What’s Inside:
A two part pastor’s pen
Information on all of our Holiday events
A calendar filled with events from SOC as well as two congregations who will be having worship in the sanctuary
A call for blankets for ‘Love One Another’ and food donations for ‘BirdFeeder’
2 View from the Pew articles
And more!
Pastor’s Pen

The season of Advent is one of my favorite seasons of the church year. With its overarching theme of waiting and expectation it becomes a time that reminds me to slow down and not rush into the all too often hectic season of Christmas. In addition, I find that the season of Advent often becomes a time for me to step fully into a renewed sense of devotion.

And so each year I seek out resources that lend themselves to my quest for deeper devotion. This year, I invite you to join with me by picking up one of two Advent Devotionals that are now available in the narthex. The first is one that Luther Seminary has put together and this year is entitled “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” while the second is one that Pastor Siri of Atonement Lutheran in Bloomington has written called “All the Earth is Hopeful.”

Feel free to pick up one or both of these great devotions and take the time individually or as a family to make your way through this too often skipped over season of our church year. If you do, I am positive your journey will be worth taking and your season of Christmas will only be enhanced.

Pastor Durk

There is a lot going on here at Spirit of Christ in the coming weeks.

On December 1st we usher in the season of Advent by decorating the sanctuary and church right after the service.

On December 8th we can look forward to the annual Christmas program. The Christmas Pageant will be performed on Sunday, December 8. The pageant is called “God’s Gift to Us”. This pageant tells the story of two weary shoppers who discover the true meaning of Christmas.

On December 15th our choir will offer us a gift of holiday music with this year’s Cantata entitled, “Journey of Promises” we will also be officially welcoming new members to our faith Community, and after the service everyone is invited downstairs for the annual Christmas Tea.

On December 24th everyone is welcome for our traditional Christmas Eve Service at 7:00pm.

On Sunday December 29th we have a Traditional Service of Lessons and Carols led by Dina Strachota and Nikki Christensen.

As a side note, Pastor Durk will be taking some time off between December 25 and January 1, but will be in town and available for pastoral emergencies.
A huge thank you to everyone who took the time to fill out and turn in your 2020 pledge cards as it is a true blessing to serve a church that is so willing to support the mission of our congregation.

But what fills me with even more joy than the amount of the pledges received is that so many of you took the time to prayerfully consider in advance what you’d be able to offer next year.

Now, as I’ve mentioned again and again your offerings should always be given not only joyfully, but with intention.

That is, an offering made after discerning your ability give and not simply as an after-thought.

Now, of course continued financial support is going to be important to the long-term sustainability of living into our mission, but we must also never forget that giving takes other forms as well as financial.

And an argument might be made that the giving of our time and talents is just, if not even more, important.

It took me awhile to understand this but eventually one on my mentors, Pastor Jeff, of Olivet Lutheran in Fargo, ND one gave me some of the best advice on stewardship I ever received when he told me that while “giving should always be done joyfully it should, more importantly, always force you to constantly reevaluate the level you give.”

Now, at first, I thought he was just trying to get me to step up and give more money to the church, but when I pressed him on what he meant he instead said that “each of us have different abilities, different strengths, and different ways of looking at what it means to be a faithful giver, but the real challenge comes from not giving more of what is easy for you to give, but what is most hard.”

And what he meant by this is that if it’s easy for you to give financially maybe you should be looking at ways to give more of your time and energy. If it’s easy to give of your time and energy maybe you need to figure out a way to give more financially. And if you are one of those people who always gives abundantly in both ways already, maybe your calling is to help others see the wisdom of your ways and help them become even more generous in the way they approach stewardship in the future.

And this final way of giving back to the church is what ultimately will help ensure that the gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered here in this place for many years to come.

Pastor Durk
Calendar for December 2019 through February 2020

December 2019
14 Shelter Breakfast 6:30 to 8:30am
19 2019 Homeless Memorial March and Service

January 2020
10 Shelter Supper 6:00 to 8:30pm
19 Volunteer Appreciation Sunday

February 2020
8 Shelter Breakfast 6:30 to 8:30am

Our Saviour’s Shelter Breakfast – December 14th
On Saturday, December 14th, Spirit of Christ will serve breakfast at the shelter. The menu is French toast, bacon, sausage, juice, fruit, and milk. We serve breakfast at 7am and leave church between 6:15 and 6:30am. If you would like to join us for serving or make a donation of coffee or tea, talk to Mark or Carollee at church, email c-cohe@umn.edu or call 952-935-5608 to learn more.

2019 Homeless Memorial March and Service - December 19th 5pm
5:00 pm - Vigil & Silent March - meet at Hennepin County Government Center - 3rd Ave S & 5th St S, Minneapolis. The march will follow 5th St S westward to Nicollet Ave and proceed south to 28th St. You can park at the Kmart lot, Lake St & 1st Ave, Minneapolis. Shuttles to the start of the march will depart from Kmart starting at 4:00 pm. Last shuttle departs at 4:20 sharp.
6:30 pm - Service of Remembrance - Simpson United Methodist Church, 2740 1st Ave S, Mpls.

