



From Pastor Bill

A new year often means new possibilities or new initiatives. For many of us, me included, the change in the calendar frequently focuses us on the future and what we can be about to make that future different.

Maybe because of my advancing years or perhaps because of my awareness that retirement is drawing increasingly closer for me, I am thinking about the new year in a different way. Yes, I still want to make some changes, changes for me personally and for us as a congregation. But I wonder if part of the task right now for me is not so much a transformed future, but a grateful present.

Ed Wosinski, our congregational president, at our last Congregational Council meeting said that, as we were discussing our goals for 2025, we as a community of faith are always planning for the future, always anticipating what the next thing we need to do is. We have always been a community with a hopeful sense for the future. Ed said, though, maybe we need to spend some time celebrating what we are doing and what we have become.

I like his idea. Sometimes we are too focused on what is yet to be that we fail to pay attention to what is. I don't plan to disregard the future. I certainly will lead us as we travel through another year of ministry to discover what is next for us. But this year I want to pay attention to the "now," to rejoice in what is the gift of the present.

The Christian notion of incarnation communicates that what is most important in life (the eternal) has taken up residence in the now. The now is infiltrated by the eternal. We live in an *eternal* now. This year I want to pay more attention to the now that is penetrated by the eternal.



From Pastoral Assistant Paula

Merry Christmas! I know, I know, this is the January edition of the Chimes and the new year has made its way to our doorstep but essentially, Christmas is not done yet. Many people inevitably imagine a single day of robust celebration and after that day they are ready to move on. They remove the garland from the fireplace, take down the tinsel, grab next year's decorations at 70 percent off and pack away the nativity scene. I get this. For some, the hectic pace of the season can often be packed away, too.

But I like to linger...linger and reflect on the journey of Advent, linger and reflect on the *season* of Christmas, which, by the way extends to the first two Sundays in January, Christmas I and Christmas II. The Christmas season 'officially' ends on January 6 with Epiphany. In fact, the gospel writer in Matthew makes the claim that Epiphany is the day the magi saw the shining star stop overhead and they were filled with joy and they (magi) entered the home where they saw the child with Mary, his mother. So bear with me today, as I share one of my "lingerings".



It has to do with my nativity *sets* I put up every year - one porcelain, one plastic and an unpainted ceramic one that never made it all the way through the process to receive color. My grandchildren, Lavena and Tristan, came to help me decorate. Tristan gravitated toward the tree. Lavena toward the boxes of Christmas characters who were nestled in their preformed grooves and niches within the box. Tristan had questions on where the ornaments came from and how long I had them. Good questions and I enjoyed answering them. But it was Lavena's intrigue of the pieces in the nativity sets that warmed my heart.

Lavena and I talked about the Christmas story and she listened intently to my wonderment and open-ended questions about the story. She proceeded to set up the characters, Mary, Joseph, Jesus, shepherds and sheep, angel, camels, wisemen, donkey, and a few cows. When Lavena had emptied the boxes and finished setting up the story characters, I was so surprised! She had grouped the people and animals in places that reflected what we had talked about. Shepherds, I told her, may have been a ways away in the hills - most likely young boys or girls; the angel was "somewhere" in the vicinity acting as a messenger from God - angel imagery typically shows up when God has something to say and God had a *lot* to say that night! And the wisemen, one



without hands and the other with a chip in his garment; well... they were tucked away in the corner - distanced from the main event. However, the camels made it on the scene before their travelers. Lavena said they were probably the fastest in the bunch!

I guess it was a combination of things that day which helped me realize how readily we place people in neat little "nativity scenes". We cram people into corners where they feel isolated and afraid. Or we live into

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Confirmation

- ◆ A huge thank you to our Progressive Dinner hosts for our Confirmation Christmas party! We dove into appetizers at Kelly and Sean O'Connor's, an amazing taco buffet at Steve and Rhonda Smith's and ice cream with many toppings at the Uetricht's. Your gracious hospitality made for a very fun evening!!!



