A Note from Pastor Alexander...

St. James writes “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” (James 1:17 ESV)

I praise God for this verse of truth........ but not so much when I was a kid at Christmas time. (Spoiler alert: this may be more information that you want.)

My two brothers and I annually “suffered” the great mental anguish of receiving (ugh) “Christmas underwear.” (It’s a Midwest thing.) Three boys, who should have been thankful, had long faces as we took turns opening our carefully wrapped packages lovingly placed under the wonderfully decorated tree. Underwear. Again. “Thanks Mom.”

“With the Father of lights, there is no variation or shadow due to change” nor was there any variation with my mother. However, shortly after the disappointment came lots of laughing as we finally remembered there was more to come that we simply hadn’t yet seen. A few games; a new toy; BB guns which disappeared immediately after an errant BB accidently broke a window.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” Certainly included in His gifts are, as Luther describes: “My body, soul, eyes, heart, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them. He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home...and all that I need to support this body and life. He does all this out of Fatherly, divine goodness and mercy without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.”

Our Heavenly Father’s ultimate Christmas gift — His only Son our Lord wrapped in human flesh. As John tells us in his Gospel, “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” In addition to all the physical blessings God has given us, He has given us His Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. He gives us the blessings that Christ won for us on the cross. He provides these blessings for us in His means of grace; Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and His Holy Word. No games or toys but redemption from sin and death. No punishment for errant actions or thoughts that, like BBs, so easily shatter things in us and those around us. There is no variation in the Father of lights or His love for us in endless and unchangeable. That is who and why we celebrate this season. Jesus is not like BBs, so easily shatter things in us and those around us. There is no variation with Him there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Again.

For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

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Christmas Blessings to you all.
Pastor Phil

PS: Thanks Mom.
Pastoral Call Committee

Preparation for OUR NEW PASTOR

Rev. Richard Browning from Bonita Springs, Florida, was presented to the congregation at the Voters' Assembly in October and is a strong candidate possessing the attributes we are seeking. He has recently been contacted and consents to our continued attention in this matter. We want to present him again to the congregation for consideration as our next pastor.

A Voter's Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, December 8. It will be held following the 11:00am service with discussion and voting on the agenda. We need your input and continued prayers for our Call Committee, the health of our congregation and Rev. Browning.

The Exmas Rush

December Devotion - Judy C.

The people of Niattrb jolt us back to the realization that Christmas was never intended to be “Exmas” and that there are alternatives to the frenzied activities we often engage in to celebrate the holiday.

Exmas and Christmas

In the middle of winter when fogs and rains most abound they have a great festival which they call Exmas, and for fifty days they prepare for it in the fashion I shall describe. First of all, every citizen is obliged to send to each of his friends and relations a square piece of hard paper stamped with a picture, which in their speech is called an Exmas-card. But the pictures represent birds sitting on branches, or trees with a dark green prickly leaf, or else men in such garments as the Niattrbians believe that their ancestors wore two hundred years ago riding in coaches such as their ancestors used, or houses with snow on their roofs. And the Niattrbians are unwilling to say what these pictures have to do with the festival, guarding (as I suppose) some sacred mystery. And because all men must send these cards the market-place is filled with the crowd of those buying them, so that there is great labour and weariness.

But having bought as many as they suppose to be sufficient, they return to their houses and find there the like cards which others have sent to them. And when they find cards from any to whom they also have sent cards, they throw them away and give thanks to the gods that this labor at least is over for another year. But when they find cards from any to whom they have not sent, then they beat their breasts and wail and utter curses against the sender; and, having sufficiently lamented their misfortune, they put on their boots again and go out into the fog and run and buy a card for him also. And let this account suffice about Exmas-cards.

They also send gifts to one another, suffering the same things about the gifts as about the cards, or even worse. For every citizen has to guess the value of the gift which every friend will send to him so that he may send one of equal value, whether he can afford it or not. And they buy as gifts for one another such things as no man ever bought for himself. For the sellers, understanding the custom, put forth all kinds of trumpery, and whatever, being useless and ridiculous, they have been unable to sell through-out the year they now sell as an Exmas gift. And though Niattrbians profess themselves to lack sufficient necessary things, such as metal, leather, wood and paper, yet an incredible quantity of these things is wasted every year, being made into gifts....

This fifty days of preparation is called in their barbarian speech the Exmas Rush.... But when the day of the festival comes, then most of the citizens, being exhausted with the Rush, lie in bed till noon. But in the evening they eat five times as much supper as on other days and, crowning themselves with crowns of paper, they become intoxicated. And on the day after Exmas they are very grave, being internally disordered by the supper and the drinking and reckoning how much they have spent on gifts and on the wine.

