



THE MESSENGER

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WEST SEATTLE
(206) 935-6530 www.flcws.org December 2024

PASTOR'S PAGE — *Advent*

My first Christmas sighting this year was in mid-November. Already the gifts and the gift wrapping and tree ornaments were on display and for sale. Come “Black Friday” the consumer driven winter holiday will officially begin, but the prelude to the day after Thanksgiving is firmly in place.

Increasingly, I find that the Christian tradition of keeping Advent has fallen on rough times. The four weeks before Christmas are a time set aside for the people of God to pray and to be alert, waiting for the light of Christ in winter darkness. Advent teems with mystery, a sense of longing, and anticipation.

When I was a kid, we had an Advent calendar and either my brother or I would open a window on the calendar each day. Slowly, the decorations came up and anticipation grew. Eager anticipation. I'm pretty sure the excitement was around receiving gifts on Christmas Day. That is what we were waiting for. Please don't get me wrong. There is a magic and wonder about the Christmas lights, the festive decorations, and gift giving. I love to give presents to loved ones and I really enjoy the Christmas lights and concerts. There's just a lack of fit between what happens in the culture and in the church in December. The timing is different. On December 25th, the 12 days of Christmas begin in earnest and for most folks the tree and festive decorations begin to come down. Over time, I've discovered that this is not an either/or situation. To be a purist often lacks an appreciation for context and the purist in pursuit of what is right may just end up being a grump. I rather like to hold these two realities in tension.

I think it behooves the church to understand the history and meaning of Advent, and to practice the season of Advent in ways that are both attuned to the depth and wisdom of the tradition AND sensitive to the culture around us. How do we do that?

Recently, there's been an ecumenical movement to expand the Advent season to more than four weeks. It's a provocative proposal and it is one that seeks to BOTH honor the deep tradition of Advent as well as pastoral sensitivities and engagement with the culture. You can learn more about this in our Adult formation class on Sunday mornings in early December. We will meet to discuss and explore the question, “What are we waiting for?”



And in worship we will be keeping a sacred Advent, praying the perennial Christian cry: “Come, Lord Jesus.”

God's Peace,
Pastor Bryon Hansen

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The church council had the opportunity to participate in a retreat on November 1st and 2nd. Pastor Ivar Hillseland facilitated the Friday evening and all-day Saturday retreat. The retreat introduced some effective exercises and tools that may be used to help the council learn to run a congregation and self-reflection on who we are as a congregation. The church council will revisit the lessons learned from the retreat and bring those tools to how we help lead the church moving forward. Pastor Hillseland was then our guest preacher on Sunday, November 3rd. During coffee fellowship after service, Pastor Hillseland and the council shared how the council retreat had gone. I welcome everyone in the congregation to reach out to me or any of the attending council members to ask more questions about what was worked on.

Thank you to all who attended the Cup of Blessing Dinner on November 9th. Thank you to all involved with setup, food preparation, and clean up, a special thank you to Valerie and Scott Schorn for organizing the event for another year. The West Seattle Food Bank presented to us a heartfelt report and video on how they carry out their mission. It is important for us to continue our ongoing support to them.

I would like to still encourage, if possible, everyone to consider an additional contribution. Many thanks for our relationships, generous gifts, and blessings upon our church. I wish everyone a joyous Advent and Christmas season.

-Steve Liang
President, Church Council

MUSIC NORTHWEST PRESENTS

to the invisible listener

(Seattle premiere)

Based on texts of Soren Kierkegaard
in honor of Rev. Ron Marshall

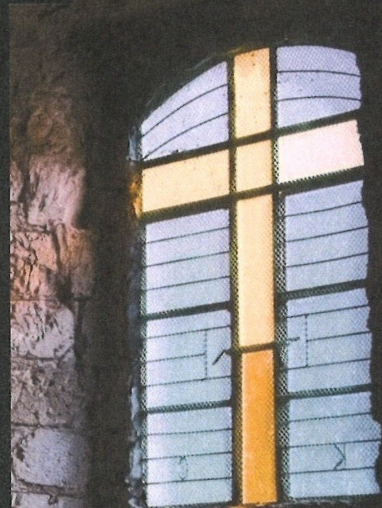
Sunday, Dec. 8, 2 pm
First Lutheran Church of West Seattle
4105 California Ave SW

