Herzlich willkommen, Familie Voigt!

Pastor Helge Voigt comes to Christ Church as part of the Leipzig Exchange of the Minneapolis Area Synod. He has fifteen years of experience serving as a pastor, the last five years as Senior Pastor of five regional churches with 3,000 members in the city of Leipzig, Germany, called the Sophienkirchgemeinde (Sophia Church). There he oversees fourteen church employees including cemetery keepers, secretaries, teachers for children, and church musicians. Prior he served in rural Röderau, Saxony, where he was ordained two days before 11 September 2001.

Pastor Voigt’s education after high school includes time serving in the German army. But shortly after joining he was transferred to civilian service because he refused to use a gun. He worked in hospital maintenance and with senior citizens, taught mentally handicapped students, and worked a year as a cabinetmaker.

In 1991, Pastor Voigt followed his heart and enrolled in the seminary to study theology, continuing his studies at the University of Leipzig. His decision to become a Lutheran pastor has now been accepted by his parents who are retired physicists and also atheists. His father holds a PhD in atomic physics and his mother is a research physicist. His two older brothers have careers in the field of science.

Pastor Voigt’s interests include judo, Nordic walking, running, cooking, singing, playing the guitar, and writing poetry and short stories. With his wife he started dancing and enjoys it very much!

Anke Voigt was born and raised in Leipzig, Germany. She has one younger brother. Her father has a PhD in pharmacy and worked in that field for his career; he is now retired. Five years ago, Anke’s mother died—she taught art and German.

Lent at Christ Church

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 10 February. Come journey together for the forty days of Lent that take us to Easter. Our theme this year for Lent is “Bearing Fruit”—not as a heavy burden but as a great joy. Below are the steps I invite you into. And remember, we do not journey alone. There is the communion of saints, our fellow pilgrims. And there is Jesus, walking with us and going ahead of us—to Calvary and the cross, to the Garden and the Easter feast. Here is what you can do this Lent:

On the table at the back, pick up for your household a copy of Bearing Fruit, our devotion book for Lent 2016. Every day, make scripture reading, devotion, and prayer a part of your journey.

Come to Ash Wednesday worship on 10 February at 11:30am and 7:00pm. Begin Lent by confessing your sin, receiving ashes on your forehead, hearing the living
Christ Church Lutheran
3244 34th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55406
612.721.6611
mail@christchurchluth.org
www.christchurchluth.org

A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
A Reconciling in Christ Congregation | A National Historic Landmark

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

Worship
Sunday 9:30am, followed by fellowship

September through May:
Godly Play for children ages 3–12, 11:05–12:05
Educational forum 11:15am–12:15pm

Announcements

Retirees
There is no retirees gathering on 24 February. We urge you all to come instead to the 11:30am Lenten service, followed by soup lunch. Watch for details on upcoming events in Sunday bulletins.

Birth
Nora Katz was born on Tuesday 12 January to Hilary Gebauer and Marc Katz.

Helping Hands
January/February

Bob Farlee
Donna & Pete Gawreluk
Roger & Liz Gomoll
Paul Hanson
Kevin Kniebel & Anna Mason
Robyn & Marcus Nooney
Rita & Ken Schoenike
Cathy Sieving

If you are named in the helping hands chart, please help with Sunday morning coffee fellowship in the form of set up, clean up, or treats.
Contact Mary Bode or Joanne Seltz for details. mhbode@gmail.com | seltz4@aol.com

Staff
Pastors
Pastor Kristine Carlson
Pastor Erik Haaland
Pastor Helge Voigt

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
Will Stark
Secretary
Pat Baehler
Treasurer
Melody Pauling

Council Members
Marcus Nooney
Sarah Brunsvold
Luann Skrivseth
Matt Courtney
Dan Mueller
Anke studied in Dresden, Germany, for five years as an arts restoration specialist. Being self-employed, she has worked for churches and for individuals on pieces that were over 500 years old. In Leipzig, she is responsible for the graphic layout and photography of their regional church newsletter. She also enjoys teaching an after-school painting and drawing program for children. This is Anke’s third trip to America. She finds Americans very friendly and attentive, and the family feels they have very good friends here in the Twin Cities. A special moment for Anke recently was enjoying a meal of Campbell’s tomato soup and appreciating the label made famous by American pop artist Andy Warhol.

Anke and Helge met in high school and married in 1994 when they were both students. They have two daughters. Marie, 19, has completed high school and has worked and traveled in the United Kingdom. She is having a “gap year” experience while in the United States with her family. Social justice is a passion of hers. She has worked with Amnesty International and with resettling refugees in Leipzig.

