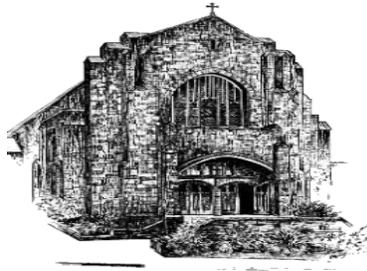


First Lutheran Church
92 W. Walnut Street
Washington, PA 15301



Ixoye

ICH-THUS

Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior

Pastoral Perspectives—December 2020

Grace and peace to you from God the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus the Christ in the Holy Spirit.

Our journey into the season of Advent began the last Sunday of November this year of 2020. How different will Christmas look this year? It will be another season of wearing masks, social distancing, washing hands, being unable to travel due to restrictions in different states (9 up to 40 states now) and being unable to visit loved ones for the traditional Christmas dinner. If you are like me and have found this pandemic to be emotionally, physically and spiritually exhausting then we are good company!

I welcome Advent more this year than any time in the past; Advent is the first day of the new year in the church liturgical calendar and it begins our four week period of preparation and anticipation of the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus. The German Lutheran pastor Rev. Dr. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, ***“The celebration of Advent is possible only to those who are troubled in soul, who know themselves to be poor and imperfect, and who look forward to something greater to come.”***

The question might be asked as to what are we waiting for that is greater to still come. Advent is the Latin translation of *Adventus* means ***“coming”***. Advent is much like the Lenten season where 40 days are spent in penance, prayer and fasting for the celebration of the coming of the Lord with the exception of the 3rd Sunday in Advent (Gaudete).

Did you know that in the 6th century the Christians of Rome were not focused on the birth of Jesus, for it had already happened but rather they were looking to the second coming of Jesus! This is similar in how we end the church season with Bible readings reminding us all that we are awaiting the return of Christ Jesus and how Jesus warns us to keep watch and be awake! It was the church in the *Middle Ages* 13th-15th century that changed the Advent season to focus on the 1st coming of our Lord and Saviour as the Christ child born in a lowly manger in the town of Bethlehem to save us from our sins!

The church today has balanced the first and second coming of Christ by using the Bible verses in the first two Sundays in Advent for the second coming of Christ and in the last two Sundays in Advent focusing on the joyful first coming of the Jesus as the Christ Child.

I believe that Pastor Bonhoeffer had captured how you and I may be feeling during this pandemic and by what this world is going through; the violence that in America through rioting; destruction of property; the economy suffering; families separated; the elderly isolated; loss of employment; schools closed; the fractious election; businesses going under; the high amount of unreported suicides. We go wounded and broken into 2021. The earlier darkness caused by the end of Daylight Savings time should not be lost on us. The darkness of this world causes us to cry out to God to bring His light, that is our Lord and Saviour, into this world. In our weariness is it any wonder that hymn #257 **“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”** is on our hearts and minds during Advent?

The four candles that will be lit during the season of Advent by acolytes and their families will represent on Nov. 29th **hope**, Dec 6th **faith**, Dec. 13th **joy** and Dec. 20th **peace**. These four gifts from God the Father of *hope, faith, joy* and *peace* can be only found in the Father's One and Only Son Jesus the Christ!

Advent is the time to prepare our hearts, minds and souls for the return of our Lord and Saviour. Whatever the New Year of 2021 will bring to you and I, to our families, to the Church, to the nation and to the world, let us proclaim the words from the Book of Revelation 22:20b, **“even so, come Lord Jesus”**.

Amen

In Christ

Rev. Robert B. Grewe

FLC Adjustments in December 2020 Due to the coronavirus

Grace and peace to you all, in Christ Jesus. Although it's only November 16th the schedule of events for December need to be planned ahead for your information and there are big changes with this year as we continue to move forward during this pandemic.

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic and restriction the following annual events are **cancelled**:

FLC Christmas Craft/ Vendor sale

Christmas Caroling to Shut-Ins (due to restrictions on visitation).

Breakfast at the Manger (Not enough children to put on the Nativity play)

Youth Group Christmas Party (lack of participation)

Cheer Baskets (Restrictions in care homes)

WFCL Christmas Party and general meeting

However, the following annual events will continue this year:

December 6th St. Nicholas Day and he will be visiting (masked) so the children and youth can bring a shoe and put it in the balcony and get photos taken after the service at the coffee hour with many German Christmas treats to snack on.

December 8th will be a fundraiser for the church at Dickies BBQ **from 11am - 9pm**

December 11th FLC council meeting at 7 pm ***(new photo to be taken of council please attend)***

December 13th St. Lucia Day with St. Lucia herself visiting the congregation she will be masked and cookies will be individually packed for your safety.

