Welcome to the Light

A New Year — A New Transition Pastor

Welcome, Pastor Eva Jensen!

Transitions and Change: Keep Your Eyes on the Star

As God called to the wise ones in the East over 2,000 years ago, God calls to us: keep your eyes on the star and return home by another way. (Matthew 2:9-12)

It is an honor and a joy to be welcomed into your midst – to be invited into the light of Christ! On December 15, 2019, I began serving as your Lead Transition Pastor at Christ Church Lutheran, following a warm and inviting introduction on December 1st. We have already walked together for six weeks!

Transitions are times of change, often marked by loss and grief. Transitions also mark new beginnings – opportunities to explore, ask new questions, and perhaps see something new.

There are two purposes in transition ministry. The first is to simply step in and do what pastors do. At Christ Church that is to plan and lead worship, preach, provide pastoral care, and participate in a variety of administrative tasks, including working with staff, Church Council and committees.

The second purpose is to provide pastoral leadership related to transition, in preparation for calling the next lead pastor to serve among you. This involves working with the Call Committee and helping the congregation to be clear about its identity, strengths and challenges. It is also about exploring the opportunities before you and discerning your sense of God’s call to you as a congregation. How is God inviting you into new life as a community of faith? How do you envision sharing the light of Christ and opening your eyes to the light of Christ that shines — beckoning you to new ventures and relationships in a wounded world in need of healing and reconciliation?

At Christ Church, you began your intentional transition early in 2019 when Pastor Kristine Carlson announced her plan to retire in November 2019. The Church Council appointed a Vision Assessment Team to review, update and confirm the congregation’s vision, values and priorities for ministry. A Call Committee, elected by the congregation, has begun its work – faithfully seeking your perspectives and discerning the leadership gifts and skills that Christ Church needs in a Lead Pastor. They are committed to listening to you as they write the “Mission Site Profile” of Christ Church, and they will represent you well as they move forward to work with the Minneapolis Area Synod and consider candidates for call. They will continue to listen to you and one another through this transition time – attending to new ideas, understanding, and insights that emerge from your faithful living in transition.

I am delighted to be walking with you in this time as we continue to center ourselves in worship, live together in the authentic relationships of mutual respect and care that you share while affirming differences that enrich your life together. You are a congregation with an extraordinary number of gifted leaders with a variety of skills and experiences that make it possible to be expansive in creativity, service and imagination.

You are willing to take risks – committing to an expansion of staff who complement and support each other in distinct roles. You invest in care for your beautiful historic building while opening space to welcome and serve community. You are generous in responding to the needs of neighbors and the larger community and world in which we live, working collaboratively with partner organizations.

I have experienced your love of God, selves, and neighbors; as well as your genuine and engaging hospitality and welcome.

In this time of transition we will continue to celebrate God’s incarnate love among us. Like the magi, we will keep our eyes focused on the star that leads us to the Risen Christ who comes to us in many and varied ways, revealing God’s love and passion in the world. Transformed by that love we will be guided home by a new way as God in Christ calls to us anew, to ventures of which we cannot see the ending … promising to be with us in the adventure.

I look forward to continuing the journey with you.

Pastor Eva Jensen

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February Birthdays

2/1 Matthew Kunnari
2/5 Ernie Caltvedt
2/6 Noah Niemann
2/11 Sharon Mueller
2/14 David Kutzbach
2/15 Gary Gustafson, Jeff Jacobson
2/23 Robert Farlee
2/24 Kevin Kniebel
2/26 Bob Victorin-Vangerud, David Moen

If you are not named above, and should be, or your birthdate is inaccurate, please call the church office 612.721.6611

Helping Hands for February

January/February

-Dawn Dankers & Michelle Hovey
-Donna & Pete Gawreluk
-Nick Goddard
-Liz & Roger Gomoll
-Tim Hokkanen
-Anna Mason & Kevin Kniebel
-robyn & Marcus Nooney
-Claire Rosenfrisk
-Rita & Ken Schoenike
-Susan & Levi Stugel-meyer
-Cathy Sieving
-Karen Woestehoff

All church members are part of Helping Hands. You may be asked to help with Sunday Coffee and hospitality-related events as needed. Mary Bode is the coordinator. Call the church office to connect with her.

