

CHURCH *Matters*



Glory Lutheran Church Newsletter - 01.21 Edition

GLORY LUTHERAN CHURCH

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

FEBRUARY 7, 2021

1:00 pm

VIA ZOOM

**Look for details on how to virtually join this meeting
by phone or computer in upcoming weekly e-news.**

Message from Pastor Markus

January 2021

“By Grace... for good works.”

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.” (St. Paul, Letter to the Ephesian 2:8-10)

Dear members of the Body of Christ,

There is nothing more central to the Christian community than these verses from the New Testament. By grace we have been saved, not by what we do or have done. Not by action, activism, or activity, but by Grace alone. No political engagement on the left or on the right; no banner, slogan, or affiliation; no leader, party, or court; no decision, victory or loss; no life-style, possession, or accomplishment - no “work” saves us. Nothing except the grace of God offered to us by Christ on the cross saves us. But God’s grace saves not only “us”; it also saves “them”. God’s grace saves everybody. Some Jewish Christians believed that circumcision was necessary in order to be saved, but Paul, himself a Jew, says, No. Both, Jews and Gentiles, are saved by grace alone. “Christ is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.” (Ephesians 2:14) Grace brings us into a community of peace with those different from us.

Many people have said “Good Riddance!” to 2020. They’re hoping for a better year 2021. In 2020 a deadly pandemic endangered our health and society in ways we couldn’t have imagined. The killing of George Floyd and other African Americans exposed serious racial disparities throughout the world. In Australia and the Northwestern U.S., wild fires ravaged the land, once again. An Australian company got the green light to strip-mine coal from Alberta foothills. So now its 2021, and we should be relieved. But what a start it’s been! The recent attack on the U.S. capitol, provoked by baseless claims of election fraud, brought the world’s largest and oldest democracy to the brink. Equality, truth and decency are under pressure like never before throughout the world.

What we do does not save us, but it does matter. What we say does not save us, but it does matter. Paul says we are “created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.” Faith accepts God’s grace and puts it into action. What we do (our “works”), we do as people who are a new creation. We serve in our communities of church,

continued on next page...

family, town, city, province and country faithfully, under the banner of love and grace, truth and justice, not with slogans of racial and political divisions. Our political engagement will reflect Jesus's humility, truth, integrity, unconditional love, and concern for all God's creatures. "My kingdom is not of this world," Jesus said to Pilate. And yet, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son..." Luther taught that God has two hands with which to govern: the church and the state. We should not mix them up. We should therefore not carry banners with Jesus' name into the halls of government. Nor should we carry national flags into our churches.

The eighth commandment says, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." What does this mean? "We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light." (Martin Luther, Small Catechism, explanation of the eighth commandment.) Increasingly, lies and slander are easily dished up, propagated and amplified with a click on a buffet of social media posts. This is poison for the soul. Christians must not eat at this buffet. We must stick to the facts of health science, social statistics and election results. Facts can be checked, either verified or falsified, but they should never be denied.

Many of us are anxiously holding our breath, wondering what 2021 has in store. Let us not forget that this year too is counted from the time of our Lord's appearance. This is God's year, Jesus' year, and it doesn't belong to any party, any disease, any catastrophe, any accomplishment, any loss. Let us remember that we are children of God who have the breath and Spirit of God. The Spirit's fruits are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. These are to be our way of life. As we celebrate the descending of the Spirit on Jesus at his baptism, we are reminded of our own baptism. We are the beloved of God, saved by grace through faith for Jesus' sake. Let us draw deep breaths of the grace of God, and let us carry on the good work of God in the world.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Markus



Council Highlights

January 2021

Annual General Meeting – Glory Lutheran Church's Annual General Meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 7, 2021** at 1:00 p.m.

In light of the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions enacted by Alberta Health Services on public gatherings, this meeting will be held on Zoom. (Please note that the Province of Alberta issued a Ministerial Order in April 2020 which suspends the obligation in section 25 of the Societies Act for in-person meetings. That Ministerial Order is still in effect.)

The AGM Report will be sent by mail or email to members of the congregation.

You are encouraged to read the report ahead of time and call Pat Becker if you have any questions or would like further information or clarification on any topic.

Suggestions on how to participate in the meeting will be offered to members who are not able to join the meeting via computer.

Watch for instructions in upcoming E-newsletters from Glory on how to join a Zoom meeting and what to do when you get there!

Nomination committee – Check out OPERATION NOMINATION in this newsletter!

