

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Newsletter

December 2017

104 West Main Street, Stafford Springs, Connecticut 06076



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Advent is a unique time in the life of the Church. It is a time when we say both “already” and “not yet.” Advent is usually thought of as a season of preparation for Christmas. In earlier years, Advent bore a striking similarity to Lent. Violet vestments were worn, and Christians dedicated themselves to fasting, prayer, and charity. Indeed, both are seasons of preparation. In Lent, new believers prepare for baptism, and the baptized prepare to remember and relive their baptism. In Advent, Christians prepare for the coming of King Jesus. But this preparation, like that of Lent, doesn’t simply prepare us to remember something that happened once 2000 years ago, but something that happens still.

During Advent we look forward to Christ’s three-fold coming. Jesus comes to us as a baby in Bethlehem to be our Savior, He comes to us in the Sacrament of Holy Communion to be our Strength, and He will come again at the Last Day to be our Judge. By remembering these things together, we confess that this Jesus, true God and true Man, “is the same *yesterday, today, and forever*” (Hebrews 13:8). Jesus came at yesterday in Bethlehem, He comes today in the Sacrament of the Altar, and when He comes tomorrow, at the Last Day, he will reign forever.

And so the common thread we find throughout each theme of Advent is the cry of the Church, “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20). The word Advent, in fact means, “Coming.” And so this is the season in which the Church not only remembers her King’s appearing, but also asks that He come again, to rule in our hearts and reign over all the earth at the Last Day. In the Lord’s Prayer, we pray regularly, “Thy Kingdom Come.” It is this simple petition that summarizes the spirit of our preparations. When we say, “Thy Kingdom come,” what is it we mean? In Luther’s Small Catechism, he explains, “The Kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.” This means that we are praying that God’s Kingdom,

which was inaugurated by His first coming, might be real to us in our lives. That we might be driven and motivated by our invisible life and citizenship in the Heavenly Kingdom, so that we might look forward to the day when God's Kingdom is revealed for the eyes of all to see. We remember that this Kingdom, like this Jesus, is *for us*.

Until that Last Day, we pray that God's Kingdom might be made manifest—palpable, tangible, visible—in us and through us. And this often means that when we pray, “Thy Kingdom come!” we are praying against our own will. We learn to follow Jesus' example and say, “not my will, but yours be done,” and allow God to be the Sovereign over our heart, over our lives, and over all that is ours. God's Kingdom comes today when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and finally in eternity.

In this way our hearts prepare room for the Child in the manger—when we find in that cradle our King and our greatest treasure, and when we so love the life and world He brings, that our whole life become a prayer saying, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

Peace and joy this season,

Pastor Tom



Come Caroling, And Spread The Joy!!! Sunday December 17th 1PM

Bethlehem in Prophecy and a Visitation into my Heart - By Michael Welch



Bethlehem (Ephratah) is first mentioned in the book of Genesis when Jacob stops there so his wife Rachel can give birth to Benjamin and she dies delivering her son. Jacob buries her there and erects a pillar on her grave. This spot is well known to this day. He then moves on a little and camps near the tower of Edar. Transliteration migdal-eder, the tower of the flock.(Gen. 35) Next we move to Micah, who prophesies the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem, he says *“and thou O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem. Now why dost you cry aloud? Is there no king in thee? Is thy counselor perished? For pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail.”*(Micah 4:8) *“But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel whose going forth have been from old, from everlasting “*(Micah 5:2)

I have been blessed to have visited The Church Of the Nativity and each time I visit this traditional place of our Saviors birth I have been overcome with emotion. I say traditional because no one knows for sure where in Bethlehem He was born. The basilica has stood for almost 1,800 years and survived the ravages of time. This was a venerated place at the end of the first century, so the Emperor built a temple to Adonis upon the site, which marked its location for Queen Helena to build the Basilica. In the seventh century the Persians invaded the land and destroyed all the churches except this one. Upon entering they saw mosaics depicting three men in Persian dress worshipping a child and withdrew from the place leaving it intact. The church has survived invasion upon invasion, war upon war and held hostage by Palestinians just a few years ago for 45 days. Artifacts were destroyed and walls defecated upon.



