



A monthly publication of
Christ Lutheran Church of Aptos

January 2023

CLC Connections

Pastor Mary Lou

Happy New Year, Christ Lutheran! **Does it seem like we're in the 23rd year of the new millennium?** Wasn't the year 2000 just yesterday? How the new millennium has flown by! And yet, here we are in the year 2023.

2023 will be a year that will go down in Christ Lutheran's history. Christ Lutheran has already experienced changes as one pastor has retired, an interim is here, and a new pastor, yet to be revealed to you, will arrive. You will continue to experience change after you welcome a new pastor, as the Spirit guides you in new and exciting ways to be church in the year 2023 and beyond.

The stress of changing pastoral leadership can cause uncertainty and anxiety for many in the congregation. But we must remember we are people of faith, and God takes care of God's children. In our humanness, we worry, stress, feel uncertain and anxious, but God loves us and is there to help us through those times of angst. We only need to trust God and have faith that God is in charge of our future, and no matter what happens God will make sure we are okay. That doesn't mean things will always turn out the way we want them to, but God is in charge and sees beyond our immediate future and asks us to have faith.

As I write this, Christmas is over, and for the materialistic, secular world, it's now time to move on. Christmas decorations go on sale for half price, Valentine paraphernalia take their place on store shelves, and soon Christmas and the year 2022 becomes a memory.

But for us in the church, we still celebrate the birth of God's son for the 12 days of Christmas up to the season of Epiphany on January 6.

So what is Epiphany?

The word epiphany comes from the Greek word epiphaneia, which means appearance or manifestation. It is an important word for liturgical churches. Epiphany is observed annually on January 6. It refers to the wise men, who were the first Gentiles to see the manifestation of God's appearance in the baby Jesus.

In the early church, January 6 was a day for baptism. The central significance of Epiphany is that Christ came as the Light of the World, not just for the Jews but for Gentiles as well. Christ's light is for all of God's children all over the globe.

In France, to celebrate Epiphany, children from Christian homes often put oats in their shoes on the evening before January 6. The oats are for the camels of the "Wise Men." When they awake the next morning, the children hope to find the oats gone and gifts left in their shoes.

And so, Christ Lutheran, as we move into this new year, into Epiphany and beyond, we can look forward to what is to come, and no matter what happens in 2023, we must always remember that we are in God's hands. As we hear the Epiphany Scriptures read in worship during Epiphany, the baby we just celebrate will be revealed to us as God's son, and we need to stay strong in our faith, let go and trust God, who gave us the gift of the baby Jesus.



We pray for strength and guidance and recognize the opportunities that the future holds. It's going to be a great year, filled with new beginnings and exciting opportunities, as you celebrate the installation of a new pastor and celebrate Christ Lutheran's 58 years of ministry in Aptos, while working with a new pastor in fulfilling ministry God has for Christ Lutheran's future. God's mission for Christ Lutheran will be an epiphany as God reveals new and exciting ministry opportunities. And of course, you might just be a healthier congregation spiritually, emotionally, physically and mentally, as individuals and as a whole. As you stay alert to what God is doing with you and through in this place at this time in the year 2023.

Happy New Year, Christ Lutheran!

Pastor Mary Lou



I would like to thank the Christ Lutheran congregation for a wonderful Advent and Christmas season. The participation of members in our services was wonderful. I especially want to thank the children, who have been such willing participants in anything asked of them. For Christmas, we had beautiful services that warmed our hearts and empowered our spirits for the celebration of the birth of God's Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

I also want to thank the congregation for the two gift cards I received from Christ Lutheran. The gift card for Safeway will buy a lot of groceries, and I can't wait to use the gift card to Gayle's Bakery & Rosticceria. It looks amazing online. Thank you to everyone who gave me gifts and cards. Your thoughts and kindnesses have really touched my heart. I love you all and deeply appreciate all the love and friendship you have shown me. The love of Christ certainly shines bright in all of you.

