

The Messenger

**Our Saviour
Lutheran Church
Warrenton, Virginia**



**No Judgment,
Only Love
December 2020**

THE FIRST MECHANICAL CLOCK ON record was built for Dunstable Priory, a monastery in England, around the year 1283. The monks used it to announce the hours for daily prayer.

Christianity has always been interested in marking the passage of time. In the 1600s, four church buildings were the best solar observatories in the world. Built to fix the date of Easter, they also housed instruments that threw light on the geometry of the solar system.

Science has benefited from our interest in time. But the interest itself is chiefly spiritual. Whether we are counting the hours between prayer services or the months between holy days, we are always looking forward with joy – which is the definition of hope.

Advent is a season of counting the passage of time, in preparation for Christ's coming. The candles on the wreath, the boxes in a calendar and all our other customs are symbols of our long, joyful wait for Christ. Advent, this time of patience and joy, is the season of hope.

Worship

WEEKLY WORSHIP SERVICES

Saturday Night: 5:30pm

Led by Voices of Praise, this is a blend of classic, folk and contemporary Christian music.

Sunday Morning: 10am

This is the traditional Lutheran liturgy, accompanied by our organist, Bettie Shiflett and by Barbara Hoke.

Both weekend services are streamed on Facebook Live, and are available for later viewing as well.

If you have been exposed to COVID-19 in the past two weeks, are showing any symptoms of a communicable disease, have a fever over 100.4, we ask you to stay home and worship online.



ADVENT TUESDAY SERVICES

By Zoom, for Extra Human Contact!

On two Tuesdays in Advent, Dec. 8 & 15 at 7:00pm, we will hold simple, short services of Responsive Prayer using the Zoom video-conference platform. There will be time afterward for casual conversation and catching up with old friends.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Thursday, December 24

Drive-In Worship @ 4:00 pm

We will gather in our cars (facing toward the church building) for a safely-distanced in-person worship experience. Listen on your car radio to the songs and story of Christmas, including our Choir's first-ever performance from their cars! Light a candle as we sing "Silent Night" and are the first to rejoice in the Nativity.



Online Worship @ 7:00 pm

This service will be pre-recorded and streamed on our Facebook page, with music from the organ, Voices of Praise and the Handbell Choir. It is the most COVID-safe way to worship at Christmas.



Vigil Worship @ 11:00 pm

This in-person service is our "Midnight Mass." We will gather in the nave, hear the mighty organ and pray together for peace on earth. Seating in the church is limited, so please RSVP if you can, by calling or emailing the church office.



CHRISTMAS DAY

Zoom Before Noon!

Join us at 11:00 am on December 25 for a ZOOM service of prayer and praise, with time afterward to wish one another a Merry Christmas.



Spirituality

Tina Korte is a certified Spiritual Director. She holds Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Luther Seminary.

A Breath of Fresh Air...

BETHLEHEM BOUND

Year 2020 has been disorienting to say the least — the covid pandemic, the isolation, the dissolution of so many familiar habits, the normalcy of our sacred rites, the shrinkage of our blessed everyday relationships, and a bitter divisive national election.

But wait! As we have been for 2000 years, we are Bethlehem bound!

BETHEHEM!

What brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem? The shepherds? The kings from afar? The angels?

And what calls you to Bethlehem this year?

- ★ To find the baby? Birthing is an extremely intimate matter.
- ★ To experience those swaddling clothes Jesus was born and wrapped in? Jesus came to do just that, wrap us and present us to His Father, Lord of the Universe.
- ★ To find freedom, peace, fresh air, to be awed?
- ★ To be born anew as a part of OSLC?

PRAYER:

Lord, take us to Bethlehem once again in our hearts, minds, and emotions! Send the mighty anthems, the simple songs, our Savior once again. As this babe is wrapped in swaddling clothes, wrap our nation, our families, our OSLC family, our friends, our enemies as only Jesus knows how to do. Help us to lie near the manger as our new year rolls in. Amen.

RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

At Church or At Home

Holy Communion is a gift from God, given to nourish our spirits and sustain us on life's journey.

Although many things have changed in the past few months, please do not think that the presence of the coronavirus prevents you from receiving this blessing.