Megan Renae Parker, soprano
Mara Finkelstein, cello
Jane Harty, piano

Music of Bach, Rachmaninov,
Andre Previn, and Jacob Beranek

Tickets: \$20 (Gen); \$18 (Sr) at
www.musicnorthwest.org

Students age 26 and under FREE, but
must be reserved in advance by contacting
Music Northwest 206 937 9792.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP: Join us after services Sunday, *December 1*, for an informal coffee hour, with Adult Formation class following.

ADULT FORMATION Join us in Room C & D. We will meet on the 1st after Coffee Hour, and after worship on the 8th & 15th, with potluck lunch available (signup for the potluck is on the bulletin board in the hall). Here is the schedule:

December 1 and 8 – What Are We Waiting For?

December 15 – An Adult Christ at Christmas

HOLY EUCHARIST – All baptized Christians are welcome to the Lord's Table. If you are not able to walk up to communion but would like to receive, please contact one of the ushers **before** the liturgy.

FOOD BANK COLLECTION: The West Seattle Food Bank box and all collections are in room C. Suggested donations for December are non-perishable holiday foods: potatoes, gravy, turkey, vegetables, baking ingredients, etc. Compass Housing Alliance is in need of socks for men or women for the winter months. Any non-perishable foods, personal products, or grocery store gift cards are welcomed. Your much needed donations are taken to the West Seattle Food Bank, Compass Housing Alliance, Mary's Place, and Westside Neighbors (American Legion Hall Shelter).

RIVERTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH is still in need of help in housing the hundreds of immigrants that keep arriving. To help, go to:
<https://rivertonparkumc.com/donate>

2025 PLEDGE CARDS: Please prayerfully consider your new pledge for next year. Your completed pledge card can be returned to the Financial Secretary by placing it in the offering plate or emailing your pledge information to tkorsmo@flcws.org.

DEO GLORIA CANTORES: Choir rehearses on Thursdays, from 7:30 to 9:00 pm each week. If you are interested in joining the choir, please contact Dean Hard at the church office.

ANNUAL MEETING AND REPORT: The 2025 Annual Meeting, and the Council's presentation of the 2024 Annual Report will be Sunday, January 26, following the Sunday service. As always, it will be a potluck in the Parish Hall.

EXTENDED MINISTRY: Support the Food Bank with Your Thriftway Receipts! The generous folks at West Seattle Thriftway are giving back 1% of sales from receipts turned in to benefit our local food bank! Simply drop off your receipts in the marked envelope at the Extended Ministry bulletin board outside Room C—we'll take care of the rest. Every receipt counts and makes a difference to those in need in our community. Thank you for your support!

NO LONGER UNDER CONSTRUCTION: Our website is updated and online! It now supports <https://flcws.org>, and you can find upcoming events as well as issues of the *Messenger* there. Also note that the old site's homepage, containing archived materials, can still be accessed at: <http://old.flcws.org>



A Christmas Tradition *At First Lutheran Church of West Seattle*

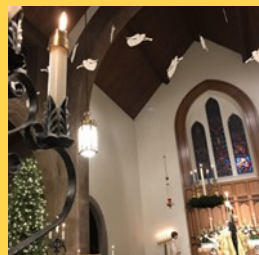
Christmas Eve, December 24th at 11:00 pm

A celebration of Christmas Eve with A Candle Light Service of Lessons and Carols, and Holy Communion.

The service will feature the singing of traditional carols; a candlelight procession of choir, acolytes, vergers, clergy and handbells; anthems sung by the Deo Gloria Cantores; and organ music played on the magnificent Noack Organ, one of the finest organs in the Pacific Northwest.

