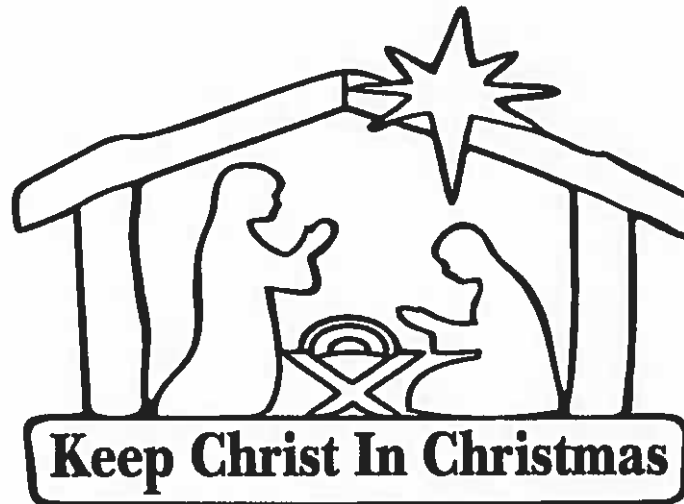


**News from St Jacobus, Woodside
December 2022**



News from:

St Jacobus Lutheran Church
7201 - 43rd Avenue
Woodside, NY 11377

As always, how are you? Seriously, we care to ask and can handle the answer. We continue to hold everyone in our prayers in these uncertain times. Please reach out to us if you feel isolated or have any needs or concerns. Thanksgiving was a few days ago. Christmas and New Years are coming up quickly. We are now in our third pandemic holiday season. That makes it especially important to check in on others, heal relationships and manage time.

A week or so before Thanksgiving, I was watching a football game with a friend. Having grown up in a house with a strange version of Christianity, he is no longer Christian. One of the commercials during the game was for Christmas sales and Black Friday specials at one of the big chain stores. He started to complain that it's so early and there are already so many annoying Christmas advertisements, sales and promotions. His comments were phrased to tell me this consumerism must be what Christians marked at Christmas, as though we were going to gather and celebrate deals on TVs on December 24th and discounted pants on December 25th; as though Christians were looking forward to laptops being 40 percent off. I had to interrupt these complaints; Special sales have nothing to do with my Christmas, I am more bothered by all this than you are.

This led me to wonder, if it's not sales and discounts, what is my Christmas. If I had a car, I would be riding with one of those "keep Christ in Christmas" magnets. My Christmas is the time when we see God's promises kept, when *the word of God is made flesh and dwells among us, for us* (John 1), it is the time *when the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people* (Titus 2:11). I'm not sure why any of the other "Christmas" things that do not proclaim this message are connected to Christians.

My Christmas is busy. Every year, people I know will complain "they have to work Christmas" or with empathy "I feel bad for hospital or store employees who have to work on Christmas" I always respond, "well I have not had a Christmas off in 15 years, nor will I for the foreseeable future". People will often give that comment a strange look, a sort of I guess that's true but weird for you to say it. Christmas is joyful but it is work. There is always an overwhelming calendar this time of year at St Jacobus. Christmas is opportunity to show and tell Christ our savior is born for us. Christmas is a time of hospitality and welcome. This good news will be shared with 1000s of people in 8 or 10 languages through our space.

Christmas is also a challenge, for us to see things differently. In the Gospel of Matthew, we learn soon after Christ is born, Christ, along with Mary and Joseph are refugees or asylum seekers. An angel tells them King Herod wants to destroy this child (which he views as competition for his earthly throne), the holy family is told to flee to another nation, to go to Egypt and be protected from state persecution, to escape the massacre of the innocents. This is not to push one particular immigration plan or political view (I think they are all wrong). This is simply a reminder that this needs to be part of the discussion. God with us the real, hectic, shocking, surprising good news of Christmas, needs to part of our world.

With Christmas joy, peace and care


Pr Joe

What I said on Sunday

Our church follows the narrative lectionary. This year long cycle of readings goes through the Old Testament, one of the Gospels and then The Book of Acts, Letters of Paul and other letters. This November, we continued our long Advent or wait for Christmas as we looked at some of the major Old Testament events and communications from God. We also started with our last part of the Christmas countdown with the words of the prophets.

On Sunday November 6th our readings were 2 Kings 5:1-15a and Matthew 8:2-3. There are 2 things we can take from the story of Naaman. One: Our faith is simple, we are saved by faith, by grace, by Christ, not works. We always want to do, we want, need it to be more complicated, to do more, to get the bonus, the special level, climb the ladder, save ourselves. We are afraid of that simple, but that is God's promise. 2 In the story of Naaman, we have examples of great faith, people like the servant girl who boldly introduces her faith to her masters, someone whose promise there is a prophet in Israel who can cure you, leads to an important general, who knew nothing about the God of Israel, to proclaim Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Let's go and do likewise.