There are three ways for OSLC members to receive Holy Communion:



1. **At the Sunday Service:** We celebrate Holy Communion every Sunday at 10am. All baptized Christians are invited to receive it. For now, we only distribute the Body of Christ.
2. **At Church During the Week:** You can come by Our Saviour Tuesday through Friday to pray with a pastor and receive reserved Communion. No appointment is necessary, but please call ahead to be sure Michael or Terri is there.
3. **At Home:** The pastors are happy to visit you at home and bring Holy Communion to you. Just call and ask! They will wear masks inside your home, and will not stay long.

TO ARRANGE A COMMUNION VISIT

Call or Write to OSLC

Email: office@oslc-warrenton.org

Call: (540) 347-3224

Learning

TUESDAY MORNING STUDY

On Hiatus

This group, which normally meets in person at the church for a casual study on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 am, is taking a break due to the busy upcoming holiday season and in a concern for safety due to rising

COVID-19 cases. Please check the church's website under upcoming events and keep an eye out in the weekly news eblasts for when the group may once again commence meeting.

DAVE'S THURSDAY MORNING CLASS

Separating Signal from Noise

Dave Raecke has just started a new study via Zoom on Thursday mornings at 10:00 am, "**For Such a Time as This**", which will run through December 17, 2020.

Today's world is sound-saturated. We are inundated every day with words from social media, newsfeeds, co-workers, politicians, and others. Other sounds accompany these—cries of lament in violence weary communities, bomb

blasts in war-torn geographies, shouts of protest and calls for justice.

How do leaders embody the music of Gospel spheres as they preach, pray, and teach in the midst of this cacophony? When it seems that Wisdom is silent or unrecognizable, how do we discern God's voice and invite others to join us in seeking to share God's love and mercy in the face of broken hearts and bodies, cities and churches?

This study explores “sound” biblical leadership practices “for such a time as this.” Together we will explore some biblical stories, listening into them for sound leadership theologies and practices for today.

For more information including the Zoom link, check the OSLC website under Upcoming Events.

Dave’s Thursday Morning Class will take a break for the Christmas and New Year holidays but will pick back up in January 2021. Check the website under upcoming events and keep an eye out for weekly news update eblasts later this



month for a start date and study title/theme.

THURSDAY EVENINGS WITH PASTOR MICHAEL *A Look at St. Nicholas*

Each Thursday at 5pm, Pastor Michael leads a Bible study by Zoom. During December, we will finish a look at the Epistle of James – but we will **also** take a look at the stories about St. Nicholas of Myra.

Known for his friendship to the poor and vulnerable, as well as his defense of the Church, Nicholas was a legend in his own time – as he is in ours.

The link is always available on the church Facebook page, or by asking. There will be NO Thursday Bible study on Dec. 24 and 31.

SOCIAL MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

September —October 2020

Food Baskets filled: 5 (Oct)

Gas Cards given: 3 (Oct)

Food Coalition:

- 123 households
- 242 individuals
 - 198 adults
 - 43 children
- 13 boxes went to local motels
- Food boxes were delivered in a “drive-by line” due to “no contact” operation. We will continue this procedure as long as necessary. (Oct)

People Helping People:

- \$ 13,285 for rent, mortgage, motels, and utilities
- \$ 2,925 total income for the month

Assisted:

- 30 families
- 39 adult individuals
- 36 children
- OSLC volunteer hours —52 (Oct)

October Activity: Delivered 76 personal care kits and 131 quilts to Lutheran World Relief

Other activities will be scheduled on a case-by-case basis, based on the COVID-19 situation. Check for notifications in the weekly announcements and on Our Saviour’s website.