Each year as approximately one third of council members complete their terms, the nomination committee begins the process of contacting members who feel a sense of call to let their name stand for membership on church council. If you are moved to be involved in the life of Glory in a way that supports the congregation in answering God's call, please contact Ellen Sitler or Rhonda Berg.

A note of gratitude from Glory's church council -

We would like to thank you, the members of Glory Lutheran Church, for your faithful giving during this pandemic! Your unwavering support and generosity mean that, financially, we have been able to meet our commitments for the past few months – including the land purchase and a reduction to the principal of the building mortgage!

The **pastor's discretionary fund** is a designated fund made available to the pastor to distribute for emergency financial aid. This fund is especially important considering the events of the past few months and the uncertainty going forward. *Please consider making a special offering designated for the discretionary fund.* Every donation will make a positive difference as we take care of our community ♥ .

Thank you for all the ways you find to stay connected with members of your Glory family – phone calls, email messages, meals made and shared, helping with all that still needs to be done at the church, contributions to online and in-person worship services, and especially your prayers!

Please don't hesitate to call if you have any feedback, questions or concerns.

Blessings, Pat, Council Chair

OPERATION



NOMINATION

The ankle bone is connected to the leg bone...the leg bone connected to the knee bone...the knee bone is connected to the....

The body of the Church has many parts. These parts are interconnected. **Your Glory Nomination Committee is looking for volunteers to join council** - to share in the joy of being elected by the congregation to provide guidance for a three year term; to deliberate and make decisions about the policies, practices and plans for the future of our church.

Council is guided by our constitution and is responsible for specific areas of church life -- such as Worship and Music, Education, Finance and Stewardship,

Congregational Life, Property and Facilities, Community Outreach, and Creation Care.

You may remember it! **Operation**, the startling childhood game!

Using a pair of tweezers to carefully remove the small plastic game piece and you dare not miss and hit the sides of the patient or “**Buzzzzz**” the alarm buzzes and Cavity Sam’s nose glows red!

Yes, the thought of being on Church council can be scary but **there is much joy in serving our Congregation!** It’s not so much the game process itself that reflects Council but where the pieces are located.



Ankle Bone Connected to the Knee Bone - CHAIR & VICE-CHAIR:

Our council chair and vice chair work tirelessly to support one another maintaining oversight of the council and have general oversight of the life and activities of the congregation. Together with council, they are responsible for ensuring that everything is done in accordance with the word of God, the faith and practises of the ELCIC, and the constitution, bylaws, resolutions, purposes and principles of Glory Lutheran Church.

Adam’s Apple - PASTOR: Pastor Markus is the voice of spiritual leadership and wisdom at Council meetings and participates in a consultative role. A Mutual Ministry committee provides care for the well-being of the Pastor.

Butterflies in the Stomach - WORSHIP & MUSIC: The name comes from the feeling in the stomach when nervous, excited or afraid. The Worship Committee works tirelessly to provide worshipful experiences for you through readings, music,

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the altar guild, children's stories and visual arts. It is a capacity within the church that took on a greater challenge this past year with online services.

Spare Ribs - FACILITY EVENTS: The Facilities Committee is responsible for the promotion and rental of the facility space. Our Mission - Reaching Up ... Reaching Out ... Reaching In . . . - is to share the love, truth and power of Christ with friends, strangers and the wider community. Our facility provides opportunity for others (both from our congregation and the community) to gather for many occasions.

Water on the Knee - CREATION CARE: The creation care team loves our earth and feels this life in the dirt under their bent knees! The blessing of a land site to honour and serve God goes far beyond the 44 acres and spreads into the areas such as recycling, conscientious use of lighting, etc.

Funny Bone - CONGREGATIONAL LIFE: This committee provides leadership in ministries which deepen the spiritual life and guide the care and well being of the congregation - a bent elbow to support evangelism, work groups, guest speakers and the many special events that bring joyous fellowship to our congregation.

Charley Horse - PROPERTY: The property committee works hard in all areas of our property making it safe for all to enjoy. With constant movement they grease their hip joints (and hopefully don't get a Charley horse) as they hop on and off the lawn tractors, climb the ladders to change a lightbulb or to paint the walls.

Wish Bone - STEWARDSHIP: Traditionally, the Furcula, or "wishbone" of a chicken may be used by two people for making wishes. The stewardship committee provides leadership in the management of the congregational funds. Yes, they are big wishers and we've seen their strong, confident financial understanding and creative energy result in the whole congregation stepping out in faith with our recent land purchase. This includes audits, maintaining the church funds, and budget preparation.

