



Our Family

Hope Lutheran Monthly Newsletter

January 2024

Volume 14 No. 01

Pastor's Message

We come to the beginning of a new year, even though the Church calendar begins the new year with the start of Advent. But there is still a major move forward in the Church year during January. Epiphany marks the coming of the Magi after the birth of Christ and it also represents the celebration of the baptism of Jesus at the start of his ministry. Epiphany looks to both events, which occur around thirty years apart. For this reason, Epiphany drives us forward from the nativity of Jesus into the ministry of Jesus. Hope Lutheran Church is close to doing the same. We also have some things brewing to launch us from our reflection on Christ's nativity toward ministry in Victoria.

We have talked about our Hope-full Future plans a lot this past year, trying to discern which way to move forward as a congregation. By the end of January, we will have a specialized meeting to better inform our decision making. The Parish Planning Council has been researching options on how to proceed with or without our current building. Regardless of what is decided, this will be a major factor in how Hope Lutheran ministers to Victoria in Christ's name. One of the local projects we had recently was contributing 20 gift bags to Street Hope Victoria (interdenominational street ministry) so the homeless in our community might have something nice this Christmas. I was more than pleasantly surprised at the generosity of our

congregation, and I hope we contribute more to the physical and spiritual wellbeing of our city in the future. This is in addition to things like the sewing group regularly putting together heart pillows for hospital patients and the cookie walk to our less mobile members.

Something new that I am helping with is leading prayer services at Amica Jubilee House, a new retirement facility at Fort St. and Richmond Rd. I led the first service on Dec 23 with seven of the residents. Only a small fraction of the building is occupied, and it will take time before the facility is filled. So far, I am the only clergy offering to lead services there and will likely be helping once a month with my next service scheduled for Jan 27. This could be an opportunity for our congregation to go beyond our building by assisting residents in wheelchairs to attend or possibly providing music.

Another new endeavor in our ministry is starting up a few new groups/Bible studies at the church. I have talked with a couple people who expressed interest in starting new groups. Concrete plans were deferred to after Christmas. And our experiences this past year have reinforced the truth that we need regular times of fellowship for our congregation. It helps us come together and be the body of Christ, not just in worship, but by getting to know one another and building each other up.

Looking forward to the upcoming year,
Pastor Adam Chandler

Music Notes



Our choirs will start up mid-January and we all look forward to learning new music for our services!

If you are wanting to join the CHIME CHOIR: rehearsals are Saturdays 3 - 4 pm.

If you are wanting to join BELLE VOCI CHOIR: rehearsals are Thursdays 3 - 4 pm.

You are also welcome to join in with Linda, Mel and Ian who support the HYMN SINGING on the Sunday Services.

All are welcome!

On Saturday, January 6th at 3 pm, we are hosting another REPOSE RECITAL. The theme of this recital is 'Carols for the Ukraine!' This is a wonderful chance to sing some beloved carols, and to help mission work for the Ukraine as they continue in a state of war that has devastated their homeland. Bring your family and friends to attend 30 minutes of carols and meditative music that reflects the light of Epiphany and its message of hope. There will be some goodies provided for after the recital for all to enjoy.

Many thanks to all our church musicians who made our Advent and Christmas Services so very special.

Blessings to all,
Barb



LWML-C News



Let's welcome 2024 with a grateful heart.

December, the month for giving, was indeed a busy month for LWMLers. It was the month when the handy work of our members shone the light of Christ to the most vulnerable for "whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done." Proverbs 1:17 NIV

These women are not seeking payback from the Lord, instead they are doing it as an expression of love, an act of service to the Lord.

When quilts are sewn to comfort babies, lap robes to comfort the elderly, or towels provided to those seeking a shower it is done to "the least of these".

Knitting toques, mittens, scarves, and socks to comfort the most vulnerable—the homeless—it is done to "the least of these"; it is done to the Lord, every bit freely given to shine the face of Christ.

It was my privilege to deliver these handmade items to seven different groups and to witness firsthand the joy in their faces.





God's Three R's: Refresh, Renew, and Restore

Refresh or "Cleanse me from my sin," "Renew a right spirit within me," and "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation," is our plea as was King David's in Psalm 51:1-12. "Create in me a clean heart, oh God." God tells us that we are new every morning. Sometimes, I do not feel that way. At times, my heart feels dark with despair or grief. It comes from the loss of a loved one, a fear of being alone, or an unexpected change in my life that seems to be for the worse.

We know that we are to trust the Lord, that He will not give us any more than we can handle, and that He is by our side listening, but sometimes doubt creeps into our hearts and the Light of Christ is overshadowed. God's Words remind us that we need to look to Christ and pray to Him for direction and forgiveness. This forgiveness clears away the hurt and allows us to renew our connection with Him and with our sisters and brothers, because only by the grace of God, are we comforted and reaffirmed in our faith.

