

# The Messenger

**Our Saviour**  
**Lutheran Church**  
**Warrenton, Virginia**



**No Judgment,**  
**Only Love**  
**February 2021**

“FEBRUARY MADE ME SHIVER,” SINGS Don McLean, in his classic song *American Pie*. “With every paper I’d deliver – bad news on the doorstep.”

It has been a difficult year for many Americans, as our lives have been disrupted by COVID, by our nation’s politics, or by the emotional and spiritual challenges personal to each one of us.

Sometimes, it does seem like every morning brings more bad news. (There’s even a word for searching your Internet news feed for new horrors: “doomscrolling.” Thanks, 2020!)

So with winter at its wintriest and the rigors of Lent approaching, let’s take a moment to remember good news that overcomes the bad: God loves us.

All of us, each of us. Which means that God loves *you*.

This is the armor of faith, the light in the darkness, the hope and promise that keep us going. In all our struggles, we are – each and every one – held and supported by the hand of a loving God.

## WEEKLY WORSHIP SERVICES

Due to the increased risk of infection from the COVID-19 coronavirus, the Continuity of Ministry Committee, in consultation with the pastors and music leaders, have made the following changes to our worship services from now until at further notice:

1. **Saturday services are online-only via Facebook Premiere** (at 5:30pm each Saturday, and available for viewing after that).
2. **Sunday services are online via Facebook livestream** (10am Sunday, and available for viewing after that).
3. **All ministries and groups that already meet at the church must follow the Governor's orders from December 10, 2020 and be limited to 10 or fewer total people.** In addition, all groups need to meet in the large, open area of the Fellowship Hall rather than any previously agreed-upon rooms. Look for updated in-person guidelines on our website.



Anyone who desires may receive Holy Communion by appointment, either at home or at church.

Please check the **COVID-19** page of OSLC's website and weekly emails for updates.

We are saddened by the increased problems from this virus and pray for all those affected in any way. If you would like a call from the pastors or a leader of the congregation for prayer or to share concerns, please contact the office or those leaders directly.

**Thank you!**

*Mark Knisely and the Continuity of Ministry Committee*

# NEW WAYS TO WORSHIP

## *In the Parking Lot and by Zoom*

Our Christmas Eve service in the parking lot was rainy but beautiful. Our two Advent Evening Prayer services by Zoom were intimate and heartwarming. Inspired by these experiences, we plan to expand on them in the coming months.

## SELECT SUNDAYS IN THE PARKING LOT

*Park facing the church, and greet your neighbors. If the weather is nice, bring a folding chair. Honk if you love Jesus!*

- January 31: “The Exorcist”
- February 28: “Behind Me, Satan!”
- March 28: PALM SUNDAY

## LENTEN WEDNESDAYS BY ZOOM

*We can't share Soup Suppers the way we might like, but we can join our hearts and voices in prayer **at 7pm each Wednesday.***

- Feb 17: Ash Wednesday
- Feb 24: Commemoration of Elizabeth Fedde, Deaconess
- Mar 3: Commemoration of John & Charles Wesley
- Mar 10: Commemoration of Sojourner Truth & Harriet Tubman
- Mar 17: Commemoration of Patrick, Missionary to Ireland
- Mar 24: Commemoration of Oscar Romero, Bishop

## TO USE ZOOM ON YOUR COMPUTER

Go to Our Saviour's calendar/upcoming events for the Zoom link, meeting ID and passcode. If you can't connect by computer, it is also possible to dial in by phone (audio only). Call +1 (301) 715-8592 (USA) and enter Meeting ID AND Passcode:.

# 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...

Several weeks ago I sat looking outside, with my morning coffee, watching the full moon, silently moving slowly towards the mountains. The brilliance was framed by barren trees in our back yard. I made my way to the kitchen on the other side of the house to freshen up my coffee. As I poured, I glanced outside and caught sight of the glow of the rising sun framed by the shadows of more naked trees. *Are these trees still growing*, I began to wonder!

A lot can happen in the moon light!!

Last year we launched Thrive using Psalms 1:3 and the image of a tree thriving. It reads like this, “... *a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.*” – they thrive. OSLC is a true living breathing community, our spiritual

community. We are standing tall and growing day and night.

At this time of the year, winter, we live more than 50% of our time in the darkness. This year’s darkness with COVID is thicker than ever. We are experiencing limited freedoms. The church as we have known it our entire lives, has been silenced.

