

The Witness of Peace

What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. – Matthew 10:27

A couple of months ago I share with you that I was reading a book called *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, a reflection on the author's experience of encountering God in times of chaos, uncertainty, loss and fear. A couple of days ago, I read the quote from the Gospel of Matthew above. Once again I was struck by the reflection on darkness, on learning to listen with our eyes closed. It struck me as an apt metaphor for finding our way forward in this new year, in this new era, where so many foundations we took for granted seem to be crumbling, some faster than others.

In reflecting on this gospel verse, Miriam McKenny writes this: *When God chose to bring the light of the world to the earth on a night in Bethlehem from Mary's womb, God makes it clear that dark and light cannot exist without each other. Too much of one and not enough of the other withers and destroys. Going deeper into our hearts might find us needing to shine a light on unseen and unknown recesses. We can only do this after we take some time to adjust our vision to the dark to see what our heart has hidden, so that when the lights come on and temporarily blind us, we remember where to look.*

As the Church, as a congregation, as the Stillaguamish cluster, we are being invited by the Spirit into the dark and fertile ground of our creative imaginations. We are in the midst of a period of evaluation and exploration and experimentation regarding what our future ministry together might look like. Much is shifting, both internally and externally, and no one actually has the answers regarding the "right" way forward. We need to learn to go "deeper into our hearts", to explore those "unseen and unknown recesses" that lie beyond the "we have always done it this way" certainties and can lead us somewhere new.

A fellow pastor recently shared these words of Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ with her congregation: *Above all, trust in the slow work of God... only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be.* They stuck me as very apt for this process of routing around in the dark. So let us move forward, into the dark, together, trusting in God's work of reformation.

Welcome, new year! *Pastor Annette*

Dear Beloveds,

For this new year, the synod staff has adopted a working statement. We are excited to share it with you and we hope that you may use it and adapt it in your context and community:

“Trusting in the Spirit, we are walking together as God’s people so that all may discover and participate in what God is doing among us through Jesus.”

“Trusting in the Spirit...”

Martin Luther writes in the Small Catechism regarding the third article of the Apostles’ Creed,

“I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel ...” As people of God, we know that doubts, concerns, worry, frustration and so many other things get in the way of following Jesus. But even when we do not have the strength or even the faith to carry on, God still calls us through the Spirit. As we hear and live into the good news that God comes to us – daily – hourly – every minute of every day, we are carried through the Spirit.

...we are walking together as God’s people ...

As I have said before, the word “synod” comes from two Greek words: sun- ‘together’ + hodos ‘way’. I love the image of walking together – of helping someone up when they stumble, of holding hands when it is difficult to see the way forward, of cheering on those who are in the front and encouraging those who are in the back – one huge Jesus-following gathering. This, of course, does not mean that we always agree. And it does not mean that we won’t have hard conversations. All of this is part of being in relationship (if you don’t have conversation anymore, you don’t have much of a relationship). But together, we, as the people of God, walk together, knowing that we are on a journey with Christ, knowing that we are Holy Community together.

...so that all may discover and participate in what God is doing among us through Jesus.”

Have you ever seen a baby discover their hands for the first time? Suddenly they are moving them around and laughing, curling their fingers, inspecting their palms, sticking them in their mouths. The gift of hands was something they never even comprehended before and suddenly – there they are. Right in front of their eyes.

Have you ever heard someone who recently heard the good news of Jesus express their wonder and amazement at who God is and who they are in God’s eyes? They suddenly see the world, themselves, each other, and God in a totally new way.

Sometimes those of us who have been around for a while, we forget. We forget the wonder, the beauty, the sheer joy of experiencing and participating in what God through Jesus is doing in this world of ours. As people of God, we are called to open our hearts, open our very beings, to see and hear and feel and experience and participate in what God is doing among us through Jesus. We are called to laugh, to inspect, to taste what God is doing in this amazing world we have been given. And we are called to share the good news of what we see God is up to among us and the communities that surround us *so that* all may discover and participate.

Dear Beloveds, all of us on the synod staff are thankful for you as we live and dance in the Spirit, walk with you, and continue to live into the amazing grace of God through Jesus Christ our Savior.

