

## E-News for the Week of Sunday, December 13

*3rd Sunday of Advent*

*A Service of Lessons and Carols*

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### Readings

Isaiah 11:1-9

Isaiah 40: 3-5

Isaiah 40:9-11

Isaiah 61:1-4

Luke 1:26-38

Philippians 4:4-7

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### Worship Participants

**Celebrant:** Pr. Nancy Wright

**Altar Guild:** Cheryl Couillard

**Communion Assistant:** Bob Furst

**Organist:** Ann Gnagey

**Readers:** Jane A'Lee and Gene Heyerdahl, Philip Hampson, and Barbara Sponem

**Ushers:** Sharon Sturm and Richard Butz

**Greeters:** Marilyn Johnson and Suzanne Furst

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### Upcoming Week

#### **Wednesday, 12/9**

4:00-5:30 p.m. Tai Chi (rental)

6:15 p.m. Choir

7:00 p.m. Social Action

7:15 p.m. Bells

#### **Thursday, 12/10**

7:15 p.m. Care for Creation

#### **Friday, 12/11**

6:00 p.m. Women's Group Cookie Bake/Movie Night @ Leah Burke's House

#### **Saturday, 12/12**

3:00-9:00 p.m. German Club Christmas Party

#### **Sunday, 12/13**

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship Service

#### **Monday, 12/14**

3:00-6:00 p.m. Music Lessons (rental)

6:00-8:00 p.m. Council Christmas Party @ Pr. Nancy's House

#### **Tuesday, 12/15**

3:00-6:00 p.m. Music Lessons (rental)

#### **Wednesday, 12/16**

4:30-5:30 p.m. Tai Chi  
6:15 p.m. Choir  
7:15 p.m. Contemporary

**NOTE: The office will be closed the week of Monday, December 28<sup>th</sup>-January 1<sup>st</sup>.**

Click [HERE](#) for a long-range calendar.

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### Holiday Service Schedule

#### **Thursday, December 24**

6:00 p.m. Candlelight Christmas Eve Service with Carols

#### **Friday, December 25**

10:00 a.m. Christmas Day Worship Service with Holy Communion and Sermon

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### Upcoming Birthdays

12/11 Timothy Kemp

12/13 Sam Swanson

12/20 Sarah Sturm

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### Pastor's Message

#### **Giving Thanks**

This Third Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday, which literally means Rejoice. We will celebrate the Sunday by lighting the third, pink, Advent candle. Will you join me in giving thanks: For each day of life, for families and friends, but above all for the birth of Jesus Christ and faith in his way of life and love. We are aware of the suffering in the world and of Jesus' call to be of service. That is our ministry. Carrying out such ministry, in whatever ways we are called to do so, can be exhausting and risky, but also brings joy. I give thanks for all Ascension parishioners, for our talented children, preparing the Christmas offering "The Little Drummer Boy" on December 20<sup>th</sup>, and for Sunday School teachers. I give thanks that we are all children in the faith, with Jesus being born in our hearts as receive his love.

Blessings, Pr. Nancy

P.S.

I am now on Facebook and will be glad to "friend" any parishioner who request it.

I recently wrote and posted this paragraph in both my Facebook page and the ELCA Rostered Leaders page:

"Just finished the second research paper for my doctoral program, on Radical Spirituality. I compared the Diggers, a 16th century impoverished, radical English religious group, to the folks who created Ascension Lutheran's meditation trail. I interviewed ten parishioners who worked on the trail. I was astounded by their insights, theology and sense of God in nature, and their caring for God's creation and for people in need. Deeply moving. Also yesterday by unanimous vote the congregation passed our new three-year plan, worked on for over five years. Ascension rocks, and I am grateful."

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### Daily Advent Reflections\*

#### **Wednesday, 12/9**

Subtract two things from your day. Use the extra time to serve a fellow human.

#### **Thursday, 12/10**

Wear several layers of your softest clothes today, a buffer against a sometimes harsh world.

#### **Friday, 12/11**

Spin an actual, or virtual, globe. Let your hand come to a rest on a random spot. Wonder about it, then bless it deeply.

#### **Saturday, 12/12**

Sneak into someone else's church. Kneel and pray, in silence, at the altar. Look for signs that God is near. Pray for the next person whose bottom will sit there.

#### **Sunday, 12/13 Third Sunday in Advent: JOY**

Sing, pray or chant this apophatic mantra: God is joy, God is not joy, God is *not not* joy.

#### **Monday, 12/14**

Silence someone who is speaking hate (in virtual or physical space) with the gentlest possible words.

#### **Tuesday, 12/15**

Print an adult coloring page off the web. Set an intention with God. Then lose yourself in coloring, inside or outside the lines.