Bread Basket - COMMUNITY OUTREACH: In the game, a slice of bread rests in the "breadbasket" - slang for the stomach. This committee focuses on programs that will reach out to those both within and outside of our congregation. They focus on initiatives that extend our care in various ways to the less fortunate of our community or world.

Brain Freeze - EDUCATION: This committee has a special responsibility for providing leadership in adult and children's education - to assist persons to grow in grace, faith and knowledge. This includes Vacation Bible School, supporting, recruiting, motivating and equipping Sunday School teachers and superintendents.

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Writer's Cramp - SECRETARY: No writer's cramp here! It's a joy to serve Glory in this capacity; keeper of the minutes. No longer recorded with pen and paper but digitally processed ensuring the information of your congregation is accurately recorded.

Heart - ALL COUNCIL & COMMITTEES: In the game, the heart has a crack through it. The council needs the leadership of members who are willing, not only to give of their time and thoughtful opinion, but also to make, at times, difficult decisions and even risk a little criticism from other members. They need to be accountable to the

Church Body through scheduled and special congregational meetings. Council meets monthly, at emergency meetings should the need arise, and participate in an annual planning retreat to appraise the present state of the church and clarify its near and long range future plans.

Just as in the game of **Operation** you don't need to be a specialist. Prospective council members need not have experience in church leadership. (Here is where you get that experience.) There is no gender or age requirement (other than being confirmed and with mature judgment). There is no education, career or financial qualification. Genuine faith and willingness to speak and work for the glory of God is what we need and ask for.

If you are asking yourself "*Should I consider being a candidate for council?*", the honest answer is - yes, if you are reading this and the above terms seem to fit you.

Church members who have a genuine love for Jesus Christ and his church; who are concerned about God's will and the mission and direction of their church; and who are willing to speak up and work for the betterment of this community, the family of faith called Glory Lutheran Church, are all potential candidates for council.

Feel free to talk with anyone on the Congregation's Nomination Committee for more information. We will be reaching out to several in our congregation to ask for your consent to have your name stand to be elected to Glory's Congregational Council.

Many blessings,



Rhonda Berg (780-449-6682)

Ellen Sitler (780-604-5970)

Pastor Markus (780-416-9594)

Pat Becker (780-998-5345)

Thank you



*with sincere
gratitude*

Thank you to everyone who prayed and sent condolences when Donna's Dawson's sister Marlene passed away on December 4th. Donna received many calls, e-mails and cards which were passed on to Deb, Shane, Jonathan and Ava in Calgary. They were comforted when Pastor Markus mentioned Marlene's family during prayers in the online service following her death.

There are not enough words to fully express our heartfelt thanks for the sympathy, love and support you have extended to our family during this time of loss.

*Debbie, Shane, Jonathan & Ava
Gord, Donna & Family*



Thanks!

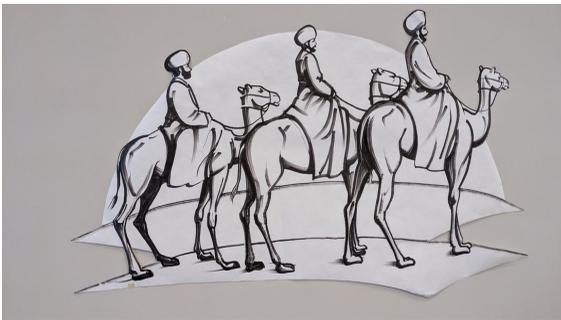
Thank you to Kirk, Dave, and Lynn (our property committee) for replacing the lights on the outside walls of the church. LED fixtures and bulbs were used, thereby reducing our electrical bill and providing more light. Next up – replacement of parking lot lights.

THANK YOU to the **many** members of Glory who contributed to the online Christmas service in December! There was wonderful participation by members of the congregation: Pastor Markus, Kids Church families, readers, musicians, dozens of photos taken of Glory members holding and/or lighting candles, as well as photos of the sanctuary and the prayer manger outside. Thank you, as well, to all who worshiped together online!

We are grateful to **Dreamcatcher Nature Assisted Therapy Association** for welcoming our Kids Church families to their ranch in order for videos and photos to be taken with their animals for the online nativity.

Thank you to **Dani Montoya and Mark Becker** for taking photos and video and to **Dani** for photo/video editing and for putting together the service.

Almost 30 DVDs of the Christmas service were delivered to those in our congregation who do not access services online. Thank you to **Sebastian** for burning these and for **council members** for delivering them!



