in each other’s shoes.

Let’s begin with self-described progressive Christians.



Progressive Christians love Jesus. They deeply admire the way he cares about “the least of these” – especially the marginalized, the poor, and the oppressed. Jesus places a high value on the sanctity of every human life, and he calls us to fight the systemic injustices that trap millions of people in feelings of hopelessness and cycles of poverty.

What about those on the Right?

Conservative Christians love Jesus. They deeply admire the way he cares about “the least of these” – especially the unborn. Jesus places a high value on the sanctity of every human life, and he calls us to fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

Both sides rally around Jesus as he one who cares about human life. One group places special emphasis on life inside the womb, the other on life beyond the womb. Conservatives think that sexual integrity is a very big deal. Progressives think that liberating people from sexual biases is a very big deal.

Left-wingers are pretty sure that a vote for candidates on the Right is a vote against Jesus. And right-wingers are just as sure that a vote for candidates on the Left is a vote against Jesus. Both sides are confident that Jesus is in their camp, and launch attacks on the immorality and callousness of their opponents, whom they label Left-Wing Marxists or Right-Wing Extremists.

Sauls asks, "Could it be that both sides are right and both sides are wrong?"

In the words of author Anne Lamott, "You can safely assume you've created God in your own image if it turns out he hates all the same people you do."

Each end of the spectrum is standing strong for things that are worth fighting for – *but all too often to the exclusion of other things that are just as much worth fighting for.* Jesus can never be contained by one group's political or sociological perspectives. And he made it clear that we are always called to pray for, care for, and love our enemies – whether real or perceived (Matthew 5:43-48).

That's why there's no place in God's kingdom for declaring, "My Jesus is better than your Jesus."

With deep humility, we must acknowledge that he is nobody's property and nobody's hostage.

In the end, one thing matters above all:

Have you allowed this Jesus you say you follow to be the Lord of *every part* of your life?



Glenn is an ordained Presbyterian minister, has 33 years of congregational leadership experience, and is the author of ten books on discipleship and spiritual formation.

The Open Door will go to a quarterly publication schedule starting with this issue:

WINTER—November

SPRING—February

SUMMER — May

AUTUMN—August

INTERGENERATIONAL CHRISTMAS EVENT

When: Sunday, December 18th following Worship

What: Together we will playfully explore the Christmas story and enjoy fellowship together.

Who: EVERYONE



A big thank you to SUE DAVIS, who faithfully put together the Open Door every month! The newsletter will now be produced in the church office four times a year.

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