Christmas Card Fundraiser was voted on by the church members at the semi-annual congregational meeting to sponsor a window (\$250) for the new residential unit for Bethesda Lutheran Services.

December 24th Christmas Eve service with music starting 8:30 pm with service at 9:00 pm



Dear First Lutheran Church Family,

We are so blessed to have such a wonderful church family! I was very worried that First Lutheran Church would not make it through these trying times this spring. Pastor Grewe did not want to close during this time if at all possible. I agreed, and we decided that we would take it one week at a time and try to remain open. I

was also genuinely concerned about how we would pay our bills with so few attending Sunday Services. Would we survive? YES! We did, and we were able to pay all of our bills. Why? Because we have the greatest congregation! You stepped up and continued to support First Lutheran Church. My biggest thanks are to you, the congregation. You made this work. Not only were we able to keep up with our monthly bills, but we have been able to pay our monthly loan payment and monthly payment to Nicolella's. In October we fell short with the weekly donations, but with your continued support, there is no stopping us! As Commander Peter Quincy Taggart would say, "Never give up; Never Surrender."

A big thank you goes to George Salvucci, who stepped up and worked hard to get the worst part of our church roof fixed. He stayed in contact with the roofers and masonry workers, met with them as needed, and even went up on the roof so he knew exactly what needed done. He has also tirelessly worked at fixing all the little things around the church. Without him, none of this would have gotten done.

Jeff Ulanich is our Guardian Angel. He is always checking on the church to make sure there are not any new leaks and cleaning up water that has come in no matter what time of the day or night. He keeps watch over us and comes in many times during the day and night when it rains. He lets George know of any new problems, and the two of them work to keep our church standing. Both of them have been outstanding, but their work is not yet done. We are so blessed to have Jeff and George keeping us safe.

We still need masonry work around the church sanctuary so that we can fix the plaster that keeps falling and the paint that keeps peeling. These internal leaks are slowing causing damage which we need to get repaired before it is too late. Hopefully when this is fixed, we will have less water coming in the basement. With your continued support, I see no reason why we will not be able to do this.

(continue on next page)

As we all get busy with things to get ready for Christmas, please do not forget to send in your monthly offering so that we can continue to do God's work. There is much still to be done.



We will be having our Christmas Eve Service beginning at 9:00 pm, with music starting at 8:30 pm. I hope you all will be able to attend this wonderful service.

Merry Christmas,

Jennifer Black
FLC President

TREASURER'S REPORT

The 2021 budget for the church was approved by the council during its October 28th meeting, with a few revisions suggested. It was scheduled to be approved during the next Congregational Meeting which was November 15th. This budget was approved by the congregation with no questions asked or any changes requested.

Thanks,

-Erik Maust

Christmas Wreath- Pick-Up

Thank you to all who ordered Christmas wreaths, centerpieces and grave pillows. The pick-up will be on Saturday, December 5th from 9AM-11AM. Please park along the church handicap entrance and we will bring your order to you.

If you have any questions please call Vickie at 724-344-0565.

Your support of our Roof Fund is greatly appreciated.

Caitlyn and Vickie Group

Angel Tree

Thank you to all who selected an angel from the Angel Tree. Please return the gifts unwrapped along with the Angel Tag to the church by Sunday, December 13th.

Thank you for your generosity and once again making it possible for our church to support the Washington Community.

Many blessings,

Caitlyn and Vickie Group

Fundraising Update

Blessings to all of you and prayers you are all staying healthy and well.

Christmas Wreaths, Centerpieces, and Grave Marker Pillow Sale: If you ordered a wreath, centerpiece or grave marker pillow, please plan to pick them up at the church on Saturday December 5th.

Quilt Raffle: We are still selling tickets for the beautiful homemade queen-sized quilt raffle. Tickets are 1 for \$5 or 3 for \$10. Please see Kimberly Grewe for tickets.

Dickies BBQ Fundraiser: We have another restaurant fundraiser at Dickies BBQ (near Sam's Club) on Tuesday December 8th from 11 am to 9 pm. First Lutheran Church will earn a percentage of all sales when the flyer is presented with your order. Please plan to join us this day! You can eat in or take out -- just please don't forget to present the flyer.

Painting Event: As I write this Judy is planning another painting event for December – tentatively scheduled for Sunday the 13th. If you are interested in joining us for this fun event, please contact Judy Sarver.

Thank you for continued support and interest in fundraising for the church. If you have any questions about any of these sales or events, please contact me at 724-263-3253.