Save the date for the 2020 Annual Meeting!

You won’t want to miss the year’s biggest congregation meeting! Come after worship on February 16 as we plan the life of our church in 2020! Annual reports will be emailed on February 7, and hard copies will be available on Sunday, February 9.

Daniel Holmgren and Colin Watkins connecting over coffee and treats after Sunday worship
From the Treasurer — Financial Update

Christ Church financial news for 2019 is good! Member giving was better than expected. Expenses were much less than budgeted, since we were without an Office Administrator for six weeks, and also without a lead pastor for a brief period. Heating and electric costs were also lower than they might have been. Because of these savings, we were able to balance the budget by taking less than $2,000 of the $25,000 we had budgeted to take from the Staffing trust. The funds remaining in the Staffing trust are likely to help us during the transition year we have ahead of us. Thank you for your faithful financial support of Christ Church Lutheran!

Personnel News

Chuck Merrell, longtime Christ Church custodian, has announced his resignation. Chuck and his wife, Kristy, are planning to relocate to Duluth to be nearer to family. Anticipating a spring conclusion of service, the Executive Committee and pastors are working with Chuck to develop a transition plan and arrange an occasion to say farewell to him and give thanks for his years of employment and service at Christ Church. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

Update for February

Melody Pauling, Treasurer, reflected upon the polarizations in the world today. She read from Jim Wallis’ book, *Christ in Crisis*, in which Christians are encouraged to challenge the strife in our lives by re-focusing on Jesus’ guidance. While there may appear to be divisions among us, as Christians we believe that much more brings us together. She concluded with a prayer thanking God for mercy and in hope of unity.

The January meeting was our last of Council’s 2019 cycle. Following tradition, we took time to honor the contributions of outgoing members and welcome new members. Rachel Slater will be stepping away from Council, after serving two years. We are grateful for her fine leadership and her service as Secretary in the last year. Elena Hilding and Kevin Olsen will join the Council as at-large members.

For the financial report, Melody Pauling gave preliminary estimates for 2019 year-end financials. Final numbers will be available for the congregation in the Annual Report. The report will be available one week in advance of the Annual Meeting, which the Council voted to call for February 16. A letter will be sent to voting members to announce the meeting and agenda.

Pastoral Acts

Wedding, Pastor Haaland, Presiding Minister

Ina Ziegler & Marina Gorsuch, January 11 at Theodore Wirth Park

Congratulations, Marina and Ina Gorzig!

Book Discussion Group

The Christ Church book group has chosen a next book for discussion: *The Good Earth*, by Pearl S. Buck. The *Good Earth* was published in 1931 and dramatizes family life in a Chinese village in the early 20th century. It was the best-selling novel in the United States in both 1931 and 1932, won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1932, and was influential in Buck’s winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938. All are welcome to come to a thoughtful, open-hearted discussion of this classic and surprising work of literature on Saturday, March 7, at 10:00 a.m. in the Concordia Room.

From the Church Council

From the Treasurer — Financial Update

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Update from the Call Committee

We have been meeting weekly and have been focusing on gathering information to complete the ELCA’s Ministry Site Profile. We met with Pastor Haaland, Pastor Farlee and Pastor Seltz to hear their thoughts and insights. We also held an adult forum on January 12 which was well attended. During the forum, we explained the call process and then broke into small groups for lively discussions on the gifts we believe to be essential for the new pastor from a list in the Site Profile. There was great diversity of opinion among congregation members but also some areas where consensus emerged. The committee appreciates everyone’s input which will make our task of selecting the “top five” much easier. This was for just one section of many in the Ministry Site Profile and did not include many areas we believe to be vital, such as worship, which will be addressed in other areas of the profile.

Upcoming events:

February 9, Adult Forum – We plan to present a draft of the Ministry Site Profile before submission to the ELCA.

March 15, Adult Forum – Congregational Conversation with Bishop Ann Svennungsen.