In the Amazement of Epiphany,
Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee





North County Churches

Last month we began sharing with the congregation the monthly electronic newsletter from an emerging collaborative ministry of the Synod here in the Stillaguamish cluster, served by newly ordained Deacon, and member of the ELCA Deaconess community, Sr. Le Brandes. The following is a reprint of their opening article last October which introduces this ministry. Please take a look and begin to imagine how Peace can connect in! – Pastor Annette

What is "North County Churches"?

Right now, "North County Churches" is an idea and a question: "What could the ELCA Churches in the Stillaguamish Valley of North Snohomish County do together that would help us live into God's vision for all of us?" For the next 18 months we will be listening and experimenting with what God might be calling forth from us—maybe a network, maybe some new mission, maybe just better relationships between our churches. God is up to something, and we're just trying to figure out what it is!

Where did this come from?

The Lutheran pastors of the Stillaguamish Cluster have been talking for a couple of years about the challenges our small, rural congregations are facing—and how we might all benefit from working together in the future. It is clear that none of our congregations wants to merge or close. But we aren't sure of the best way to partner and so need to do some work to figure that out. Our cluster has received several grants for a two-year experiment to see if our congregations could benefit from working together. This newsletter is one part of moving this to a wider audience.

Which churches are involved?

Right now, the **ELCA Stillaguamish Cluster**: Faith (N Lakewood), Freeborn (Stanwood), Peace (Silvana), Camano, Josephine Caring Community (Stanwood), Our Saviours (Arlington), Bethlehem (Marysville), and the brand-new Stillaguamish Valley Dinner Church. These churches are involved (or not involved) in various ways at this point—this is just where we are starting to ask questions and start conversations. It may be that we eventually extend this network to non-ELCA congregations and/or a wider area.

What might partnership look like?

We already have one example. In 2017, our churches came together with a vision for shared youth ministry and outreach, and "North County Youth" was born. This allowed us to maximize our assets as small congregations (small numbers of youth, close relationships with caring adults) and to do together the kinds of events and activities that work well with only larger groups of youth and skilled leaders. The program has continued and adapted, and we are now building a multi-congregation faith-based mentoring program alongside it. This project has shown us that working together has amazing benefits—not just for programs but for the increased relationships, a sense of solidarity between leaders and congregations, and signs of hope for new life.

How do I find out more?

In addition to this monthly email, we are working on a website to be a "one stop" place for people in our area to find more about our churches, the outreach and mission work we are involved in, and to share information among ourselves. But until then, you can talk to Sister Le Brandes, the Deacon who is leading the listening project. Or you can ask your Pastor for more information about what we are doing as a Cluster in North Snohomish County.

NOTE: Look for the January newsletter in your inbox- featuring our own Mary Fuentes in the *All Are Called* section highlighting local lay ministries.

JANUARY WORSHIP

*We will continue with Parking Lot Worship
until further notice.*

January 3 Final Sunday of Christmas: last chance for your favorites carols!
Service of Holy Communion

January 6 **EPIPHANY SERVICE** (*online*) This pre-recorded Epiphany worship will be led by 13 of the bishops of the ELCA (those elected in 2019– including our own Bishop Shelley Byran Wee.) May this worship service bring God’s Spirit of surprise, grace and wonder to you. You will find the livestream of it on our Synod [Facebook page](#) at 5pm on Wednesday, January 6.

January 10 Service of the Word, celebrate baptism on the **Baptism of the Lord Sunday**.

January 17 Service of Holy Communion.

January 24 Service of the Word, with guest preacher, Chaplain Kristi Lambing

January 31 Service of the Word

November Financial Update:

Income to the General Fund totaled \$14,794.74 including the **Mission of the Month** collection for Mary’s Place of \$465.00.

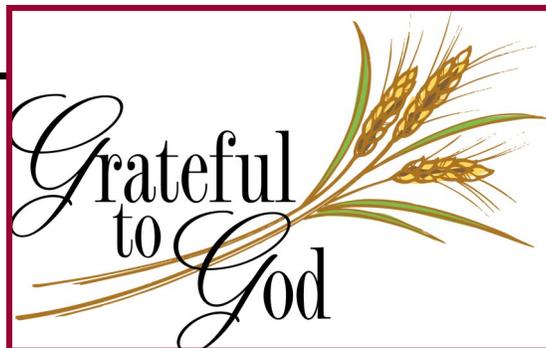
Expenses totaled \$17,245.53

Our **Mission Investment Fund** had a total of \$117,089.47 on November 30th after earning \$110.46 in interest at 1.144%.

