



First News

Waiting in our Cells

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran pastor from last century, described Advent in this way: "A prison cell, in which one waits, hopes...and is completely dependent on the fact that the door of freedom has to be opened from the outside, is not a bad picture of Advent." This image carried particular weight for Bonhoeffer as he sat in the Nazi prison camp of Tegel in the winter of 1943. As a pastor, he knew the Christmas story, that Jesus had come and had been born in Bethlehem during the reign of Herod. Bonhoeffer had preached Easter sermons proclaiming the resurrection that happened centuries ago. He knew that salvation had come, shining in the darkness of this world. Despite all this, he knew that there is more waiting to do.

The season of Advent is all about waiting and watching. In the Gospel readings for the Sundays of Advent, we'll hear about St. John the Baptist as he watched and waited for the advent – or "coming" – of Jesus. When Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, the yet-unborn John leapt in his mother's womb because he was in the presence of the yet-unborn Jesus – but he still had more waiting. John watched for the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry proclaiming the life of repentance and faith – but he still had more waiting. John would be locked up in his own prison cell, and almost began to question whether Jesus was truly the Messiah. Even there in that prison cell, John heard the Gospel, that Jesus truly was the Messiah, though not one of earthly power but of heavenly mercy and love. Eventually, John was beheaded in prison and now is waiting for the return of Christ and the resurrection of all the dead.

The story of John the Baptist is a perfect picture for Advent. In fact, Christians have talked about the three advents of Jesus Christ. The first advent was the one foretold by the prophets of Israel for centuries. Of these prophets, only the last one – John – ever saw the Messiah promised by God. Jesus' first advent was in Bethlehem and continued through His earthly life and ministry. John witnessed this first advent. Jesus second ad-

vent is whenever He comes to us in His Word and Sacrament. Like John sitting in his prison cell, we are sitting in the cells of our temptations, sins, and sicknesses. But Jesus does not leave us hopeless. Still Jesus sends messengers to proclaim the Gospel to us, assuring us that Jesus is our savior. Through this Gospel Jesus assures us that He will be with us until the end of the age, whether we are still living when Christ returns or whether we are resting in our graves. John, along with countless other Christians through the ages are waiting for Jesus' final advent when He will come in glory and put an end to all sin and death forever. Advent is all about waiting and watching. We hear how Jesus came, how He still comes, and how He will come on the Last Day.

Bonhoeffer, like John, is resting in his grave awaiting Jesus' final advent. Bonhoeffer, also like John, was martyred for his faith. Together, Bonhoeffer and John show us how to wait and watch for Jesus. We aren't saved by good works that get us out of the cell of sin. We can only be saved by One opening the door from the outside our cell of sin. Jesus Christ has burst through the bars of sin and death and rescued us from our captivity. Praise be to God for not leaving us as hopeless captives, and for freeing us to live lives of repentance and faith before Him.

In Christ,

Pastor Schultz

New Communion Statement:

The Lord's Supper is celebrated in our worship service today. In this supper, our Lord Jesus Christ graciously feeds the humble sinner with His true Body and true Blood for the forgiveness of sins and the strengthening of faith (Matt. 26:26-28; Heb. 10:19-25). Scripture clearly teaches that anyone who eats and drinks without believing in and publicly confessing that the bread and wine are Christ's true Body and Blood receives condemnation from God rather than forgiveness, life, and salvation (1 Cor. 11:27-29). Therefore, out of a Christian concern for souls, we require a thorough instruction in the teachings of the Lutheran Church before participating in this Sacrament (See Luther's *Large Catechism* VI). Participation at the altar is also a testimony of unity of faith with all others who partake (1 Cor. 10:16-22). Since unity at the altar demonstrates unity in teaching and practice (Acts 2:42) and out of Christian love and concern, we request that only those who are in confessional fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod attend.

Please know that we look forward to having you at the Lord's Table soon. We sincerely invite you to visit with Pastor Schultz about the joys of the Lord's Supper.

