



Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

December Lights

2021

Arlington Hills Lutheran Church "LIGHT FROM THE HEIGHTS"



Advent with the East Side Collaboration

Advent Series on Zoom

Wednesdays 7:00 p.m.

December 1, 8, 15, 22

On Wednesdays during Advent, the East Side Collaboration will be hosting an evening worship service on Zoom to help prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of the Christ Child. Holden Evening Prayer will guide our time together with Pastoral Per Halaas providing a short meditation each time. Tune in as you are able for a special time together remind ourselves to prepare the way in our hearts and minds for the coming Lord.

December

5 Pick Up Choir

14-16 Alley Shoppe Community Christmas Celebration

19 Lessons and Carols 9:30 a.m. worship service

21 -Jan 3 Alley Shoppe Closed

24 Christmas Eve Service 3:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

25 Christmas Day on-line with Amy and Adams

26 Sunday Service at Grace Lutheran Church 9:30 a.m.

1730 Old Hudson Rd, Saint Paul

27 Office Closed





Pastor's Paragraph

I recently met Carlotta. You may have benefitted from her even if you don't know it. She is a 74-year old fireball who goes to Cub Foods seven days a week to collect their past-sell dated bread and other baked goods and distributes them to various churches, homeless shelters, and food shelves. She does this work with the support of and on behalf of Amazing Grace Assemblies of God Church here on the East Side. As we talked after one of her deliveries to Arlington Hills, she shared her heart, both her sadness for the homeless and others outside systems of support, and her joy at the privilege of being able to help meet the needs of others for Jesus' sake.

As of this writing, I am looking forward to participating in the Ecumenical East Side Thanksgiving worship service. We will be meeting at St. Pascal Baylon Catholic Church with several other Lutheran churches, a Baptists church, and hopefully some others. Rather than highlighting our differences, I'm sure it will be a meaningful time of reminding ourselves of all that we hold in common in Christ.

Our ecumenical commitment to our sisters and brother in other denominations seems especially relevant in a time of a fractured and divisive country. I'm reminded of Jesus' prayer for unity in John 15 where he prays for all those who will follow him (including you and me!) asking of the Father "that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us." These are powerful and challenging words today.

With the beginning of Advent, the time when we wait for the arrival of the Christ Child, may we be encouraged to love our neighbors of other Christian faith traditions, that we all might be one in Jesus. And may we also love our neighbors of other religious traditions, and neighbors of no religious tradition, as well, to be a "Beacon for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ," Jesus Immanuel, God with us.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Mitch Kinsinger



Tears, Locked Doors, Doubts

Please read Daniel 9: 9 - 10, 1 Kings 17: 18, Luke: 13 1 - 9, John 9: 1 - 3, John 20: 1 - 29

After nearly two years of being affected by the covid pandemic we probably are increasingly concerned about its conclusion and its effects. N.T. Wright, author of the book *GOD AND THE PANDEMIC* states these questions (page 2) "Does anyone know what is going on? Why is this happening? Is someone trying to tell us something? What are we supposed to do about it?" Mr. Wright provides information in his book to help readers in their search for answers.

This is a quotation from page 8: "The greatest disaster in Hebrew history was the Babylonian exile. The prophets interpreted that event as punishment for Israel's sins, particularly worshipping pagan idols." The exile was punishment of the Hebrew nation. The remedy was repentance. Mr. Wright claims the clearest prayer for forgiveness is found in the passage from Daniel.

Individuals often assumed that personal disasters were individual punishments for their sins. Mr. Wright claims that the passage from 1 Kings shows that the death of a widow's son was not punishment. You'll find Mr. Wright's account on page 8 of his book.

In the chapter *Jesus and the Gospels* (pages 15 - 29) Mr. Wright states some interpretations of Jesus' actions and teachings. In the passage from Luke he called for repentance (pages 15 - 16) to avoid future disasters. In the passage from John, chapter 9. Jesus explains that the man was not blind because of his or his parent's sins, it happened so that God's works could be seen." Page 20 mentions several actions that Jesus did during his ministry, healing a leper, having dinner with the wrong people, forgiving the woman at the well, feeding large numbers of people. Page 21 states how we should interpret those and similar actions as a call to repentance.