- ◆ The Confirmation students raised \$315 to benefit Noah's Project in Muskegon. The students chose this as their service project this Christmas because the animals too, need added care and food during the winter months. The students raised the funds by hosting a Wednesday dinner. We have some great cooks with meal prep skills, and their joy and enthusiasm melted my heart!
- ◆ Confirmation parents: Don't forget to sign your child up to acolyte!!! The schedule can be found in google docs or in front of Paula's office! Thanks!

Christmas with this perfectly painted scene and placement of people all gathered together in the creche. But hearing the messenger, following the star, and seeking Jesus can often be messy and the people we encounter along the way can be messy, too. Injustice and war and oppression are all players in the manger scene because this is where we find Jesus. I believe we are all characters in this amazing story of love and grace. We come at various intervals, sometimes carrying heaven burdens, sometimes with joy in our hearts. We are always welcome in the manger. So Lavena, thank you for asking the questions this year as you carefully placed the pieces of the nativity sets around the room. Thank you for opening your heart and being ok with Grandma's wonderment. Thank you for living into the mystery of God.

May we all linger awhile in the message of the Christchild...

Paula



Youth Events



Winter Sports Complex Day
 High school youth
 January 26
 12:00-3:00 p.m.

Stewardship Report as of 12/10/2024

Dollar a Day

So far this month \$283. This will go towards the New Carpet Project just announced by Pastor Bill. By the way, have you seen the new portable screen just added to Family Life Center activities? Large and elegant. Part of our previous project.



Annual Pledge Drive

The Pledge Drive stands at \$240,000, almost as much as last year. But as a famous church council president once said, "Things seem to work out every year."

This is my last Stewardship Report. We are going for youth in 2025 with the talented Kathryn Hall taking over as chair. Thank you Kathy for "stepping up to the plate." I am pretty sure that Kathryn would welcome some volunteers to the committee. So, if you would like to offer your creative, motivational, or other skills and energy to the committee that inspires us to support our church mission, give Kathy a call or email. She's in our Realm Directory.

Wishing you all a healthy, grace filled 2025,
Joe Labiak
Departed Chair

Join us for our

Super
Sunday
Chili & Soup

Cook-Off &
Annual
Congregational Meeting



Date: January 26, 2025

Place: Family Life Center

Time: After the 10:30 worship service

Bring your dollars to vote for your favorite chili or soup winner.

Desserts, bread, crackers and drinks will be provided

**Please bring non-perishables, cans or boxed,
to donate to food pantry**

Sign-up sheets are at both Information Stations



Chimes Assemblers

Thanks to Dave and Theresa Buchan who assembled the December Chimes.



The staff of our congregation would like to thank all of you for your generous gift of money at Christmas time. We feel so blessed to lead such a vital, generous, and thoughtful community of faith.



Weekly Offerings

Sunday	Weekly Scripture Readings
1/5	Jer 31:7-14, Ps 147:12-20 Eph 1:3-14, John 1:[1-9] 10-18
1/12	Isa 43:1-7, Ps 29 Acts 8:14-17, Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
1/19	Isa 62:1-5, Ps36:5-10 1 Cor 12:1-11, John 2:1-11
1/26	Neh 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10, Ps 19 1 Cor 12:12-31a, Luke 4:14-21

Week ending: 11-3-2024:

General Fund: \$11,742.17
Building Rent: \$107.00
Building Enhancement: \$130.00
Dollar-a-Day: \$477.84

Week ending: 11-10-2024:

General Fund: \$8,776.85
Building Rent: \$1,510.38
Building Enhancement: \$735.00
Dollar-a-Day: \$232.00
Noisy offering: (R.P. Schools Food Pantry) \$300.32

Week ending: 11-17-2024

General Fund: \$18,638.17
Building Rent: \$239.80
Building Enhancement: \$140.00
Dollar-a-Day: \$365.00
Noisy Offering (R.P. Schools) \$229.33
Abiding Memorial: \$50.00