7:30 pm - Community Meal Simpson Shelter Lower level of Simpson UMC
All are welcome / Todos son bienvenidos! Talk to Jeanne at church to learn more about it.

December is dedicated to collecting for the SLP Bird Feeder!
Top 10 items:
Canned Fruits, Microwavable Meals, Pasta Sauce, Snacks, Bread/Tortillas, Nutritional Drinks/Bottled Water, Jelly, Canned Meat, Rice, Backpacks, $10 Gift Cards (Cub or Target)
☐ Recommended food items are ones that do not involve the use of stoves or ovens.
☐ Please do not donate items that are expired; we cannot give them out to students in need.
☐ The best type of 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.

All items must be brought to church by Sunday, December 15th!
Your support is greatly appreciated!

Volunteer Appreciation Sunday – January 19th!
Please join the Social Action team on Sunday January 19th after the service. There will be a small service project to do and then some breakfast as your reward for all that you do throughout the year to help our neighbors and others around the world.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>Sunday, December 1</td>
<td>11:00am Worship</td>
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<td>12:00pm Fellowship</td>
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<td>Decorating the church</td>
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<td>Tuesday, December 3</td>
<td>6:00pm CYF meeting</td>
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<td>Sunday, December 8</td>
<td>11:00am Worship (Christmas Pageant)</td>
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<td>12:00pm Fellowship</td>
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<td>Thursday, December 12</td>
<td>7:00pm Church Council</td>
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<td>Saturday, December 14</td>
<td>6:15am Shelter Breakfast</td>
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<td>Sunday, December 15</td>
<td>11:00am Worship (Choir Cantata)</td>
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<td>12:00pm Christmas Tea</td>
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<td>Thursday, December 19</td>
<td>1:00pm Active Adults (potluck and program)</td>
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<td>6:00pm Men’s Group</td>
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<td>7:00pm Prayer Shawl group(youth room)</td>
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<td>Sunday, December 22</td>
<td>11:00am Worship</td>
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<td>12:00pm Fellowship</td>
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<td>Tuesday, December 24</td>
<td>7:00pm Christmas Eve service</td>
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<td>Sunday, December 29</td>
<td>11:00am Worship</td>
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<td>12:00pm Fellowship</td>
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<td>Sunday</td>
<td>1:30pm Like No Other Family Church worship</td>
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<td>5:00pm Church of St. Joseph worship</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>7:00pm Boy Scouts</td>
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<td>(Fellowship Hall)</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>5:30pm Women's AA</td>
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<td>(Green Room)</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>5:30pm Bible Study</td>
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<td>7:00pm Choir</td>
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<td>Bible Study (Like No Other Family Church)</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>7:00am Grace in the Park bible study</td>
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<td>(at Knollwood Panera)</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>7:00am NA</td>
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<td>7:30pm Desire AA (Green Room)</td>
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Worship Assistants this month

**Sunday, December 1st**
Lector: Dina Strachota  
Ushers: Team 5 (Bret, Cheryl, and Courtney Hanson, Jen Mornes)  
Powerpoint Operator: Dina Strachota

**Sunday, December 8th**
Ushers: Team 6 (Linda and Lowell Brandt, Karen and Greg Flatten)  
Powerpoint Operator: Mark Cohen  
Money Counters: Renee Compo and Erik Mornes

**Sunday, December 15th**
Ushers: Team 7 (LeRoy Murray, Anne Kraft, Dick and Nancy Brammer)  
Powerpoint Operator: Bret Hanson

**Sunday, December 22nd**
Lector: Renee Compo  
Ushers: Team 8 (Renee Compo, Deb Schmitz, Marcee Larsen, Jeanne Worm)  
Powerpoint Operator: LeRoy Murray

**Sunday, December 24th (Christmas Eve)**
Ushers: Team 8 (Renee Compo, Deb Schmitz, Marcee Larsen, Jeanne Worm)  
Powerpoint Operator: Nikki Christensen

**Sunday, December 29th**
Lector: Renee Compo  
Ushers: Team 9 (Mark and Carolee Cohen, Dina and Bruce Strachota, Harding Hanson)  
Powerpoint Operator: Mark Cohen  
Money Counters: Renee Compo and Anne Kraft
Blanket Collection
Again this winter, SOC is collecting blankets. If you have new or clean used blankets that you don't use, bring them to church and they will be delivered to Love One Another. Allen Law can distribute them as needed when he is out on the streets at night. SOC provided six blankets to him when he presented his Temple Talk. Thank you all for helping to keep people stay warm during these upcoming winter months.

View From the Pew
By Bruce Lindquist
Week of November 3, 2019, Vol. 3, No. 2

Popular addition -- Following are a few comments offered from Dina Strachota on a project initiated in the Narthex last year, involving the movement of pews, the addition of chairs, a table, fresh paint, and a lot of enthusiasm.