2021 Budget \$194,582.00

2021 Average donation needed each month \$16,215.00

Thank you to everyone for your continued support!





A Blessing for the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6th

Here is a wonderful way to begin the New Year with a sense of well-being in our homes.

An old tradition from Europe is to bless one's house each year on the feast of the Epiphany (January 6th). It is very appropriate for families to do on New Year's Day as well.

As the Magi traveled on their journey, guided by a star, so too we ask God's protection and guidance in all our journeys. This is symbolized by a special blessing over our doorways, where all our comings and goings begin and end.

For the threshold blessing, take a piece of chalk and mark the top of the doorway this way:

20 + C+ M + B + 21 (the numbers of the new year)

This marking contains four crosses, representing the four seasons (thus the whole coming year.) The letters have an older tradition of representing the legendary names of the three Magi: Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar. There is also a more recent association with a traditional Latin blessing: *Christe mansionem benedica*, which means "Christ, bless this house."

Closing Prayer:

O God, you revealed your Son to all people

By the shining light of a star.

We pray that you bless this home

And all who live here

With your gracious presence.

May your love be our inspiration,

Your wisdom our guide,

Your truth our light,

And your peace our benediction;

Through Christ our Lord,

Amen.

(source: *Come, Lord Jesus*, by Rev. Susan Briehl)

Optional: You may wish to begin your blessing ceremony by walking through every room in your house, sprinkling water, lighting a candle or blessing with incense or a native herb like sage or cedar. Let each child do his or her own room. Invoke peace and joy to fill your household. Finish up with the threshold blessing above.

Blessings on the year ahead!

Youth, Family, and Community

We have just celebrated Hope, Unity, Love, Joy, and Peace during the Advent season and now we are in the Christmas season. We truly are in the most spectacular time of the year! During advent we spent some great Wednesday nights together surrounded by a beautiful tree and nativity while listening to Richelle play Holden evening prayer. I feel so blessed to be able to worship together with beautiful music in the dark and only have Christmas lights to light up the evening. We were able to hand out craft bags and teach the craft via FB and the church website. Thank you to all who have helped with the tree, lights, advent wreath, nativity and so much more.



During January we will be slowing down a little, but Phoebe and I hope to put out weekly craft ideas on FB and the church website. We have had fun coming up with ideas and practicing them together, to make sure we are giving enough instructions. If you ever have an idea or a question about one of the crafts please give us a call. We have been learned a lot of new craft techniques and that we have a lot more to learn.

During January I encourage you all to go outside and help clean up the area. Phoebe and I had been cleaning along side the Hevly road last spring and into early summer, but then the farm work took over our lives. Well I'm happy to say we are going to get back at it and we hope you will help clean up Gods creation with us.



Also this will be a lead into February for you all to start planning. Hunger strike will be on the first weekend and I've already been planning how we can do most of it virtually. We will still try to do part of the Saturday service project together, but that is a wait and see. Watch for more to come.

Yours, MJ

HUNGER STRIKE



Mission of the Month-Sarvey Wildlife

Our main goal is to provide food, shelter, and rehabilitation to orphaned and injured wildlife. This is just as comforting to the person who finds an animal in distress as it is to that animal. Having to leave an animal to die in pain and fear is incredibly disturbing, and having someone to turn to for help is a welcome relief. Our sole focus is Washington wildlife, and we accept all orphaned and injured wildlife from throughout the state.

Sarvey Wildlife provides programs for public and private schools as well as the general public and private organizations.

Sarvey is located at 13106-148th St. NE, Arlington, 360-435-4817



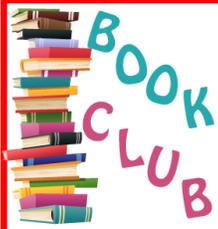
Peace Lutheran Church Women

Ladies, this past fall was indeed different, but we are still trying to find some normalcy to our church life. Both Lydia and Naomi circles continue to meet via Zoom and the prayer group continues to pray for those who have requested prayers and for our country and the leadership of our country. We ask you all to reach out to your neighbors and pray for the church leadership as they navigate these times difficult times.