Mr. Wright's message is that the covid pandemic is not punishment for national or individual sin. Pages 31 and 32 recommend replacing blame when reacting to disasters with answering three questions: Who is at risk? What can be done to help? and Who can help? On page 59 Mr. Wright interprets the first Easter (recorded in John, chapter 20) as answers to those questions. Mary Magdalene was weeping outside Jesus' tomb. Jesus suddenly appeared and told her to tell the disciples that he was alive. They were hiding behind locked doors. Jesus came to them, shared a meal with them and said "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." On page 60 Mr. Wright claims that Thomas' doubt is similar to present doubts: Is there any room for hope or faith? If we are isolated, is there any possibility for love?

GOD AND THE PANDEMIC contains this quotation from page 61: "When faced with a plague, the early Christians came to the aid of the ill and cared for them. Their strong faith in God's promises made them fearless. They gave comfort and aid to those whose families had abandoned them." A television news report broadcast shortly before this article was written described the lack of sufficient medical personal to care for patients and requested volunteers to release professionals for those duties. More suggestions are contain in chapter 5, beginning on page 52, of *GOD AND THE PANDEMIC*.

When you have completed reading books that you have borrowed please return them so they are available to others. *Thanks. Clair*



A Preview of The Book of John, Chapter 17

Hello Bible Study Friends! This month I will write a preview of John Chapter 17.

On Passover Night (starting with Chapter 13), we read Jesus instructing the disciples on his top priorities.

Well, instruction is over. Verse 1 reads, "When Jesus had finished saying all these things he looked up to heaven and said, Father, my hour has come." But, Jesus had one more task: PRAYER!

The Gospels tell us that Jesus prayed often (Luke 5:15: "Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer") But we don't always know what he prayed. In this prayer we hear Christ's intimate prayer with his Father for his loved ones. Some say it's the Holiest of HOLY prayers.

This prayer is also a model of what Jesus is doing NOW when interceding for us. Verse 20 reads "I am not praying for these alone, but also for the future believers who will come to me."

I sometimes wonder when we are in heaven; will we see the spiritual benefits of Christ interceding for us? It's an awesome thought, and very reassuring that Christ tenderly and lovingly prays for us. What a loving Savior who deliberately allowed the disciples and allows us today to receive comfort through His Prayer!

Hope to see you Monday, December 6th!

Valerie Robertson-Osmundson



**2021 CHRISTMAS
MEMORIAL GARDEN**

This year's Christmas Memorial Garden will again feature Christmas poinsettias. If you would like to memorialize or honor a loved one, please complete the information as indicated below. You also have the choice of donating toward other funds. Please check your choices below:

Flower Fund _____ **General Fund** _____

**Payment must accompany this form and be returned to the church office by
December 16. PLEASE PRINT**

Name of Donor _____ **Envelope #:** _____

In Memory of

PLEASE PRINT

In Honor of

Use back if needed.





Alley Shoppe

Christmas is coming to the Alley Shoppe December 13th-December 16th. We are excited to have a drive-up event this year. Over 3 days, about 300 preregistered families will be coming to our front doors to receive gifts for Christmas. It definitely looks like Santa's workshop in our rooms. As our congregation moves through our 'Year of Generosity' we will continue our collection of mittens and gloves for all ages throughout December. I am also asking you all to check your cupboards or local stores for any extra Christmas mugs that you would be willing to donate. We will fill them with candy, hot chocolate, and a gift card for the teenagers this Christmas. Please drop off the mugs in the church office by December 10. Many people have asked if we will be seeing any refugees from Afghanistan as they are resettling in Minnesota. The answer is yes. We have served new Minnesotans for all of our 51 years of operation. Thank you for all of your continuous care for our community members.



Arlington Hills Lutheran Church Council Minutes 10-21-2021

Members Present: Amy Adams- Westin, Diane Allmendinger, Karl Ebert, Tom Hanson, Ryan Henk, Pastor Mitch Kinsinger, Mary Kowitz, Cindie Peterson, Linda Strohkirch, Florence Rasmusson, Silvester Vicic
Members Absent: Anna Clarke, Jim Persoon

1. Vice President Mary Kowitz called the meeting to order.

11. Devotions: Ryan Henk

111. Consent Agenda: Motion was made by Amy Adams Westin and seconded by Cindie Peterson "to approve the Consent Agenda." **Motion Passed.**

1V. Old Business

* **Financial Reports** as of 9/30//21: **(Allmendinger)** Checking: \$15,946; Savings: \$21,689.42 A motion was made by Cindie Peterson and seconded by Ryan Henk "to "accept the financial report." **Motion Passed.** A motion was made by Ryan Henk and seconded by Cindie Peterson "to approach the members of MIF requesting that they do some exploratory research into ways to manage the PMP accounts as part of MIF." **Motion Passed.**

Pastor and Interim Pastor's Report: Both Pastors attended the Bishop's conference this week. Per Halaas has completed his first 2 weeks with AHLIC.