I trust that our present day "Christmas Rush" doesn't compare with this fictional one, but the story does give us insight on how "traditions" can become burdens. Many of us have been complaining that current traditions and Christmas marketing begin earlier and earlier each year. With some stores putting up decorations even before Thanksgiving, we seem to miss the days of reflection and preparation that the Advent season affords us. Let's choose to savor the days as we go to the manger this Christmas and ponder the gift of the Christ child, our Savior, Jesus Christ.
Please join us for book club discussions. We meet the second Saturday of each month, 10:00-11:30am, September-May. A lively discussion of the book occurs, fellowship is shared and we are refreshed with morning goodies, coffee and tea. Consider joining the group when you can and invite a friend! There is no obligation to attend every month and no pressure to have the right answers because there are NO right answers. The following is a listing of the books that will be read and discussed:

| December | No assigned book |
| January  | O Pioneers by Willa Cather |
| February | The Gown by Jennifer Robson |
| March | Major Pettigrew’s Last Stand by Helen Simonson |
| April | Carnegie’s Maid by Marie Benedict |
| May | The Language of Flowers by Vanessa Diffenbaugh |

Thank you for joining us!

Group Home News And Activities

“Jesus loves us” and God loves us so much that he sent Jesus as a baby to save us and to fill us with joy each year as we celebrate his very special birthday—“Christmas”. This Fall our bible lessons had the theme, “Jesus loves us” and spoke of how we show love because “he first loved us”. The Group home Wish Wreath is in the narthex with gift suggestions for our friends in the four Tualatin homes as well as some needed gifts for the homes, and also $10.00 gift cards for staff members (an envelope will be in the office or you can give me, Kathye Greene, money or gift cards). Our Mission is to share the love of our Lord with our Group Home Friends and the staff members who work with them.

The Annual Christmas Service and Luncheon is on Saturday, December 7, 12:00pm to 2:00pm. It is a fun way to start your Christmas celebration. Help is always appreciated. A sign up sheet with needed help and food is on the bulletin board going into the Fellowship Hall.


-Kathye G.


**Senior Youth Education Hour**

Attention all High School aged members and friends!

Did you know that this year’s Senior Youth education is being led by two of Living Savior’s own young adults?

I’d like to introduce everyone to Katrin Richter and Ty Knisely. Katrin was baptized at Living Savior where she spent her early years as well. She has since lived cross country, attended college and is delighted to be back in the area and at Living Savior. She majored in English and Library Science with a LOVE of reading and discussion. She is grateful for her formation as a member of Living Savior community while growing up and is delighted to be giving back, continuing to learn and grow along with the senior youth.

Ty Knisely has been a member of Living Savior since 2009. He is engaged and is getting married in the church next spring. He enjoys being with friends, and loves his job. He has always taken an interest in the church, serving in a leadership role in the past with the youth group. After a break to achieve some personal goals, he is ready to jump back in with the youth again.

We welcome these young adults and the enthusiasm that they bring to the senior youth class on Sunday mornings. Try and join the class if the opportunity presents itself. I’ve been alerted that doughnuts find their way to the class on occasion. The next several weeks will focus on some of the parables, including the Laborers, The Way into The Kingdom and The Pharisee and the Tax Collector.

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**Stewardship Update**

**Contributions through Nov. 18, 2019, are as follows:**

**General Fund:**
- Received: $518,513
- Budget: $517,500
- Variance: $+1,013

**Building Fund Contributions:** $44,524

Thank you for your faithful giving!

Tired of writing checks? Interested in giving electronical-ly? Please pick up a form to enroll in Joyful Response, available on the counter outside of the church office.

One giving option that may help you reduce your tax burden is a “Qualified Charitable Distribution”. For those that are over age 70½ and have an IRA with a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), you can bypass paying taxes on any proceeds that are gifted to a charity/religious organization/501c3. Instead of receiving the RMD, paying the full tax, and then making your regular offering contribution, you can instead have some portion of your RMD transfer directly from your IRA to a 501c3 organization (like Living Savior) and avoid paying taxes on that gift. If you would like more general information about this, please contact Adam Wilkie. For anything more specific or detailed, please consult your tax advisor.

If you have questions, please contact at the church office.

Thank you.

Adam W.

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**Education News**

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Thank you.

Adam W.