“A little over a year ago, the Worship and Music Committee, along with help from Pastor Durk and Properties, decided to freshen up the Narthex and move a few pews around and put in the table and chairs in the back of the sanctuary.

“It was a new concept for me to have a space designated for families with little ones or simply a friendly and familiar place like a ‘dinner table’ to sit at during worship. It is also being used for meetings.

“I had no idea how popular this would prove to be. I’ve even noticed during services like Christmas Eve when we have more than the usual numbers of visitors, people are still drawn to that table.

“It brings me such joy to have families sit there while the kids can be kept busy with the coloring sheets and books we have on the table. Having younger families participating in worship is a sign of vitality in our congregation.

“And I hope this trend continues.”

No apostrophe needed --
We are again reminded of a couple of facts surrounding Veterans Day, coming up on Monday, Nov. 11. Katie Lange wrote several, including the following, which appear in the current edition of American Legion Magazine:

Veterans Day does not have an apostrophe.
A lot of people think it’s “Veteran’s Day” or “Veterans’ Day,” but it is not. The holiday is not a day that “belongs” to one veteran or multiple veterans, which is what an apostrophe implies. It’s a day for honoring all veterans -- no apostrophe needed.

Veteran Day is not the same as Memorial Day. Memorial Day is a time to remember those who gave their lives for our country, particularly in battle or from wounds they suffered in battle. Veterans Day honors all of those who have served the country in war or peace – dead or alive – although it is largely intended as an opportunity to thank living veterans for their sacrifices.

To the military veterans in our congregation, whether Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard – and there are many, even in our smaller church – thanks for giving our nation a blank check to use your service wherever and whenever it was needed.

Because service men and women come from virtually every nook and cranny of this land, I’m reminded of the popular Lee Greenwood song this time of year, “God Bless the U.S.A.” (some have suggested it become our
national anthem). “. . . From the lakes of Minnesota, to the hills of Tennessee, across the plains of Texas, from sea to shining sea . . . God Bless the U.S.A. . . .”

Have a great week.

-o-

Week of November 17, 2019, Vol. 3, No. 2

A fall tale-- -- I’ve had this old, small, wooden handle, wire leaf rake for nearly as long as I can remember. I’ve had other rakes, but the antique one seems to follow me everywhere. How it’s found its way into my stuff through all of the moves I’ve made in my lifetime, I shall plead ignorant. Shortly after we purchased our first house on 10th Avenue in Austin in 1975, I bought the rake at Sears, along with a shovel, hoe and a garden hose, as I recall. The rake seemed to do the simple task it was built for: trap leaves along the surface in its little wire forks as the handle is pulled forward at an angle.

Now I use the mower mostly to grind the maple, oak, basswood and willow leaves into fine particles to filter back into the grass. That’s the best part – the way they disappear. That doesn’t happen when you rake; the leaves get bigger, or at least the piles do.

The reason I bring all of this up, is because the little rake that could – now, can’t. I became painfully aware of this when I grabbed the rake near the garage door, as I headed off to church last month, to do the first clean-up of the season in the area around the office and sanctuary doors. I had about 20 minutes before I had to take off for one of my VA veterans’ volunteer visitations. Plenty of time, I thought, to tidy up the strip along the east side of the church, plus the south and east side curbs.

Now, after almost 45 years of pretty good performance, the “old guy” had finally lost the oomph in his spring tines. Not me, the rake.

Attendees to the monthly session of Active Adults were beginning to arrive. One of them, Marcee Larsen, could see that I needed help (okay, so maybe in more ways than leaf-raking). She volunteered to rake the leaves into piles, then we would push the piles unto the old blanket, and I would drag it away, dump it, repeat.

After only a few minutes of this routine, I could tell something wasn’t right. Then Marcee told me, point-blank, something that I suspected: “This rake is useless!” I said yes, yes, you’re correct. But I guess I needed to hear it from her, because she sealed the spindly wooden fella’s fate. I told her that I had finally come to that harsh realization also, and wished that I had brought another one of our rakes from home. Almost an hour later, and this limp tool was barely combing anything!

But loyalties die hard, and I knew I had to force it into battle for at least one more autumn. Its purpose is to whisk leaves away -- and it failed. And we all reach the end of the line in something. I’ve run 10 marathons, and I’d like to run No. 11. But the inclination is gone, and so too is the attractiveness of 10- to 15-mile training runs. Add that I’m slower and far north of my ideal weight, and there it is, reality.

And so it is with the simple yard cleaner. After nearly a half-century of doing what it was supposed to do, it can’t do it anymore. Maybe I’ll fashion it into a garden trellis, then it can remain stationary in retirement, and simply admire the falling leaves -- not do battle with them.

(Note to Marcee: Thanks for the replacement rakes – they did a wonderful job!)