Roots Bible Study: Reaching Further, Going Deeper



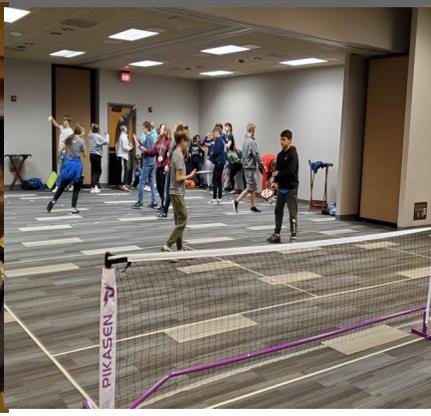
All trees need healthy roots. You don't see most of the roots, but you can see the results reaching up towards the sky and offering shade and beauty. There are two kinds of roots. The first kind is called the tap root, generally the first root a tree sends down. It's necessary to anchor the plant as it grows. The second kind is called a lateral root that extends sideways to reach more water and nutrients. Both types are necessary for a healthy tree. If there are only tap roots, then the tree can't reach new water sources. But if the tree only has shallow roots, then it will blow over with the first big storm.

Like a tree, our congregation needs two kinds of roots. You might not always see the roots, but you can see the results as more sinners are called to repentance and faith. Both kinds of roots are necessary here too. Christians need a strong, deep taproot; old or young, you need to keep learning. Second, our church needs to reach out to others and invite them to go deeper in the Christian faith. If we only have 'tap roots' – that is, if we know what we believe but never share it – then the Gospel won't reach sinners in need of repentance and faith. But if we only have 'lateral roots' – that is, if we only put effort into growing in numbers but not in faith and understanding – then our church will be blown over by false teaching and the Gospel won't truly reach sinners with the Gospel (Ephesians 4:14).

*Starting Sunday, January 9th, Pastor Schultz will be teaching the Roots Bible study. This is an opportunity to learn and grow for old members, new members, those who would like to be members, and anyone who is curious about the Christian faith. The class will meet from 4:30-6:00 in the church basement and run for 8 consecutive weeks until February 27th. We will go through the book *Lutheranism 101* and have time for study, fellowship, and prayer.*

A sign-up sheet will be in the back of church so that we make sure we have enough copies of the books.

Please mark your calendars, invite a friend, and join us as we reach out further and grow deeper in our Christian faith together.



Thank You for Supporting FLC Youth!

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, I want to take this time to thank all of you for your hard work getting the youth of our congregation involved in Lutheran events national and district events. We hope you love seeing all the pictures. These experiences will travel with them for a lifetime, strengthening their relationship with Jesus. So the saying goes, it takes a village and we as the parents could not have made this possible without you.



ADVENT SERVICES @ FLC

Light dinners following service

December 1, 2021 (*NO Dinner*)

December 8, 2021 *Dinner with FLC Youth*

December 15, 2021 *Dinner with LWML*

December 22, 2021 *Dinner with Stewardship Board*

Members of First,

This time last year our elevator to the basement failed and we began assessing how to best approach either fixing the existing elevator or replacing the unit altogether. Since that time we've learned that the existing unit's age prohibits us from replacing the necessary components to make the elevator operational.

The Trustees recommendation was to replace the entire unit and at that time the estimated cost was in excess of \$40,000. Given our financial status during the pandemic, it would've been irresponsible to simply pull these funds from the general account to make this purchase.

Fast forward to today and we do understand that this is a need for the church as we hold various events in the basement throughout the year. We do want everyone to have access to the basement for these functions.

For these reasons, we'll be holding a fund drive in November to help raise funds for this purchase. Please consider giving towards this cause as it will help your congregation members participate in church events to a larger degree.

We'll be sending additional details through email and church announcements regarding how to get involved and the current status of the fund drive throughout the month.

Blessings,
Church Council

Dear Members of First Lutheran Church,

The seasons of Advent and Christmas are upon us once again. As your elder, I thought this to be an especially appropriate time to write to you in order to encourage you in the faith. Unfortunately, this can be a very hectic time of the year as we attempt to meet everyone's expectations of us. Often, we end up wearing ourselves out running after the things of this world, with little energy left for our Lord and one another.

