

# CHURCH Matters



Glory Lutheran Church Newsletter - 12.22 Edition

## 2022 ABT SYNOD YOUTH GATHERING

November 25-27, 2022  
at Mulhurst Camp

+RECLAIM +REBUILD +RECREATE

Our three confirmands: Aiden Jones, Owen Jones and Maria Takenaka, along with Pastor Markus and our new Youth Leader (joint with Mt. Olivet), Elizabeth DeCorby, attended this retreat.



# Message from Pastor Markus

December 2022

## “Un-Stable Housing” – or – “Danger in the Manger”

The Holiday Season is in full swing with its usual frenzy of decorating, shopping, singing, baking, eating and drinking, parties, visiting and entertaining, and many other wonderful traditions we have come to expect. The weather in our province has been cold and snowy, lending a sense of appropriateness and even urgency to our seasonal preparations and justifying the purchase of that new down jacket or pair of boots. We may not be in danger of freezing to death without them, but it is nonetheless comforting to assure ourselves of the fact.

The infant Jesus, the gospel of Luke tells, was laid in a “manger”, a feeding trough where animals eat hay or whatever their humans feed them. Mary and Joseph could find no other place in Bethlehem, the town to which the government had ordered them to go to register. This obedient and highly expectant couple was temporarily homeless. Mary gave birth surrounded by humans and animals, in a place unimaginable to the average Canadian. The first to visit her and Joseph and the infant Jesus were “certain poor shepherds” who were “living in the field keeping watch over their flock by night”. They were certainly poor, and yet certain that the infant in the manger was the Son of God, the Messiah.

Jesus was born in a stable, so the artists imagine it. Although that manger could have been outside, or under a lean-to. Archeologists believe it may have been in a house, because animals were often sheltered alongside humans. In any case, I think we all agree that the son of Mary, the Son of God, and his parents deserved better.

And so do the Mary’s and Josephs treading our streets this winter and the children they carry. Like Jesus’ parents, they do not have much choice. The laws written by the powerful coerce them. Homes are condemned, prices inflated, rents raised, social supports lowered, evictions served, camps demolished, private properties fenced off. No room in the inn. Even on a sidewalk, a steep hillside, a busy street corner, a tarp, a mat on concrete there is no room, as they will face eviction even there. This is not a tragedy, or an emergency, or an embarrassment. It is a catastrophe, according to a recent article in the Edmonton Journal. I would add, it is a sin.

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Ten square feet of side walk, a tent, a tarp, a mattress may not constitute a home for us, but it does for some. People are not homeless, they are made homeless. The manger was Baby Jesus' home. The sin is that his home continually gets taken away. The law does not allow for mangers to be used as cribs anymore. That those whose choices have been reduced to tents on side walk or in bushes, to shelter floor or prison, are even deprived of these poor choices. Woe to us who are well housed and warmly clothed, if we do not allow the poor to use mangers for beds. But this is what is happening.

In one of the Dene languages spoken in Alberta, the expression used as a greeting literally means "There is room". Ho'ah! the Dene say to welcome somebody. It is what they probably said when the European fur traders and settlers arrived in their territories. Ho'ah, Welcome, there is room! And so we built our homes here, and our farms, and our factories, and our roads and sidewalks. European civilization took possession of this land and made itself at home with all their cultural, economic, and entertainment venues. In the 1970's we built the Northland's Coliseum. This hockey stadium, built for our then famous team, is named after the Roman emperor's entertainment hall in Jesus' day. Northland's Coliseum has been sitting empty for several years now. It is kept heated and fully functioning, while owners, politicians and administrators are taking their sweet time deciding what to do with it. It would supposedly take tens of millions to demolish this functioning hall of former champions. What if the city or the province, you and me, invested a fraction of that money to convert this building into a culturally appropriate and safe place to gather and live for the people whose forebears said "Ho'ah" to ours? Mary and Joseph with the Son of God and many indigenous members of their family are languishing at its doors. It is a sin not to let them in. It is not a question of whether there is room to house everybody adequately. There is of course. The question is whether there is room in our hearts, in the hearts of the emperor, the administrator, the owner. It is time to open the doors of our hearts and homes.

Pastor Markus

## **ADVENT IS**

...to know Him as He is today, not as a manger-babe, but as the One who lived and died and lives again, enthroned and reigning in our hearts.