Art by Mike Lee

Prayer Manger & Lights

Message From Pastor Nickel

Hi, For us and our JOURNEY/Spiritual Journey using the CHURCH YEAR, “Christmas” in the Church Year ended with Epiphany Day, Jan.6, while it began on the 6th for our Orthodox friends. EPIPHANY season follows.

But first, for all of the Christmas messages I heard this year, the heart of one stands out in Ava’s and my mind –

Christmas is usually a noisy party. So we can actually use a bit of silence to hear the voice of love – within Christmas – and within you.

“Christmas is you when you decide to be born again each day and let God into your soul.

- + The Christmas Tree is you when you resist vigorous winds and difficulties of life.
- + The Christmas Decorations are you when your virtues are colours that adorn your life.
- + The Christmas Bell is you when you call, gather, and seek to unite others.
- + You are also a Christmas Light when you illuminate with your life the path of others with your kindness, patience, joy, and generosity.
- + The Christmas Angels are you when you sing to the world a message of peace, of justice, and of love.
- + The Christmas Star is you when you lead someone to meet the Lord.
- + You are also the Wise Men when you give the best you have no matter to whom.
- + Christmas Music is also you when you conquer the harmony within you.
- + The Christmas Gift is you when you are truly friend and brother to every human being, when you are truly a friend and sister to every human being.
- + The Christmas Card is you when kindness is written in your hands.
- + The Christmas Greeting is you when you forgive and re-establish peace, even when you suffer.
- + The Christmas Dinner is you when you share hope to the poor who live by your side.

You are Christmas Night when, humble and conscious, you receive in the silence of the night the Saviour of the World – without noise or great celebration.

You are a Smile of Trust and tenderness in the inner peace of a perennial Christmas that establishes a kingdom within you.

-- 25 Dec.2020, Pope Francis,

And, this EPIPHANY Season within our CHURCH YEAR which helps guide OUR JOURNEY OF FAITH and Spirituality --

EPIPHANY is the Time of the Wise Men [Have Camel, Will Travel].

The Wise Men were the first Gentiles (non-Jews) who recognized Jesus as King.

The word, Epiphany, means: to appear, to make known, to reveal, in the original Greek.

We Christians from the nations of the world recall events from both Old and New Testaments in which the Lord's Light is revealed in His Servant-Son, enlightening our lives.

EPIPHANY

- + tells about God revealing His Son to the whole world as loving Saviour. Therefore Epiphany is a time to renew our giving of the gift of God's love through Christ in our words, deeds, possessions.
- + The Star in the East, the Light of World – calls us all to let the light of Christ shine in your life and be seen by others – to be willing to share your Story of His Story in your life with those around you.

A Blessed Epiphany,

~Gary Nickel

Epiphany

Live Nativity Photos



The Likely Angels



Elliot



Lonnor

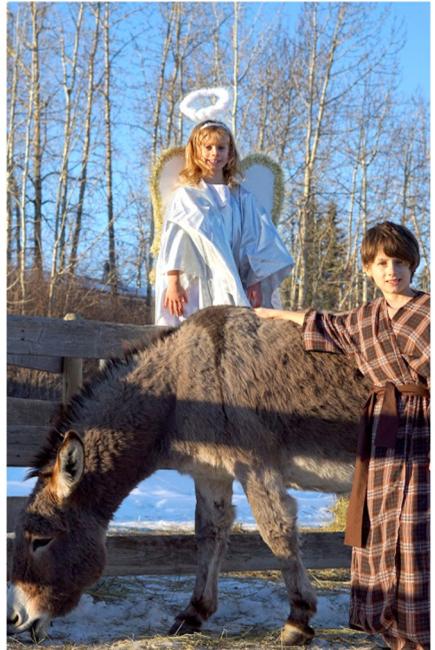


The Jones'

Photos taken at
 Dreamcatcher
 Nature Assisted
 Therapy
 Association by
 Dani Montoya for
 Glory's online
 Christmas Service
 Live Nativity
 feature. ✨



