

# the Spirit



## Christmas at Spirit of Christ

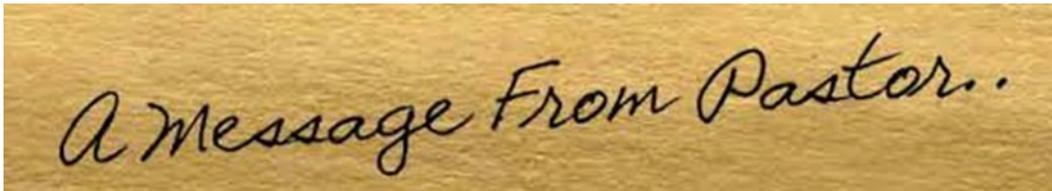
What's Inside:

Our busy holiday schedule

Our new View from the Pew column

And much more!





***Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and will be repaid in full. (Proverbs 19:17)***

***For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. (Matthew 25:35-36)***

Homelessness and affordable housing are two the most urgent issues facing our community these days.

And while it may sound like a lot of progress has been made over the last few years getting more people into housing, especially when it comes to helping veterans, there are still way too many people who are struggling, too many people without a place to call home, and too many people barely getting by.

It's hard to hear about people experiencing homelessness when I sit here in a warm church office knowing I have a bed and pillow to lay my head upon each night.

It's hard to hear that 51% of those who find themselves homeless are under the age of 24.

And its really hard to hear that 1/3 of those people who find themselves homeless are children.

But this does not mean all is lost because there is always hope and there is always something more that can be done.

And that something begins with each of us. It begins with you.

Now, at first glance it may seem overwhelming to even figure out how you, as an individual or family, should even start if you wanted to help alleviate homelessness.

I know that this was my initial reaction when I was first exposed to the issue of homelessness. But then, as the executive director of homeless shelter, I came to realize that help comes in many forms.

It comes from small donations that can add up over time and really make a difference. It comes



from little prayers lifted up to God. And above all it comes from simply acknowledging that there is problem in the first place.

And maybe acknowledging the issue is the first and best place for each of us to start.

We need to not ignore the issue, but look this problem right in the eye, face it down, and understand that each of us has had a role, even if it's simply been as a passive observer, in perpetuating homelessness.

So in this season of Advent, as we anxiously await celebrating the birth of our Savior, let us not forget that Jesus came into this world to save the lost, the least, and the last.

Jesus came into this world to call us to action and to join him in a ministry of reconciliation: a ministry where he reminds us that those who we often look down upon or simply try to ignore are the ones who are truly blessed.

Now, John the Baptist understood the need for us to change our ways and broaden our outlook of the world and that's why he spent all his time calling for people to change their ways, to repent, and be baptized. John, like a "voice of one crying out in the wilderness" rallied people to "prepare the way of the Lord."

And so, during this season of Advent, as we prepare for Jesus' birth we must also prepare for his return by continuing the work he began so long ago.

Beginning and continuing the work of loving God by loving and helping support everyone who has found themselves, for whatever reason, without hope, without peace, without joy, without love, and above all, without a place to call home.

Blessings, Pastor Durk



## Calendar– December 2017

### **Fri December 1, 2017**

7:00am N A  
7:30pm Desire AA (Green Room)

### **Sun December 3, 2017**

9:00am Sunday School  
10:00am Worship  
11:00am Fellowship

### **Mon December 4, 2017**

7:00pm Boy Scouts (Fellowship Hall)

### **Tue December 5, 2017**

5:30pm Women's AA (Fellowship Hall)  
6:30pm CYF meeting (Office)

### **Wed December 6, 2017**

5:45pm Drop-In Bible Study  
7:00pm Choir Rehearsal

### **Thu December 7, 2017**

6:30pm N.A. (Green Room)

### **Fri December 8, 2017**

7:00am N A  
7:30pm Desire AA (Green Room)

### **Sat December 9, 2017**

5:30am Shelter Breakfast

### **Sun December 10, 2017**

9:00am Sunday School  
10:00am Children's Pageant  
11:15am Fellowship

### **Mon December 11, 2017**

7:00pm Boy Scouts (Fellowship Hall)

### **Tue December 12, 2017**

5:30pm Women's AA (Fellowship Hall)

### **Wed December 13, 2017**

5:45pm Drop-In Bible Study  
7:00pm Choir Rehearsal

### **Thu December 14, 2017**

6:30pm N. A. (Green Room)  
7:00pm Church Council

### **Fri December 15, 2017**

Newsletter Deadline  
7:00am N A  
7:30pm Desire AA (Green Room)

### **Sat December 16, 2017**

9:00am Choir Cantata Rehearsal  
Christmas Tea Set Up

### **Sun December 17, 2017**

**Share the Spirit Sunday**  
10:00am Choir Cantata  
11:15am Christmas Tea

### **Mon December 18, 2017**

7:00pm Boy Scouts (Fellowship Hall)