Approaching the church from Manger Square crowds are pressing towards the entrance as vendors form blockades slowing our movement, shouting “one dollar one dollar, three for ten dollars, buy my postcards!”. Armed Palestinians with automatic rifles surveil the throng below from their perches on the roof top of the monastery to the right. Palestinian Tourist Police are half

heartedly breaking up the vendor blockades so that we can pass. While the commercialism so familiar here in the U.S. surrounds the Church of the Nativity. I am profoundly struck by the peace that envelops me upon entering this place, sanctified by the prayers and offerings of tens



of millions of pilgrims who have visited before me. Their repentant prayers raising up to the LORD as incense. Their prayers have hallowed it. The entrance was lowered to prevent invaders from riding into the church on horseback causing me to bow when entering. I immediately smell the incense of centuries illuminated by shafts of light from the rows of windows high up at the roof line. The columns that separate the quarters of the church have served as touchstones for millions of worshippers and are impregnated with the oils from their hands, creating a golden patina upon them, reflecting a warm glow through out the church inviting me to enter into His peace. Proceeding to right of the icon clustered sanctuary, which is built above the grotto I wait patiently in the soft light of prayer candles to descend into the chapel, as chanting and Hallelujahs spring forth in a multitude of languages, giving me goose bumps. Entering the Grotto there is a 14 pointed silver star marking the spot of our LORD’s birth and strains of Silent Night ring out in the native tongues of worshipers. My spirit is quickened. Bathed in forgiveness I worship. After reflection and prayer I ascend again

carrying within me an overwhelming sense of joy and hope into the world. I feel His peace within me. We exit the church into the hustle and bustle of the market place surrounding the church. Once again hearing the venders calls "one dollar one dollar, three for ten dollars" and I seemed to pass thru them as though I were invisible. I board the bus back to Jerusalem. The door closes, the bus begins to move and I drift off and I awake as we reach the hotel. At dinner that night amongst the chatter and excitement of my friends I am quiet. Their voices fade into the background. I escape to a corner of the lounge, sitting in solitude, sipping a glass of wine meditating on the events of the day and how my heart had been touched. I wondered how I could possibly express my experience to others.

I retire early sleeping soundly. The next morning I am awakened to Sheila's gentle voice "rise and shine my love". I am instantly awake and revived.

What I experienced here in Bethlehem can be experienced anywhere. Jesus meets each of us in special place, in a special way, at a special time that is just right for each of us. I pray that we may reflect His love and share His story. Not just through this advent season, but throughout the year, that others might see our joy. On this wonderful day of remembrance of our LORD'S birth let us take time to Savior the moment and experience His true Joy.

HTLC Christmas Party!!!

Join The Celebration Thursday December 14th At 6PM



Bring A Joyful Heart And A Friend!!!
Signup Sheets In The Narthex

Pastoral Care

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
7 Green St. Stafford Springs, CT 06076-1334
Office Phone-860-684-7571
Church – htlc-church@att.net
Website – htlcstafford.org

Pastor Tom will be on sabbatical.
During this time, he will return messages left to his phone (860-806-2440) and email as quickly as possible.

In the event of an immediate need or emergency, you may contact Pastor Ryan or Pastor Kathleen Mills (Holy Trinity Trumbull) at (203) 903-8352, or the synod office at (860) 482-6100.

If you'd like to write Pastor Tom via snail mail,

his address during this time is:

Revd. Thomas S. Droben
Selwyn College, Cambridge University
Grange Rd
Cambridge CB3 9DQ
United Kingdom

Members of the Council are:

Rev. Thomas S. Droben
President – Andrew Fisher
Vice-President – Walter Kovaciny
Treasurer – Catherine Lichanec
Secretary – Amelia Hinchliffe
Melissa Fisher
Leonard Lichanec
Michael Marvonek
Patricia Marvonek
Financial Secretary – Leigh Maxa

Service Teams

† Worship & Music Team: Leigh Maxa
† Property Team: Andrew Fisher,
Michael Marvonek, Adam Tremblay and
Michael Welch
† Learning & Youth Group Team:
Rev. Thomas Droben, Melissa Fisher,
Walter Kovaciny, Cathy & Leonard Lichanec

Shut-in Members

Attn: Mr. Harold Barton
Fox Hill Center
1253 Hartford Tpke. Room #49A
Vernon, CT 06066-4560

Attn: Mrs. Barbara Bulick
Brookdale
1715 Ellington Rd. Room # 212
South Windsor, CT 06074-2702

Ms. Shirley Kaba
7 High St.
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-1215

Attn: Ms. Barbara Kovaciny
Evergreen Health Care Center
205 Chestnut Hill Rd., Room # 1101
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-4005

Mr. Paul C. Kovaciny
242 East St.
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-3923

Ms. Anna Mandak
21 Old Monson Rd.
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-3343

Mrs. Tonia Marvonek
Evergreen Health Care Center
201 Chestnut Hill Rd., Rm. # 2107
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-4005

A Thought

When God blesses you financially,
Don't raise your standard of Living.
Raise your standard of Giving!

