

# the Spirit



## The New Year at Spirit of Christ

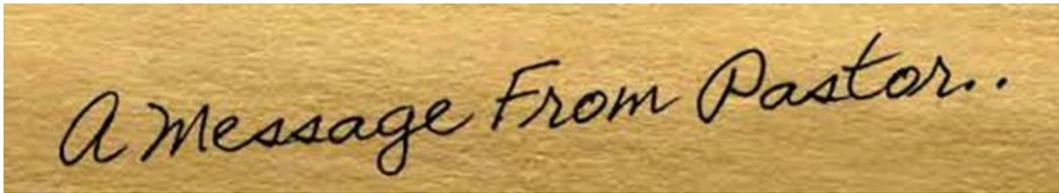
What's Inside:

A Reminder about our Annual Meeting

Two new editions of the View from the Pew column

And much more!



A message from Pastor. The text is written in a cursive, handwritten style on a light brown, textured background that resembles aged paper or parchment.

As I sit down to write this afternoon I am filled with hope and expectation to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Now, this is my first Christmas here at Spirit of Christ and already I have been blown away by the traditions of this congregation.

The children's program filled me with joy as did last week's Christmas Cantata and now just days away from Christmas Eve I'm already getting excited to join with all of you as together we stand in the darkness of the sanctuary to sing light into this holy space.

Yes, Spirit of Christ, I've discovered, is a very special community of faith.

A tight-knit caring community of faith that truly understands what it means to be a follower of Christ.

And while even though Christmas will have passed by the time you read this there really is no reason why this season of generosity and gratitude cannot continue well into this next year.

There's really no reason why you can't take a step back and maybe allow someone else to take a step forward with your help.

There's really no reason why you can't continue giving God thanks and thanking those in your life.

And there's really no reason why this year can't be a year to make amends or seek forgiveness.

Our Christian brother, Pope Francis, tells us that "Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy and that we must all rejoice daily because God's own son came to live among us and made God's mercy visible by personally saving us from our sins."

So today I encourage you to bring whatever burdens, struggles, sadness, or guilt you may carry before Jesus, as there is more than enough mercy to go around for each of you.

All you have to do is to receive it.

Again in the words of Pope Francis, “may the balm of God’s mercy reach everyone, both believers and those far away, as a sign that the Kingdom of God is already present in our midst!”

And signs of the Kingdom of God are all around us every day because God’s mercy is present through the Holy Spirit working in and through each and every one of you.

Each of you who have it within you the power to work miracles for the sake of others.

So this year I pray that each of you will do your part to show a little more mercy, be a little more grateful, and act a bit more generously in response to God’s abundant love come as a child, born in a manger, for the salvation of all.

New Year’s Blessings,

Pastor Durk



## Calendar– January 2018

### Mon January 1, 2018

7:00pm Boy Scouts (Fellowship Hall)

### Tue January 2, 2018

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

### Wed January 3, 2018

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

### Thu January 4, 2018

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

### Fri January 5, 2018

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

### Sun January 7, 2018

9:00am Sunday School  
10:00am Worship  
11:15am Fellowship

### Mon January 8, 2018

7:00pm Boy Scouts (Fellowship Hall)

### Tue January 9, 2018

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

### Wed January 10, 2018

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

### Thu January 11, 2018

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

### Fri January 12, 2018

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

### Sun January 14, 2018

9:00am Sunday School  
10:00am Worship  
11:15am Fellowship

### Mon January 15, 2018

Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
Newsletter Deadline  
7:00pm Boy Scouts (Fellowship Hall)

### Tue January 16, 2018

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

### Wed January 17, 2018

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

### Thu January 18, 2018

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

### Fri January 19, 2018

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

### Sun January 20, 2018

#### Share the Spirit Sunday

9:00am Sunday School  
10:00am Worship  
11:15am Fellowship

### Mon January 22, 2018

7:00pm Boy Scouts (Fellowship Hall)