#### **Wednesday, 12/16**

Wake up

Wake up

Wake up in the middle of the night. Creep quietly to the holiest place in your house. Read 1 Samuel 3. Listen.

\*Shared from an Advent calendar prepared by Rev. Molly Phinney Baskette (Keynote speaker from the 2015 New England Synod Assembly)

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### HARK! IMPORTANT UPCOMING NEWS AND EVENTS

#### **Congregational Meeting—Thank You!!!**

Big thank-you to ALL who stayed after church on Sunday to vote on the Constitution and the Long Range Plan. We had more than the quorum needed, and both items passed unanimously after great conversation. The minutes for this meeting will be prepared and presented for approval at our next Congregational Meeting, date TBD.

#### **Christmas Poinsettia Order**

Orders for Christmas Poinsettias must be submitted to the church office no later than **Wednesday, December 16** ([church.office@alcvt.org](mailto:church.office@alcvt.org) or 862-8866). Please indicate your color preference (red, pink, or white) and the names of those you wish to have remembered. The cost of each plant is \$12.

### **The Holiday Giving Tree!**

We will be sponsoring families through Howard Center again this year. The tree is now up with tags in the Narthex! Gifts should be returned to church unwrapped by **December 13**. We will also have a cookie bake sale on December 13th with donations going to the giving tree families. If you have any questions, please contact Cheryl Couillard at [checouillard@yahoo.com](mailto:checouillard@yahoo.com) or 999-5512.

### **Women's Holiday Event**

What: Cookie Baking and Holiday Movie Night

When: **Friday, December 11th at 6:30 p.m.**

Where: Leah Burke's House (see directory)

We will enjoy baking cookies and watching one or two holiday favorites. Cookies will be donated to the cookie sale for giving tree families.

Questions? Contact Cheryl Couillard at [checouillard@yahoo.com](mailto:checouillard@yahoo.com) or 999-5512. Please join us!

### **Upcoming Sunday School Events**

**December 20** will be our Sunday School Christmas tableau presentation, in church. We will rehearse on **December 13 and December 20 at 9:00 a.m.** The theme this year will be the Little Drummer Boy, as a vehicle for the tableau. Volunteers with special talents are welcomed!

**NO SUNDAY SCHOOL on December 27.**

### **Abenaki Food Shelf**

This **Sunday, December 13**, will be your last opportunity to join with the Sunday School in providing non-perishable items for the Abenaki Food Shelf. A basket for your contributions is in the narthex.

### **A Moral Call: People of Faith Confronting the Tragedy of Gun Violence**

This is your last e-news reminder to attend the interfaith prayer and remembrance vigil on **Sunday, December 13, 3 p.m.** at the Unitarian Universalist Society in Burlington. The hope is that the vigil in will be a starting point for faith communities to hold sacred conversations about gun violence and the common good in 2016. The recent horrific acts in Colorado Springs, CO, and San Bernardino, CA, underscore the need for people of faith to take the lead in confronting the tragedy of gun violence. For more information, contact Marcia Gustafson at [marciagus@earthlink.net](mailto:marciagus@earthlink.net), or call 864-5908.

### **Quilt top kits available**

If you would like to help make mission quilts for Lutheran World Relief but cannot join us on the first and/or third Thursday or the month at church, you can assemble quilt tops at home. There are kits that consist of cut fabric squares (11" x 11") along with directions. Let Karen Martin know if you are interested.

Next Quilter's Group Meeting is **Thursday, December 17**.

### **Duo Toivo Concert at Ascension**

DUO TOIVO presents a classical concert for voice and piano at Ascension Lutheran Church, **Thursday, December 17, 7:00 p.m.**

OH! HOLY NIGHT!

Classical Christmas music, traditional and contemporary carols.

Free by Donation (A third of the proceeds will be donated to Ascension for upkeep of the piano.)

Duo Toivo (Toy-Vo, The Hope Duo in Finnish) Classically trained international soprano, Emili Losier teams up with the Vermont pianist, Melissa Dickerson, to touch hearts with their eclectic Christmas Concert. Music ranges from traditional to contemporary Christmas songs sung in a classical style: Arias from Handel's Messiah; Newly arranged well known Christmas carols; Foreign Christmas Songs; Other composers include Mozart, Bach/Gounod, Wolf and Kotilainen.

For more information about Emili and Melissa (Duo Toivo), [click here](#).

Please come and invite friends and neighbors! Light refreshments will be served at intermission.