Week ending: 11-24-2024

General Fund: \$6,749.10
Building Rent: \$119.00
Building Enhancement: \$135.00
Noisy Offering (R.P. Schools): \$268.21
Abiding Memorial: \$200.00



January Birthdays

1	Martin Shields Karin Carlson	14	Donald (Bill) Webber Sylvia Robbins	26	Sara Henry Kim Beidler
2	Amy Smith	15	Chuck Carlson	27	David Shields
3	Dennis Plekes Connie Robinson	16	Mel Wei	28	Lark Roberts Bud Fiser Chris Kooiman
4	Sue Van Hoesen	17	Heidi Hampton Pamela Hanophy Mark Besteman Lisa Naymick VanDyken	29	Gabriel Cahill
5	Timothy Vanderstelt John Smith	20	Jim Boardwell Sharon Hanson	31	Marianne Newman Reese Giles Paula Love
6	Ysabela Golden	21	Katie Neel		
7	David Neumann	22	Kimberly Fenbert Paul Becker		
8	Jackson LaChapelle Pat Clifford	23	Ben Werling		
9	Marilyn Nygren Jack Lamoreaux	24	Diane Kroll Kathy Boardwell		
12	Jane Boyle Lori Archer Maggie O'Connor	25	Stanley Shank		



Keepers

Gerald and Betty Crenno
1740 Village Dr Apt 318
Village at the Oaks
Muskegon, MI 49442-4288

Theresa Hansen
Robbinswood-Northcrest Campus
2650 Ruddiman Dr
North Muskegon, MI 49445

Rosemary Loch
704 Miller Drive
North Muskegon, MI 49445

Pat Mullinex
Newaygo County Medical Care
Facility
4465 W. 48th St.
Fremont, MI 49412
Mailing Address:
2284 Riverwood Drive
Twin Lake, MI 49457