## **ADVENT IS**

...to love Him and His Word above all else, and wanting to tell others everywhere of God's love for us through Jesus Christ who brought us the tidings of redemption. - Gary

*You are invited to participate in a*

# **REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR**

<b>1</b> Cereal	<b>2</b> Peanut Butter	<b>3</b> Juice	<b>4</b> Boxed Potatoes	<b>5</b> Macaroni & Cheese	<b>6</b> Canned Fruit
<b>7</b> Canned Vegetables	<b>8</b> Pasta	<b>9</b> Canned Tuna	<b>10</b> Granola Bars	<b>11</b> Apple Sauce	<b>12</b> Canned Sweet Potatoes
<b>13</b> Canned Stew	<b>14</b> Canned Beans	<b>15</b> Crackers	<b>16</b> Rice	<b>17</b> Oatmeal	<b>18</b> Canned Tomatoes
<b>19</b> Spaghetti Sauce	<b>20</b> Chicken Noodle Soup	<b>21</b> Tomato Soup	<b>22</b> Canned Corn	<b>23</b> Canned Chickpeas	<b>24</b> Cookies

Rather than the traditional opening of a door every day for a chocolate or beauty item, the reverse advent calendar adds a food item to a basket/bag every day of Advent. At the end of the month, bring it to Glory where we will donate it to the Strathcona Food Bank!

Alternatively, gift cards to Walmart/Superstore can also be brought to the church to be donated.

The Food bank anticipates great struggle in our community for months to come with many experiencing poverty, homelessness and hunger. Let us take time to help those in need during this special time of year.

## Council Highlights

December 2022

Winter has well and truly arrived with plunging temperatures and soaring costs everywhere we turn. There are many individuals in our communities today who are struggling to make ends meet. Council therefore decided that, this year, rather than feeding ourselves at an Advent Dinner, we would focus on feeding others. In addition to the lunches and fundraising done by our outreach committee this Fall for the Inner City Pastoral Ministry, we are inviting everyone to participate in the Reverse Advent Calendar collection of food items for Strathcona County Food Bank. Please see the posters or our website for suggested food items that can be added to a bag or box each day. Alternatively, you can contribute by purchasing gift cards for Walmart or Superstore to help those in need.

As you may be aware, Glory's next Annual General Meeting is coming up on the 5th of February. Council is busy right now with budgeting and planning for the upcoming year. If there are ministries or events that you would like us to consider allocating funds for in the new year, please contact me or another member of council and we will add your suggestions to our discussions. We will also be looking for members of our congregation who may be interested in serving on council in 2023. If you would like more information, please speak to a member of our Nominations committee – Rhonda Berg, Donna Dawson, or Ellen Sitler.

Wishing you all a blessed Christmas season!

Rose Schlegl  
Council.chair@glorylutheran.ca

### **ADVENT PROCLAIMS THE REDEMPTION OF ALL THINGS.**

True, or false?!?

True because it refers to Jesus redeeming all things.

At Christmas, our focus is upon the coming of Our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

From our perspective, Jesus Christ has of course already come.

Were we, and are we, ready?

--Gary

# GLORY 50 PLUS



**Glory 50 Plus** is going out for their **Christmas brunch** after worship on Dec 11<sup>th</sup> to Smilie's restaurant in Sh. Park. Jean Poots and Maureen Wesner from Group 1 are taking names and collecting money in advance. The cost for this event including the buffet, taxes, and gratuity is \$36 per person. All who are 50 Plus are welcome to join the group for this event.

## **AN ADVENT TEXT: GOD'S HOME**

"The home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them. [Rev.21:3]

Pointing to that Day, Jesus says, "Keep awake."

[Awake is a posture of both the future and of hope-fulness.]

--Gary



# **CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES**

## **November 27 - December 18 - Advent Services**

In-person and online worship continues,  
with Advent Candle Lighting - Sundays 10:30 am

## **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

Saturday, December 24, 4:00 pm

## **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Communion**

Saturday, December 24, 7:00 pm

## **December 25 - Christmas Day**

Sunday Worship with Holy Communion 10:30 am

**God's blessings to all this Advent Season!**

"**ADVENT** tells us..., "Your redemption is drawing near!" It is already knocking at the door, don't you hear it? it is breaking open its way through the rubble and hard rock of your life and heart...Christ is breaking open his way to you. He wants to again soften your heart...rescue us from the prison of our existence, from fear, guilt and loneliness."