Our spiritual traditions are challenged and the breath knocked out of it. God draws us into darkness at times. Some of God’s best work

is done in blackness, silence and coldness. These unseen works are deep in the earth; like the changing of the tides, the changing of the seasons, the movement of the stars. I’m not a farmer even

though I’m a Minnesotan. But I have come to understand that farmers have learned the best times to plant and when the soil is



most fertile. And it is in the moonlight!

A lot can happen in the moonlight!!

Our spiritual life cannot be so easily snuffed out. "Who can separate us from the love of God?" has been asked before!!! For survival of our inner faith, the spiritual life,

Psalms 1:3 suggests we are drawing from the deeper well of Christ himself. We are drawing from the streams that will produce new fruit in its due season. What will our darkness produce?

A lot can happen in the moonlight!!

## PRAYER

Dear Lord.

We are gathered in your name, in your world, in our homes as your church.

Light our way through this darkness.

Unify our purpose.

Cultivate us.

Sink our roots into the way of Christ.

Guide us to bear fruit each in its season.

Please don't allow us to miss the growth of knowing you in the darkness in a deeper way.

We are here, you are here, we are grateful.

Amen.

## **FEARFUL TO FEARLESS:**

### *Tools to Live with Less Fear in Your Life*

– a virtual presentation (Zoom)

To kick off 2021, the **Mental Health Association and PATH Foundation** are partnering to host a virtual community presentation by motivational speaker **Darryl Bellamy on Thursday, February 11th from 7 p.m. – 8 p.m.** Individuals of all ages are welcome to join this FREE virtual event.

Darryl has analyzed over 50,000 fears from students all over the country. He focuses on helping his audience identify the fears that are holding them back while providing practical solutions to move them from fearful to fearless. In this one-hour presentation, Darryl will present his findings and help you become more fearless as you approach your daily life.

Darryl has a particular passion for our region. He will also be presenting at several schools in Fauquier and Rappahannock over the next several months.

We hope you'll attend Darryl's presentation and be a part of the greater movement toward fearlessness, especially as we enter a new year.

The flyer for this event as well as the link to register is on the OSLC website under both upcoming events and news. You may also go to [www.fauquier-mha.org/event/darryl-bellamy-community-presentation](http://www.fauquier-mha.org/event/darryl-bellamy-community-presentation) or contact Mental Health Association of Fauquier County by calling (540) 341-8732 or emailing [bdwyer@mhafc1.org](mailto:bdwyer@mhafc1.org) to find out more.

#### **REMINDER: ANXIETY AND THE FAMILY WORKSHOP**

If you get this newsletter in time, plan to join other OSLC members by Zoom for this mental-health workshop on January 31. Call the office to register (or check your email).

# TOMORROW'S NEWS – TODAY!

## A Sneak Peak at the Weekly Readings

Each Thursday, Pastor Michael will introduce us to the Bible readings for the following week. His goal will be to put each story in its Biblical context, and to help us tease out the spiritual connections between them.

Join us by Zoom each Thursday at 5pm. A link will be posted on Facebook earlier in the day, and on the OSLC website.

## DAVE'S THURSDAY MORNING CLASS

### *The Gospel of Mark*

Join Dave Raecke and others on Thursday mornings at 10:00 am via Zoom for a class/Bible study from Augsburg Fortress on the **Gospel of Mark**. The new session began on January 14 and runs for (8) classes but you can still join in by contacting Dave Raecke at your first opportunity.



For more information including the Zoom link to participate, check the OSLC website under events. If you are unable or don't want to connect by computer, it is also possible to dial in by phone (audio only). Call +1 (301) 715-8592 (USA) and enter Meeting ID: **841 3748 0736 AND** Passcode: **202668**.

## **SOCIAL MINISTRY ACTIVITIES**

*December 2020 - January 2021*

### **On-Site Ministry:**

- Bags of Food: 3 (Dec)
- Bags of Cleaning & Personal Items: 3 (Dec)
- Gas Gift Cards: 5 (Dec)
- Grocery Gift Cards: 2 (Dec)

### **Food Distribution:**

- 133 households
- 302 individuals
  - 227 adults
  - 77 children
- 14 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. (Dec)

### **People Helping People:**

- \$ 18,088 for rent, mortgage, motels, and utilities
- \$ 8,025 total income for the month

Assisted:

- 438 families
- 71 adult individuals (2 over 65 y.o.)
- 59 children
- OSLC volunteer hours — 66 (Dec)

*People Helping People extends to OSLC members and friends many thanks for the quarterly donations and for individual donations.*

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.