Church Sanctuary Services and CDC Guidelines (Kowitz) Masks continue to be required during services.

Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas time Services (Pastor Mitch) A meeting was held to discuss the Ecumenical Thanksgiving services at St. Pascal's to be held on Tuesday Nov. 23. Plans for Advent have not been finalized yet. Christmas Eve we will have 2 services: at 3:30 and 10 PM. These will be streamed.

On Christmas Day there will be a prerecorded service. On the 26th, a collaborative service will be held at Grace Lutheran church.

Year of Generosity: (Rasmusson) The theme for November is "being generous in giving thank" Advent bags will be distributed on Nov. 28.

Website Update (Vicic) The new website should be ready by the end of October.

Pastoral Intern Update (Kowitz) Per will complete his first rotation of churches in two weeks. After the next rotation the pastors will evaluate the schedule.

Synod Program-Planning Hope (Kowitz, Pr. Mitch) We need a chair for the program. Training for the chairs will be in January.

V. New Business

Sound System Update (Adams-Westin) Amy and Mark and Pastor Mitch tested the Sanctuary microphones and headsets. Mikes on the pillars were tested and one was replaced.

Stewardship Campaign (Kowitz) The December theme for the Year of Generosity is “be generous in giving’ and will be tied to the stewardship campaign.

Call Committee (Kowitz) The former call committee members and Pastor Mitch will be asked to meet to review and update our Mission Profile.

VI. Discussion/ Open Forum

V11. Next Meeting: November 16, at 6:30 PM at Arlington Hills

Order your Scrip gift cards for Christmas, many to choose from.



The Saint Paul Area Synod is dedicating Oct. 1 to May 14 as a time of remembrance, repentance and resolve to live in equitable partnership with neighbors of Native identity.

Tips from your Treasurer

The following is from the IRS.gov website. It is entitled: "Year end giving: Special tax deduction helps most people give up to \$600 to charity, even if they don't itemize."

What does this mean for givers to Arlington Hills Lutheran Church? It means that individuals can claim a tax credit of \$300 for donations given to an accredited charity (as AHLC is) and couples filing jointly can claim \$600! This deduction can be claimed even if you claim the standard deduction. We have amazing givers here and I want to make sure none of you miss out on this opportunity. It is only being offered for tax year 2021!

"Under this provision, individual tax filers, including married individuals filing separate returns, can claim a deduction of up to \$300 for cash contributions made to qualifying charities during 2021. The maximum deduction is increased to \$600 for married individuals filing joint returns. Included in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, enacted in March 2020, a more limited version of this temporary tax benefit originally only applied to tax-year 2020. The Taxpayer Certainty and Disaster Tax Relief Act of 2020, enacted last December, generally extended it through the end of 2021.

Cash contributions include those made by check, credit card or debit card as well as amounts incurred by an individual for unreimbursed out-of-pocket expenses in connection with their volunteer services to a qualifying charitable organization. Cash contributions don't include the value of volunteers services, securities, household items or other property.

Arlington Hills Lutheran Church (AHLC) is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization whose mission is to spread of the Word of Jesus Christ through word and deed and to promote the improvement of body, mind and spirit on the East Side of St. Paul and the greater St. Paul and Minneapolis metropolitan area. All tithes, offerings, or donations of any kind are tax-deductible under section 170(c)(2) and other relevant laws. The church will make every reasonable effort to honor designated gifts. In the event that a program, project, or giving purpose is over-funded or has concluded or is a program, project, or giving purpose not currently active in the church, your gift will be applied where it is needed most.

Arlington Hills Lutheran Church

Interim Pastor:

Rev. Dr. Mitch Kinsinger

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Admin.: Cheryl Hollman

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***Visit us at:* www.ahlc-stp.org**

**Alley Shoppe clients by appointments only
651-771- 65501 extension 100**

Church Calendar can be found

www.ahlc-stp.org

OUR MISSION: "To Spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to all in word and deed."

OUR VISION:

"Arlington Hills Lutheran Church community a Beacon for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ."

Companion Congregation – Idegenda,,
Tanzania

Online Giving
is simple and easy!