Christmas Day, December 25th at 10:30 am

A celebration of the Birth of Christ with a Festival Liturgy and Holy Communion. These services will be celebrated within the old-world beauty of this historic West Seattle church with its massive pillars, arches, vaulted beamed ceiling and awe-inspiring stained glass windows.



Join us for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day *As part of your Christmas Tradition.*

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord..

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men.

Luke 2:10-11, 13-14

STEWARDSHIP

I felt inspired to write a stewardship article after hearing Pastor Hanson's sermon based on the Bible verse from Mark 12:41-44. Stewardship refers to the idea that everything we have, including our money, is a gift from God and should be managed responsibly and generously, with the focus not on the amount given but on the heart behind the giving. However, in these Bible verses, we learn of the poor widow who gave a small amount but it was all that she had, which demonstrated a greater commitment than the wealthy who gave large sums from their abundance. We are not owners of our possessions but stewards. We are entrusted with managing them wisely and responsibly for God's purposes. We know too that stewardship applies to all aspects of life, including our time, talents, and resources, which should first be used to serve God. May we all feel inspired by the poor woman who gave all that she had.

-Gina Allen
Church Council

ADULT FORMATION

What are We Waiting For?

We will explore this question on the first two Sundays in Advent in the Adult formation class. On the first Sunday, December 1, we will meet following coffee hour. On the second Sunday, December 8, we will meet after worship and lunch items will be provided.

An Adult Christ in Christmas

A exploration of the Christmas stories in the Gospels and how the birth narratives reveal many layers of the meaning of Christ's coming. This formation time will take place after worship on December 15 with lunch items provided.



Cup of Blessings Dinner

Dear Congregation,

Valerie and I extend our sincere gratitude for your participation in the Cup of Blessings Dinner. We trust that you enjoyed the event.

The evening featured a variety of prizes, with the total amount raised estimated to be approximately \$10,000 for the West Seattle Foodbank. We will provide an official update once the final tally is determined.

We would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our volunteers who assisted in the dinner's success. Their dedication is essential to our ability to organize such events.

Thank you once again for your support.
InChrist, we can do all things!
Scott and Valerie Schorn



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Although the historical record is sketchy, it appears that our Advent arose out of a season of fasting to prepare for baptisms at Epiphany. Advent comprises the four Sundays before Christmas. Each year, the first Sunday deals with our readiness for divine judgment, the second Sunday the ministry of John the Baptist, the third Sunday the Baptist's call to a repentant life, and only on the fourth Sunday a narrative concerning the birth of Jesus. God comes, in the past in the history of Israel and the incarnation of Jesus, in the present in the word and sacrament of each Sunday and in the sufferings of our time, and in the future at the end of all things.

The season of anticipation and longing segues to the Twelve Days of Christmas, a time of great festivity and joy. We celebrate the "Word made Flesh." The birth of Christ is celebrated as the festival of the incarnation. God is with us. The glad tidings of Christmas celebrate God's presence with us still. Jesus is God's Word in the flesh. The culmination of Christmas is Epiphany, January 6th. On this day we celebrate the appearance of Christ to all nations seen in the visit of the Magi to the Christ child.

LUTHER'S REFLECTIONS ON THE NATIVITY

Let us, then, meditate upon the Nativity just as we see it happening in our own babies. I would not have you contemplate the deity of Christ, the majesty of Christ, but rather his flesh. Look upon the baby Jesus. Divinity may terrify man. Inexpressible majesty will crush him. That is why Christ took on our humanity, save for sin, that he should not terrify us but rather that with love and favor he should console and confirm. This is the word of the prophet: "*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given*" (Isaiah 9:6). This is for us the hardest point, not so much to believe that He is the son of the Virgin and God himself, as to believe that this Son of God is ours. Truly it is marvelous in our eyes that God should place a little child in the lap of a virgin and that all our blessedness should lie in him. And this Child belongs to all mankind. God feeds the whole world through a Babe nursing at Mary's breast. This must be our daily exercise: to be transformed into Christ, being nourished by this food. Trust him! Who is there whom this sight would not comfort? Now is overcome the power of sin and death. Believe that he is come, not to judge, but to save.