In Christ,

Pastor Mary Lou

Call Committee Update

The Call Committee continues to work hard toward calling a new pastor for our congregation. We meet at least twice each month as we try to discern where our passions lie, what our core values are and where we want to go in the future. We have talked to you and listened to what you are saying. Now we are incorporating it all into two documents that we need to submit to the Bishop's office: the Mission Site Profile (MSP) and The Seven Reflections. We will be having another retreat with the church council to work on goals and objectives.

Although it may seem that our progress is slow, we are making excellent progress. The MSP and the Seven Reflections are the documents that will tell prospective pastors who we are and who we want to be as a church. Please continue to keep us in your prayers as we work toward calling a new pastor to Christ Lutheran Church.

Marilyn Minke

Call Committee Communicator

Council President's Message

Greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus, whose birth we just celebrated together,

The Council is still meeting by zoom and met a few days before Christmas. We concerned ourselves with the holiday and primarily with the upcoming annual Congregational Meeting, scheduled for Sunday, January 29 after service. The primary things we prepared are our proposed annual budget, recruiting new and returning members of the council and Reconciling in Christ (RIC.)

Reconciling In Christ is a network of Lutheran Churches around the country who work together to insure their fellowship is welcoming, especially to the LGBTQ community. I have reached out to the network and have started, on behalf of the congregation, a discernment process. The thing on our agenda for January 29 which you might not have on your bingo card, will be a motion to continue exploring the process of becoming an RIC member Church as a congregation in 2023. It is important that, before we welcome those who may have been scorned or mistreated in Church, that we communicate otherwise together.

Of course, there will also be reports on the process of preparing for a new permanent Pastor.

As always, I am here for your questions, concerns, feedback and bad jokes.

Your brother,

Doug



Life in El Salvador Lutheran Ministry at Work

Presentation by Rev. Christian Chavarria
Assistant to Bishop Medardo Gomez
Of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church
Monday, January 9th, 2023 at 3:30PM
Lite meal of pupusas, fruit salad, drinks to follow

Pupuseria Nathalia
(Karla and Ronal Tobar)



If you plan to attend, please add your name to the sign-up sheet on the Welcoming Table or notify the church office at office@aptoschurch.org

Sunday, December 18th, 2023

Worship Service led by
Council President, Doug Pascover
and Call Committee Chair, Bill Vezey



Children's Time



Sermon

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Thank you to
Mason and Noah LaRussa,
Emma and Orion Pascover,
Avagail Davis, and Bill Vezey.



Christmas Eve Worship Service



Youth singing 'Go Tell it on the Mountain'.

'Away in the Manger' solo by Autumn Fowler.

Lighting of the candles and congregation singing 'Silent Night'.



ELCA Good Gifts for Christmas

The children of our congregation have done an amazing job of telling us about the difference a Good Gift to the ELCA can make to a family in need. And you have responded with amazing generosity. As of December 25th, you have given \$1,980 dollars to Good Gifts. That translates to

- 15 flocks of chicks,
- 10 goats,
- 8 piglets,
- 9 hives of honeybees,
- 1 water filter,
- 1 packet of school supplies
- 2 fruit tree seedlings
- 2 shares of a fish farm
- 1 vaccination
- 1 backpack of food
- 2 microloans for women
- \$60 to be applied where the need is greatest



Wow! Great job Noah, Avagail, Emma, Orion and Mason!

Mark Your Calendars for Two Important Meetings

It's that time of year when we look to the future both personally and as a congregation. Please mark your calendars for two important meetings:

1. The **Annual Congregational Meeting** is scheduled for **January 29th** immediately following worship. At this meeting we will be electing new council members and approving our 2023 budget.
2. The Sunday before, **January 22nd**, we will have a budget preview meeting where we can review the budget that council will be presenting at the annual meeting and decide if we want to make any changes.

Please plan on attending both of these meetings.

CLC Hosting the Homeless

We are finishing the year by providing the Christmas meal for our shelter group. We are happy to report that the person who tested positive for covid is healthy and no one in the group caught it.

