

OUR SAVIOUR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

January 2020 Newsletter

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The North American Lutheran Church

Dear Friends in Christ,

Happy New Year! We enter 2020 with hope and expectation in the grace of our Lord!

I want to use this article to lay out for you some stewardship activities we are going to be sharing this January and February. Our plan is to have some fun with stewardship. (Yes, stewardship can be fun!) For our stewardship emphasis this year, we are going to give out money. I'd better explain that.

Our stewardship discussion this year will focus on the parable of the talents that Jesus tells in Matthew 25:14-30. In that parable a master gives out money to three servants. The parable focuses on what the servants do with the master's money, and how the master responds to what they do.

Now the fun part. For our stewardship this year, we are going to live out this parable. We are going to give out money. On Sunday, January 19 during our worship services, we will pass out envelopes holding \$20, or \$15, or \$10. We will give you an envelope and ask you to use the money in a creative way. You will have 4 weeks to use the money as you see fit. On Sunday, Feb. 16 we will ask you to return your money (and hopefully your profit!) plus an accounting of what you did, just like in the parable.

So what can you do with the money? Please be creative as you reflect on this. Here are some suggestions:

- *Use the money to buy ingredients for cookies or cakes, bake them, and sell them in the church narthex on Sunday mornings.
- *Buy materials and make something to sell.
- *Buy a rake or other tool and hire out for yard work.
- *Pool your money with others and try something of a bigger scale.
- *And for a different approach, do something that supports the outreach of God's kingdom. You can give the money away to a ministry you respect, or help someone in need. In these cases you won't have a profit to return on Feb. 16, but the good Lord will be pleased with your stewardship!

Please use the church narthex on the Sundays between January 19 and Feb. 16 as a place to set up market and sell or display what you have. We envision this being a month-long celebration for the entire congregation.

One Sunday, Feb. 16 we will ask you to return your money and your profits. (By the way, we are going to refer to the profits as our "servant returns.") Also on Feb. 16, if you would, tell

us what you have done. We hope to celebrate and tell stories on that day and the following Sundays.

Please come to worship on January 19 and be part of all this. If you can't be present on that day, please stop by the church to pick up an envelope or pick one up on the following Sunday. We'd like for as many of our members to participate as possible. And have some fun with this! Be creative, see what you can come up with. Stewardship is finally the joy of living in the grace of our Lord. This year we intend to lift up that joy.

God Bless,
Pastor Mark

Thank You!

Thank you to all who helped with our Advent and Christmas activities. It was a busy month, but a wonderful month. We had incredible participation. Thank you to all!

Thank you from Braatens

Thank you for the cards and gifts and remembrances over the Holiday season. We very much appreciate your thoughtfulness!

Sunday School Resumes

Sunday School classes for all ages resumes on Sunday, January 5.

Adult Sunday School – Jan. 5 – “What is all this talk about a Rapture?”

Our Adult Sunday School class is going to start the new year by taking a one-day look at a theory called the rapture. Some denominations teach that at the end of time, God will “rapture” or remove all Christians from the earth, and then begin a period of intense tribulation. It is a quite popular theory in East Texas.

Pastor Mark finds the theory to be most unhelpful and not a good interpretation of the Bible. On Sunday, Jan. 5 at 9:00 a.m., Pastor Mark will examine all of this. He will first present what the rapture theory teaches. And then he will critique it in light of what the Bible says.

Please come and join us as we get back into the swing of adult Sunday School for 2020!

Congregational Meeting

Our annual meeting of the congregation will be on Sunday, January 26 at 11:15 a.m. The meeting will be followed by a congregational potluck dinner. 2019 has been an incredible year of ministry for OSLC; we want our congregational meeting to be a time of celebrating and thanking God for all He is doing!

Adult Forums on Jan. 12 and 19

Our church council is going to host adult forums on Sunday, Jan. 12 and 19 immediately after worship. The council will share with the congregation the proposed budget for 2020 and all the items on the agenda for the annual meeting. We've learned in past years that it is most important to have the congregation informed of all of this before the annual meeting. That gives people a chance to pray and reflect ahead of the meeting. Please come to these forums and share your input and thoughts.

Items for Annual Meeting - Submitted 2 Weeks in Advance

Just a reminder; we changed our bylaws a few years ago to say that all items to be discussed at the annual meeting need to be submitted to the congregational president at least 2 weeks before the meeting. That allows adequate time for all items on the agenda to be presented to the congregation before the meeting. If you have any proposals or ideas for the annual meeting, please do submit them to Bill Hebb. Thank you for your input!

High School Retreat at Lutherhill

High School youth, we are going to Lutherhill for a retreat again in 2020. The annual High School retreat will be Feb. 7 - 9. We will leave Friday evening and return late Sunday afternoon. This is a great time of worship, small groups, ultimate frisbee, and all sorts of fun. The cost for the gathering is going to be \$80. Please register with Courtney or Bailey if you plan to attend.

Egyptian Coptic Worship – Saturday, Jan. 4

As you know, we have a group of Egyptian Coptic Christians who worship in our building one Saturday morning a month. They are a marvelous group of people and this has been a fun and special ministry.

In January the Coptics will worship on Saturday, Jan. 4 beginning at 8:30 a.m. Worship will be followed by a big potluck dinner. This is a special day for our Coptic friends as their bishop will be joining them.

Please feel most invited to join this service and dinner on this special day!