Refreshed by forgiveness, God puts us in a "right spirit" to see that each day is a gift, a gift of life on this earth. Each dawn is an opportunity to savour the joy of God's world. It can be a time to uplift others; a time to share what we have and others do not. God's love refreshes us. "He gives power to the faint... they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles" Isaiah 40:29-31 He sets our life in a "right" order.

With the cloud of guilt cleared away, we can now see God's joy and love. As we experience this, He gives us a way to show this love to

Angus Reid polled Canadians with their response to the question if you could sum up the year 2023 in one word what would it be? "Grateful" was the winner! I too echo this response. I am grateful to Pastor Chandler for leading our monthly Bible study, am grateful for each society member and for your faithfulness and willingness to share your time and talents, and most of all to our heavenly Father for sending His only son to be our redeemer.

Humbly In His Service.
Deborah



people around us. "Do good to Zion in your good pleasure" Psalm 51:18.

Now, refreshed, renewed, and restored, we are to shine God's Light. "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" Matthew 5:16.

Your sister in Christ
Louise

No, Never Alone

"Yet, I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand." Psalm 73:23

Just because we feel lonely doesn't mean we are alone. Even when it looks like we're the only one in the room, God promises He's there with us. There will be times though, when we need companionship, conversation, or a warm hug, God has placed that longing in us as well. He wants us to reach out to his other children. When we feel that way, we can ask God to bring to mind others who may need our companionship. Then, we pray for the courage to connect by text, phone call, email, or in person and start up a conversation. When we alleviate someone else's loneliness, we almost always alleviate our own.

God, please provide the energy and resolve I need to reach out to others when I feel alone. Thanks for being here with me, Amen.

(Source: Still Moments in the Presence of God: Reflections on His Promises to you, Bethany House)

Grow
in Christ

Christmas Day Potluck

Christmas Day worship service was followed by a potluck luncheon, a reading of the Christmas story by Pastor and a carol sing led by Laura Gibson. Thanks and blessings to all who contributed help, food, and fellowship.



Christmas Day Potluck

Street Hope Victoria

Street Hope were pleased with our generosity of 20 cloth bags filled with toiletries, snacks, socks, mitts, and hats given to be distributed to those in need just before Christmas. They expressed their thanks with these words in a card, which is posted on the bulletin board: "Dear friends at Hope, Merry Christmas from Street Hope Victoria! As the end of the year draws near, we want to thank you for your support. It is because of you that we are able to share the love of Jesus with those in our community who are vulnerable and marginalized. We are truly grateful for your partnership. Tim".



Some Thoughts on Ageing

In the culture we live in, ageing is almost a taboo subject, though the truism that we all age from the day we were born is inescapable.

Still, most people push that fact aside, at least until retirement looms. Our medical/pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries do their best to make any signs of ageing disappear or less obvious. The emphasis is on keeping you alive and lengthen the lifespan, rather than on maintaining or improving quality of life. In the former aim we have succeeded; people here now live at least a generation longer than at Luther's time, when

reaching 70 was exceptional. Now, living to age 90 is common, and even to 100 is not unheard of. But God has set a limit of 120 years (Genesis 6:3), which we may reach in a couple of centuries...

But what about quality of life? Quite naturally, as we get older, we develop not only more aches and pains but also long-term problems. Thus, the older the people, the more health care is needed. At the same time, people now marry (if they do at all) later and have fewer children, if any (Canada now is at barely 1.5, vs the replacement rate of 2.1). That results in greater demand yet fewer workers, which can only be reduced by raising the retirement age (which economists favour but politicians reject) and/or increasing immigration (immigrants tend to be young and their families larger).

That may take care of the numbers, but let's look at the individual. What can we do to stave off the effects of old age? In the "good old days", often three generations lived together, effectively avoiding loneliness—a common problem today. Few now can share growing up or life's concerns with granny or grandpa; they are separated in so-called homes, their experience and counsel wasted. Yet, the generational interaction, even its mere presence, is beneficial at all levels, including old folks, who can feel (and are) useful. Today's lone youngsters sitting in front of a screen or playing virtual games cannot develop a feeling of community, let alone prepare for what life may be like a few decades hence.

It is generally accepted that our well-being in later years is the result of three factors: our genes, our life/work environment, and our lifestyle (not to mention God's will, which of course is not known to us). Of the above three, only the last one is one we have some control

over; the genes are a given, and the choice where we will live and work is often quite limited. Even lifestyle is often determined well into adulthood by how and where we grew up. Meanwhile, the shift from blue-collar to white-collar, from working physically to some (automated) machinery has continued. Thus, more and more people sit more and move less, even at home. Likewise, home-cooking has largely given way to commercially prepared/canned foods, much of which contains too much salt or sugar (not to mention chemicals) for our health or even taste. Collectively we eat too much of that—and too much relative to our physical activity—rather than fresh local produce, admittedly expensive but worth it in the long run. In general, we need to go outside more, away from city noise and traffic fumes, slow down and enjoy nature and the outdoors, as our forebears did.