They thoroughly enjoyed their meal and there was plenty for them to take for lunch and snacks the following day. A special thanks and gratitude to the Pruitts for the treat bags and Jennifer Davis and family for the cards. And also, those who brought paper products and cough drops. The AFC program cannot always supply these as generously as we have and, while these simple daily products are not very exciting, they help keep our clients healthy and prevent illness from spreading. There is not the luxury of regular laundry services, etc. that we have at our homes.

In the previous newsletter, I answered some questions about this program and in general the folks it supports. Let me know your questions and we will get them answered.

There is an excellent documentary about homelessness available on Netflix. Please take 40 minutes to watch "Lead Me Home" with your family. From my perspective, it is an accurate portrait of this crisis.

~ Donna Kaelin

In Memory of Gloria Weber

Gloria passed away peacefully on Thursday, November 24, 2022 with her dear friend, Daphne Schmitt by her side.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, January 14th at 2:00PM.

She will be laid to rest next to her husband, Duane in our Prayer Garden Columbarium.



In Memory of Joe Amaral

Joe passed away peacefully at home on Saturday, November 7, 2022. Please keep Jane and her family in your prayers.

A memorial service will be held February 11th at 2:00PM.

Jane and Joe Amaral with Orion Pascover

Stewardship of the Earth

Vegetarian Enchiladas

This stuffing for enchiladas is easy and tasty.

Stuffing ingredients:

2 cups raw pecans
2 cups water
3 Tbsp. liquid aminos (soy sauce substitute)
4 large white or baby Bella mushrooms, largely chopped
1/2 small green bell pepper and 1/2 small red bell pepper,
both seeded and chopped
2 Tbsp. red onion, chopped
1 Tbsp. taco seasoning
Juice from 1 lime

In a medium bowl, combine the pecans with water and liquid aminos.

Soak for 3 hours, then drain.

Add the drained pecans to a food processor with the remaining ingredients.

Pulse a few times until the mixture is well chopped and resembles ground meat.

DO NOT over-process.

TO USE AS ENCHILADA STUFFING:

Fry 24 corn tortillas in oil for a few seconds to soften.

Dip the cooled tortillas in 26 oz. of red enchilada sauce, spoon a line of pecan stuffing at one end of tortilla, then roll and place seam side down in a pre-greased 9" x 13" pan. Cover with a layer of the enchilada sauce, then top with grated cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes

Submitted by Lois DeVogelaere



Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs)

Did you know that your charitable gift to Christ Lutheran could result in the lowering of your federal and state income taxes even if you don't itemize deductions? If you are at least 70 1/2 years old and have an IRA that has a required minimum distribution, you can lower your taxable income by making Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs).

All you need to do is have the plan administrator for your IRA send the amount you want to contribute to CLC directly to CLC rather than to you. There is no income tax due on the IRA distributions that go directly to CLC, this lowering your adjusted gross income while satisfying the required minimum distribution.

If you have any questions about how to set up a QCD, you can talk to Mary Elizabeth Bellizzi, Marilyn Minke or your plan administrator.

Maureen Perkinson and Rebecca LaRussa
visiting with Colleen Ward in December



Stewardship of the Earth



The **Monterey Bay Aquarium** will bring back its **Community Open House**, which was shuttered for the past three years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Community Open House provides residents in Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito counties an opportunity to receive free admission to the world-famous aquarium from January 21-29, 2023.

It is the Monterey Bay Aquarium's way of showing its appreciation to the residents in the tri-county area, and one of the ways the aquarium works to ensure everyone can visit regardless of income, said Adrian Samora, aquarium spokesperson.

In order to enjoy the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Community Open House, residents from Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito counties must bring a photo ID and proof of current residency to receive free admission. Proof of residency can include current student identification from any university or community college located within any of these counties, utility bills, the Matricula Consular, or monthly buss passes from Monterey-Salinas Transit, Santa Cruz Metro and San Benito County Express.