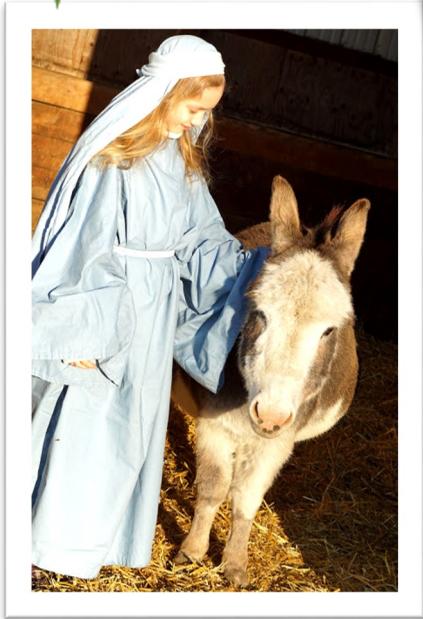
The Ashtons



The Boisverts



Sophie



The Kalerantes'



The Ronskos





GOOD NEWS BY MARK - *Announcement*

There is lots of bad news on TV, in the papers, on the internet, on Facebook. There have been countless unprecedented developments in politics and society, the environment, public health, and other areas. Bad news makes headlines and it is easy to think that that's all there is.

Good News comes our way every week as we read and study Scripture. Today I'm inviting you to join me and people of Glory Lutheran Church to immerse ourselves in the Good News according to Mark. Mark lived at a time of social unrest and political upheaval not unlike our own. Politics, economics, and religion were volatile in first century Palestine. Armed rebel factions, Roman and Jewish leaders, and various religious parties were competing with each other. Jerusalem was controlled by brigands, besieged by the Romans and finally captured under the commander Titus. The great temple was desecrated and, in 70 AD, destroyed. It was never been rebuilt. These were the headlines Mark the evangelist would have seen as he penned the Gospel. Gospel means good news. Join me in finding out why Mark's good news is as important for our time, as it was for his own.

This coming Tuesday, January 19th at 7 pm, I will host a ZOOM meeting to give a brief introduction to Mark the author, the historical background of the gospel, and an overview of its content. You will also be able to **join a Facebook group to post comments and discuss** with others in the group. This group will be private, which means you'll be admitted by request only.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82464629611?pwd=WDQrRC9JbmtJVjZ0aCtxL3lWejVXUT09>

Meeting ID: 824 6462 9611

Passcode: 314826

Request to Join Private Facebook Discussion Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/goodnewsbymark>

~ Pastor Markus

Peace in Pandemic

When the kids were first sent home in March from school, our family made a HOPE sign for our window that faces the street. Little did we know how long that sign would sit in the window or how our hope and faith would be tested.

We pray for those who are isolated or who have lost a loved one in this difficult year when we gather as a family for supper. We thank God for all those who are working - no matter their job - putting themselves out there, to make sure we all get whatever we need – medical care, groceries, gas... whatever it may be.

Of course, we miss doing our usual activities and seeing the people we care about, but we have been pleasantly surprised by several silver linings throughout the past year.

As a family, we prayed and promised each other that we would always do our best to make the most of the situation. We have been pleasantly surprised at the many wonderful gifts that have come out of this time amid the restrictions.

Mike and I spent a week of vacation time together at home with Connor coming and going from school. This is something we would never have done otherwise, and we plan to do it again.

We have made a point of slowing down and taking stock of what is truly important and, although we've always been fairly good at that, it's been great for Connor to see that we're being VERY safe but trying to enjoy life and the blessings God provides instead of wringing our hands anxiously at every turn.

We look forward to online church - every week. We wear our pjs, have Dad's awesome pancakes, use shakers/instruments provided by Connor and sing like nobody's listening. It's a sight to behold and we love every minute.

Connor always says the Offertory Prayer and we all work together to set up Communion. We feel closer sharing Communion at home and we have found that, watching the service together, we sometimes pause the service and discuss things.

Of course, we miss Praise Band, Choir, Kids' Church and HUGS from church friends every week but we have also been blessed with a growing closeness within our family, me with my parents and with my cousin. We have reached out to people we haven't spent as much time with as we might have liked and rekindled connections.

So, yes, COVID is unspeakably terrible. However, so many extraordinary

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things have happened, are happening... little blessings in our lives that we are so grateful for. This year we made a Jesse Tree and Mike and I made the ornaments. These are the things we often say we don't have time for and dismiss. Ann Voskamp's ***The Greatest Gift*** has been a wonderful addition to our Advent tradition this year.

We think of you all – often. I pray that God's peace washes over you and unexpected blessings find you amidst the chaos of this pandemic.

~Caitlin Havens



Glory Lutheran Church Fundraising Campaign

Fulfilling God's Vision for our Land: The Next Chapter

Dear Glory Family,

We are pleased to announce that the land purchase, placement of the mortgage with Servus and the payout of the ELCIC mortgage are now complete! The support of our members and the work of the stewardship and fundraising teams in making this happen in a very difficult time is remarkable!