It is important to have something useful and satisfying to do, something you like and can still do; remaining active is so important in retired life. And yes, by all means, enjoy all good things (in moderation). In summary then, a reasonably active life with satisfying little tasks, coupled with relaxation in good company and proper food should make ageing quite enduring—all based on faith in God, right up to the last leg in our final journey.

Paul Loofs

***God's Blessings to Everyone
with January Birthdays!***



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Newsletter Submissions Wanted!

Please send your articles, updates, photos, stories, memories, artwork... any and every thing to do with Hope Lutheran (and our faith) to helcnewsletter@gmail.com Hard copy submissions can be left in the designated mailbox right of the members' mailboxes.

Submissions are due the 25th of each month.

Thank You and God Bless,
Nicole

Children's Corner and For Those Young at Heart

Why was it so important for Jesus to be born as a man?

Jesus had a big job ahead of Him when He was born! If you really think about it, Jesus was born to die on the cross to pay for the sins of the whole world. But before He died, He lived a perfect life under God's Law. That means that during His entire life, Jesus never sinned. Not even once! As a man, Jesus took the place of mankind under the Law and fulfilled it. That means that for every time we failed to keep the Law, Christ succeeded!



Why was it important for Jesus to be true God?

It would take more than an ordinary man to suffer and die on the cross to pay for the sins of the whole world. Jesus had to be true God so that He could live a perfect life and fulfill the requirements of the Law, die a perfect death on the cross, and rise from the dead victorious over sin, death and the devil! All of this He did in obedience to the Father and out of complete and total love for us. Through faith, the Holy Spirit delivers all of the great things Jesus won for us in His death and resurrection!

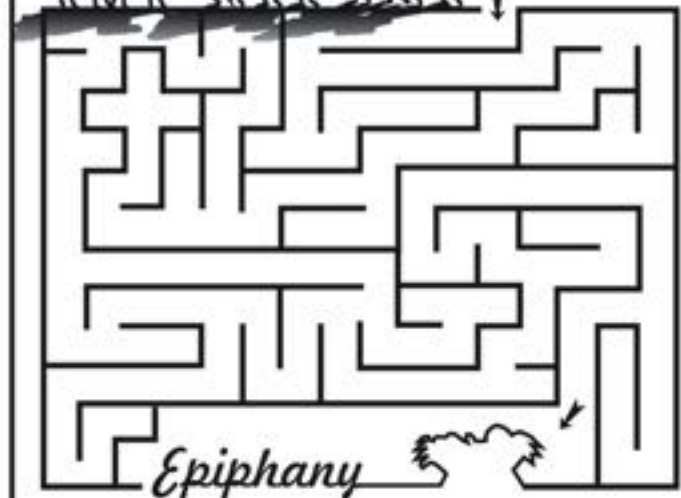


Review the Ten Commandments with your child (Ex. 20:1-17). Discuss the commandments and be sure to point out just how often we fail to keep them. Remind your child that because of Christ's perfect sacrifice on the cross, in faith we have the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.

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Epiphany, Mt 2:1-12

Three wise men were searching for Jesus. They traveled from very far away to meet him. They followed a star and finally found him in Bethlehem. They adored him and gave him special gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. What gift would you like to give to Jesus this year?



Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
31 1 st Sunday a. Christmas New Year's Eve	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY Pastor is Away (Jan. 1-5)	2	3  Laura Frandsen Liliane Plante	4  Emerson Starling	5  Fisher Novakovics	6 10:00am Confirmation 11:00am Youth Group Meeting 3:00pm REPOSE  EIPHANY Linda Russell
7 Epiphany 10:30am Worship 12:30pm Lunch with Pastor	8	9 10:00 am Bible Study	10	11 1:00 pm Sewing Group 3:00pm Belle Voci	12	13 10:00am Confirmation 1:30pm Worship Comm. Meeting 3:00 pm Chimes Practice
14 2 nd Sunday after the Epiphany 10:30am Worship	15  Julie Lind	16 10:00 am Bible Study	17	18 1:00 pm Sewing Group 3:00pm Belle Voci	19  David Gibson	20 10:00am Confirmation 3:00 pm Chimes Practice
21 3 rd Sunday after the Epiphany 10:30am Worship	22	23 10:00 am Bible Study	24 6:15pm PPC Meeting	25 12:00 pm LWML Lunch & Learn 3:00pm Belle Voci	26	27 10:00am Confirmation 3:00 pm Chimes Practice
28 4 th Sunday after the Epiphany 10:30am Worship Congregation Meeting after Service	29	30 10:00 am Bible Study	31  Arlene Dill	1 1:00 pm Sewing Group 3:00pm Belle Voci	2	3 10:00am Confirmation 3:00 pm Chimes Practice
	Notes	ELDERS: Michael Rumsch (250-588-0776) Bert Weiss (250-382-2612) Fred Smale (250-652-9396) Elder of the Month: Fred Smale		Altar Guild: Deborah Gruben Theodora Henry Eleanor Murdoch Louise Rushton		