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**Holiday Concerts**

**The Christmas Chorale/A Service of Lessons & Carols**
Concordia University’s music ensembles
Friday, Dec. 6 and Saturday, Dec. 7 at 7:00pm
Sunday, December 8 at 3:00pm
St. Michael’s Lutheran Church
6700 NE 29th Ave., Portland, Oregon
Free Admission Donations accepted

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**11th Christmas/Epiphany Concert**
Lutheran Choral Association
Calvin Presbyterian Church
10445 SW Canterbury Ln., Tigard
January 5, 2020 at 3:00pm
Enjoy this ecumenical choir, which has sung continually since 1938. Music will include familiar carols (including sing-a-longs).

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**Birthday Party for Jesus!**
Let’s all welcome in the 2019 Christmas season and celebrate the Birth of our Lord and Savior with snacks, craft, storytelling, singing, and birthday cupcakes!

**Saturday, December 7th**
9:30 to 11:00 a.m.
Living Savior Fellowship Hall

For all: Preschool & Sunday School children, Siblings, Parents, and Grandparents

**RSVP:** dhornberger@livingsavior-preschool.org

A big thank you goes out to all who bought pies for our preschool fundraiser. We hope you have been enjoying them through this holiday season. You helped the preschool earn $4200!

As always, we appreciate your support in prayer and fundraising!

May the sights & sounds of this Christmas season bring JOY to each family as we all celebrate the birth of our Savior throughout all the festivities!

**Merry Christmas!**
From Denice and the Preschool Staff
Living Savior Scholarship

Consider contributing to the Living Savior Scholarship as part of your year-end charitable contributions!

$1,000 scholarships are awarded in the spring of each year to two college bound members of Living Savior. Applicants submit an essay on the subject, “My Christian Faith Means to Me.” The winning entries are chosen by a 3-member panel and the scholarships are awarded in May.

As members of Living Savior, we need to raise the scholarship funds. You can make a designat-ed contribution directly to the scholarship fund by sending a check to the church and indicating that it is for the “Scholarship Fund” on the face of the check.

Questions? Please call Cathy D. at the church office.

Shut In Ministry

“You are those who have stood by me in my trials.” - Luke 22:28

Living Savior has an active team of people who have a heart for those who are unable to attend church because of illness or disabilities. As a visitor to shut ins, they have an opportunity to make a positive difference in someone’s life by visiting and bringing to them fellowship and love from the congregation.

Would you like to visit Shut Ins or know of someone we can visit? Volunteers are trained for this ministry. If you would like to be a part of this ministry or have questions, contact:

Peggy H. or Lola Erickson

Dinners of Eight

Our first of three dinners will be Sunday, January 12, 5:00-7:00 pm. You may sign up on the “chef” poster in the church narthex until January 5th. Each month you are asked to sign up. You will be contacted the week of the dinner by the host with the host’s address and a request for a side dish.

WHAT: What are Dinners of Eight? They are dinners for about eight participants, to be held at a host’s home. Multiple suppers will be going on at various locations on the same day. The host will generally provide the main entrée with other diners bringing a side dish, salad or dessert.

WHY: This is an opportunity to spend more time getting to know each other, renewing friendships, and just having time to talk and enjoy each other’s company.

HOSTS NEEDED: Please check the host column on the sign-up sheets in the narthex.

FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN: There has also been interest in full family participation in the Dinners of Eight. Families who would like their children to participate in these events at the church in the Fellowship Hall or in a home, please sign the sheet labeled “Families with Children” and indicate if you would be willing to host. A host will call/email others to participate in the potluck. Also indicate the number of children.

DINNER DATES: Sundays, January 12, February 9, March 8, 5:00-7:00 pm.

“Harmonizing for a Cause”

“Plan Ahead to Prevent Getting Overwhelmed by Holidays”

Stephen Ministry

ANTICIPATE THE HOLIDAYS

“One day at a time” and “so far so good” are the themes of people who grieve. However, these responses are a challenge when holidays, anniversaries and birthdays arrive. Grievers often go into overload and lack concentration.

PLAN AHEAD

There are things that a person can do to plan ahead to avoid overloading and creating the best physical as well as emotional environment.

• Prioritize and make lists from gift buying to getting out of bed!
• A good top-bottom housecleaning could be a joint family holiday project, or call on those people who have been offering to help.
• Break up monumental (or what seem monumental) undertakings into smaller, more manageable segments.
• Do something every day to organize your environment.

