

What's Inside?

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December 2017

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GETHESEMANE LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Gethsemane Witness

I have told the story of what God has done among us to let you know the truth about what you have heard (Luke 1)

If you feel overwhelmed, scared, and insecure, if you aren't sure how to hold up tomorrow and anxiety found its way into your heart, if you find yourself buried by worries and don't know what to do or think next ... I have a story for you: The story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem!

When Jesus' mother, Mary, was about 12 years old, the angel Gabriel came to her, announcing that she was pregnant. She had no idea what it means to "bear a child". She was scared to death, especially because she had not been with Joseph or any other man before. Being unfaithful would set her up for the appropriate punishment: stoning. Mary felt her changing body and the child growing within her. So she turned to her aunt, Elizabeth, who was pregnant too. Mary looked for support and advice, for a resource to cope with her fears.

Joseph must have felt scammed, yet he stayed by the young girl. Later he delivered the baby in the stable (imagine a carpenter taking on the role of a midwife...) Joseph was a caring man, a faithful man. Against all circumstances he trusted the voice of his heart, and he believed in God's good future.

After the birth of the child Mary and Joseph fled the country. The child's life was in danger. Based on a dream, Mary and Joseph joined today's millions of displaced people to look for a safe place; they became refugees. They fled to a foreign country and culture, Egypt; they risked an unknown future, not knowing what tomorrow will bring, whether they will have a roof over their head and food to eat. They risked everything driven solely by hope and faith.

And then there are the shepherds. During those days shepherds were at the bottom of society, poor, marginalized. Watching someone else's sheep, they were just trying to survive the next dark night, not expecting anything. Then it happened. Suddenly they found themselves at the center of a world-changing event. God came to earth, and they were the ones spreading the news. God uses all kinds of people in all kinds of situations.

Meanwhile three highly educated researchers in the East had put away the books that they had read and the texts that they had studied. They had come to the conclusion that a mighty king would be born who will bring peace to all people. The three men connected wisdom, knowledge and prophetic promises and trusted that a constellation of celestial bodies, a star, would show them the way to find this newborn king. As crazy as this sounded, the time was right. Trusting what they were able to see they set out for the adventure of their lives. They had to venture out in order to find out the truth—and they did.

Finally, everything came together, all of them came together in one place, in the middle of the night. And there was light in the darkness: a mother had conquered her fears, a man trusted and believed, a couple followed their hopes in faith, the poor grew into a new divine role, wise men went and found truth. And Angels were singing—there was peace on earth...

"And I have retold the story of what God has done among us to let you know the truth about what you have heard and read." There is hope—even in the midst of darkness. Always.

Wishing you a blessed Season of Advent
and a joyous, hope filled Christmas.

Yours,
Pastor Karin



Did you know...

- TACO raised \$26,465.50 at the 2017 “Eat, Drink & Be Sharing” event. In 2017 they have served over 16,000 guests.
- From September 1, GLC raised **\$1,717** for the ELCA Lutheran Disaster Relief Fund (note: this amount does not reflect any specific disaster areas!)
- The Preschool will have their Christmas Program on Friday, December 15, 5:30 p.m. You are welcome to attend!

Transition Update

The Ministry Site Profile of Gethsemane Lutheran Church describes the congregation as “stable”. Under ‘Giftedness’ of GLC the MSP states that “people gathered in this place...maintain the spiritual and organizational strength...created over recent years of redevelopment and stability.” **Stability** is often a goal for churches, especially in an environment of widespread decline. Yet stable churches are often stagnant churches; Thom S. Rainier lists five reasons why:

1. A stable church is not a church on a mission.
2. Comfort is the enemy of obedience.
3. Stable churches are not reaching their communities.
4. Stable churches do not create new ministries.
5. Members of stable churches want the focus to be on their preferences.

(feel free to select what currently might or might not apply to GLC)... and keep in mind: **GLC’s best days are yet to come!!!** No doubt, to move forward always takes time. So be patient, pray, stop fighting change with yesterday’s arguments. Love everybody and move with the movers. Trust your leaders who take on extra responsibility. Be prepared for conflict. It is going to come. It is not the 70ies any longer. Over the course things move away from the traditional center of gravity, especially when new people with different ideas than yours are walking through the door.

Do not be afraid. Keep praying!

Call Committee

The Call Committee was elected at the November 12 Congregational meeting. Congratulations and thank you for serving... Jerry Class, Mary Erlenborn, Jeffrey Jenkins, Linda Juhasz, Mark Mendoza and Earline Trinkle. Aaron Williams will be the alternate.