Envelope Donations!

It is important for all of us at Holy Trinity to help out a little more with our weekly donations. Sometimes it is hard to give every week due to unexpected circumstances but it would help if when you miss a week that you put the donation from the week you missed in the envelope for the following week. If you cannot come to church you could also mail in the donation. This would help us to keep on track with our monthly income and will help with our financial responsibilities. No matter how much you give it is important that we receive it on a regular basis. Thank you. Cathy Lichanec, Treasurer

(At the November 12, 2017 Council meeting, Cathy offered to write an article about giving. The Council members were asked if anyone had an objection, no objections were raised. Vice-President W. Kovaciny)

December Birthdays

02 – Debra “Debbie” Lewis
05 – Rev. Thomas S. Drobená
08 – Daniel Lichanec
09 – Jennifer Welch
17 – Paul Hockla
19 – Carl “Tim” Mercier
20 – Melissa Fisher
23 – Finnegan Cooley
27 – Anna Mae Hockla
31 – Harold Barton



Anniversaries

10 – Richard & Nan Hayden

30 – Phil & Janet Renn

Year End Reports

At the November 12, 2017 Council meeting, it was decided that all Yearly reports for standing Committees will be submitted for inclusion in the Annual Report by the next Council meeting, December, 10, 2017.

At the November 12, 2017 Council meeting, it was decided that all Committees will have their yearend reports submitted for inclusion in the Annual Report by the next Council meeting, December, 10, 2017. The Financial Reports will be expected mid-January 2018.

This will include the following committees: Education, Worship, Property and Hospitality / Activity Committees.

Slovak Zion Synod Assembly

The next SZS Assembly will be held Saturday, January 20, 2018 to Thursday, January 25, 2018. The following members of HTLC will be attending the Assembly:

Rev. Thomas S. Drobená

Synod Treasurer Shelia Welch

Synod Council member Andrew Fisher

Synod Council member Walter Kovaciny

HTLC Voting members – Melissa Fisher and Michael Welch

Guest to the Assembly Stacey Fisher

Christmas Services

Calling all Usher, Lay Assistants and Readers. When you read the December – January Service Schedule, hopefully you’ll notice the services for Christmas Eve and Day just show “A Volunteer”. There is a signup sheet posted on the white board in the narthex for you to indicate when you are available to help with those services. Thanks to all for your assistance.

Come Caroling Sunday 17th at 1PM!!! Make A Joyful Noise!

December – January Service Schedule

These readings are from Series B and can be found in the front of the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal.

Tellers

Ushers

Worship Assistants Reader

December 3, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The First Sunday in Advent – Blue

Isaiah 64: 1 – 9; Psalm 80: 1 – 7, 17 – 19; 1 Corinthians 1: 3 – 9; Mark 13: 24 – 37

Amelia Hinchliffe

Walter Kovaciny

Leigh Maxa

Daniel Lichanec

Mike Marvonek

Pat Marvonek

December 10, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Second Sunday of Advent – Blue

Isaiah 40: 1 – 11; Psalm 85: 1 – 2, 8 – 13; 2 Peter 3: 8 – 15a; Mark 1: 1 – 8

Amos 5: 18 – 24; Psalm 70; 1 Thessalonians 4: 13 – 18; Matthew 25: 1 – 13

Michael Welch

Walter Kovaciny

Sheila Welch

Daniel Lichanec

Sheila Welch

Cathy Lichanec

December 17, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Third Sunday of Advent – Blue

Isaiah 61: 1 – 4, 8 – 11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5: 16 – 24; John 1: 6 – 8, 19 – 28

Cathy Lichanec

Daniel Lichanec

Cathy Lichanec

Cathy Lichanec

Leonard Lichanec

Leonard Lichanec

December 24, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Fourth Sunday of Advent – Blue

2 Samuel 7: 1 – 11, 16; Luke 1: 46b – 55; Romans 16: 25 – 27; Luke 1: 26 – 38

Melissa Fisher

Rick Bednar

Cathy Lichanec

Daniel Lichanec

Walter Kovaciny

Walter Kovaciny

December 24, 2017 – 8:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve – White

Isaiah 9: 2 – 7; Psalm 96; Titus 2: 11 – 14; Luke 2: 1 – 14, [15 – 20]

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A Volunteer

A Volunteer

A Volunteer

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A Volunteer

December 25, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – Christmas Day – White

Isaiah 52: 7 – 10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1: 1 – 4, [5 – 12]; John 1: 1 – 14

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A Volunteer

A Volunteer

A Volunteer

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A Volunteer

December 31, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The First Sunday after Christmas – White

Isaiah 61: 10 to 62: 3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4: 4 – 7; Luke 2: 22 – 40

Melissa Fisher
Michael Marvonek

Rick Bednar
Walter Kovaciny

Leigh Maxa

Daniel Lichanec

January 7, 2018 – 10:00 a.m. – The Epiphany of Our Lord – 10:00 a.m.