# PRAYER CLOTHS FOR LENT

*by Thrivent Action Teams*

*Pray Without Ceasing—1 Thessalonians 5:17*

Have you ever heard of a prayer cloth? As with most objects of traditional origins, there are as many interpretations of the concept as there are variations of the cloths themselves, but basically they are small cloths — usually handmade — that can serve as a comforting reminder that those receiving them are cared for and prayed for. The idea is to for the recipients to have a tangible reminder of their connection to a faith family and to be able to keep the cloth close (folded in a pocket or tucked in a purse, for instance) in times when that reminder is most needed and/or in moments of prayer.

As Lent approaches, you are invited to share your crafting skills to create and distribute these simple prayer cloths to members of our congregation. Do you knit? Crochet? Loom knit? Sew? All of the above? Would you like to lend a hand and share your handmade creations with others among your faith family?



If so, please contact Emily Ashby at [Prayer.Helps@oslc-warrenton.org](mailto:Prayer.Helps@oslc-warrenton.org) for more information about the project and the cloths themselves. Creative generosity at any level is very welcome!

If crafting isn't your thing but you're inspired by this project, please let us know that's the case. We will have need for helping hands for other related tasks as well, even after the cloths themselves are made.

~ OSLC Crafters and Home Worship Ministry  
[Prayer.Helps@oslc-warrenton.org](mailto:Prayer.Helps@oslc-warrenton.org)

# Connections

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*Here are a few thank-you letters that have come in recently:*

## **From Bettie Shiflett and Her Family**

I wish there was some way we could adequately thank you for the kindness and thoughtfulness shown John, Tim and I as we journeyed through our sad time of losing Rudolph. He was such a special part of our lives and we miss him so much. Please know all the cards, flowers, food and donations to worthy causes is greatly appreciated. We have a very loving circle of friends.

*OSLC's staff members have all expressed their thanks for the congregation's generous Christmas gifts:*

## **From Susan Kiser**

I want to thank all of you for the very generous Christmas gift. It was so thoughtful as well as a wonderful gesture! I'm so grateful to be a part of such a caring congregation.

## **From Yvette Pfeifer**

Thank you for the very kind and generous Christmas gift! I am grateful for the ways in which you make it known to me how me and my work for Our Saviour Lutheran Church is appreciated. Your caring and kindness makes my heart overflow with love and gratitude!

## **From Bettie Shiflett (Again!)**

Thank you so much for the Christmas remembrance. I have missed seeing everyone during the Advent and Christmas seasons. I look forward to being able to worship with you again soon.

## **From Joanne Smoot**

Thank you so very much for your generous Christmas gift. I am so thankful to have such a caring place to work.

### **From Dean Kolb**

Thank you kindly for the generous Christmas gift for the staff. I am so blessed to be a part of this congregation and pray you all had a wonderful Christmas.

### **From Pastor Michael and Pastor Terri**

We are deeply grateful for the gift, as well as for the friendship so many of you have shown us this year – and as always, we are most grateful for your partnership in spreading the Gospel.

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## **In Transition**



After more than seven years leading Voices of Praise, Brian Stevenson is leaving us to devote himself to a full-time music ministry at Pender United Methodist Church.

As both a trained theologian and a gifted musician, Brian has been a vital part of our life together. He has guided our Saturday service through nearly half its existence!

We wish Brian and Pastor Tarja the very best, and pray for God's blessing upon their work.

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## **Congregation Meeting**

Our Spring congregation meeting will be Sunday, Feb. 21, at noon by Zoom. Watch your email for details!

## CHRISTMAS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

### *Through the Eyes of a Missionary Kid*

**By The Rev. Ted Schulz**

Christmas is a big deal in the South Pacific island nation of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Not only does it mark the birthday of Jesus Christ, but it also marks how old one is. For example, I was 16 years old when my family returned to the States. The New Guineans would say I was 16 Christmases old. In addition to being a religious holiday, Christmas is a measure of time.

Church service in the towns and villages are at the heart of the Christmas celebration with processions. The garamut (hollowed-out log) was banged to call the people to worship. There were candles too and lots of singing. I recall the outdoor dramas that the Narer mission station students put on at night on the soccer field. They did this for both Christmas and Holy Week and Easter. The New Guineans like acting out dramas. They dramatized the Christmas story with Mary and Joseph, the angels, shepherds, and wise men. They powerfully portrayed evil King Herod's slaughter of the innocents of Bethlehem with the sounds of loud wailing in the nighttime air. It was haunting to me!