### **Pastor's Piano Policy**

Ascension received a piano, gratis, from a family in Montpelier and paid to have it moved to ALC through funds originally given by Lynne Dapice. Thank you Lynne. We have the joy of the piano for parishioners (including children) who wish to enjoy playing while at church or taking piano lessons; as well as for public performances and regular teaching. Daimon Ferrante, the composer and piano instructor who rents space from ALC to teach, is personally paying for ongoing tuning. He asks that the piano not be moved, as it upsets the tuning (it is not a young piano). Also, when children play, under gentle supervision of their parents or teachers, they are welcome! We are all respectful of others in the building, who may be praying, worshiping, practicing, talking, etc. Closing doors and making sure the sound system (above the piano) is turned on or off depending on whether the sanctuary practice or service needs to be heard in the fellowship hall, will all help. Let the music sound!

### **Practical Christmas Gifts**

Check out the EQUAL EXCHANGE table at Coffee Hour. In addition to coffee, tea, cocoa, organic nuts, and olive oil, there are 3 flavors of chocolate bars available for the holidays. If you don't see what you need, a catalog is also on the table. E-mail me at [dpittman@gmavt.net](mailto:dpittman@gmavt.net). Orders can be filled in a week. Christmas shopping that makes a difference around the world! –Donna the Coffee Lady

### **Men's Breakfast**

There will be no Men's Breakfast for the month of December. Worry not, Men of Ascension, we will continue in January!

### **ELCA World Hunger Matching Funds Challenge**

Until **December 31, 2015**, friends of ELCA World Hunger are challenging one another with a \$150,000 match. Gifts received by December 31 can help meet the match. To take advantage of this match, please give online at [www.ELCA.org/WorldHunger](http://www.ELCA.org/WorldHunger)

### **Adult Class**

All are welcome to join the 9 am adult class, regularly on even for one Sunday. The class is led by Pr. Nancy and the whole group. The class will study the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-11) through October. In November the class will study Pope Francis I's Encyclical on Climate Change and Inequality: On Care for Our Common Home.

### **COFFEE HOUR NEEDS YOU!!!**

Thank you for the great response to the new Coffee Hour sign-up sheet. If you were unable to sign up for a week or two, please check out the list hanging on the bulletin board in the fellowship room. There are several empty dates to be filled in yet. Coffee Hour is fun for members but also a very important time for us to greet visitors and new members. We often joke about coffee, food and

Lutherans going together as a natural....and they do....so please sign up for Coffee Hour and let's continue this wonderful tradition. Also, the Coffee Can (to defray costs) is on the table to help pay for the coffee. Thanks.

See Beth Dreibelbis with questions.

### **Church Mouse**

The Mouse is available by email on a quarterly basis. But you can tell the office if you prefer to have the Mouse mailed to you. There are always extra copies of the Mouse on the table in the Fellowship Hall. A sheet next to the copies gives spaces for you to sign your name if you wish the Mouse to be mailed to you in future.

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## **Additional News and Volunteer Opportunities**

### **Thank You!**

We received many donations again of household items and furniture from our incredible Congregation for the family (from Florida) that was recently in need. They have passed along the following message:

*"We are truly thankful for everything. it has been a miracle. When our lives were turned upside-down we would never have survived without the help we received. Everyone has been so generous...Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!"*

### **Bethlehem Prayer Service 2015**

On Saturday, December 19, 2015, the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. invites all to join worshipers in the nave at 10 a.m. EST for the ninth annual joint simulcast Christmas service with the people of Bethlehem. Prayers, readings, and hymns alternate between Washington, D.C., and Palestine via the internet, bringing together people of different lands, languages, and ethnic backgrounds in celebration of the birth of the Prince of Peace.

The Palestinian location for the joint service is Ascension's sister church, the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church of Bethlehem.

The December 19 Bethlehem Prayer Service may be accessed via computer from the National Cathedral's home page: <http://www.nationalcathedral.org/>. A program for the service is usually available so that everyone can follow along.

### **Climate Change discussions and Faith**

Associated Press reporter Seth Borenstein recently wrote an article entitled "Scientists Enlist the Big Gun to get Climate Action: Faith." This article reflects how religion in the form of individuals and communities will continue to have an important moral impact in solving climate change and other critical environmental challenges. To read the full article,

visit: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3348252/Scientists-enlist-big-gun-climate-action-Faith.html>

### **Tai Chi at Ascension!**

#### **Tai Chi for All Generations, Wednesdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m. with Elizabeth Wirls**

Classes are ongoing and everyone is welcome to come as you are, whenever you wish. All generations are welcome! Please note that we have decided to offer these classes on a "pay as you can" basis. That way everyone who is interested will be able to join us! For more information, see the attached brochure and feel free to contact Elizabeth in the church office, 862-8866

[CLICK HERE](#) for full brochure.

Tai Chi will break for the holidays soon. **There will be no classes on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, or January 6<sup>th</sup>.**