The message of Advent and Christmas is that Christ comes to bring us together with Him and one another through his Word and Sacrament. True peace and life are not found in the things of this world, but in Christ Jesus and the life He has given us to live together. In the coming week, a brochure detailing all the dates and times of services through the Epiphany of our Lord will be distributed. The words of the following hymn are a fitting prayer as we enter this wonderful season:

*O Lord, how shall I meet You, How welcome You aright?
Your people long to greet You, My Hope, my heart's delight!
O kindle, Lord most holy, Your lamp within my breast
To do in spirit lowly, All that may please You best.
-- "O Lord, How Shall I Meet You" (LSB 334)*

I am here to assist Pastor Schultz in serving you, so if I can be of help, or, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out. I look forward to receiving God's free gifts with you this Advent and Christmas season.

*In Christ,
Richie Sinclair*

MEMBERS OF FIRST LUTHERAN,

During our November board meeting, the Elders voted to begin holding single service Sundays. We pray that this serves to bring us closer together during the season of Advent and also to allow for some much-needed rest for those currently volunteering on Sunday mornings. Beginning December 5th, Sunday services will begin at 9:00 a.m. and will be followed by Bible Study/Sunday School at 10:30 a.m. As changes are being made and routines are being adjusted, we ask that all parishioners continue to pray that God's will be done here at First. Please consider serving on Sunday mornings or on a board, as there is much work yet to be accomplished.

In Christ,

Richie Sinclair

MEMBERS OF FIRST,

At services last Sunday we announced the difficult decision to recommend a reduction in force to the congregation at our voter's meeting on Sunday December 5th. To follow this announcement we also wanted to make sure that we sent out a written communication to anyone that missed last Sunday's services. The Elders brought forth this recommendation to council early last week for a vote after assessing the proposed budget for 2022. Council then reviewed the proposed budget to seek alternatives to this action. Ultimately, short of selling assets or eating into reserves council was unable to find a viable alternative. Reduction in Force is a tool that is only used if a church finds themselves falling short in offerings versus the current staff that are employed. In this case it is council's recommendation to the congregation to enact reduction in force for the DCE position. We are extremely grateful for Angel's contributions to the church and the advancements in ministry we've had during her time here! It should be noted that reduction in force has no reflection on the work that's been done at First. Ultimately it will be the congregation's decision to vote on the reduction in force at the annual voter's meeting. You'll receive the budget two weeks ahead of the voter's meeting for review and we'll discuss this recommendation more on 12/5. Please reach out if you have any questions ahead of time.

Blessings, Church Council

Happy Anniversary!



Kettler, Mark & Mary

December 08, 2001

Weaver, George & Ethel

December 15, 1961

Meyer, Ken & Pam

December 16, 1978

Koontz, Dale & Donna

December 23, 1990

Lake, Jim & Sandy

December 26, 1965

John Ohlmeier

December 05, 1945

Greg Surbaugh

December 05, 1946

Justin Scott

December 06, 2001

Steve Hambleton

December 07, 1955

Donald Meyer

December 07, 1945

Kylar Coffey

December 09, 2013

Ron Medlin

December 09, 1956

Autumn Menefee

December 09, 1971

Donna Brandt

December 11, 1937

Mika Menefee

December 11, 2003

Hunter West

December 13, 2012

Preston Berggren

December 16, 1984

Lily Berggren

December 16, 2016

Leona Rentz

December 16, 1935

Madison Armbruster

December 17, 1996

Donald Polson

December 18, 1949

Betty Miller

December 19, 1946

Ethel Weaver

December 19, 1941

Ruth Lohaus

December 22, 1943

Helen Webster

December 22, 1944

Gregg Lewis

December 25, 1953

Terry Drugg

December 26, 1954

Melinda Pitzer

December 26, 1973

Maria Worrell

December 27, 1977

Arlene McMillin

December 28, 1937

John Trickett

December 29, 1967



ADVENT

A time to prepare for the coming of our Savior, Jesus, to be born on Christmas Day! A time when many families are preparing their homes with decorations, lights, shopping, baking...