Hannah is a ninth-grade student at Minnehaha Academy for this semester. She will celebrate her fifteenth birthday in the US in July.

The Voigt family is being welcomed as associate members of Christ Church Lutheran. They will retain their main congregation membership in Leipzig.

Here is Pastor Carlson’s mother, Marjorie, enjoying The Courier. She’s in Sacramento, California, for the winter with one of her daughters. She says the new German pastor looks like such a nice man and is looking forward to meeting him when she returns in the spring.
From the Church Council
January Council Meeting

We were very pleased to welcome Pastor Voigt among us after months spent anticipating his arrival from Germany. For devotions, Pastor Voigt led us in a reflection on the hymn “Now Thank We All Our God” (840), which was written by Martin Rinkhart, a pastor near Leipzig serving during the hardships of the Thirty Years War (1618–1648). The hymn continues to be very important to Lutherans in Saxony.

Ted Contag of Thrivent Financial was present to talk with us about the congregation’s investments. The market has recently been quite volatile, but over the long term our investments have fared reasonably well. We discussed how money for the Second Century Campaign might be invested until it is needed. A plan will be developed in the coming weeks.

We heard about conversations with a congregation in Northfield about jointly sponsoring the resettlement of a refugee family. The discussion is still in the preliminary stages, but the council was enthusiastic about investigating the possibilities.

We worked out our devotions schedule for the coming year and heard an update about the formation of the children’s ministry committee, which is underway. We heard a request from the property committee about replacing a malfunctioning refrigerator in the kitchen. The plan is to gather a bit more input from other parties involved in the use of this unit.

The council voted to allow Novel Energy Solutions to enter this congregation into a “lottery” through the State of Minnesota for the possibility to be chosen as a solar energy site. If we are successful, we can receive subsidies to install solar panels on the roof of the education wing. We would not be obligated to proceed, but this change would save Christ Church Lutheran a considerable amount of money and would lower our carbon footprint.

We heard reports from our pastors and from various bodies in the congregation. Much good work is happening here. If you have ideas or suggestions, please don’t hesitate to contact any member of the council.

Fellowship Dinner
February 20

Remember the song “Getting to Know You”? Here’s a chance to spend a relaxed evening over dinner with other Christ Church members and visitors—laughter, good food, great conversation. Our next fellowship dinner is Saturday 20 February at 6pm. If you can seat 6–8 people (including yourself/yourself) around a common table, please consider being a host. Hosts invite others assigned to join them, prepare the main entrée for dinner, and ask others to bring appetizer, salad, vegetable, or dessert to round out the meal. Couples (married/partnered), singles, members of Christ Church, and visitors can share in this fun opportunity to get to know one another.

The last Sunday to sign up is 14 February, and the sign-up sheet is in the atrium. Hosts will be notified of their guest list by Tuesday 16 February. Every effort will be made to consider driving distance when assigning people to a host’s home.

If you have questions or would like to sign up via email, please contact johndschmidt@usfamily.net with your name/s, home address, email address, phone number, and any dietary restrictions the hosts need to know about. Enjoy an evening out with your Christ Church Lutheran family.
“Who are we?” This is an interesting question any time. For my family and me, being new in the Minneapolis Area Synod and this congregation, and as we all approach the season of Lent, it is a very appropriate one. This question was posed recently as the visioning committee of Christ Church Lutheran began its work. It seems to me a wise way to start, the mark of a congregation that appreciates the gifts of God to everyone. Coming to Christ Church, we felt that openness to others’ gifts. Thank you for all the trust you have in newcomers, even those from the worldwide church of Christ.

“Who are we?” reminds me of Paul, who wrote: “Be transformed by the renewing of your minds” (Rom 12:2). Isn’t it wonderful that we, as new members, can also take part in this transformation? We love being here among all of you. Thank you all so much for the heartfelt, friendly welcome our family has received at Christ Church and in the Synod through the help of so many people. We are so pleased at your support (and also that of Mount Olive Church), the bright eyes we encounter, and we want you to know we do not take that for granted. For us, it is a gift in Christ.

Since arriving in the Twin Cities, we have even walked on water—well, ice, actually. Pastor Morris Wee (Pastor Carlson’s husband), who currently works in our German congregation in the church district of Leipzig, took us on the ice of Lake Calhoun (photo). It was a day when you could look through the ice like glass, discovering the strange underwater world. This is one of many fascinating situations we are grateful for. Thanks to all who prepared this pastoral exchange: Bishop Ann Svennungsen; Pastors Kristine Carlson and Morris Wee; Pastors Craig Peterson, Robert Farlee, Paul Rogers, Martina Helmer-Pham Xuan, Bill Russell, Joseph Crippen, Allen Dundek; the congregation council and congregation of Christ Church Lutheran and the vestry of Mount Olive with its President Lora Dundek.