[Redemption via Jesus calls us to refocus our lives to the direction of God and His Love for you and me.]

"Christmas will come either with us or without us. It is up to each individual to decide what it will be."

"Something is at work that makes it possible for us not to close our hearts but to open up to Him who wants to come in."

*--Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lutheran Pastor and Martyr; from an Advent Sermon.*

# Our *Spiritual* Journey

*A Message from Pastor Nickel*

Some have asked if it ends with our physical death or at the End of the Age. Our CHURCH YEAR's last Sundays, just past, for example, talked about saints and eternal life, and an End of the Age.

As Lutherans, we don't hear much about such things unless we have friends in other church groups. Why is that?

Well, the Bible tells us to continue on with our lives, to continue our Journey of Faith, our Spiritual Journey. Don't waste time guessing when the end may come or through which events it may happen. Don't let your lives be focused on eternal life or what it will look like. These other things can get in the way of, or side-track, our Spiritual Journey.

For example, instead be more focused on living with God's love and sharing it with others through what we do with our lives.

At the same time, the Bible reminds us that the world is often more turbulent and hazardous than we expect or think it is, so it reminds us to: watch out, be careful, draw upon God's help and guidance, and do not be weary of doing what is right.

This reminds me of when I was in college. A classmate had a large sore on his arm. We all kept encouraging him to get it looked after. But he said he was too busy trying to get people to come to his church – because his church told him that, more importantly, the end of the world was coming very soon – so, no time for such things as doctors. [Not a good idea!]

There is a whole industry out there trying to interest us in knowing when the end of the world will happen. Some tell of a "thousand years" of events what will happen when the end comes – but the Bible does not say when, or how. These "thousand years" are seen by some to happen before other events, while others believe the "thousand years" will happen during these other events, and others believe the "thousand years" will happen after these other events. [It's called, "pre-millennial", "millennial", and "post-millennial".] Of course, not all three can be right.

A neighbor's son showed me a Bible that has more words about the end of the world than they do actual words of the Bible!

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I was in the Air Force during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the closest the world has come to nuclear war. Was working the weekend it “all went down” on the flight line for first-responding alert combat aircraft. At one point our big base had a military plane landing or taking off every few minutes. Some thought at first the conflict between China and India was the problem; others, Cuba and Russian missiles and us; or other places? We didn’t know; we couldn’t see the direction the planes were flying; only those at the top knew what was happening and when. Similarly, we need to avoid second-guessing what only God knows will happen.

The Bible warns against interpreting signs and events; for example, “nation rising up against nation”. Some Christians take sides with certain Middle Eastern nations over other nations because these Christians hope that the end of the world will come sooner through certain nation conflicts. [Want to know more about this? The Lutheran Church in Jordan & The Holy Land, which includes Christian Palestinians under Israeli control, can help give you the facts, as well as our Lutheran World Federation.]

And there’s a great industry devoted to trying to figure out WHEN the end of the world will take place according to current world events. Yet the Bible’s Gospel says that when we hear of such things we are not to trust those signs. The problem with these “signs and wonders” is that they are created by people trying to interpret when the end of the world will come in order to help leave the problems of this earth and be in heaven with Jesus sooner.

Even whole churches have been built in part on WHEN the end of the world will come. Two churches said “1844”, then one said a couple of other dates. But it didn’t happen as predicted. In the end, they tried again and said that date was “the beginning” of the end of the world. [Can’t argue with that!?!]

I prefer to focus instead on God’s love through Jesus Christ [timeless], and our ministries to one another here and now with the Holy Spirit’s help.

If you have questions, feel free to ask... ~Gary Nickel

God of light, your righteousness shines brightly in a world of darkness. Guide your young people as they walk through this world. Preserve us all from trusting in empty hopes and promises, and let your Word lead us ever closer to you. Amen.

# Prayer



## Partner Ministry

**Prayer Partners is starting up again.**

On week 1 and week 2 (November 27th and December 4th), those interested will fill out an information slip (name, address, birthday and anniversary)

On week 3 and week 4 (December 11th and December 18th), they will draw a name and that will be their prayer partner for the coming year.

Men and women as well as confirmation-aged youth are all welcome to participate.

