What’s Inside:
A two part pastor’s pen
A calendar filled with events from SOC as well as two congregations who will be having worship in the sanctuary
Who we’re T.P.ing!
Not two, but three View from the Pew articles
And more!
The season of Epiphany is all about God revealing God’s presence. And as I get done watching another day of commentators and comedians talking about little else than an impeachment of a president I sure wish God’s presence was more fully on display.

Especially given the fact that almost every single office holder in both the executive and legislative branch of our country, regardless of their political party affiliation, seem to claim to be believers.

Believers in Christ.

And yet, if they are truly believers why can’t they seem to get it through their thick skulls how important it is that, as leaders, it is their main responsibility to make this nation, and dare I say even the world, a better place for all people to live.

I get so irritated by the bipartidism, I am frustrated to no end by their constant bickering and backstabbing, and, at times, I wish I could just wash out their mouths with soap.

And I bet many of you feel much the same way.

I bet many of you also would like to see our elected leaders act more civilly towards one another and start working together on issues that really matter.

But until that day comes we will have to wait.

However, we don’t have to wait and do nothing, but can start calling out their actions for what they are – Evil!

Call out the evil while continuing to point out all the good God is making known all around us.

And don’t just point out the good, but do your part too.

Do your part to bring a little sunshine and hope and peace into this world.

Because as this impeachment stuff gets finished we’ve still got an election starting to really ramp up.

An election that I am sure will only get nastier and nastier.

So, let’s all do our part to spread a little new year cheer by sharing the love of Christ and doing what we can to counteract the negativity that seems to lurk around every corner.

And who know, if we do, maybe the world really can become a better place.

Blessings, Pastor Durk
More from the Pastor’s Pen
Excerpts from A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Church

Miserable Members
A woman asked her pastor for the birth record of her sister. The church files were searched, but to no avail.

Several days later the pastor approached her and asked, “Has your family always been connected with this congregation?” The woman’s reply: “Why, sure. We’ve been afflicted with this church all our lives.”

The Rev. Kenneth L. Engstrom
Miller, South Dakota

Preacher Praises Prisoners
A pastor in our community was asked to preach to the inmates of a county prison. Pleased by the invitation, he began by blurting out an enthusiastic “I’m glad to see so many here!”

Conrad Lobel
Paxtang, Pennsylvania
Calendar for January – March 2020

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

February 2020
8    Shelter Breakfast 6:30 to 8:30am
13    STEP Empty Bowls Event

March 2020
13    Shelter Supper 6:00 to 8:30pm

Our Saviour’s Shelter Supper – January 10th
On Friday, January 10th, Spirit of Christ will serve dinner at the shelter. We will be serving a menu of baked chicken, stuffing, gravy, green bean casserole, lemonade and dessert. We can use homemade desserts and coffee or tea donations AND servers are always welcome. If you would like to make a dessert or other menu donation, talk to Carolee or Mark at church, email c-cohe@umn.edu or call 952-935-5608.

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.

STEP Empty Bowls Event - SAVE THE DATE - February 13, 2020
Stay tuned for more details about the event in the upcoming weeks!

It’s time to T.P. STEP!!!
Get rollin’ to the store and pick up some toilet paper for STEP!! Ever think about many rolls your family uses in a week? In a month? You might not think at all about TP…until you run out! And then it becomes a top priority! Government issued food support funds can’t be used to buy toilet paper. STEP families are allowed two rolls per visit so STEP needs over 1,600 rolls a month.

Consider bringing in a 4-pack every week in the month of January, or better yet, buy the bargain 24-pack! We challenge you to fill the Social Action collection area in the narthex to the max with many rolls and packages of TP! Come on, SOC members, share those squares!

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, Pat Latvala, Deb Schmitz, Joanne Stone or Jeanne Worm) if you want to help!
### Calendar – January 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sunday, January 5</strong></td>
<td>11:00am Worship&lt;br&gt;12:00pm Fellowship</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday, January 7</strong></td>
<td>6:00pm CYF meeting</td>
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<td><strong>Thursday, January 9</strong></td>
<td>7:00pm Church Council</td>
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<td><strong>Friday, January 10</strong></td>
<td>6:15pm Shelter Supper</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sunday, January 12</strong></td>
<td>11:00am Worship (Christmas Pageant)&lt;br&gt;12:00pm Fellowship</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sunday, January 19</strong></td>
<td>11:00am Worship&lt;br&gt;12:00pm Fellowship</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday, January 16</strong></td>
<td>1:00pm Active Adults (potluck and program)&lt;br&gt;6:00pm Men’s Group&lt;br&gt;7:00pm Prayer Shawl group(youth room)</td>
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<td><strong>Sunday, January 19</strong></td>
<td>11:00am Worship&lt;br&gt;12:00pm Fellowship</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sunday, January 26</strong></td>
<td>11:00am Worship&lt;br&gt;12:00pm Annual Meeting</td>
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| **Weekly**               |                                                                                  |
| **Sunday**               | 1:30pm Like No Other Family Church worship<br>5:00pm Church of St. Joseph worship |
| **Monday**               | 7:00pm Boy Scouts (Fellowship Hall)                                               |
| **Tuesday**              | 5:30pm Women's AA (Green Room)                                                   |
| **Wednesday**            | 5:30pm Bible Study<br>7:00pm Choir Bible Study (Like No Other Family Church)       |
| **Thursday**             | 7:00am Grace in the Park bible study (at Knollwood Panera)                        |
| **Friday**               | 7:00am N A<br>7:30pm Desire AA (Green Room)                                       |
Worship Assistants this month

