Advent at Christ Church

At some point in my life Advent became very important to me. It’s not that I don’t love Christmas with its joyful carols and bright red decorations. I am unfailingly moved by the mystery of a God so loving, so willing to forgive, that he sends his infant son to save a fractured world. Like many of you, I am brought to tears at the quiet beauty of Linus reciting Luke’s nativity narrative in *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. But for all the wonder of Christmas, for me it is Advent that holds the true magic.

Advent is a time of preparation, a time of anticipation. From the Latin *adventus*, it means “coming,” and it is a time for us both to recall the miracle of Jesus’ birth and to await his return. In each of the four weeks, we draw closer to his arrival.

It is this feeling of anticipation that appeals to me, the delicious moment of knowing that something glorious is about to happen and that, when it does, it will fulfill us completely. It’s the moment before you eat the first bite of a tasty holiday meal. It’s the moment when the conductor raises his baton and the musicians watch him for their cue. It’s the moment you see a pine tree and know you’re about to be enveloped by its aroma. During Advent we are held in those moments when the promise alone sates us.

If this sounds intensely physical . . . you’re right. As we begin the year of Matthew in the lectionary, we also hear a great deal from Isaiah, and his readings engage all of our senses. We see animals living in peace, hear the people sing for joy, smell blooming flowers, taste curds and honey, and feel the cool water rushing through our fingers. This anticipation, Isaiah tells us, is not merely intellectual. It is not just something we read in a book. It is something we live with our bodies. Christ, coming to us in human form, invites us to witness his birth with our own bodies.

We welcome you to experience the physical magic of Advent at Christ Church Lutheran. Watch as the light of Christ brightens in our midst. Listen to the songs that tell of the promise about to be fulfilled. Feel your feet marching on the Holy Way to Zion. Smell the new life in the shoot from Jesse’s stump. Taste the meal that he lays out for us even at his birth. Revel in the anticipation of what is to come.

—Pat Baehler

Advent and Christmas Worship at Christ Church Lutheran

Sunday Service—9:30am
December 1, 8, 15, 22

Wednesday Midweek Service—11:30am and 7:00pm
December 4, 11, 18

Christmas Eve Carol Service—5:30pm
Pre-service music at 5:15
December 24

Christmas Day Service—10:00am
December 25
Christ Church Lutheran  
3244 34th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55406  
612.721.6611  
mail@christchurchluth.org  
www.christchurchluth.org

Office Hours  
Monday–Friday 9:00am–2:00pm

Worship  
Sunday 9:30am, followed by fellowship  
Education forum from 11:15am–12:15pm  
September through June

Staff
Pastors  
Pastor Kristine Carlson  
Pastor Erik Haaland
Cantors  
Pastor Robert Farlee  
Pastor Martin Seltz
Office  
Stephanie Okoneski
Facilities  
Chuck Merrell
Courier Editor  
Josh Messner

Council Officers
President  
Bob Victorin-Vangerud  
Vice President  
Dan Mueller  
Secretary  
Naomi Bruesehoff  
Treasurer  
Melody Pauling

Council Members
Pat Baehler  
Ann Davis  
Josh Messner  
Kevin Reuther  
Rita Schoenike  
Luann Skrivseth

Announcements

Retirees
This year retirees will meet on a different day for their annual Christmas party—Friday 20 December at 11:00am. Socialize over cider and sing carols led by Kay Madson. A Christmas buffet lunch will be served—no potluck. Freewill donation. Everyone is welcome.

Submissions
Want to write an article for The Courier or submit photos or other content? Contact Josh Messner at jmessner001@luthersem.edu.

December Birthdays
12/2  Carol Flanders  
12/3  Isis Faulk  
12/5  Shawn Deresch  
12/8  Jeremy Gustafson  
12/12  Jeannette Kretzmann  
12/15  Cheryl Leuning  
12/19  Liam Browder  
12/20  Marni Schmidt  
12/21  James Bartsch  
12/24  Carol Mead  
12/28  Erla Polsfuss  
12/29  Dorothy Hanson  
12/30  Eero Foat
Finances Update

The finance committee is working to provide you with the most current information about our congregation’s finances. In addition to other communications, we will provide a quick report on the state of our operating budget in each issue of The Courier.