We are facing Lent, a time when we are invited to give new attention to God, which means the renewing of our minds. Some of us will fast, receiving a more silent power. That can help bring transformation to our senses. My family has been renewed by being here together among you all as beloved people of God. Isn’t it wonderful that the question “Who are we?” cannot become boring to any who are renewing their minds? You can grow old and still discover something new in Christ. Along with all members, new and long-time, you can experience new answers to that question as a congregation. And I find it leads to a deeper understanding of the worldwide church, our common family.

The German-speaking Jewish philosopher Martin Buber expressed it well, short and to the point: “A person only becomes a Self through encountering the Other.” I deeply admire the power of this sentence, especially in my native language: “Der Mensch wird am Du zum Ich.” It means that we all renew our minds through contact with others. More than that, we develop our self through the woman, man, or child beside us. We can change in relation to each other. But we can also withstand difficulties. I believe this is where God is present. We newcomers are so curious, meeting people face to face. And we are so thankful for all the new we receive, encountering you here.

—Pastor Helge Voigt
Freddie, Tatum, and Hans with Pastor Haaland in the Luther Lounge singing Epiphany hymns from *ELW*.

Freddie abdicating his kingship to Elliot.  

Pastor Haaland leads us in blessing the sanctuary for a new year.
Upcoming Music Series Events
These events are free and to the public. All are welcome.

March 12, 7:30pm
The Rose Ensemble in Concert
American Roots: A Journey through Our Country’s Folk, Old-Time, and Gospel Traditions
In this celebration of almost 400 years of music, the Rose Ensemble takes us on a journey through the colonial dance halls of Boston, the quietude of nineteenth-century Shaker villages, and the iconic foot-stomping hills of Appalachia. The hymns and close harmonies that gave birth to bluegrass are mingled artfully with rousing anthems from the Civil War, social-protest songs, and a colorful tapestry of ballads, dances, and mouth-music from the British Isles. American Roots is a veritable musical evolution spread before the audience like a banquet.

March 20, 4:00pm
Cantata Vespers
Service of Evening Prayer with Cantata 82
The Bach Society of Minnesota performs Bach’s Cantata 82, Ich habe genug (I have enough)—a cantata composed for the festival known as the Presentation of our Lord (February 2). It reflects the story of the old man Simeon taking the baby Jesus into his arms and proclaiming, “Now Lord, you let your servant go in peace.” It is one of the best known of Bach’s cantatas. We will hear it beautifully performed within the liturgy of Evening Prayer. There is no charge—an offering will be taken for the outreach ministry of the church through music.
Monday, Leipzig churches joined forces to make a “chain of lights” around the center of Leipzig. This was the church’s response to the ongoing conflicts of opinion about Germany’s policy of welcoming refugees from Syria and elsewhere, conflicts that have occasionally broken out in violence, as happened on 12 December in Leipzig. More recently, on New Year’s Eve, there occurred in Cologne a series of attacks on women—rumored to have been perpetrated by refugees—during the chaos of partying and fireworks outside the train station. These events have given fuel to anti-immigration groups such as Legida (“Leipzigers against the Islamisation of the West”).

So the church organized a campaign to say Leipzig bleibt helle (“Leipzig remains bright”) as an affirmation of the government’s policy and the Christian church’s support of it. The audacious goal was to make a chain of light (people holding candles) along the entire ring road that surrounds central Leipzig, a distance of perhaps 4 miles. Moreover, the church publicized this action widely, including what the demonstration stands for. The text reads:

Again in 2016 we stand/speak up
• for the basic right of asylum
• for a Europe of open borders

Here is an article from Rev. Morrie Wee, the other part of the Leipzig Exchange, who is serving the Sophienkirchgemeinde (the Sophia Church)—Pastor Voigt’s congregation in Leipzig—during Pastor Voigt’s time with us. Rev. Wee tells about a peaceful demonstration the churches of Leipzig organized on Monday 11 January to bear witness to Germany and the world that Leipzig is welcoming to everyone—including the refugees.

Note the remarkable clarity of the church’s stance, and note especially the final bullet: the church stands for a means of responding to conflict, honoring everyone’s view. Often our congregations would rather pretend there is no conflict, or prefer only to broadcast their own view as the self-evident truth.