On behalf of Church Council, Stewardship Committee and Fundraising Sub Committee, thanks to everyone for their efforts!

Hope you had a Blessed Christmas, please stay safe and all the best in 2021!

Aroon Sequeira



Little Christmas treat bags for Glory 50 Plus folks who have been unable to meet for the entire year 2020.

Glory 50 Plus sends their greetings for a blessed Christmas and a healthy and Happy New Year.





Bishop's Message - January 2021

Dear Beloved of God –

I've been thinking lately about the conclusion of the liturgical year and the coming New Year in which this article will be read.

The Reign of Christ includes the gospel reading from Matthew 25:31-46. The familiar passage of the sheep and the goats. Both those identified as sheep and those named goats are ... surprised: "When was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison?"



Surprised by their failure to recognize the Son of Man. Surprised that the Son of Man is present in the face of the poor, the imprisoned, and all who are in need. Neither sheep nor goats expected the Son of Man to be present and available in the face of "the least of these." Each imagined that the Son of Man would come in strength, power, might, and glory. Yet Jesus reveals that he comes in weakness, vulnerability, and brokenness.

Surprise!

God didn't come to us in Athens or Rome or Washington or Beijing or Moscow, or any other seat of power. Surprise! God came to us in lowly Bethlehem as a vulnerable infant. And God didn't conquer the world through military strength, but through the scandal, shame, and pain of the cross. And even more, the God we know in Jesus welcomed the child, the woman, the orphaned, the sick, the lame, the outsider. To these he showed compassion, grace, mercy, love.

The God we know in Jesus is revealed not in power but in vulnerability, not in might but in brokenness, not in judgement but in mercy.

And God continues to come where we least expect God to be...in the plight of the homeless, the poor, the needy, the refugee, the imprisoned.

And, in those who work with great courage and confidence for justice for all. In those who seek reconciliation with First Nations peoples. In those who yearn and work for a place and a space of welcome for all. In those who seek to be bearers of God's grace, mercy, and love.

And to us, and to all who are weak and vulnerable, worn and wounded, broken and hopeless. To all of us affected in one way or another by the roller-coaster ride of the pandemic.

In the midst of this time of crisis, this gospel reading draws our attention this New Year to what might be a surprise: that God regularly, even relentlessly, shows up where we least expect God to be. To surprise us, disarm us, overturn our expectations and judgements. God invites us to see and to welcome with open hands and lives God's surprising and unimaginable grace, mercy, and love.

Perhaps this text isn't as much about us – sheep and goats – as it is about God, and about who God is and where God is present. God is not only at the end of time waiting on a royal throne in glory, but right here, right now, in the face of those around us, with us – each of us – in the middle of this pandemic.

It may not be where we expect God to show up, but it is just where we need God to be.

Surprise! Blessed New Year!

In Christ Jesus –Shalom, +Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Landscape/Memorial Garden Update

I am pleased to inform you that the master design for the Memorial Garden is completed! Dora Berry, of Nature's Elements, has provided us with a beautiful plan for the Memorial Garden. Her design incorporates numerous types of coniferous and deciduous trees, shrubs, flowers and benches. Barrier free pathways and sitting areas make it accessible to all. The overall design provides an environment for meditation, prayer and remembering loved ones in an attractive, peaceful garden setting. The Memorial Garden will allow for burial of ashes and scattering of ashes. A columbarium will not be available.

The committee is excited to share the design with the congregation and look forward to the time when we are again able to gather in the church. We will follow Alberta Health Services recommendations in order to ensure the safety of everyone during this pandemic.

The committee is now moving on to garner quotes from landscape companies for the development of the memorial garden. This will take a number of weeks. We are also continuing to look at the logistics and operation of the Memorial Garden. Beginning in April, weather permitting, the Community Garden Committee plans on relocating the community garden to the south side of the church.

On behalf of the Landscape/Memorial Garden Committee,
Rita

Tuesday - Friday, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Please note that Heidi may be working from home due to the pandemic. Email and phone calls will continue to be answered during office hours. Please call the office if you would like to visit the church.

OFFICE
HOURS



GLORY
LUTHERAN CHURCH

22577 Hwy 16,
Sherwood Park, Alberta,
T8A 4T7



Phone: 780.416.9594 E-mail: glorylc@telus.net
Pastor Markus Wilhelm E-mail: pastormarkus@glorylutheran.ca
Check out our Website: www.glorylutheran.ca