### Tue January 23, 2018

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

### Wed January 24, 2018

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

### Thu January 25, 2018

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

### Fri January 26, 2018

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

### Sun January 28, 2018

9:00am Sunday School  
10:00am Worship  
11:15am Annual Meeting

### Mon January 29, 2018

7:00pm Boy Scouts (Fellowship Hall)

### Wed January 31, 2018

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



## Social Action Calendar – January to March 2018

### 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

### March 2018

- 4 Minnesota FoodShare Kickoff
- 9 Shelter Supper 6:00 to 8:30pm
- 18 Share the Spirit Sunday

### It's time to T.P. STEP!!!

Let's roll out to the stores and shop for some toilet paper for STEP!! Think about it! How many rolls does your family use in a week? In a month? No one really does think about it...until you run out and then YIKES! It becomes a top priority! Did you know, food stamps can't be used to buy toilet paper? Consider bringing in a 4-pack every week in the month of January, or better yet, buy the bargain 24-pack!

STEP families are allowed two rolls per visit and the food shelf needs 1,600 rolls cover a full month. The Social Action Team challenges you to 'share a few squares' with STEP in January 2018!



Our early bird breakfast servers from December.

### Our Saviours Shelter Supper - Jan. 12th

On Friday, January 12th, Spirit of Christ will serve dinner at the shelter. We will be serving baked chicken, stuffing, gravy, green bean casserole, rolls, milk, lemonade and dessert. Right now, we need volunteers to serve the meal and we can use homemade desserts and coffee or tea donations. If you would like to join us to serve the meal or make a monetary or dessert donation, talk to Carolee or Mark at church, email [c-cohe@umn.edu](mailto:c-cohe@umn.edu) or call 952-935-5608.

### Calling all Volunteers! January 14th Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast!

We appreciate all of you! Yes, that means you! The Social Action Team would like to invite all members to enjoy our typical shelter breakfast meal following the service on January 14th to say thank you for another great year of Social Action activities and support! We are blessed to have so many members who are so willing to carry out our SOC mission (Worship, Grow, Serve!)



## 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 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

### Annual Meeting

Just a reminder that Spirit of Christ's annual meeting will take place on Sunday, January 28th, 2018, after worship. There will also be doughnuts in the back of the sanctuary.

## 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.



The youth and chaperones who are going to the Gathering, along with some friends, went to an Escape Room earlier this month.

## **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 two editions from December 17th and 24th:

**Filled with talented energy** -- Leave it to the kids to fill the SOC sanctuary with positive energy. And that was the talk following our church's annual Children's Christmas Program on Dec. 10 -- a palatable feeling in the air by the congregation that they had been "energized" by the performance.

Under the very effective musical, stage and youth guidance of Nancy Malone, Bruce Strachota and Wendi Harmsen, the children (of all ages) added their signature to a production that was as refreshingly unique as it was timeless. Oskar Mornes' horn playing and Yoomee Harmsen's work on the piano gave us a preview of two budding musicians. Who knows, maybe 20 years from now, when their names are up in lights, we'll say, "I remember when . . ."

Keeping convincing performances all in the family in Scene One, "Gifts," were Erik, Jen, Oskar and Esme Mornes, while mother-daughter duo Brooklynne and Michelle Patterson did the same in Scene Two, "The Perfect Gift." Michelle and Brooklynne followed that up with readings in Scene Three also, "The Gift of Love." Scene Four, "The Gift of Prayer," featured another mother-daughter combination, Yoomee and Wendi Harmsen, and bolstered by Kristi White, also. The Mornes' took over Scene Five, "The Gift of Mission." And also displaying their thespian talents in Scene Six were the SOC wise guys, urr, The Three Wise Men, otherwise know around here simply as Mark Cohen, Bret Hanson and Walter Malone. Look out, Way-Off Broadway! The alter scenes were interspersed with beautiful Christ-

mas music, led by Bruce directing and Nancy on keyboard.

And waiting in the wings at this year's program were Wesley and Oliver, young sons of Jason and Nicole Goerges -- absorbing the material for some future SOC production!