Our income, including giving from members, is very close to what we budgeted. Thanks to all of you contributors, especially those of you who have given a little (or a lot) extra. With expenses below budget, we are actually showing a surplus of over $38,000. Most of that will be spent for bills at the end of the year, and repairs of flood damage should use up the $20,000 insurance settlement we received. For now, we are in good shape!

### As of October 31, 2013

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From the Recent Council Meetings

In lieu of reproducing the minutes of each council meeting, we are offering highlights. Complete minutes are always available for review from the church office.

Balancing the 2014 Budget

The council spent considerable time preparing the 2014 budget for the December Congregation Meeting. The main changes in the budget this year pertain to staffing: first, absorbing part of the cost of the Congregation’s decision to call Erik Haaland as our new Associate Pastor; second, beginning a three year process of bringing the salaries of Pastors Carlson, Farlee and Seltz up to the level prescribed by the Synod Compensation Guidelines. Their salaries fell below guidelines during some years when finances were extremely difficult for the congregation.

Miscellaneous

- Planned for council-led forum on Sunday 1 December, which will cover key congregational topics in details to prepare us for the Sunday 8 December congregational meeting
- Welcomed Pastor Erik Haaland to his first council meeting and approved a computer and housing allowance for him
- Set a date for congregational meeting in February

Helping Hands December

Jason Bergquist
Dick & Naomi Bruesehoff
Mary Lou and Peter Doll
Dorothy Iverson
Phyllis Mattill
Marge Meffert
Chuck & Kristy Merrell
Kevin Olsen & Will Stark
Ray & Rosie Peters

If you are named in the December helping hands chart, please donate a helping hand with Sunday morning coffee fellowship in the form of set up, clean up, or treats. Your helping hand is appreciated.

Contact Michael Jefferis for details. michael.jefferis@gmail.com
I’m writing this the second week of November—my very first week as a pastor at Christ Church Lutheran. I can hardly express how honored I am to have been called to serve among you in this way. Alongside Pastor Carlson, our cantors, and other congregational leaders, you have offered me your trust and placed in our shared hands your hopes and dreams for this community of faith. I am thrilled to be able to work with Pastor Carlson—and with this whole community of remarkably faithful and gifted people—as we seek to live out our calling as the body of Christ in this place. For all of it, thanks be to God!

In this, my very first week of pastoral ministry at Christ Church, one thing seems clear: there is work to do! I am preaching this Sunday, 17 November, and one of the appointed readings (from 2 Thessalonians 3) includes these words: “Anyone unwilling to work should not eat.”

Okay then, I’ll get busy! And fortunately, I don’t even have to worry about being an idle busybody (see verse 11), because there is plenty of good work to be done.

I look forward to taking on new leadership roles in worship; I gladly anticipate visiting homebound members, as well as connecting with visitors and new people in our midst. In my position description, the congregation has also asked me to work in three specific areas—developing relationships and ministries among young adults, working with our adult education program, and striving, alongside Pastor Carlson, to deepen our outreach and service efforts in our community.

There is much good work to do. The truth, of course, is that we do this work together. As the body of Christ—the crucified and risen body of Christ—we are called into a community of humility and servanthood in which our brother’s need and our sister’s joy become our own. In and through our worship of Christ Jesus, we are gathered, forgiven, nourished, healed, and poured out for each other and for the world. This is the work of a whole community—it is the baptized life.

Join the Christ Church Choir for Advent

Our church choir is always recruiting. We rehearse Thursday nights starting at 7:00pm, and rehearsals typically are just over an hour long.

We are a fun and talented group, and we love to welcome new singers. On the first Thursday of each month, we head to the atrium after rehearsal for snacks, drinks, and some social time together.

If you can't sing with us regularly, consider joining us for some special projects—ask one of the cantors for details.

You also could join the choir for the Advent/Christmas season, with rehearsal/worship commitments on December 5, 8, 12, 15, 19, 22, 24, and 25.

Annual Christmas Cookie Sale

The baking club is taking orders on Sunday mornings for Christmas cookies, which will be available for pickup after church on Sunday 15 December. Each box of four dozen assorted cookies is $10.