**Sunday, January 5th**
Lector: Anne Kraft
Ushers: Team 2 (Dave and Pat Latvala, Nancy Malone, Alyssa Willis)
Powerpoint Operator: Nikki Christensen

**Sunday, January 12th**
Lector: Anne Kraft
Ushers: Team 3 (Bruce Lindquist, Erik Mornes, Eileen and Glen Soderberg)
Powerpoint Operator: Bret Hanson
Money Counters: Volunteers needed

**Sunday, January 19th**
Lector: Jeann Worm
Ushers: Team 4 (Jan Arnold, Nikki Christensen, Clark and Karen Johnson)
Powerpoint Operator: LeRoy Murray

**Sunday, January 26th**
Lector: Renee Compo
Ushers: Team 5 (Bret, Cheryl, and Courtney Hanson, Jennie Mornes)
Powerpoint Operator: Dina Strachota
Money Counters: Dina Strachota and Michelle Zins
A journey of more than 3 decades of service — This week Jeanne Worm, a longtime and very active member of our church, offers her unique and personal perspective of her more than three decades of service to our congregation.

“When we moved to St. Louis Park in 1986, I knew we had to find a church and have our girls (4, 6, 8 at the time) enrolled in Sunday School. Having no sense of direction, I found First Lutheran — one that I knew I could get to without taking a different ‘scenic route’ every time.

“I was quite nervous that first Sunday. The first person to greet us was Dave Ekberg. He started calling the girls by name immediately — and he always knew, and called them by name weekly! I thought that, even I, their mother, mixed them up!

“We sat in the third pew on the left, in front of the ‘Murray’ pew. My fear was that the girls would start acting up — if they got restless, LeRoy made them hats (?) boats (?) airplanes (?) out of the bulletin. He does that to this day.

“I remember going to my first Annual Meeting — I hadn’t planned to go, but someone called and reminded me about the importance of attending. I had no clue what to expect, or what was expected of me. I remember Glen calling on Coleman Berge to discuss the Trust Fund. As I listened to Coleman, soft-spoken but so sincere and knowledgeable, I thought, ‘What a wonderful gentleman!’

“Soon I was teaching Sunday School. I didn’t have the talent/knowledge like that of Glen, Wendi, Kristi, Carolee — but I was there to be a part of the whole. I guess that’s what it’s about.

“As a Youth Leader, we connected with Ascension for some activities. The women of both churches had gotten together. So, I met Renee Compo and Nancy Malone. Nancy was a child at that time, but what a delight! Hugs from both of them to this day are the best!

“Soon, I was part of the Social Action Committee. My first Our Saviour’s Shelter meal serving was with Liz Fixen, Joanne Stone and Carolee. I remember Carolee and Joanne bringing their daughters, 5 years old or so, so I thought I could do this. These girls had no idea how tough life was for some of the people served, but they were there chatting with those they served. Thank you to Maren and Kaitlin. Sometimes, through the eyes of a child . . .

“Some years ago, Glen told me about a need for volunteers at STEP. I was thinking, I do not like to drive like he does, but maybe something else. So, I applied to help where ever needed, other than to drive. So, I was able to help in the Food Shelf at STEP. (LeRoy retired, MaryAnn said he needed to do something — yup, we work together at STEP weekly!)

“First and Ascension united 10 years ago, and yup, a few issues along the way. But, we had the help of so many to bring us together; Pat and Dave Latvala and Cindy Guddal come to mind. Without our common bond through Christ, we couldn’t do this. So many children
entering, love the voice of the child, miss the voices we do not hear . . . Peace to our hearts.”