On Sunday, November 13th our readings were Micah 1:3-5; 5:2-5a; 6:6-8 and Matt 9:13. This morning, we left history and started the prophets. We also celebrated Drew Wutke's 10 year anniversary as our music director. I believe our readings, despite coming from a list, determined years ago, fit our time. I recently heard a pastor / praise and worship leader talk about God's word set to music, its power to speak good news, impact, to bring the word to people's hearts and minds and lives, to remember, to hear, to change and believe, how often have we been able to experience Drew doing this. How much like the prophets,

On Sunday, November 20th , our readings were Isaiah 36:1-3, 13-20; 37:1-7; 2:1-4. In this series of readings, we hear about God sending the Assyrians packing to save Jerusalem, Decades later God will not intervene, Jerusalem will fall to the Babylonians, the temple will be destroyed, the people will be exiled. I, and maybe you, are tempted to try and understand, why then and not now, to explain this. Instead, I want to ask Why don't we use what we have. The prophets kept saying it, We are not listening to God, Imagine if the efforts of Christians around the world were applied to global warming, or world hunger or ending war or good, safe, sustainable and helpful, immigration,

On Sunday, November 27th, our readings were Habakkuk 1:1-7; 2:1-4; 3:[3b-6], 17-19 and Matthew 26:36-38. The book of Habakkuk is the combination of different writing and communication styles. They all say the same thing. remain faithful to God, to be hopeful in awful times. Our readings from Habakkuk are paired with part of the report from Matthew on Jesus last hours. In the moments before his betrayal, Jesus was mentally where Habbakuk was. Praying, crying out How long O God, really is this necessary, Israel will go through defeat, through the destruction of the temple, through exile, Jesus will go to a rigged trial, to the cross, to actual death, real burial, Jesus will go through real resurrection and ascension. Jesus follows the prophets, seeking community, support and turning to prayer, doing all he can to remain faithful to God, to be hopeful in awful times.

December Birthdays

Nicolas Monty 10

Laura Fisher 12

Peter Johnson 23

Virginia Grant 24

Memorials and gifts

In loving memory of Evelyn Becker a gift was given by Joan and Kenneth Smykal

In loving memory of Evelyn Becker gifts were given by friends and loved ones

In loving memory of Evelyn Becker a gift was given by Lorraine Scherer and family

In loving memory of Frank Stauss a gift was given by Joan and Kenneth Smykal

In loving memory of Frank Stauss a gift was given by Janelle and J McPartland

**CAROLING IN
ELMHURST**

12/09 FRIDAY AT 6 PM

**COLLECTING
TOYS FOR TOY
DRIVE**

LOCATION
Frank D. O'Connor Playground
Between Broadway and Woodside
Ave. along 78 Street.

Elmhurst Queens
In front of Elmhurst Hospital

Christmas Memorials & Gifts



This Christmas, I would like to make a special donation towards the ministry and work of St Jacobus Lutheran Church.

In loving memory of: (deceased)

or

Given to the Glory of God for (living)

Given by: _____

Donation: \$ _____

checks payable to St. Jacobus Lutheran Church

**Please return this form by
Wednesday, December 21st, 2022 to:
St Jacobus Lutheran Church 7201 43rd Avenue Woodside NY 11377**



Evelyn & Otto Becker, Sophia Bieber by Lorraine Scherer and family

*Robert Grady, Corrin Barker, Brian Grady, Anna Florence Martin & Katherine Grady
by Jennifer Grady Mantovani and family*

Kathleen and George Yuen, Joseph Moran by Linda Varriale vb

Alice & George Kustka, Sharon Kustka by John, Bill & George J. Kustka

*David Campbell, Martha and Paul Oakes, Jacqueline, Bernard, David and Michael
Wisniewski. by Rebekah Oakes & Steve Wisniewski*

All our loved ones by Gloria & Teddy Wilson & family

Frank Stauss by the people of St Jacobus

Walter Maerz, Edith Stedler by Elke Maerz

Christopher Cronin by Helen Cronin

*Miss Sophie Popp, Mr. Harry Blessing & Mrs. Christine Blessing, Mr. Christian Seitz,
Mrs. Ellen Seitz, Miss Dorothy Popp by Christian Seitz, Caryl Seitz*

Thomas Mullally by Meylinda Mullally

*Erik Smykal, Bertha & Joseph Slavicek and Emily & William Smykal by Ken and Joan
Smykal*

All of our departed loved ones by Ted & Laura Fisher

W. Sahat Silaban & Tumpak Hutajulu by the Silaban family

Loved ones by Jeff & Christine Fisher

HAPPENING THIS MONTH

FRIDAY DECEMBER 9TH @6 PM

Community Christmas Caroling

Join a group of different and diverse community partners as we sing and celebrate together. This outdoor event will be in Frank D O'Conner Park (in front of the main entrance to Elmhurst Hospital)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17TH @ 3:00 PM