Looking back, we lived a simple and rather spartan life. The life of missionaries involved sacrifices and not many comforts. Growing up, we did not have things we Americans take for granted like electricity, running water, telephone, television.

Growing up in the tropics, we kids could only imagine the magic of snow. We were mesmerized viewing the snow scenes on the Christmas cards sent from America and "watching the snowfall" if we were lucky enough to receive a Christmas snow globe present.

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*For the full version of this story, with pictures and video, visit the Virginia Synod website:  
<https://www.vasynod.org/christmas-through-the-eyes-of-a-png-missionary-kid/>*

## FINANCE CORNER

### Last Quarter 2020 Income & Expenses (General Operating Budget)

	TOTAL OFFERING	TOTAL EXPENDITURES
October 2020	\$ 28,690	\$ 37,000
November 2020	\$ 27,401	\$ 34,638
December 2020	\$ <b>36,598</b>	\$ 37,854
YTD	\$ 465,892	\$ 422,831

### AVERAGE MONTHLY OFFERING NEEDED: \$ **36,750**

Shown in the last line of this chart are our year-end totals. While it looks great that we spent \$43,000 less than we took in, it is noted that the total offering includes the PPP Loan (or Grant?) of \$59,100. In effect, then, we have dipped into the extra reserve the PPP created. However, that was the purpose for these uncertain times. The latest information from PNC Bank is that the Small Business Administration may forgive any loan which did not exceed \$150,000, so we are well within that range. Fingers crossed and praying!

We have received extremely generous donations into the Special Funds Account – namely \$10,000 each into the Memorials/Endowment Fund and the Capital Repair Reserve Fund. The first ever withdrawal from the Memorials/Endowment Fund will be made shortly to cover the four (4) projects which Caring, Admin. and Worship teams have requested.

One last thank you to all who contributed to the Staff Christmas Gift collection as the pastors, office administrator, musicians and other church staff received a nice check in appreciation for all their efforts during a trying year.

# Council News

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January, what an interesting month it was. I will admit that it is by far my least favorite month and time of year. For me, this is the time of year for facing seasonal depression issues, anxieties, fears, and insecurities. It's the time of year where we seem to lose loved ones, we feel isolated, we get that cold or flu that's going around, we're affected by house fires/floods, power outages, and equipment – like that otherwise dependable car – breaking down.

For some reason though, this year feels a little different. Maybe it's because sitting at home isn't any different this month than last year. Maybe it's because I discovered espresso and light therapy, or maybe it's because I'm not trapped in a windowless office. Or, quite possibly, it's because I've come to recognize that my anxieties, fears and mental health issues aren't just a January thing. After an eye opening and reflective conversation with my brother, I've started to recognize some of my own mental health struggles these past several months. Mental health is critical to our overall health and happiness. I've been trying to consciously work on my own mental health and a big part of doing so has centered on prayer and meditation.

This January also felt different to me in other ways. Perhaps it's the hope that this year will be different, better in some way. Perhaps it's a chance for God to help us with resilience or the opportunity to clean the slate and start renewed and refreshed. Whatever this year brings, it will come with it's own set of challenges, opportunities, and hopes. We just need to pray for guidance and resilience, and trust that God is with us and helping us – always.

In January, the new 2021 Church Council met for our annual retreat. During which, we had some great discussions with The Reverend John Wertz of the Virginia Synod on how we connect with God and our community. It was amazing to reflect on all the challenges, changes, innovation, and resilience this congregation has

gone through this past year. I came out of the retreat feeling extremely proud to be a member of OSLC and of all the accomplishments we as a church have made together. My hope is that these discussions will set the foundation for Revive Thrive, our Thrive reboot that Tina Korte will spearhead in this upcoming year.

The other major accomplishment from the retreat was electing our council officers and Ministry Team liaisons:

### **OSLC 2021 Congregation Council and Officers**

President	Troy Stansell
Vice President	Tom Jordan
Secretary	Renee Breeding
Treasurer	Bonnie McQuillan
Financial Secretary	Sandy Benfit
Administration Team	Ken McIlvoy, Tamar Yager
Caring Team	Krista Coyner, Rod Kastrup
Faith Growth & Development Team	Mark Knisely , Betsy Wilco
Thrive	Tina Korte
Worship Team	Jason Ashby, Jerry Hoke
Pastors	Terri & Michael Church

Please keep the council, as well as members of church committees, in your prayers as we navigate this new year and strive to thrive once again!

*Troy Stansell*

Troy Stansell  
Council President

#### **Congregation Meeting**

February 21 at noon  
by Zoom.  
Watch your email for the  
link.