Isaiah 60: 1 – 6; Psalm 72: 1 – 7, 10 – 14; Ephesians 3: 1 – 12; Matthew 2: 1 – 12

Amelia Hinchliffe

Walter Kovaciny

Leigh Maxa

Daniel Lichanec

Mike Marvonek

Pat Marvonek

Attention all Lay Assistants and Volunteers that help with services

This includes Council Members, (Tellers), Ushers, Worship Assistants and Readers.

Please let me know dates and days of when you aren't available to serve in your position. It's much easier to find a replacement (when available) prior to typing the Monthly Service Schedule rather than finding a replacement after the schedule is typed or you just don't show up.

You can hand me a piece of paper when we see each other at church; or send me an email at walterkovaciny@cox.net or send me the information via snail mail. Just don't tell me verbally. Thanks to everyone for their assistance for this. Walter Kovaciny, Part of the newspaper team.

Christmas Poinsettias

The members and friends of Holy Trinity are encouraged to donate poinsettias each Christmas in order to give Glory to God and beautify our sanctuary during the Nativity liturgies. Those who donate the poinsettias may take them after the 10:00 a.m. liturgy on Christmas Day, December 25th. The cost of each poinsettia is \$6.75.

Your Name: _____

Given in honor of (for the living) _____

OR

Given in loving memory of (for the deceased) _____

Return this form to Walter Kovaciny with the correct payment, by Sunday, December 17th. If paying by check, it should be payable to the: Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. Please indicate what color and quantity poinsettia(s) you would like, red ____ or white _____. **Instead of marking the color with a check mark or the letter 'x', please put the quantity in the area instead.** Hopefully that will prevent me from guessing. **Thank you.**

December *Holy Trinity Lutheran Church* 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 The First Sunday of Advent 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion 11:15 a.m. Learning & Youth Committee meeting 11:20 a.m. Social Hour	4	5 <i>Pastor's Day off</i>	6 Nicholas, Bishop 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Cub Scout Troop 81	7 Ambrose, Bishop	8	9 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Safe Net Distribution
10 The Second Sunday of Advent 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion 11:15 a.m. Church Council meeting	11 Deadline for submitting information for the January newsletter	12 <i>Pastor's Day off</i>	13 Lucy, Martyr 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Cub Scout Troop 81	14 Christmas Party 6 p.m.	15	16
17 The Third Sunday of Advent 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion 1:00 p.m. Christmas Caroling Deadline for ordering Poinsettias	18	19 <i>Pastor's Day off</i>	20 Katarina von Bora, Reformer	21	22	23 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Safe Net Distribution
24 The Fourth Sunday of Advent 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion 8:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Holy Communion	25 Christmas Day 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion	26 Steven, Deacon and First Martyr 7:00 p.m. Holy Communion	27 John, Evangelist 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Cub Scout Troop 81	28 Holy Innocents of Bethlehem 7:00 p.m. Vespers	29	30
31 The First Sunday of Christmas 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion This is the last Day to make contributions for credit in 2017						

*** Coming Events ***

December

- 3 – Learning & Youth Committee meeting – 11:15 a.m.
- 3 - Social Hour – 11:20 a.m.
- 6, 13, & 27 – Troop 81 Cub Scouts – 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- 9 & 23 – Safe Net Distribution – 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
- 10 – Church Council meeting – 11:15 a.m.
- 14 – Christmas Party 6:00 p.m.
- 17 – Christmas Caroling – 1:00 p.m.
- 17 – Deadline for ordering Poinsettias
- 24 – Christmas Eve service with Holy Communion – 8:00 p.m.
- 25 – Christmas Day service with Holy Communion – 10:00 a.m.
- 26 – Steven, Deacon and First Martyr – Holy Communion – 7:00 p.m.
- 28 – Holy Innocents of Bethlehem – Vespers – 7:00 p.m.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church 104 West Main St. Stafford Springs, CT 06076

Web site address www.holytrinitystafford.org

Address Correction Requested Slovak Zion Synod – ELCA