**A leg up** -- It just isn't the holiday season in St. Louis Park until "the leg" appears in a certain window on Quentin Avenue -- The Leg Lamp, of course! Probably most everyone has seen "A Christmas Story," a very popular, quirky film depicting a Midwest family's misadventures over the holiday season, first released in 1983. In the film, Ralphie's father receives "a major award," which turns out to be a leg lamp (a life-like leg base with a bulb and shade on top).

All in good-natured fun a few years ago, Dick and Nancy Brammer received such a lamp from their son and son-in-law, and now very carefully pull it out each Christmas and set it on a table in front of their window -- just as in the movie. Over the past couple of years or so, I have kidded Dick that it sure must be nice to have such a precious heirloom to display and admire each year -- at the same time thinking what a guilty pleasure that must be. A couple of weeks ago, they unceremoniously presented me with a copy of "A Major Award" certificate which accompanied the fishnet-encased leg -- to get me, I think, to stop my incessant yammering about it every year! Anyway, thanks for the lovely parting gift.

## **December 24th edition**

**Reflections on 3 members of our family** -- We lost three wonderful members of the Spirit of Christ family in 2017. I've been here now for nearly four years, and I was lucky enough to get to know all three. Gorden K. (Gordy) Westermann, 91, of SLP, died Jan. 7th of this year; Harold Edward (H.E.) Larsen, 83, of SLP, passed



away March 19, and Jillian Patricia Berge, 26, of Hopkins, died April 28. The funerals for H.E. and Jillian were held here; Gordy's was in Northeast Minneapolis. About three years ago, I was asked by our parish nurse Renee Compo to join Glen and Eileen Soderberg and Dave and Pat Latvala on this church's visitation team. One of my assignees was Gordy. I would stop by his Maryland Avenue home here in SLP about once a month. Both of us being vets, we would swap war stories, but given his vast WWII hand-to-hand combat experience in the South Pacific, the conversation was pretty one-sided -- which meant I did a lot of listening. I miss those informal talks with him. H.E., also a vet, and I shared interests in art and joke-telling, although he was much better at both. He would almost always surprise me with some story that would inevitably take a dramatic turn for the hilarious. (He and his wife Marcee danced and danced some more during their time together, which I enjoyed hearing about). And he seemed to have that look in his eyes that something funny was about to happen or be said. I miss laughing with him. Jillian joined SOC in the same new member class that I was in, May, 2014. She was a former trumpet-player for the over-the-top Pride of Minnesota – U of M Marching Band -- and she acted like it. Members of that group always struck me as having a lot of interesting things going on in their lives, and Jillian was no exception. She held a biomedical BS degree from the U, was valedictorian of her '09 Farmington High class, assisted in the operation of a small gift business, etc., etc. I miss the vast promise she held for our congregation. I hope their families and friends are finding some comfort, in this very reflective time of year, in the wonderful memories they left us. I know I am. I've learned over the past four years that our loved ones never leave us, but help to guide us to that positive ground, because of the exemplary lives they led.

**The sound of (special) music** -- I sit in the back row of the choir and pretty much take up space, but it gives me a tremendous vantage point to take in the melodious sounds flowing from those in front of me, and on either side. My musical claim to fame is limited to strumming a few chords on the four-string ukulele. So I had a prime box seat on Dec. 17 to take in the SOC Christmas Cantata, directed by Steve Stucki, and it was a beautiful event. Hats off to Jan Arnold, Linda Brandt, Jeanne Worm, Dina Strachota, Barb Endres, Karen Johnson, Karen Flatten, Anne Kraft, Renee Compo, Nikki Christensen, Nancy Malone, Lowell Brandt, Glen Soderberg, Bruce Strachota, Greg Flatten, Harding Hanson and David Latvala. My take away? I think they are all very experienced -- and talented -- vocalists. Thanks also to narrators Bret Hanson and Megan Patterson, Michal Sobieski (violin), Jim Jacobson (cello) and Larry Wilson (piano). And a special thank you to Dina Strachota for arranging to have Park TV 15 Community Cable record the concert, which can now be found on Youtube!