Go Green Tip:

Everything under one lid. Save time and energy in the kitchen by preparing whole meals in one pot. For example, try boiling rice in a large covered pan, then adding a layer of vegetables, plus strips of meat, and steaming them. Dishes based on potatoes or pasta can be prepared in a similar way, as can traditional stews and pot roasts. Whatever the recipe, a one-pot meal will generally use about a third of the energy of a meal cooked in separate pans.



Book Club has been a great blessing for me. Gathering together after reading a book and trying to talk about it, but we end up talking about stories from the book and how they tie in with our lives. We share about how the book made us feel, the questions it raised with in us, and how relatable the book actually is. If you would like to join us for January's book club this month we will be reading *Hank and I* by Christina Rosmolen. You can find this book on Amazon in their used book section. From the back cover "Hank and I met when I was eight and he was nine. We stood there, staring at each other, not saying a word."

And so begins the true story of two Dutch children who met prior to World War 2 in Holland. While the war raged in their country and beyond, Hank and Christina grew up, and met again during the infamous Hunger Winter. They fell in love, married after the war, and began their life together as husband and wife.

But postwar Holland was no longer a land of plenty as all of Europe struggled to recover from the devastation brought on by the terrible war. America beckoned the young couple, and they immigrated to the state of Kansas in 1949, eventually settling in the state of Washington. There, they forged a new life together in a new country, raised their two daughters, and dreamed of many happy years together...

But their story ended too soon, and though they are separated by death, *Hank and I* reminds us all that their story-and our stories also-aren't really over; they're just waiting for the glorious final chapter to be written, when loved ones will meet up once more in heaven, never to be separated again.

I hope you will join us for this read along. *MJ*



January Birthdays

- 9 Jean Oien
- 11 Cheri Gonzales
Dave Tripp
- 15 Karen Fuentes
- 19 Mary Haugen
Becky Sather
Jordana Tyler
Shawn Moyer
- 20 Tammy Chase
- 25 Tegan Woodington
- 26 Kale Stewart
- 27 Darlene Mc Clay
Allyson Martinez

Office Closures

The church office will be closed
December 31st and January 1st.

Our Church Council Members 2021:

President— Larry Sather
 Vice-President—Al Camp
 Secretary—Sue Sather
 Treasurer—Cathy Pryor
 PLCW Rep.—Stephanie Bean
 Youth Rep.—Tammy Chase
 At Large: Dave Tripp
 Larry Bean
 Dennis Dicken
 Linda Legler
 Staff: Pastor Annette
 Mary Fuentes

January Food Bank Item:

SOUPS
CANNED OR ADD WATER



Monetary donations accepted as well.

Donations to the Arlington Food Bank

Thanks to a grant from Thrivent initiated by Tammy Chase we were able to purchase \$250 worth of food.

As of this printing there were cash donations from the congregation of \$260. Al & Judy called the food bank and were able to purchase the items they requested. The remainder was given to them as a check from the congregation.

We also received an assortment of canned veggies that will be taken to the food bank.

Thank you all!



January



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 New Year Office Closed	2
3 Last Sunday of Christmas 10am Worship	4 5:30pm Lydia Circle Zoom Meeting	5	6 5pm Epiphany On-line Worship service	7	8	9
10 Baptism of Our Lord 10am Worship	11	12	13 10am Naomi Circle Zoom Meeting	14	15	16
17 10am Worship	18 5:30pm Lydia Circle Zoom	19	20	21 6pm Book Club	22	23
24 10am Worship	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 10am Worship						

Peace Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 100
Silvana, WA 98287

WORSHIP OPTIONS AT PEACE

- We offer “Worship in the Home” resources that are either emailed or mailed to your home.



- We also have Sunday Worship at 10am in your car in our parking lot. Simply tune your car radio to listen to the service.
- Our website, www.plsilvana.org offers a link to our Sunday Worship, weekly reflections by Mary Fuentes and crafts with Phoebe.
- Facebook is another option. Most Sundays you can now watch the service live on Facebook or watch it recorded later.