~Donna Dawson



## Prayer Chain Ministry

**Did you know we have a Prayer Chain at Glory?**

**The Prayer Chain at Glory is available to anyone wishing to send or receive prayer requests. It is private and confidential. Members with or without e mail are welcome.**

**Please contact Donna Dawson at [dawsondl@shaw.ca](mailto:dawsondl@shaw.ca) for details.**

# Help Wanted

Thank you for adding your name to the Service Ministry sign up list on the easel in the narthex for the following roles: Greeter, Usher, Communion Assistant, Reader, Social Ministry (Coffee Maker). Each one of you makes such a loving contribution to our Sunday worship.

If you are interested in serving as an **usher, communion assistant, reader** or **coffee maker** for the first time, we are thrilled and will offer guidance on how to feel comfortable in the role you choose.

Speak to any of the following:

Esther Madsen, Gaylene Sitler, Rose Schlegl, Liz Wood, Pat Becker.

## *New Volunteer Coordinators*

Thank you

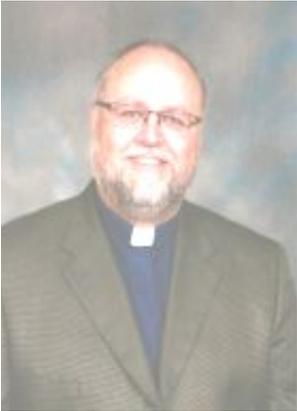
**Glenda Nelson & Esther Madsen**  
for volunteering to be our new service  
volunteer co-organizers.

There are still several spots that need to be filled  
in December, please sign up in the Narthex or  
contact Esther or Glenda if you are able to help.

[esther.m.madsen@gmail.com](mailto:esther.m.madsen@gmail.com)

OR [mk.glenda@gmail.com](mailto:mk.glenda@gmail.com)

*A digital process for signing up is in the works.*



## Bishop's Message - December 2022

Dear Beloved of God -

Do you have a relative who keeps track of the family tree? Someone who knows who all the second cousins are, what became of Aunt Anna, and where your middle name comes from? Someone who knows the heroes, the tricksters, and the secrets? Maybe that person is you. If you are a genealogy adventurer, you are going to love the genealogy according to Matthew 1:1- 17.

Matthew is getting ready for a birth. To prepare, our host has pulled out charts and yellowed family photos to demonstrate that this baby comes from an established bloodline tracing all the way back to Abraham, right down to a carpenter named Joseph. It is quite a feat, really, diagramming forty-two (42!) generations of a family tree.

As Matthew moves through his chart, a pattern unfolds, "Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel." So-and-so was the father of so-and-so, and on and on. Traditionally, one's lineage was traced from fathers to sons. Curiously, wonderfully, Matthew's genealogy breaks this cadence and includes the names of five women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary, each with a story to tell. Several of the women were gentiles, some had experienced great trauma, and each was tenacious in their loyalty to Yahweh.

When we get to the carpenter from Nazareth the gospel writer breaks cadence again. "Eliazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary." Matthew does not describe Joseph as "the father of." He is a husband – a husband to Mary, the woman who gave birth to the Messiah.

Matthew makes it clear that Joseph has no biological connection to the baby born in Bethlehem. And he does it again when he tells Joseph's story. On learning that his fiancée is pregnant, Joseph is visited by an angel. The angel explains that Mary's baby is not Joseph's child. This babe belongs to God.

This is, of course, the story of Christmas. But it is a bit of a headscratcher. Perhaps Matthew is saying out loud what we all know to be true: families are messy. If you look at our genealogies, you will find separation and abandonment. You will see places where names have been crossed out, scribbled over, and downright erased. Some of us belong to families where diagramming our relationships requires a degree in ancestral calculus.

At this time of year – this "family time" when all is supposed

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to be jolly and perfect – our flawed trees stand out in our minds. So we do what all normal Christmas tree owners do: we spin the greenery around until the best side faces the room. We live in the hope that no one will notice our hidden imperfections.

But Matthew actually refuses to hide the imperfections! He spins the scruffiest parts of the baby's family tree toward the room. His genealogy highlights disreputable moments in the family's history.

In effect, the angel tells Joseph, "God is in the middle of the mess that you find so disconcerting. The same God who was there in all the not-so-pretty, difficult events shaping your family tree, is in the midst of this moment."