### **Tue December 19, 2017**

5:30pm Women's AA (Fellowship Hall)

### **Wed December 20, 2017**

5:45pm Drop-In Bible Study  
7:00pm Choir Rehearsal

### **Thu December 21, 2017**

1:00pm Active Adults  
6:30pm N. A. (Green Room)  
7:00pm Men's Group  
7:00pm Prayer Shawl Group

### **Fri December 22, 2017**

7:00am N.A.  
7:30pm Desire AA (Green Room)

### **Sun December 24, 2017**

10:00am Worship  
11:15am Fellowship  
5:00pm Christmas Eve Worship

### **Tue December 26, 2017**

5:00pm Lion's Club (Fellowship Hall)  
5:30pm Women's AA (Fellowship Hall)

### **Wed December 27, 2017**

7:00pm Choir Rehearsal

### **Thu December 28, 2017**

6:30pm N.A. (Green Room)

### **Fri December 29, 2017**

7:00am N.A.  
7:30pm Desire AA (Green Room)

### **Sun December 31, 2017**

9:00am Sunday School  
10:00am Lessons and Carols  
11:15am Fellowship



## Social Action Calendar – December 2017 to February 2018

### December 2017

- 9 Shelter Breakfast 5:30 to 7:30am
- 17 Share the Spirit Sunday & Winter break donation deadline for BirdFeeder
- 21 2017 Homeless Memorial March & Service – March 5pm, Service 6:30pm, Meal 7:30pm

### January 2018

- 12 Shelter Supper 6:00 to 8:30pm
- 14 Volunteer Breakfast after the service
- 21 Share the Spirit Sunday

### February 2018

- 10 Shelter Breakfast 5:30 to 7:30am
- 18 Share the Spirit Sunday

## Our Saviours Shelter Breakfast - Dec. 9th

On Saturday, December 9th, Spirit of Christ will serve breakfast at the shelter. It is so important for the shelter residents to have a hot meal as they are sent out into the elements for the day. We will be serving French toast, bacon, sausage, juice, fruit, and milk. If you would like to join us for serving or make a donation, talk to Mark or Carolee at church, email [c-cohe@umn.edu](mailto:c-cohe@umn.edu) or call 952-935-5608 to learn more.

## The Great Thanksgiving!

Thank you for the donations to SLP BirdFeeder to help them cover their Thanksgiving break.

Now let's do even better in December! We are still collecting food donations for SLP BirdFeeder in December. Since students have a long weekend in November and two weeks off for winter break, we want to help fill the shelves at BirdFeeder so they can pack enough food for students to use over the breaks. Please bring donations for Thanksgiving break by November 19. For winter break, donations are needed by December 17.

Recommended food items are ones that do not involve the use of stoves or ovens. The best items you can donate are full packaged meals that require few outside ingredients, along with meals that can be made within their packages. These are appreciated by the families who don't have access to other cooking equipment.

Top 10 items below:

- |                                       |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Canned Fruits                         | Pasta Sauce |
| Microwavable Meals                    | Backpacks   |
| Bread/Tortillas                       | Snacks      |
| Nutritional drinks/Bottled water      | Rice        |
| Canned Meat                           | Jelly       |
| \$10 Food Gifts Cards (Cub or Target) |             |

## Share the Spirit Sunday

How can you share the Spirit? While sharing can take MANY forms, one opportunity we have every 3rd Sunday of the month is to contribute to the "Share the Spirit" fund. These donations are used in many ways: to support the shelter meals, Tree-House, special requests from STEP or Bird Feeder and our [363days.org](http://363days.org) sandwich making project.



## Get involved with Social Action!

The Social Action team (aka SOC SAC) welcomes everyone in the congregation to join us to plan and organize mission and social action events. This could be an ongoing activity or a one-time commitment. Talk to anyone on the Social Action Team: (Mark or Carolee Cohen, Wendi Harmsen, Pat Latvala, Deb Schmitz, Joanne Stone or Jeanne Worm) if you want to help!

## Upcoming Events

### Homeless Memorial Walk— Save the Date



The Memorial Walk is an annual event of remembrance for those experiencing homelessness who passed away in 2017. If you can't make the march at 5pm, you are welcome to join others for the Memorial Service at 6:30pm which is followed by a community

meal at 7:30pm at Simpson United Methodist Church (2740 1st Avenue South, Minneapolis). Check out the Simpson Housing website <https://www.simpsonhousing.org/events/memorial-march/> for more details and logistics about parking near the church and how to catch a shuttle to the start of the March (downtown).

## Advent Festival

The Children, Youth and Family Committee will be hosting an Advent Festival on Sunday, December 3. We will be decorating the trees in the fellowship hall and in the sanctuary immediately following the church service. There will be appetizers and desserts served. Please celebrate the start of advent by participating in decorating our church.