Warren Robinson
Poppen Hospice House
2065 East Mt Garfield Rd
Muskegon, MI 49444

Keith Stapel
1228 Lawrence St
Muskegon, MI 49442

Dave Walborn
18552 W Spring Lake Rd
Spring Lake, MI 49456

Mary Warden
1740 Village Dr. Apt 222
Muskegon, MI 49442-4283

First Lutheran Church

January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Dollar-A-Day Weekend</p> <p>9:15AM-Confirmation 9:30AM-Kids' Music 3-4 years 9:30AM-Faith Formation 10:30AM-In-Person Worship 10:30AM-Online Worship 12:00PM-Bells 6:00PM-Listening for the Word 7:00PM-AA Meeting</p>	<p>12:00PM-Quilters' Group 5:00PM-P.E.O. Group 5:45PM-Chair Yoga 6:00PM-Overeaters Anonymous 7:00PM-AA Meeting 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming 7:15PM-Gently Restore Yoga</p>	<p>Bulletin Deadline</p> <p>9:00AM-Pickleball 9:00AM-Seniors Helping Our Parish (SHOP) 3:00PM-Burnished Brass 6:00PM-Lion's Club 6:30PM-Choir 9:30PM-Compline</p>	<p>** Office Closed **</p>	<p>12:00PM-Lectioary Bible Study 3:00PM-Clipper Preservation Group 6:00PM-In-Person Worship 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming</p>	<p>7:00PM-AA Meeting</p>	<p>8:30AM-Care Team Meeting</p>
<p>5 9:15AM-Confirmation 9:30AM-Kids' Music 3-4 years 9:30AM-Faith Formation 10:30AM-In-Person Worship 10:30AM-Online Worship 12:00PM-Bells 6:00PM-Listening for the Word 7:00PM-AA Meeting</p>	<p>6 12:00PM-Quilters' Group 5:00PM-P.E.O. Group 5:45PM-Chair Yoga 6:00PM-Overeaters Anonymous 7:00PM-AA Meeting 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming 7:15PM-Gently Restore Yoga</p>	<p>7 Bulletin Deadline 9:00AM-Pickleball 9:00AM-Seniors Helping Our Parish (SHOP) 3:00PM-Burnished Brass 6:00PM-Lion's Club 6:30PM-Choir 9:30PM-Compline</p>	<p>8 9:00AM-Pickleball 12:00PM-Staff Meeting 1:30PM-Clean Green Room **Wed Night Programming **</p>	<p>9 12:00PM-Lectioary Bible Study 6:00PM-Private Group 6:00PM-In-Person Worship 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming</p>	<p>10 5:30PM-Bunco 7:00PM-AA Meeting</p>	<p>11 8:30AM-Women's/Men's Breakfast Retreat</p>
<p>12 9:15AM-Confirmation 9:30AM-Kids' Music 3-4 years 9:30AM-Faith Formation 10:30AM-In-Person Worship 10:30AM-Online Worship 6:00PM-Listening for the Word 7:00PM-AA Meeting</p>	<p>13 12:00PM-Quilters' Group 5:45PM-Chair Yoga 6:00PM-Overeaters Anonymous 7:00PM-AA Meeting 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming 7:15PM-Soul Flow Yoga</p>	<p>14 Bulletin Deadline 9:00AM-Pickleball 9:00AM-Seniors Helping Our Parish (SHOP) 9:30AM-1st on 2nd Quilt Bee 3:00PM-Burnished Brass 6:30PM-Choir 9:30PM-Compline</p>	<p>15 Chimes Deadline 9:00AM-Pickleball 12:00PM-Staff Meeting 7:00PM-Confirmation for 3rd Year Students **Wed Night Programming **</p>	<p>16 12:00PM-Lectioary Bible Study 6:00PM-In-Person Worship 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming</p>	<p>17 6:00PM-Crafty Group 7:00PM-AA Meeting</p>	<p>18 8:30AM-Women's/Men's Breakfast Retreat</p>
<p>19 9:15AM-Confirmation 9:30AM-Kids' Music 3-4 years 9:30AM-Faith Formation 10:30AM-In-Person Worship 10:30AM-Online Worship 12:00PM-Bells 6:00PM-Listening for the Word 7:00PM-AA Meeting</p>	<p>20 12:00PM-Red Cross Blood Drive 12:30PM-Quilters' Group 5:45PM-Chair Yoga 6:00PM-Overeaters Anonymous 7:00PM-AA Meeting 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming 7:15PM-Gently Restore Yoga</p>	<p>21 Bulletin Deadline 9:00AM-Pickleball 9:00AM-Seniors Helping Our Parish (SHOP) 3:00PM-Burnished Brass 6:00PM-Lion's Club 6:30PM-Choir 9:30PM-Compline</p>	<p>22 9:00AM-Pickleball 12:00PM-Staff Meeting **Wed Night Programming **</p>	<p>23 12:00PM-Lectioary Bible Study 6:00PM-In-Person Worship 6:00PM-Private Meeting 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming</p>	<p>24 7:00PM-AA Meeting</p>	<p>25 9:00AM-Worship & Music Ministry Mtg</p>
<p>26 9:15AM-Confirmation 9:30AM-Kids' Music 3-4 years 9:30AM-Faith Formation 10:30AM-In-Person Worship/ 10:30AM-Online Worship 12:00PM-Bells 6:00PM-Listening for the Word 7:00PM-AA Meeting</p>	<p>27 12:00PM-Quilters' Group 5:45PM-Chair Yoga 6:00PM-Overeaters Anonymous 7:00PM-AA Meeting 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming 7:15PM-Soul Flow Yoga</p>	<p>28 Bulletin Deadline 9:00AM-Pickleball 9:00AM-Seniors Helping Our Parish (SHOP) 3:00PM-Burnished Brass 6:30PM-Choir 9:30PM-Compline</p>	<p>29 9:00AM-Pickleball 12:00PM-Staff Meeting ** Wed Night Programming **</p>	<p>30 10:00AM-Rental 6:00PM-In-Person Worship 7:00PM-Cardio Drumming</p>	<p>31 7:00PM-AA Meeting</p>	