A SIMPLE, POWERFUL WAY TO CARE FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE GRIEVING

Journeying through Grief is a set of four short books to send to people at crucial times during the first year after the loss of a loved one. Author Kenneth C. Haugk writes in a warm, caring style, with short, easy-to-read chapters. He walks alongside the reader through the grief journey, sharing helpful insights about grief, biblical truths, and stories that provide comfort and reassurance. The set includes the four books, four envelopes and a tracking card as to when to send them.

We are making them available to you to share with others. They are $8 for the set and can be purchased in the church office during regular office hours or on Sunday from a Stephen Minster leader.

- Karen H.

Karen H.
Valorie W.
Andrew W.
Pastor Alexander

Scrip News

With the holidays coming up, now is the time to buy scrip to use for gifting. Whether you use it to purchase a gift, or give a scrip card as a gift, the profit will go to the Living Savior building fund. What a great way to support the church and use gift cards to their best advantage. Check out the new order form with lots of new vendors. Also check out the Parish Notes to find out about the Benefit Mobile app that you can use on your phone.
MISSION AND SERVICE

- SHARI R.

We wish to let the congregation know all of our annual donations have been distributed to the budgeted projects.

- In support of Lutheran Community Services Northwest the contributions from Living Savior were part of the matched funds toward the $122,000 raised.
- Living Savior’s contributions to Tualatin School House Pantry have totaled $1,210 to date, along with monies for the purchase of eggs, milk and meat.

The Christmas Season brings us to the Angel Tree opportunity. Living Savior has about 100 children in this Prison Ministry Project to support. Tags with gift information are available in the church Narthex. The gifts can be brought boxed and ready to wrap by Saturday, December 14. The Women’s group will meet at 8:00am to sort and wrap the presents. (Please do not wrap presents.)

In November, Living Savior welcomed the homeless into our church for the third time since we began partnering with Family Promise of Tualatin Valley. With the direction and assistance of Family Promise and the increasing involvement of our church members, we have had three smooth weeks of serving homeless guests. We are grateful for a fantastic turnout of 18 community volunteers at our last training session at Living Savior and many who helped generously during our last host week; this truly is a ministry that benefits from many volunteer hours. Also, we should note the heartfelt service of our support church and neighbor Tualatin Methodist, and Coordinator, Wes Tanac, whose help has been exemplary. All combined, our last host week involved 36 volunteers and 284 hours. Great work everyone! Our next host week will be January 26 through February 2, 2020, and we welcome your much needed help.

Please contact Karen or Roberta in the office.

Come Check Us Out!

In addition to the regular library material,

DID YOU KNOW THAT?........

- We have a book shelf dedicated for books that the Book Club at Living Savior has read.
- We have a book shelf of puzzles for you to check out.
- We have reference material, Bible studies, children’s craft & learning idea books.
- We have devotions that you may take home and use for as long as needed.

The library is located on the second floor, next to the Upper Room (arched entries). There is self-check out.

COMMUNITY

WAREHOUSE/TUALATIN

Thanks Living Savior Lutheran for their donations throughout 2019. Community Warehouse provides essential items that turn empty rooms into homes.

Donations provided 3477 mattresses, 1438 dining tables, 3289 pillows, 5307 dish sets.

LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION

Mission Grant Update:
Oregon District Grant: $5,000
Financial Aid Funds for Latino Children to Attend Trinity Lutheran School was funded on Sept. 8.

The children and principal of the Portland school are pictured here with Liz Bier, VP of Gospel Outreach.

National LWML
Teach Me Too — Preschoolers with Learning Needs / Lutheran Special Education Ministries: $100,000

Lutheran Special Education Ministries (LSEM) has seen a growing desire for early intervention support of children with learning needs. In 1976 LSEM began serving children with special learning needs in the Detroit area and has since expanded programs and services to include a presence in Lutheran schools nationwide. Their pilot program is Let It Shine Academy at Bethany Lutheran Church, Austin, Texas. The Teach Me Too program was designed to administer intervention strategies, address the unique needs of children with autism spectrum disorder and other unique needs such as hyperactivity issues, decreased or delayed social skills, developmental or speech delays, sensory integration difficulties, or other learning differences. As a resource for families, this program provides assessments, consultations, and materials to help children on an individual basis. This grant will help fund Teach Me Too, expand the Let It Shine Academy, provide teacher training, and offer scholarship funding for children whose families cannot afford the cost of the Let It Shine Program.

Check out the 2019-2020 LWML Mission Goal Report which is posted on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall.

Mite boxes are available on the bookshelf in the Narthex. Return filled boxes to the large Mite Box on top of the book shelf. The coins may be put into the large box or you may leave the entire box and take a new one.