THE FIRST THREE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS ARE FESTIVALS!

Stephen, Deacon and Martyr (December 26) One of the seven who had been chosen to serve widows and others in need, Stephen preached the Gospel and it angered temple authorities. They ordered him put to death by stoning. As he died, he witnessed his faith and spoke of a vision of heaven.

John, Apostle and Evangelist (December 27) - One of the twelve apostles, John has been attributed as the author of the Gospel and three letters that bear his name. John's proclamation of Jesus as the "Word made Flesh" who lived among us, and the "Light that shines in the darkness" are most appropriate proclamations at Christmas time. According to tradition, in his later years John's sermons were rather short. He would essentially say "Love one another as Christ loves you. Amen," a rather precise summary of John's themes in scripture.

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs (December 28) - The infants commemorated on this day were the children of Bethlehem, two years old and younger, who were killed by Herod, who was threatened by the birth of a new king.

✠ PARISH PRAYERS ✠

*Remember in prayer before God those whom He has made your
brothers and sisters through baptism.*

Pray for members and friends of our congregation that God will bless and strengthen them in these days: Nancy Lawson, Peter and Dana Morrison, Paula and The Rev. Douglas Lindsay, Shirley Graham, Nora Vanhala, and Don Minter and children,

Pray for the homebound that the light of Christ may give them joy: Joan Olson, Mona Ayer, Jeannine Lingle, Robert Schorn, Lou & Lori Landino, CJ Christian, and Melanie Johnson

Pray for our bishops Elizabeth Eaton & Shelley Bryan Wee, our pastor Bryon Hansen, our choirmaster Dean Hard, and all who faithfully assist with worship. May they be strengthened in faith, love and the holy office to which they have been called. Pray for our church council, that God will guide and strengthen them in their work.

Pray that God would give us hearts to find joy in service and faithful stewardship. Pray that God would work within us to become a good steward of our time, talents, and finances. Pray to strengthen our commitment to stewardship in our congregation.

Pray for the hungry, ignored, abused, unemployed, addicted, homeless, and unbelievers. Pray God will show mercy to these people, and for all in Christ's church to see and help those who are in distress. Pray for our country and those who lead us, that our collective actions may honor God and be a blessing in the world.

Pray for people around the world who suffer from the effects of war, terrorism, natural disasters, disease, poverty, and abuse, especially the people of Ukraine, Israel, the Palestinian people, Afghanistan, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, and all who live in fear.