Illuminated Bibles from the Middle Ages often depict the first chapter of Matthew's Gospel as an elaborate family tree. Men and women perch on each branch like ornaments. At the top of the tree stands Mary, holding the infant Jesus. Alongside the tree, Matthew stands, holding a scroll and a pen, still adding names to the genealogy.

In a nutshell, this is Christmas. Here the holy infant presides over our trees. I'm not talking about the ones with glass balls and tinsel. Here Christ embraces our families in all their messiness. Here Matthew stands, waiting for you, pen in hand. He is going to write your name on a branch. Protest all you want. Matthew is going to scribble away!

"This," he will say, "is how God operates: forever grafting our flawed families and our fractured selves into a story of immeasurable hope."

In Christ Jesus – Shalom, +Larry

*"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



Loving God, you have the power to transform all things old and dull into things new and bright. Help us to remember to take time to pause and reflect on those areas in our lives which need your transforming power. Forgive us and renew us, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen



# Canada Lutheran

*It's Subscription  
Renewal Time!*

The Glory congregation is a part of the **Canada Lutheran Congregational Subscription Plan**. Our renewal package should be coming soon, a little later than normally expected due to a technical issue that has now been resolved. ELCIC sincerely apologizes for the delay and in light of this, the subscription deadline has been extended to the end of December.

Learn practical, no-nonsense strategies for personal spiritual growth.  
Find information and inspiration to live life *In Mission for Others*.

Through the **CONGREGATIONAL SUBSCRIPTION PLAN**,  
*Canada Lutheran* is available at a significantly reduced rate  
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as well as access to a full digital copy.**



**YES!** I want to **START** or **RENEW** my  
subscription to ***Canada Lutheran*** magazine!

To ensure we make the deadline, please let Heidi in the office know if you would like to renew your existing subscription or if you would like to start a new subscription.

Please confirm your current address, email and phone number and **provide a cheque for \$19.49 payable to “Canada Lutheran”**

**Submit to Heidi in the office by December 23.**

### DATES TO REMEMBER

<b>December 1-24</b>	Reverse Advent (see calendar on page 4)
<b>December 4</b>	Rental 1:30pm
<b>December 24</b>	Candlelight Service 4:00 p.m.
	Candlelight Service with Communion 7:00pm
<b>Tuesdays</b>	Praise Band Rehearsal 7:00pm
<b>Thursdays</b>	Confirmation 6:30pm
	(No Confirmation Dec. 22 & 29)
	Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm
<b>Sundays</b>	Worship 10:30 am (Communion 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Sundays)



### FACILITY BOOKING

Our church is returning to our usual busy place with activities from within and without of our congregation. It is important to **book space and time** so there are no conflicts. Check the website ([glorylutheran.ca](http://glorylutheran.ca)) on the drop down menu under Contact Us. Click on Facility Booking Request Form and fill out the ONLINE APPLICATION to book your space and time. Or call the church office and speak with Heidi. If you want to confirm that a space is free, call the church office or check the *Calendar* on the website on the drop down menu.

**Committees:** Please ensure the office is aware of your meeting dates and times, however small your group may be. If you can, please also write them on the wall calendar in the office so it can easily be seen by others looking to use the space.

## Finance Corner



## Update for January 1 to October 31, 2022:

Actual Offering\*: \$246,913  
Budget Offering Goal\*: \$241,349  
Over by \$ 5,564  
\*(General Fund & Capital Building Fund)

Thank you for your ongoing financial support.

If you need any help with giving options (envelopes, PAR, or Canada Helps) please contact the church office.



Please use [treasurer@glorylutheran.ca](mailto:treasurer@glorylutheran.ca)  
when giving by e-transfer

Take a **MOMENT** to look at others.

What do YOU see? Try this: **Which two of these are correct:**

1. A person who doesn't look you in the eye is likely to be dishonest.
2. Wrinkles at the outer corners of the eyes show a person has a sense of humor.
3. A heavier-set person is more good-natured.
4. A curly hair a symptom of vitality.
5. Cold hands are a sign of an affectionate disposition.
6. A high forehead is a sign of superior intelligence.
7. Brunettes are usually more trustworthy than blondes.

[Getting these wrong can mean a judgment of people on the basis of false stereotypes.]

Ready? All have been evaluated by scientists as false.

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

Please note that Heidi may be working from home.

Email and phone calls will continue to be answered during office hours. Please call the office if you would like to visit the church.



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