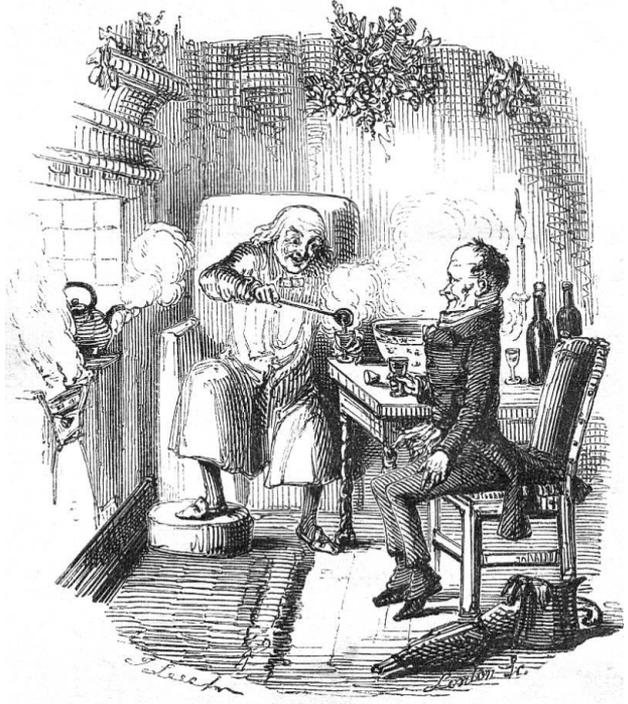
CHRISTMAS FOR WARRENTON MANOR

Senior Angels

ECHO and the Social Ministry Committee are making Christmas plans to adopt all the seniors living at Warrenton Manor (low income housing).

If you would like to help out, we are collecting monetary donations and Thrivent Grant money to put together a small gift for each resident.

Please donate online or, if you are dropping off a check, please do so by **3pm on Wednesday, December 16**, and write “Senior Angels” in the memo line. For more info contact Marian Rognlein or the church office.



Blessed is the Season
which engages the whole world in a
CONSPIRACY OF LOVE.

+ *Hamilton Wright Mabie* +

Connections

CELEBRATING ADVENT TOGETHER—APART *Home Advent Kits*

The Evangelism and Faith Development leaders invite the whole congregation to celebrate Advent together this year. Rather than think of the things we cannot do but wish we could, we want everyone to connect with each other in a special way.

To that end, we have created "At-Home Advent Kits" for each household in our congregation. Some will have items specifically for young children, some for Millennials, some for senior adults, and everything in between. Although each kit is not identical, they will all remind us that the Holy Spirit is at work, helping us to "Wait for

the Lord" as we count the days toward his birth.

As this is going to print, we are still gathering items and people to pack and deliver them, so it is possible you may not have received yours. If so, PLEASE email or call the office or Pastor Terri so we can make sure we have your address correct. We don't want to miss anyone!

You are all special to us, and we miss gathering together. We will look forward

to sharing these Advent activities and devotions together even though we are apart, and pray for the day when we can ALL be together again.



PHONE A FRIEND

Help Our Saviour Hold Together

There is nothing like the voice of a friend, calling for no special reason – except to check in. Martin Luther wrote lovingly of “the mutual conversation and consolation of brothers and sisters” as one of the blessings of the Church, and he was right.

One of the pandemic’s cruelties has been the way it cuts us off from one another. We can’t coffee and or



share cake on Sunday morning, gather safely for classes and committees. We rarely see the faces we have grown used to, and love. The result is that church members, like most other Americans, start to feel isolated, cut off from one another.

So – phone a friend!

The Evangelism Committee urges every member of OSLC to pick up the phone and call a friend from church. Better yet, call two or three. Call to say hello, to catch up, to share joys and sorrows. Call to say “I miss you,” or even “Isn’t it a beautiful day?”

Staying in touch with each other will hold us together as a community, at a time when the devil wants to keep us apart.



FINANCE CORNER

Last Quarter 2020 Income & Expenses (General Operating Budget)

	TOTAL OFFERING	TOTAL EXPENDITURES
AUGUST 2020	\$ 42,260	\$ 31,357
SEPTEMBER 2020	\$ 26,379	\$ 34,100
OCTOBER 2020	\$ 28,690	\$ 37,000
YTD	\$ 401,894	\$ 350,339

AVERAGE MONTHLY OFFERING NEEDED: \$ 36,750

Hope you were able to be with us earlier this month when the 2021 Ministry Spending Plan was presented to the Congregation and graciously approved. The Plan was perhaps a little more difficult to formulate this year with the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic but we were helped greatly by the extra funds we have in the General Operating Fund thanks to the Paycheck Protection Program. While that money has been spent on salaries and utilities as stipulated by the loan, it allows us to have a cushion for the future months which are still uncertain. We are awaiting our “invitation” from PNC Bank to submit the forgiveness request but do have confidence that we will be approved.

Our major expenses this month revolved around the 6 furnace systems that are required to keep our building heated and cooled. The unit that services the sanctuary needed freon replacement and another one of the older units was completely replaced.