## Annual Christmas Tea

Sunday, December 17th

The annual Christmas Tea will again be held after the choir cantata on Sunday, December 17th at 11:00 in the church Fellowship Hall. There is a sign up sheet in the Narthex for anyone wishing to help serve that day, contribute treats, set up on Saturday, or clean up on Sunday. Anyone who would like to help or to contribute treats for the tea please contact Pat Latvala ([patlatvala@comcast.net](mailto:patlatvala@comcast.net) or phone number 763-428-0638).

We look forward to hosting this annual tea as a way to thank choir members for all they do to put on the cantata and throughout the year and wish a Merry Christmas to Spirit of Christ members.

## Choir Cantata— December 17th

Join us at 10am on Sunday, December 17th, as the Spirit of Christ Choir presents "Sing Joy To All The World" by Lloyd Larson. It is a beautiful, new cantata with familiar tunes and will be an experience you won't want to miss!



## **Ongoing Events/Opportunities**

### **Wednesday Night Drop-In Dwelling in the Word**

Feel free to stop by the church office between 5:45—6:45 each Wednesday evening as we take some time to center ourselves in the upcoming week's scripture or revisit the previous week's readings.

We will read and hear the lessons for the upcoming Sunday, ask questions, and just give the Holy Spirit the chance to speak a word of *Law and Gospel* into our daily life.

So come when you can and leave when you must.

### **Poinsettias**

There are still a few poinsettia plants that will decorate the sanctuary for Christmas. You will be able to take them home after the services on Christmas Eve. If you are interested, please contact Dina Strachota or the church office. They are \$12 each and proceeds from the sales will go to Worship and Music.

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!! Be on an Ushering Team!**

Are you looking for a low-commitment way to get involved at Spirit of Christ? Consider being on an Ushering Team! Time commitment is about 1.5 hours every 10 weeks throughout the year. We are looking for a new team of 5 people and three teams could use an extra person. Training will be available if requested. Please let Anne Kraft (a9kraft@outlook.com) know if you are interested.

## **View from the Pew**

Every two weeks, our very talented Bruce Lindquist has been writing a column called "View from the Pew". These are available in the weekly email blast, and will be here and on the website going forward. Here is the latest edition from November 12th:

40-year balsam fir tradition continues in 2017 -- "I felt that if we had a bad artificial Christmas tree, it was better to have no tree at all." And from those sentiments 40 years ago as a member of Ascension Lutheran Church, David Latvala began a tradition that continues to this day at SOC. Every year, joined by wife Pat, he heads for the old Latvala family farmstead near tiny Tamarack, Minn., and State Hwy. 210 in Aitkin County, to search the wooded land around the property for a balsam fir deemed worthy enough for placement at the head of his home church. After cutting, the popular fir is strapped to the family van for the 150-mile trip to St. Louis Park, and placed in its stand -- the same day. With regular waterings, the evergreen remains a healthy holiday staple for an appreciative congregation during December's sacred season. "Pat and I have always brought back the balsam, except for one year, when we bought a Fraser fir," Dave said. But the beautiful pyramidal, dense-needled tree that sits left of the alter during the final weeks of the year is only one obvious sign of their service here. It only takes a few minutes at SOC to see the Latvalas' influence on many aspects of church life, from cutting grass to making lefse. But the smell of a fresh-cut tree is the best!

Minnesota's unofficial king of the church basement -- Some of you may remember the late WCCO Radio morning personality Roger Erickson a little like I do: The voice of the stereotypical Minnesota Lutheran. With a heavy dose of humor, Erickson would weave you-betcha skits and stories throughout his broadcasts, for decades,



centering on tuna casseroles served by faithful church ladies to a full basement of Sunday congregants eager to consume many calories -- despite zero visibility and large snowdrifts on rural roads in every direction for miles.

For many, Erickson, who died recently, was the face of Lutheranism in Minnesota popular culture, even if his persona had little to do with church doctrine or reality. Still, his folksy stories often struck a chord in us, and we identified with the hard-working rural portrayals of our ancestors, relatives -- and even ourselves. I met him once at some long-forgotten newspaper gathering -- but I do still recall the personable Erickson, and his engaging smile and firm handshake. We exchanged a couple of southern Minnesota news items, and laughed about a certain New Ulm area road that doesn't seem to lead to anywhere. But that was a long time ago now. His radio tales of driving from the farm down dirt roads, watching the church steeple rise above ever-present corn fields on Sunday morning, apparently aren't relevant to anyone anymore in our urban landscape. And I suppose some are quick to dismiss his corniness in a world of smart phones and the internet. But like "Fargo" and Lake Wobegon, Erickson spoke for many of us "of a certain age" -- and it was great fun. Now, just north of Winthrop, Minn., at the Bernadotte International Airport, all flights have been cancelled. RIP, Roger.

"Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value." -- Albert Einstein

Next time: SOC's Active Adults share some Christmas memories.

Have a peaceful and productive week.