Easter Memorial Garden

You can order plants to beautifully decorate our sanctuary for Easter. Forms are included in the Courier email, and will be in bulletins and on the back table in the sanctuary throughout the month of February. Easter lilies, mums, hyacinth, pansy bowls, hydrangeas and azaleas are available to order.

B.A.S.I.C.

Brothers And Sisters In Christ

Join B.A.S.I.C. on Wednesday, February 26 for the Ash Wednesday worship service at 11:00 a.m., followed by a potluck lunch together in the Concordia Room.

Mardi Gras Jazz Concert, February 23

Mardi Gras Jazz Concert

FREE!
Sunday, February 23, 2020
3:00 p.m.

Christ Church Lutheran
3244 34th Avenue South, Minneapolis

Bill Simenson
and his
Longfellow Jazz All-Stars

Free will offering will benefit the programs of Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota’s Refugee Resettlement

Ash Wednesday and Lent Look-Ahead

This year, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 26 and extends to Maundy Thursday, April 9.

The season of Lent began in the early centuries of the church as a time to prepare for baptism. Martin Luther taught that baptism isn’t a one-time event, but something we turn to every day of our lives. As we, together, approach this time of baptismal renewal, please save the following dates for worship opportunities at Christ Church.

Ash Wednesday, February 26
Holy Communion with Impostion of Ashes, 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Sundays in Lent, March 1—April 5
Worship with Holy Communion, 9:30 a.m.

Midweek Worship
Wednesdays March 4—April 1, 7:00 p.m.
CHRISTMAS COOKIE BOX UPDATE
Thanks to the generosity of our cookie bakers, those who bought cookie boxes, and those who donated supplies and money, a check for $1,100.00 was sent to our local South Minneapolis Meals on Wheels program!

Seventeen volunteers worked over 290 hours to make 23 different kinds of cookies, totaling over 4200 cookies for 66 boxes. Extra thanks to those who supported our Meals on Wheels project with their donations.

This year’s cookie project was again sponsored by Thrivent Financial through their Thrivent Action Teams program.

Roosevelt High School Operation Holiday Basket Update
From Christol Schultz, RHS Public Relations Coordinator
Dear Christ Church:
Thank you SO much for your donation to the 49th annual Operation Holiday Basket. . . . Your donation helped us make 300 baskets! 150 alumni and student volunteers filled those baskets with 27 food items, a bag of potatoes and a 15-lb. turkey, and delivered them on December 20. Those baskets go to families and veterans in our attendance area and to date we’ve fed over 13,000! . . . Thank you again for being part of our amazing tradition!

Endowment Committee Update
On Christmas Eve, we received a very generous gift for the CCL Endowment Fund from former members Jeff and Sarah Zutz. The Zutzes moved to Wisconsin more than 30 years ago, but their fondness for Christ Church remains strong. This surprise gift is a testament to the lasting impact that our church community has on those who have been part of it. By donating to the Endowment Fund, the Zutzes are helping to ensure the strength of that community long into the future. A gifted architect, Jeff previously gave Christ Church another lasting gift by designing our portable altar. Jeff and Sarah are now members of Advent Lutheran Church in Madison, WI. Jeff is President & CEO of Flad Architects and Sarah works in IT at Epic Systems.

Stationery Group Update
The Stationery Group ushered in the holiday season with a luncheon, together with the Christmas Cookie Bakers, church staff, and other special guests. It was a lovely event during which we thanked Phyllis Dunstone for her years of service as the group’s coordinator, our tatters Pat (Dunstone) Allar & JungAh (Peters) Sombke, fabric cutter Jana Gould, as well as Laurel Jacobson & Chuck Merrell for their help with publicity and custodial setup. Our group is growing and includes several two- and three-generation members. There’s a place for you, too, even if your skills, interests, or schedules differ from our monthly 10:00-Noon crafting sessions. Contact Stephanie Gustafson for more information. New for 2020: For the first time in over a decade, we have increased our prices to help our fundraising efforts for several worthy causes. $1.50 per card or $10.00 for a package of 7 cards. See our newest cards for winter and winter Holidays! Remember, our cards are available for purchase throughout the year. If the stationery table is not out on a Sunday, near the yellow classroom of the Education Building, you can still order cards! Contact any Stationery Group member or Stephanie Gustafson (612.724.6206 or email: stephsaddress@att.net).