On the ministry side, donated monies to purchase holiday turkeys for our usual partner, Head Start, as well as a new effort in our community this year – for First Responders. And then worldwide, the Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes are almost ready for shipping.

2021 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Pick Yours Up at Church!

2021 Offering Envelopes will be available for pick from a table in the church narthex beginning December 1, 2020.

There will be a sign-up list for anyone who wants an offering box who does not see a box with their name on it. If you have any questions, please contact Sandy Benfit.

As always, thank you for your support for the community and our church!

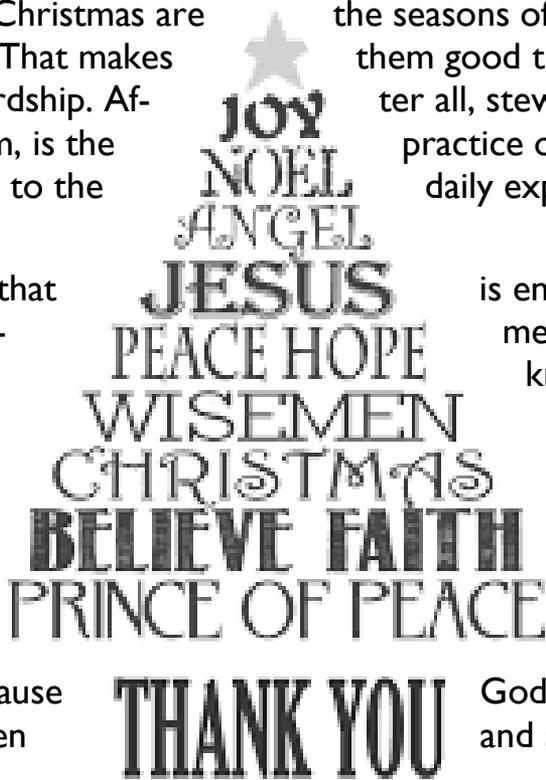
THE PRACTICE OF GENEROSITY

Thoughts on Stewardship

Advent and Christmas are receiving gifts. That makes about stewardship. At its simplest form, is the It is essential to the our faith.

As a church that lively engage- and life, we derstanding household is crucial ing to abun- grace.

We give because given, so often



the seasons of giving and re- them good times to talk ter all, stewardship, in its practice of generosity. daily expression of

is energized by ment in our faith know that un- personal and stewardship in respond- God's dant

God has already and so much.

Council News

November 2020 Congregational Meeting Wrap-up

On Sunday, November 15, Our Saviour Lutheran Church concluded our annual fall Congregational Meeting. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the outgoing council members:

- Cathy Cogdill
- Mike Burkholder
- Nancy Bonnaire
- Jan Fowler
- Bob Springman
- Rich Baker

Without their counsel, advice, commitment, and passion for Our Saviour Lutheran Church, this year in the church would not have been possible. I have personally grown from their wise counsel and influence and wish them well as they step away from council!

During the Congregational meeting we successfully elected the following council members:

- Jerry Hoke
- Tina Korte
- Renee Breeding
- Tamar Yager
- Krista Coyner
- Mark Knisely
- Betsy Wilco

They will join the following returning council members for the 2021 calendar year:

- Rod Kastrup
- Ken McIlvov
- Thomas Jordan
- Jason Ashby
- Troy Stansell

Please join me in congratulating our new and returning council members! Thank you to the Nominating Committee (Krista Coyner, Tom Bartkiewicz, and Rick Ducharme).

The meeting also successfully elected Mark Scheffel and Bettie Shiflett to the Endowment Committee; and Bob Springman, Tom Bartkiewicz, and Tom Yager to the Audit Committee. Please join me in congratulating the newly elected members of these committees. Thank you for your willingness to serve!

The Proposed 2021 Ministry Spending Plan was successfully voted on and approved by the congregation. I would like to thank the Finance Committee for their work in generating the Ministry Spending Plan!

The meeting concluded with updates from Ken McIlvoy on the Endowment Fund, and a review of proposed constitutional changes that will be voted on at the February 21, 2021 Congregational Meeting.

Troy Stansell

Troy Stansell
Council President

WORSHIP REMINDER

Advent

- 7pm Zoom Services December 8 & 15

Christmas Eve:

- 4pm – Drive-In Service
- 7pm – Facebook Service
- 11pm – In-Church Service

Christmas Day

- 11am Zoom Service