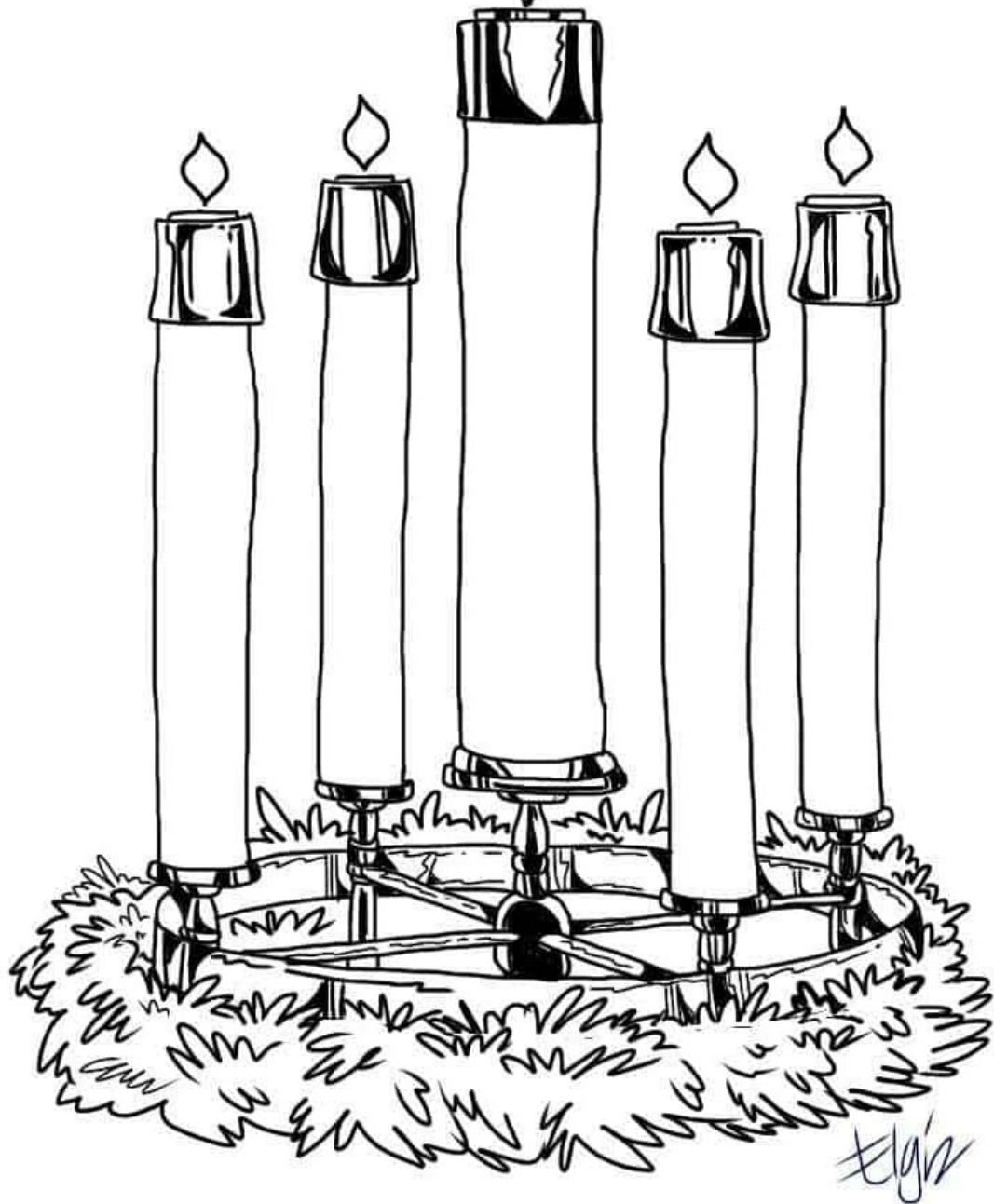
Pray that God will bless us through the lives of the saints: Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, c.342; Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, 397; Lucy, Martyr, 304; John of the Cross, 1591; St. Stephen, Martyr.

*Stir up Your power, Lord Christ, and come.
With your abundant graces, free us from the
sin that binds us, that we may receive you
with joy, and serve you always.*

Amen.



Advent



Color, cut, attach to foam core or cardboard to stiffen.



printable

★ nativity ★

playset



THE MESSENGER

NOVEMBER 2024

First Lutheran Church of West Seattle
4105 California Avenue S.W.
Seattle, WA 98116-4101

A Christmas Tradition at First Lutheran Church of West Seattle

*Christmas Eve,
December 24th at 11:00 pm*

*A celebration of Christmas Eve
with A Candle Light Service of
Lessons and Carols, and Holy
Communion.*

*The service will feature the
singing of traditional carols; a
candlelight procession of choir,
acolytes, vergers, clergy and
handbells; anthems sung by the
Deo Gloria Cantores; and or-
gan music played on the mag-
nificent Noack Organ, one of
the finest organs in the Pacific
Northwest.*

*Christmas Day,
December 25th at 10:30 am*

*A celebration of the Birth of
Christ with a Festival Liturgy
and Holy Communion.*

*These services will be celebrat-
ed within the old world beauty
of this historic West Seattle
church with its massive pil-
lars, arches, vaulted beamed
ceiling and awe-inspiring
stained glass windows.*

Join us for Christmas
Eve and Christmas Day