Free admission is valid for all aquarium exhibits and programs during regular aquarium hours, 10am to 5pm daily during the week-long Community Open House. Visitors from outside Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito County – including relatives or friends of local residents – can accompany local residents but will charged regular admission fees.

Submitted by Lois DeVogelaere

COVID Update:

As we have throughout the pandemic, we continue to monitor conditions in our County. As we have seen in our own congregation, COVID-19 is now much less dangerous than the original strain for which we had little immunity, but it is still dangerous enough. Also, as throughout the pandemic, what precautions to take and how to balance the danger against the need for fellowship remains unclear. We are doing our best and welcome your feedback and input.



In The Lord's Service

January 2023

	Jan 1	Jan 8	Jan 15	Jan 22	Jan 29
Assisting Minister	Donna Kaelin	Clare-Marie Karat	Matt Love	Doug Pascover	Donna Kaelin
Reader	Monika Schmidt	Christina Robert	Donna Swedberg	Marilyn Minke	Jon Covello
Ushers	Bill & Constance Vezey	Tori Nahnsen Ruth Cruddas	Patrick & Sandi Thomas	Hank Aranda Mark Zabel	Bill & Constance Vezey
Counters	Roberta Pruitt Ruth Cruddas	Donna Mininni Tori Nahnsen	Donna Swedberg Bill Vezey	Bill Vezey Joan Love	Bill Vezey Ruth Cruddas

Bible Readings for January

	1st Reading	Psalm	2nd Reading	Gospel
First Sunday of Christmas January 1, 2023	Isaiah 63:7-9	Psalm 148	Hebrews 2:10-18	Matthew 2:13-23
Baptism of Our Lord January 8, 2023	Isaiah 42:1-9	Psalm 29	Acts 10:34-43	Matthew 3:13-17
Second Sunday after Epiphany January 15, 2023	Isaiah 49:1-7	Psalm 40:1-11	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	John 1:29-42
Third Sunday after Epiphany January 22, 2023	Isaiah 9:1-4	Psalm 27:1,4-9	1 Corinthians 1:10-18	Matthew 4:12-23
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany January 29, 2023	Micah 6:1-8	Psalm 15	1 Corinthians 1:18-31	Matthew 5:1-12

Thanksgiving for January Birthdays



	JANUARY
2	Edita McQuary
17	Barbara Lopez



Treasurer's Report November, 2022			
INCOME			
<u>Current Month</u>	<u>Budget to Date</u>	<u>Actual to Date</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
\$9,816.98	\$166,740.29	\$150,945.21	\$181,898.50
EXPENSES			
<u>Current Month</u>	<u>Budget to Date</u>	<u>Actual to Date</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
\$17,477.17	\$185,057.40	\$167,202.38	\$201,880.80
GENERAL FUND INCOME/(LOSS)			
<u>Current Month</u>	<u>Budget to Date</u>	<u>Actual to Date</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
(\$7,660.19)	\$ (18,317.11)	\$ (16,257.17)	(\$19,982.30)

This month we received \$239 in Thrivent Choice Dollars.
 Thank you for continuing to support our ministries so faithfully.
 Please consider giving to our Repair and Maintenance fund to prepare for future major repairs and maintenance on our property.
 If you have any questions about this report, please call me at 831-566-4557.
 Marilyn Minke, Treasurer



Christ Lutheran Church
10707 Soquel Drive
Aptos, CA 95003

Please Rush
Time Dated Material
This newsletter was mailed on **December 29, 2022**

Address Correction Requested

Christ Lutheran Church (CLC) Ministry Team

Rev. Mary Lou Petitjean, Interim Pastor
Aministrative Projects & Newsletter: Ruth Cruddas
Communications and Website: Erin Busch

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CLC Connections

2022 - CLC Council

Karen Covello—Secretary
Marilyn Minke –Treasurer
Doug Pascover– President
Maureen Perkinson
Glenn Taylor
Constance Vezey—Vice President

Photographers: Members!
Graphics: Erin Busch
Production: Tori Nahnsen



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