Christmas Decorating

Anyone available is invited to help the Altar Guild prepare the Chapel for Christmas on Saturday, **December 16** at 9:00 a.m. These dedicated women provide faithful support for our worship experience year-round, and at Christmas, they pull out all the stops! Thank You.



*December
Happy
Birthday*



Ellen Wagner	4th
Rolando Garcia	5th
Shirley Mitchell	12th
Rachel Evans	14th
Kristen Nelson	18th
Susan Mendoza	24th
Pastor Karin	28th
Earline Trinkle	30th

Prayer Retreat

The **Advent Prayer Retreat** returns this year on **Sunday, December 3rd**. The chapel will be open from 7:30 a.m. to noon. The retreat stations will be available during this time, with a pause for our usual 8:00 a.m. and 9:30a.m. liturgies.

For those of us who find the commercialization a bit overwhelming, or if the joy of the season seems too far out of reach, this is an opportunity to spend some quiet time in prayer and reflection. There will be various stations around the chapel, each with a specific focus, but also encouragement to contemplate beyond today. A journal is provided to help guide you, and has room for you to record your personal thoughts, whether they be newly-gained insights or lingering questions.

On December 3rd., **please remember to enter the chapel quietly**, as our fellow sojourners may already be within, experiencing the retreat prior to the scheduled liturgies.

May God bless our time together, as we prepare to greet the Christ Child anew.



A Note of Thanks...

Dear Karin and the GLC Community,

“Thank you for your warm acknowledgment of my election as bishop and my episcopal ordination. I deeply appreciate your recognition of this life changing event in my life.”

Jane Via, MMACC

(take time to read her full note of appreciation that is posted in the Narthex.)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Our series of articles continue with our core ministries:

(4) Prayer Quilt Ministry

Did you know that, since 2007, Gethsemane's Prayer Quilt Ministry has provided over 350 prayer quilts and prayer squares (smaller quilts) to people and organizations all over the world? And multiply the number of quilts by the individual prayers (and knots) for each, and we're talking about one impactful ministry!

Most Gethsemane church-goers have experienced the Sunday morning sight of a beautiful and colorful quilt, along with information about the quilt's requestor and recipient.

There's a "behind the scenes" story of each quilt so let's delve into the details.

First, some background. Many churches have prayer quilt ministries, and Gethsemane's was started through the efforts of Rachel Evans, who had experience with this form of ministry at some of her past churches.

The current group is spearheaded by Becky Baker and Earline Trinkle, both of whom possess a love of all things "fabric". Not only does this talented group create fabric quilts and squares, but also crochet (yarn) quilts.

Each quilt involves not only selecting and harmonizing various fabrics (colors and prints) but also choosing a pattern in which the fabric pieces are sewn together. The fabric is typically donated in bulk from thrift stores, and monetary donations designated for the Prayer Quilt Ministry are used to purchase supplies such as thread and backing.

Many hands come together to create these lovingly-made quilts, and the talents involved include not only the sewing or crocheting but also fabric cutting and ironing the fabric pieces.

The finished quilts provide an invitation for parishioners to tie a knot and say a prayer for the person or group of people who are receiving the quilt. Our quilt recipients have been very grateful and appreciative of the prayers, comfort and caring thoughts that accompany each quilt. Anyone can participate in the Prayer Quilt Ministry, and leaders Becky and Earline are happy to provide training and guidance for new quilters. If you would like to request a prayer quilt, please see the Church Office for request forms and information.

If you missed any of the previous parts (1. God's Work. Our Hands; 2. Food Pantry; 3. Social Ministries With a Walking Twist) call the office - we can email it... and there is more to come in 2018!

We, the staff of Gethsemane Lutheran Church, are wishing you a **blessed Advent, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!** It is an honor to serve you and we look forward to joy and happiness within our Christian family in the year to come.



"Oktoberfest Highlights"



A special thanks to Matthew Baker for stepping in as our grill master...



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Check out our Website
at
www.gethsemanesd.org



Gethsemane Lutheran Church...
grounded in the gospel, anchored in Word
and Sacrament, traditional yet creative,
seeking to be God's people in this time
and place.

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



A Labyrinth for prayer and
meditation is in our front
yard and available to all.

24/7

December Services

December 3

7:30 a.m.—Noon—Prayer Retreat

1st Sunday in Advent

Installation of the Call Committee

December 10

2nd Sunday in Advent

Congregational Meeting

December 17

3rd Sunday in Advent

Cantata

December 24—Christmas Eve

4th Sunday in Advent

9:00 a.m.—ONE Morning Service Only

6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

December 25—Merry Christmas

No Service Today

December 31—New Year's Eve

9:00 a.m.—ONE Service Only