The weekly “Peace Prayers” at the Nikolai church, origin of the famous “peaceful revolution” that in 1989 brought down the Socialist Government of the DDR (East Germany), were packed on Monday night, with perhaps 1500 people. Outside, we were joined by many more as we processed through the city with candles and fanned out along the ring road. There were candles in the night as far as I could see in both directions. It was 38 degrees and raining. People stood in their places for an hour.

Then we processed back into the Thomaskirche, again perhaps 1500 people, to hear speeches of support and encouragement from the mayor, from two government officials from other cities, from three organizers of different pro-immigration groups, and from a former refugee from Iraq who emigrated here twenty years ago.

Not only was the demonstration’s stance and peaceful style celebrated but also the persistence of public demonstrations. For a full year, Legida has been holding noisy demonstrations every couple weeks. So the
pro-immigration groups have committed to parallel demonstrations every time, so that Legida is never the only voice in the news. (“We stand for a culture of democratic conflict.”)

I have said before that I came here thinking the church in Germany was nearly dead. But the church is a lively, powerful voice in this community, exerting tremendous influence for good in a tense and politically complex time. Christians are something like 15% of the population here but are providing powerful leadership that is respected by many more.

I have been asked several times why the Minneapolis Area Synod has an exchange program with Leipzig. Aren’t they doing just fine without us? Yes, they are. And we have a great deal to learn from this five-hundred-year-old church about being the church in a complex world and about providing Christian leadership in a diverse community.

(continued from page 1)

word, sharing our Lord’s supper. Come every Sunday to Eucharist worship at 9:30am. Stay on Sunday morning for Godly Play or the Forum—grow in faith, community, caring for others. Lenten Forums will focus on Bearing Fruit: Practices of Faith.

On the First Sunday in Lent, 14 February, if you are a child, during Sermon on the Steps, get a “Poor Box.” Bring it home, put it on the table where you eat your meals, and every day put in some money to help those who are hungry. Bring your “Poor Box” on Easter for the Offering. If you are a grown up, make your own “Poor Box” to fill during Lent and bring on Easter as part of your Offering.

On the Wednesdays in Lent (February 17, 24, March 2, 9, 16), come to midweek worship in the Chapel: Morning Prayer at 11:30am, Evening Prayer at 7:00pm. Join us for soup lunch after Morning Prayer, or come at 6:00pm for soup supper before Evening Prayer. The theme for our Lenten midweek worship is Bearing Fruit: The Lives of Saints. Each week we will reflect on the life of a saint listed in the commemorations in our Sunday bulletin Prayer Box—a rich companion to journey with and learn from in Lent.

Looking ahead to a Lenten event in March

On Saturday 5 March from 1 to 4pm, come to “The Home and What’s Holy: Nourishing Faith in the Home,” at Christ Church, with the wonderful Gertrud Mueller Nelson. This is for everyone who wants a richer faith life in their home life. See the top of page 3, and watch for publicity about this event. It is ecumenical, for everyone. Invite friends and neighbors. All are welcome.

I hope you will come. Your presence and participation gives life to all of us—and certainly to you. Make this a rich Lenten journey. Come walk with us at Christ Church.

—Pastor Kristine Carlson
**Lectionary Readings**  
*January 2016*

**Upcoming Educational Forums**  
*Sundays 11:15am*

### Sundays 11:15am

#### 7 February
**Transfiguration of Our Lord**
Exodus 34:29-35  
Psalm 99  
2 Corinthians 3:12—4:2  

#### 14 February
**Annual Meeting**
At this annual congregation meeting we will receive official 2015 reports, welcome new council members, and conduct any new congregational business. Christ Church members are encouraged to attend; all are welcome.

For Lent we begin a new forum series—Bearing Fruit: Practices of Faith. We’ll hear presentations and engage in discussion on the ways we practice our faith in our daily lives. Join us for discussions about eating, hospitality, prayer, and sharing rituals and stories of faith in the home.

#### 21 February
**Bearing Fruit: Eating with Jesus**  
Pastor Haaland
The Gospels are filled with stories of Jesus sharing food with others. Our weekly worship brings us to a Table, where we share bread and wine in Jesus’ name. Food is clearly central to our faith—and yet questions abound. What’s the connection between Sunday Eucharist and our daily meals? Is organic kale more holy than French fries? Come and explore these questions, and more!

#### 28 February
**Bearing Fruit: Hospitality**  
Pastor Carlson
Pastor Carlson leads a discussion of one of the central practices of Christian faith: hospitality. Our faith invites us to open our lives to others—to welcome the stranger and to share God’s gifts with mutuality and joy. What does this look like for us today?

#### February Birthdays

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<td>Transfiguration</td>
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