Sincerely, Heather Quedenfeld

Heather.quedenfeld@comcast.net

Enjoy Barbecue Done Right At



And Support

Our Day at Dickey's Barbecue Pit

First Lutheran Church

Fundraiser

Tuesday December 8, 2020

From 11:00 AM to 9:00 PM

At: 96 Trinity Point Drive,

Washington, PA 15301

Dine-in or Take Out

**For Take-out Call Ahead (724) 993-4902 or order online at Dick-
eys.com – choose store PA #1332**

This flyer must be presented to the cashier for validation

FUNDRAISER

Come join the fun, to celebrate the Christmas holidays!

Painting is at Thistledown Boutique, Art with April at 151 S. Main Street, Washington.

Sunday December 13 @ 2:00

Painting is a fundraiser and the cost is \$38.00

Please RSVP to Judy Sarver at 856-889-0776

Thanks!

Judy



From the Music director:

Our church communities are going through trying times because of Covid19. Many people are concerned about coming to church and that is very understandable. As choir director I am especially cognizant of Covid concerns. I have noticed that our congregation does quite well with spacing in our beautiful sanctuary. As one of the largest sanctuaries in Washington, we are blessed to be able to distance ourselves quite comfortably. I am always encouraged to do my best each time I sit at the piano and look out at the smiling faces in the congregation. And Pastor Grewe's humming when he goes past me makes me smile as well!

As music director, I have tried to provide special music in light of these trying times. Our choir room and also choir loft in sanctuary doesn't allow for much distancing. Singing is more problematic as our voices project farther when singing than during normal speech; especially people who have vocal training. In spite of this, my choir still volunteers to come and sing. How thankful I am for their efforts!

As we go through our winter months, I will continue to provide special music that follows the guidelines set forth for our protection. It is such a pleasure to be a part of your lives on Sunday morning. I have never thought of this position as a job but as a commitment to our Savior and to the people who attend. Each one of you.

Bobbi Heastings

EMBRACING HOPE – TEN YEARS LATER

In April 2011, Fikadu was our first child added to the Embracing hope project. Fikadu was sick and his Mom was desperate. Within weeks of him entering the project he was so sick that our staff had to rush him to the Emergency room. Doctors later told our staff that he would have died within a day if he had not been treated.

Fikadu's Mom was trying to support her family by begging along the roadside. Mom had a medical condition that kept her from being able to work, so in the absence of safety nets, she had to sit by the roadside hoping to beg enough so that she and Fikadu could eat each night.

But his malnourishment and sickness continued to grow, and there was nothing that mom could do.

A trip to the hospital (which was beyond mom's own means), a nutritious diet (including Plumpy Nut), getting mom and Fikadu away from begging on the roadside, an opportunity to work and a caring team at the right moment were all it took to preserve this little guy's life and help the family have hope.

10 years have passed and Fikadu and his mom are in a much different place today. Mom now has her own injera baking business and no longer begs by the roadside. They have their own government apartment and Fikadu is now in Grade 5. While he may no longer be in our program, he and his mom will always be in our hearts – reminders of how simple interventions change lives.

Fikadu is only one of hundreds of children that we have had the privilege of walking with over the years. Thank you for walking alongside of us and Fikadu as we see hope embraced one family at a time.

Linda Coleman

Dec. Lay Readers

- 6** George Salvucci
- 13** Dennis Schmidt
- 20** Dennis Schmidt
- 27** Lisa Maust

Dec. Altar Flowers

- 6** Kathleen Black
- 13** Jeff Ulanich
- 20** Don Hazlett
- 27** Sonie Rea

Dec. Acolytes

- 6** Bryce Berry and Lyndsay Berry
- 13** Heidi Walsh and Maria Sobocinski
- 20** Lillah Clark and Elijah Clark
- 24** Nathaniel Black and Wesley Black
- 27** Collin Berry and Cole Johnson

Dec. Ushers

- 6** A. Serbak; J. Sarver
- 13** K. Behrens; D. Looman; E. Oliver; H. Snyder
- 20** J. Hoffer; C. Krcil; R. Williams; N. & L. Williams
- 27** S. Ringer; D. Schmidt; Z. Mason; M. Verderber

Dec. Counters

- 6** D. Bassi; C. Group; J. Ulanich
- 13** H. Quedenfeld; S. Rea; L. Sten
- 20** V. Group; D. Schmidt
- 27** J. Black; L. Coleman; K. Luketich

Dec. Altar Team

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1	Rick Williams Chris Maust	13	Sally Hazlett Loraine Kay Rush
2	Matthew Mazzotti Aiden DeWalt	16	Judson Lacko
3	Sally Caddies Deborah Sten	21	Jodi Berry
3		22	Jimmy Conkle John Bartanus, Jr.
4	Allan Zimmerman	28	Danielle Penkerton
6	Wyatt Streator	30	George L. Walz Jim Scheffel
7	Jennifer Black		
8	Mark Black	31	Karen Gavazzi
10	Ed Goga		
11	Thomas DeWalt		