The money raised will be used to help feed the hungry in our neighborhood. Bakers are needed to help with the project, and baking ingredients or funds to purchase ingredients are welcome.

Contact Rita Schoenike at 651.681.9975 for more information on how to join us or support us in other ways as we get together, socialize, and bake for a good cause.

—Erik, a.k.a. Pastor Haaland
Thanks from the Music Series

The Vespers in Remembrance event on Sunday 10 November was a success in every way. Many people from our congregation and from the broader community attended and were treated to excellent music, lovely reading, and, most importantly, an opportunity to reflect on the Holocaust and its legacy today.

Conductors Gary Wolfman and Sally Messner led the Elm Ensemble expertly in performances of Bach’s Cantata 106 and Schütz’s motet *Aus der Tiefe*. A variety of lections from scripture and elsewhere were read by Leslie Nightingale, Pastor Carlson, Rev. John Manz, and Pastor Farlee. Pastor Erik Haaland offered beautiful prayers of the people.

A freewill offering was received for our community partner, Our Lady of Peace Home. Our Lady of Peace Home has ministered to members of Christ Church Lutheran for many years, so our community was grateful for this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to this wonderful organization.

Celebrate Joulu!

On Saturday 14 December our education wing will be alive with the sights, sounds, and smells of Christmas in Finland. Join the Finnish community for Joulu.

An elegant Christmas buffet created by Finnish chef Soile Anderson includes salmon, fresh ham, traditional salads, breads, casseroles, dessert, and more. Tickets available at eventbrite.com.

Other activities include Kauneimmat Joululaulut (most beautiful Christmas carols) sing-along service with music by Finnish children and Ameriikan Poijat brass ensemble; Tiernapojet (starboys), a musical based on the Magi story; a Christmas marketplace; Finnish films; children’s activities; and a wreath contest. A Finnish café will be open all day with soup, sandwiches, savory and sweet Christmas treats, pulla, rice pudding, coffee, and glögi.

Except for Christmas Buffet and café items, all activities are free. For more information visit www.jouolumn.org or call 651.270.9784.
Lake Wobegon Brass Band Concert Benefits Lutheran Social Services and Homeless Youth

For a number of years, Christ Church Lutheran has been preparing and serving eight meals each month for teens living at the Lutheran Social Services Safe House in Saint Paul. The Safe House is a thirty-day emergency shelter for teens and is only one part of a larger LSS project called Metro Homeless Youth.

A decrease in donations over the past year coupled with a potential decrease of federal funding for homeless youth has catastrophic implications for this program. In response to this need, on Saturday 7 December Christ Church will host a benefit concert to help fund Metro Homeless Youth. The concert features the Lake Wobegon Brass Band from Anoka. It promises to be an entertaining and uplifting concert for the Christmas season.

Admission to this concert is free. A freewill offering will be taken and a reception follows. Proceeds from the offering will be given to the LSS Metro Homeless Youth program.

Come hear great music and support LSS’s Metro Youth Program.

Lectionary Readings December 2013

Sunday 1 December
First Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 2:1-5
Psalm 122
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:36-44

Sunday 8 December
Second Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

Sunday 15 December
Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

Tuesday 24 December
Christmas Eve
Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-20

Wednesday 25 December
Christmas Day
Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-12
John 1:1-14

Sunday 29 December
Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

Upcoming Educational Forums
Sundays 11:15am

1 December
New and Exciting Gifts for Christ Church
Announcements, details, and discussion led by the church council to prepare for next week’s congregational meeting.

8 December
Congregational Meeting
After a special Saint Nicholas coffee fellowship, come back to the sanctuary for the congregational meeting, which includes election of officers.

15 December
Getting to Know Pastor Haaland
After a special Saint Lucia coffee fellowship, gather in the Luther Lounge for a time of question and answer with our new associate pastor, Erik Haaland.

22 December
Advent-Christmas Celebration
A celebration of the end of Advent and the coming of Christmas. Gather in the Luther Lounge after coffee fellowship.
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*** Lake Wobegon Brass Band Concert**
Saturday, December 7
7:00 pm
Benefits Lutheran Social Services
Metro Homeless Youth program
Free-will offering
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<th>Date</th>
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