An invitation to join the Weaving Group on February 9
Interested in weaving or just want to hang out with fun, creative people? Come to the Weaving Room (below the sanctuary, next to the choir room) on Sunday, February 9 during the fellowship time. We will host an informational meeting about the Christ Church Weaving Group where you can see weavings up close, view the looms we use and learn about more opportunities for beginning and intermediate weavers. If you have questions, please contact Kevin Olsen at 612.554.5401 or klolsen2@gmail.com.
Images from Advent, Christmas and Epiphany

1. Intergenerational Advent Fair, December 1

2. “Las Posadas” Advent procession through Powderhorn Park to St. Paul’s Lutheran Church

3. Christmas Pageant, December 22

4. Epiphany Party, January 5

The lovely Christ Church courtyard in winter
Jesus said, “Let the children come!”

At Christ Church Lutheran, we welcome children and their families to the font, to the table, and to worship.

A recap of all the beautiful Advent, Christmas and Epiphany events with kids and families, and fun stuff to come!

The photos to the left beautifully illustrate the many events that occurred as we marked Advent, depicted the Christmas story, and celebrated Epiphany and the arrival of the Magi. All ages came together as the family of Christ!

Intergenerational Advent Fair: Sunday, December 1
After church, we made papier-mâché stars with local artist Sandy Spieler. The stars were used at the “Las Posadas” Advent procession at Powderhorn Park as well as at the Epiphany Party (described below). We also had treats and made paper chain Advent Calendars to bring home and count down the days until Christmas. (See photo montage #1)

Intergenerational Christmas Pageant: Sunday, December 22
Marking the transition from Advent to Christmas, on the Fourth Sunday of Advent we acted out the story of the birth of Christ — from Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem, to the angels appearing to the shepherds, to the arrival of the Magi. It was all ages, just like the scene was at Jesus’ birth! (See photo montage #3)

Epiphany Party: Sunday, January 5
On the eve of Epiphany, we gathered in the Education Building for a party! We made colorful stars, decorated manger-scene cookies, dressed up like the Magi, ate good food, sang Epiphany hymns, and processed around the sanctuary, blessing our worshiping space with song and prayer. (See photo montage #4)

Our Winter Warmer event in February will look a bit different than Winter Warmers that have happened on Saturday morning. Join us for a Winter Warmer: Evening Edition on Friday, February 28th from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. We will have time to run around in the gym before eating pizza and watching a family-friendly movie. All are welcome!

February Baptismal Birthdays
According to Tyler’s records, there are no baptismal birthdays to celebrate in the month of February. If you know this to be incorrect, send him an email at childrensministry@christchurchluth.org so he can correct the error!

Children’s Ministry Director Tyler has a new email address!
Did you notice in the February Baptismal Birthday article that Tyler has a brand-new email address? You can now reach him at childrensministry@christchurchluth.org. Send him a message!

Save the Dates...
February 26 … Ash Wednesday
February 28 … Winter Warmer: Evening Edition
March 28 … Saturday Winter Warmer
Remembering Reverend Herbert Chilstrom, First Bishop of the ELCA

Rev. Herbert Chilstrom, 88, died Jan. 19 at his home in Green Valley, AZ. He was born in Litchfield, MN, on Oct. 18, 1931. He is survived by his wife, Corinne, also a Lutheran pastor; his daughter and son; and four sisters. Rev. Chilstrom completed academic degrees at Augsburg University, Augsburg Seminary, the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Princeton Seminary, and New York University, where he earned a doctor of education degree. He served Lutheran congregations in Pelican Rapids, Elizabeth, and St. Peter, MN. He was professor and dean at Luther College in Teaneck, NJ, from 1962 to 1970. In 1976 he was elected bishop of the Minnesota Synod of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA). At the 1987 merger that created the 5.2-million-member ELCA, he was elected the first presiding bishop. For further information, go to https://elca.org/News-and-Events/8020.