Congregation-Wide Garage Sale this Spring – Stat Planning Now

We are planning to do another congregation-wide garage sale this spring, most likely in late February or early March. We are sharing this news with you early so you can start setting aside items to donate for the sale. Items you are getting rid of after the holidays, items you find in your winter cleaning, please donate them to the church and we will again have a huge garage sale. These have been most successful and fun in the past.

All proceeds from the sale will be used for our fund which provides financial support for our senior members and other members in need. Come share in the garage sale and also help to minister to our members!

Lutherhill this Summer

It is time to be thinking about Bible Camp for this summer. The earlier you sign up, the better chance you have of getting a spot. And for the younger campers, the earlier you sign up, the cheaper the week is.

Dates

Our week of camp next summer will be July 19-24. The camp will be for students in grades 4 through the 8th grade.

We are also looking at July 19-31 as the dates for our Senior High students to attend the LYLE program. That is LYLE II, Session B.

When to Register – the sooner the better!

If you would like to attend the LYLE session, be sure to register immediately. This program fills up fast. The cost for the LYLE program is \$850.

For students in grades 4 – 8 who will attend the week of camp – if you register and pay before March 15 the cost is \$525. After March 15 the cost is \$560. This camp will fill up, please be sure to register by the middle of this month.

How to Register

We are going to do things different this year. We are going to have you register directly with Lutherhill. That should simplify things. Please go to the Lutherhill website – www.lutherhill.org Look for summer camp information and follow the links for registration.

For students in grades 4 and 5 – please register as a Yearling. For students in grades 6 -8, please register for Confirmation camp. And Senior High, please register for LYLE II Session B.

Please notify our church office when you have registered.

Scholarships

We will again offer scholarships through our congregation. If you would like assistance in paying for camp, please call Pastor Mark.

For more information

Please go to the Lutherhill website, there is a lot of great information there. And of course please call Pastor Mark as you have questions.

Bible Camp Scholarship Fund

One of our best youth ministries is sending youth to Bible Camp. It is an incredible and faith growing experience. We have a scholarship fund to help youth who can't afford to attend camp. We don't want anyone to miss camp because of finances. If you would like to donate to this fund and help some youth attend camp, please write a check to the church and mark it for the "Bible Camp Scholarship Fund". Thank you.

Primetimers

Primetimers had a fun Christmas meeting in December with a beautiful soloist, a very delicious luncheon, an exciting gift exchange and fantastic attendance.

The January meeting will be January 9th, 2020 at 12 noon at Our Saviours Lutheran Church. The group will have a chili cook-off. All entries will be numbered and attendees will vote on the best chili. Volunteers have offered to bring salads, crackers, chopped onions, cheese, and corn chips. Volunteers are needed to bring desserts.

The program will be a speaker from Tyler Area Senior Citizens Association(TASCA) telling of all the activities available at the center.

Please RSVP to Mary Ferguson at mkvjhf@aol.com or 903-565-6607 by January 6th to let her know if you are planning to attend and in addition whether you are planning to enter the contest. These numbers are important as they will determine how much chili each contestant should bring.

Mark your calendars and practice making your favorite chili. Hosts to help set up for the meeting are Marlen Curry, Joyce and Curt Peterson, and Joseph Byers. Bring friends for some fantastic Christian fellowship. There is nothing to obligate you or no one to intimidate you, just great Christian friends to welcome you. Remember we are the "most caring Primetimers in the world".

Prayer Chain

We have an email prayer chain that works wonderfully. Thank you to all who share in this special ministry. If you are not presently on the prayer chain and would like to be, please call or email the church office and we will be sure you are added.

Social Ministry

The Social Ministry Committee follows the mandates of scripture to serve others, especially those who are ill, hungry, troubled, suffering injustice, or lacking basic needs. Each month, we will include a brief description of the organization (s) that our donations target.

Contributions: In January, we contribute to Haiti Education Foundation.

PATH: We are grateful to all who so generously contributed to the PATH food drive in November. We collected 267 lbs, our largest donation ever. In February, we will participate in the canned soup drive.

Christmas In The Neighborhood: Again this year, we are adopting four adults from the community who will benefit from our gifts. Our gratitude to all who contributed gifts. We made this a very Merry Christmas for these deserving citizens.

Quilters: The Quilters have a variety of quilted wall hangings for sale. Watch for them in the next few weeks.

When the Quilters become aware that a member is experiencing a serious illness or recovering from a serious accident, they place a special quilt in the narthex. The congregation is invited to tie a knot and say a prayer on the person's behalf. Please participate in this expression of love and concern.

The Quilters are always looking for new members. Anyone who is interested, please join us any Tuesday morning. We meet from 9:00 to 11:30 with a coffee break at 10:00. No experience is necessary. Only a desire to learn is required.

Direct Deposit

Did you know that you can do your offerings by direct deposit? We have been set up with Vanco Corporation through Thrivent Insurance for a number of years. We have a good number of people who are using this. If you would like to explore this possibility, please call the church office or pick up the information papers in the narthex.

“Pop Tops”

Have you noticed that in our church narthex, we have a large jar for the collection of the aluminum tops from soda cans? We have been doing that collecting for quite a few years now. We collect the “pop tops” and then donate them to the Ronald McDonald's House, a charity that provides housing for family members who are visiting in hospitals. It is a great charity and one of their fundraisers is to collect these tops. We recently donated a huge amount (one of the biggest donations they have ever seen) to the Ronald McDonald House in Dallas.

We invite all of our member and friends to share in this. Just save your pop tops and bring them to church. Thank you for your support; this has been a good ministry for us for a good number of years now!

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