Ladies, LWML is inviting you to our annual **Advent by Candlelight** on Thursday, December 9th. It will be starting at 6:30pm and held in our church basement. **Bring a friend** and enjoy the fellowship, eating Christmas goodies and snacks and hearing the program called "*On Our Way to Bethlehem.*" We will be collecting our Red Stocking Offering which will be going to MLM. (Metro Lutheran Ministries)

Have a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year. See you December 9th!!



CHRISTMASTIDE! A Christmas service with choir, bells, the Sonshine preschool, hymns and readings, will be December 12, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. Randy Fast is the choir director. Please sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board, invite your relatives and friends, and come on out to join in the fun of singing some fun Christmas choral pieces!

DO YOU SHOP FOR GROCERIES? Do you shop for groceries? If so, then you can help LWML reach its goals of raising money for worldwide missions. While you shop, all BEST CHOICE LABELS can be clipped for cash! The Best Choice Label program is an extremely successful program, which helps non-profit organizations raise money. LWML earns \$.03 for each Best Choice UPC symbol redeemed, with a minimum of 1,000 labels required for redemption. Clip your labels and place them inside the LWML collection can in the narthex.



First Lutheran Church Slate of new officers for 2022-2024

President: _____ (needs filled)

Vice President: Virgil Lyons*

Secretary: Don Bucher(2)*

Financial Secretary: Mary Kettler*

Treasurer: Jason DeCaire*

Elders:

Richie Sinclair (2)* (Current Chair)

Gregg Lewis (3)

Brian Mead (1)

Dean Lovig (1)

Curtis Long (1)

Evangelism:

Amanda West (2)* (Current Chair)

Cindy Mead (2)*

Joe Patton (3)

Family Ministry:

Matt Brandt (4)* (Current Chair)

Nikki Chilson (2)*

Sheresa Law (5)

Jordan Medlin*

Stewardship:

Lindsay Sinclair (1) (Current Chair)

Cindy Forsberg (1)

Helen Tagler (1)

Autumn Diehm (1)

Emily DeCaire*

Trustees:

Pat Tagler (3) (Current Chair)

Russell Pope (2)*

David Wehmeier (2)*

Matt Chilson (3)

Brandon Livingston (3)

Mark Kettler*

Preschool:

(Needs Chair)

Becky Long (1)

Patricia Lyons (1)

Helen Webster (1)

Chrissy Diehm (1)

*Up for election/re-election

Creating a Habit of Time in God's Word

By Adele Werner

Published October 11, 2021 on the CPH Blog

I keep a relatively busy schedule and often feel like I have a lot on my plate. Some weeks it feels like my husband and I are running on several different schedules from one another, only connecting for brief moments maybe at dinner or a shared responsibility.

Trying to add spending time with Jesus into this seems fruitless. "We're going too fast, we only have these moments to organize with one another," or, "We're just tired," are some of the excuses we've used. When the truth is, at least for us, we do have time. We're just bad at consistency.

Let's Talk about Habit Formation

I remember an elementary school teacher telling me that it takes 23 tries for a practice to become a habit. I think this was in response to learning my multiplication tables. Although there is no proof that 23 is this magic number, I think it helps us to conceptualize that it takes time before a practice becomes natural or routine to us. I am good at trying to start routines but then after a few days, I tend to fall off and not get back on track. Even if the habit is something you enjoy doing, there often needs to be a plethora of motivation to convince yourself to continue the habit (especially if you've stopped for a few days or weeks). When it comes to continually spending time in God's Word, learning about His heart for you and the world, it can seem like nothing is working.

What I've Tried

There are several ways I've tried to create this habit of committing to a daily devotion. One way is signing up for devotional emails. I find myself "checking my inbox" as a way to procrastinate or take a brain break. By having a devotional email in my inbox, when I'm taking these moments away from other work, I can read from God's Word and be refreshed. In college, this was my main way of doing a daily devotion. After undergrad, I can't say it's worked with the same success. But maybe it will work for you.

I've also used devotional apps, such as the Portals of Prayer app, and set notifications on said apps at a specific time to read the devotional for the day. Again, this is one I had success with for a while, but I fell off because I could simply ignore the notifications. I say that these stopped working for me, not to say that you shouldn't try these tactics, but to showcase options for your current situation.