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Week of December 15, 2019, Vol. 3, No. 5

**Lloyd and Ginny are together again** -- Two weeks ago, beloved longtime SOC member Lloyd Boe passed away at the age of 93. The memorial service of his life was held this past Saturday, here at Spirit of Christ. He joins his wife of 64 years, Ginny, both blessed with the promise of eternal life through Christ. I will miss the twinkle in Lloyd’s eye as we conversed. I think Pastor Durk, and a line from his obituary, stated it best: “Lloyd’s kind and loving spirit will be missed by his family and friends.”

**40(!) beautiful balsam firs from the North Country** -- The contributions of Dave and Pat Latvala to the church have been many through the years, stretching back to their membership at Ascension, all the way up to present day SOC. But at this time of year, it is especially noticeable, since they have, for 40 years, put the tree in the Christmas season in both sanctuaries. But I’ll let Dave fill you in.

“The story began almost four decades ago, when I was a youngster on the farm. The balsam fir tree holds a special memory. Because of its wonderful evergreen smell, we always had a balsam for the family Christmas tree. They hold up well with proper watering, and don’t shed many needles.

“We also harvested balsam for pulpwood to be sold to the mill in Cloquet. As active youngsters growing up, we occasionally received small cuts. The balsam fir has blisters on the bark, that we would break open and apply the pitch to a cut (who needs a Band Aid!).

“For many years, my best friend, Ron Lee, would accompany me to get the Christmas tree for Ascension Lutheran. As choir members, we would listen to tapes or CDs of the Christmas cantata during the drive to help learn the songs.

“This year, we were blessed to find the nicest tree so far. But it also came with some adventure. We had to cross a shallow beaver pond. Pat broke through the ice and was mired in muck, almost to her knees. After pulling her out, we decided she should walk back to the car to change boots and warm up. I continued to cut and secure the tree to the toboggan and get it back to the van. There was almost no snow, so I rested often.

“After 40 years of success, why retire now? It is, or can be, quite a bit of work. But it was a small thing we could do to help the Christmas Spirit at both churches. I would encourage someone to pick up the ball and get a very nice artificial tree so we can add lights. Unfortunately, it is against code to put lights on a real tree in church. So please enjoy our church tree this year, and all of the trees that come year after year -- at this time of year.”

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8 The Spirit-January 2020
Our family, reduced by five -- As we find ourselves at the end of another calendar year, it is human nature to look back at the preceding 12 months, and reflect upon the good times, the bad, the accomplishments, and disappointments. For many of us, that also means contemplating another year without special loved ones, or coming to grips with the recent loss of a beloved relative or friend. As a Spirit of Christ congregation, 2019 saw us mourn the passing — and celebrate the lives — of five special parishioners. In the short span of two months, we lost three of our members: Martha Haugen, 81, on Feb. 11; Coleman Berge, 90, on Feb. 26, and Charlotte Bolling, 85, on Mar. 31. Then, four weeks ago on Dec. 1, Lloyd Boe died, followed by the passing of Vern Hoff on Dec. 19; his service was held this past Friday. Their passing is bittersweet, because our first wish is to have them close again during the Christmas season. But we are sustained by their legacy: Our priceless memories of them.

Finding meaning in the mess -- As I saw and heard of the tragic Christmas Day Drake Hotel fire in Minneapolis, and the displacement of nearly 250 men, women and children, it reminded me of Pastor Durk’s very insightful “A Very Messy Christmas” sermon presented just hours earlier, on Christmas Eve. The downtown images were stark, and in sharp contrast: The now homeless, standing in bathrobes and socks in a parking lot, watching the few worldly possessions they owned go up in smoke, while well-intentioned residents from across the Twin Cities were driving up to them with brightly colored, beautifully-wrapped presents. Inappropriate? Maybe at that moment, but not in the big picture, not at all. They responded to a need, and came quickly. Others were coming, too, to meet their basic needs. But all were driven by something greater than themselves. And even in our less-than-perfect personal lives, or in our inability to correctly read the situation, most of us still try to put one foot in front of the other. And, as pastor said, our hope still lies in the promise of that first Christmas — especially in the midst of our imperfections.

Peace, if only for a moment -- Two days before Christmas, Dale Klinkhammer posted a wonderful commentary on Facebook, also dealing with our shared struggles at this time of year. “Countless people struggle to find Peace and I happen to know many of those people. I can’t really exclude myself, yet I know It is out there for the taking if we sweep away the noise and distractions. My Christmas wish is that to some degree, the people I know and love can manage to locate It, for at least a moment, and hopefully more, the greatest gift given to us all, not just for the holiday, but to grasp and hang onto It, as a reminder that It is there for you whenever you need it. Yes, It is often clouded by the noise, but never forget, It hangs there for you whenever you need It, to search It out. It can lift you out of the depths of dark moments. Rejoice when you find It, and be thankful. Merry Christmas and Peace to you all.”

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