Church clean up and Christmas set up

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18TH @10:00 am

Join us for church, our annual budget meeting and Christmas potluck party

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24TH @7:30 PM

Join us for our Christmas Eve Candlelight church service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25TH @ 10:00 AM

We do not usually have a Christmas Day service but it's Sunday so we will be here for worship. Join us as we hear Christ our savior is born

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1ST 2023

Again we do not usually have a New Year's Day service but it's Sunday so we will be here. Join us as we start the new year together in prayer

STACEY'S PANTRY

We will be at Bethany (4808 91st place Elmhurst NY 11373) to show our neighbors God cares for them by caring for them on Saturday, December 3, 10 and 17 from 8:00 am to 10 am. We will be closed on Saturday, December 24th and 31st but we will distribute food on Thursday, December 29th at 3:00 pm. Join our diverse community as we help a diverse community and do something about food insecurity in our neighborhood

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

All Thursday Nights at 7:00 pm (December 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29) online



Thanksgiving Memorial & Gifts

In loving memory of:

Miss. Sophie Popp, Mr. Harry Blessing & Mrs. Christine Blessing, Mr. Christian Seitz & Mrs. Ellen Seitz, Miss Dorothy Popp by Christian Seitz, Caryl Seitz

Alice and George Kustka by John Kustka

Our loved ones by Ted and Laura Fisher

Herta & Frank Schwuchow, Wilhelm & Emma Radermacher

by Marion & Wolfgang Radermacher & the Walsh family

Martha and Paul Oakes, Jacqueline and Bernard Wisniewski by

Steven Wisniewski and Rebekah Oakes

Robert Grady, Brian B. Grady, Corrin Barker, Anna Florence Martin & Katherine Grady by

Jennifer Grady-Mantovani

Loved ones by Gloria and Teddy Wilson

Marjorie Fisher by Jeff and Christine Fisher

Christopher Cronin by Helen Cronin

Peter and Uwe Aldag, Hilde Aldag, Walter Maerz and Edith Stedler by Elke Maerz

Loved ones by Lorraine Scherer

Given to the Glory of God for:

Our Family by Gloria and Teddy Wilson

Emma Wisniewski and Benjamin Burbidge, Kadin and Eve Wisniewski by

Steven Wisniewski and Rebekah Oakes

Loved ones by Ugen Choephel and family

Mr. Robert Gates, Mrs. Caryn Gates, Robert, Brad, Marie and Stephanie Gates by Christian Seitz, Caryl Seitz



Pivoting from Deep Wound to Resilience

By The Rev. Anthony Stephens, MDiv, PhD, LMHC, JD

Readers of my previous articles know that my doctoral studies and early clinical experience dealt extensively with victims of violent acts against women. The literature about domestic violence was troubling. It accurately depicted the deep wounds caused by being abused. However, the literature also proposed guidance for increasing one's capacity for self-determination in order to promote growth and resilience.

For instance, we cannot control what actually happened, but we can control the following:

- 1) Set yourself up for success – usually this involves education. Be discriminating. Engage in healthy habits. Recognize traps. Keep your head on a swivel to look for good and recognize bad.
- 2) Don't blame yourself for what is not your fault. You don't necessarily have to blame anyone, but absolutely do not blame yourself for what is not your fault.
- 3) Realize that you will always be more than the injury you sustain or the wounds that you bear.
- 4) Don't over-identify with being a victim. ("Victimitis" as the literature calls it). Personally, and socially, we can look at people we might have caused to be victims, by ignorance, bad policy and sometimes malice – and maybe if we are the cause, then we need to make amends. However, identity is personally chosen and personally crafted, even if in the context of a cultural narrative.
- 5) Recognize that you are not just a human being, but a human becoming. (Tillich).
- 6) Recognize and seize the moment when recovery turns into growth.

Our Lutheran Counseling Center therapists offer a variety of counseling modalities, such as CBT (cognitive behavioral therapy), that can help our clients to "cognitively reframe" and pursue behaviors that chart a course to resilience. Resilience is not just bouncing back but integrating all elements of life into the ability to become. Faith is an essential element.

For several years, I used to visit Verna Kwiatkowski in a nursing home. Musician, teacher, pastor, writer and composer, she contracted Primary Lateral Sclerosis (as nasty as Lou Gehrig's). Tapping out articles on her keyboard (as she could no longer talk), she would pen an article *The Best is Yet to Be*, just shortly before her death. Her joy remained irrepressible to the end.

*Rev. Anthony Stephens provides secure telehealth counseling sessions for teens, adults, couples and families. Please see Anthony's bio here: <https://lccny.org/anthony-stephens/>
For an appointment, call LCC at 1-800-317-1173 or e-mail us at <https://www.LCCNY.org>.*