What Has Worked (for me)

While it may seem strange to start a daily devotional a month before the new year (shouldn't this be a New Year's resolution?), I find that during the season of Advent I have the most, what I call, "religious energy." There is something about the Advent (and then Christmas) season that makes me want to create habits of looking to His Word. I think it's because so many of us already have traditions at this time of the year that using a "special devotional" seems right. Keeping this energy after the season is easier if you've committed to reading God's Word at a specific time of day. I am a night owl. Even though I can be productive in the mornings, I feel the most awake, alert, and motivated in the evenings. For me, doing my devotional time after dinner has been the best way to keep consistently in God's Word. Maybe for you it's first thing in the morning, at breakfast? Or maybe lunch break? If there's a pocket of time you have to just sit, read or listen, that may be the perfect opportunity.

All this to say, your ability to continue a daily devotional practice is not what determines your place in God's kingdom. Although it definitely is so, so good to be in God's Word and learning from Him, there is boundless grace. I want you to be in God's Word as often as you can, learning about how much He loves and cares for you, about His unending joy and peace that surpasses all understanding. This world is hectic, loud, and can be deceitful. God's Word and consistently being in the Truth is a remedy for the chaos.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

December 1 Advent Service 5 pm

December 2 Bell practice 6-7 pm

December 5 ONE SERVICE 9 am

December 5 Voters Meeting 10:30 pm

December 6 Choir practice 6 pm

December 8 Advent Service 5 pm

(light dinner with FLC Youth following service)

December 9 Bells practice 5:30-6:30 pm

December 9 LWML Advent by Candlelight 6:30 pm

December 11 Choir practice 4 pm

December 12 ONE SERVICE 9 am

(Christmas Family Workshop 10:15 am)

December 12 Christmastide 4:30 om

December 13 Preschool Christmas Program

M/W/F classes 6:30 pm

December 15 Advent Service 5 pm

(light dinner with LWML following service)

December 16 Preschool Christmas Program

T/Th classes 10:45 am

December 19 ONE SERVICE 9 am

December 19 Angel's Recognition Dinner

December 22 Advent 5 pm

(light dinner with Stewardship following service)

December 23-Jan 4 Preschool Closed

December 24 Christmas Eve

Candlelight Service 6:30 pm and 11:00 pm

December 25 Christmas Day Service 9 am



PACA BELL RINGING SCHEDULE

Our church is ringing the salvation army bells for PACA Friday, Dec. 24th at Wal-Mart's west door. We are looking for volunteers to sign-up for one-hour increments from 10 am – 3 pm.

To sign up for your spot please sign-up in the church narthex for email office@firstlutheran-paola.org

Christmas Shoppers Needed...

Your Evangelism Team raised about \$4000 by hosting the Fall Craft Bazaar and the Christmas Craft Fair.

We would like to ask for your help in spending that money. We have children and adults that we would like you to shop for. We will have a gift card for you to use to do the shopping and all you need to do is bring the gifts in before

December 10th, unwrapped and with the receipts.

If you would like to help out, please contact Amanda West at (913) 731-0201

or Cindy Mead at (859) 576-1891



First Lutheran Church

Phone: 913-294-3476

Pastor Christian Schultz

Pastor@firstlutheran-paola.org

Office: Office@firstlutheran-paola.org

Firstlutheran-paola.org



{ First News }

Submit articles to: office@firstlutheran-paola.org

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First Lutheran Paola KS

Office Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am 4:00pm

401 E Piankishaw St. Paola, KS 66071

913.294.3476

www.firstlutheran-paola.org

office@firstlutheran-paola.org

Rev. Christian D. Schultz

Pastor@firstlutheran-paola.org

(785)-313-4633

D.C.E. Angel Gillespie

dce@firstlutheran-paola.org

913.594.0565 (call/text)

Kris Fuchs, SonShine Preschool, Director

913.294.5925 (preschool office)

sonshinepaola@gmail.com

Jody Brown, Support Staff

913.294.3476 (church office)

jbrown.tls@gmail.com