The Light in the Darkness
by Pastor Gina Herman

On one Tuesday morning in November, I entered the church in darkness – literal darkness, that is, because the power had gone out due to another crazy windstorm. While a few things were still semi-functional due to the emergency back-up battery, most things did not work. The phones didn’t work. The computers didn’t work. The internet was down. The heat didn’t work. And of course, the lights didn’t work.

There was a little bit of natural light coming into the office through the windows, but the bathrooms were pitch black, certain meetings were moved to Zoom or cancelled, and preschool had to be cancelled that day as well. It definitely disrupted our regular routine. Fortunately, the power only stayed out for about an hour and a half, though it continued to flicker on and off throughout the day. And even when the power was out, we were able to function with the help of flashlights, cell phones, and of course, the support of conversation and camaraderie with others in the building.

But it reminded me once again how important light is. Even the smallest bit of light can help you see in the darkest of places.

This is a very appropriate image and wonderful way to think about the Advent and Christmas season.

John 1:4-5 says, “In the Word was life, and that life was humanity’s light – a Light that shines in the darkness, a Light that the darkness has never overtaken.” (The Inclusive Bible)

In the midst of this pandemic that has now been around for almost 2 years, many of us have felt like we were in a time of darkness. We were separated from loved ones, forced to communicate in new and sometimes

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Alternative Giving Fair
Sunday, December 5th - 8am to noon

The Alternative Giving Fair at HSLC is back! You are invited to attend the Alternative Giving Fair on Sunday, December 5th in the Fellowship Hall. This fair is a little different from other gift fairs. Here, in place of physical gifts, we invite you to donate to organizations that HSLC supports financially in honor of someone on your Christmas list. It’s a great way to spread love and joy. These are organizations that HSLC supports year-round, and we invite you to learn more about them and donate either in person, or on our website!

Come and check out the organizations we are supporting, such as Attain Housing Stable Homes, Common Hope, ELCA Good Gifts (animals), and Lutheran Refugee and Immigration Services. In addition, we will provide information about how to support local black-owned businesses in the area.

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Nelson through the church office. We look forward to seeing you there!
Pastor's Letter (continued)

confusing ways, worship in new ways, and many of us have felt isolated because of it. And this does not even touch on the many injustices that have weighed so heavily upon our hearts in the midst of this time as well. It is an understatement to say that our “regular routine” has been disrupted.

But even in the midst of this darkness, there has been light. We have remained connected – the pandemic couldn’t break community and spirit of Holy Spirit Lutheran Church. The church as a whole has found new and creative ways to worship that have reached new people in different ways. The ministry of the church has continued. And now that vaccines are becoming more available and more people are taking advantage of them, we are able to see the light even more.

And what this proves to me is that no matter what darknesses we face individually, as a community, as a country, and even as a world, Christ our Light will shine and the darkness will never be able to overtake it.

May the light of Christ shine in your hearts, your homes, and our community this Advent and Christmas season.

Blessings,
Pastor Gina

End-Of-Year Giving

Making an end-of-year gift is a wonderful act of generosity. Tax-deductible donations postmarked or received by December 31, 2021 qualify for the 2021 tax year. We give thanks for the generosity of this congregation and look forward to 2022! Watch for your 2021 giving statement by the end of January.

Holden Village Trip - Summer 2022

Are you interested in going to Holden Village next summer 2022? We are gauging interest in organizing a group from Holy Spirit to go to Holden Village. If you are interested, please let the office know at office@hslckirkland.org. We will then send out a survey to see if there is a common week in July or August that will work for a group of 15-40 to visit Holden Village together. If you would like more information about Holden Village, please visit their website at www.holdenvillage.org. A reservation could be made as early as December 6th.

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Note that the fiscal year is 7/1/21-6/30/22.
Seasonal Reading at HSLC Library

Advent is here and Christmas is close! The Holy Spirit Lutheran Church library has books that might fill a role in your observance this year.

For starters, we have a large collection of devotional books relating to the season. A few will be displayed in the narthex/lobby, but you are encouraged to come downstairs to the library to browse. The books have been placed on a cart that you will see right inside the door. In addition to devotional books, there are some essays and also some books with practical suggestions for celebrating at home that will also be available on that cart.

Here is another idea. The new church year starts with Advent, and the assigned Bible readings for the year will be centered on the Gospel of Luke. Set yourself the challenge of reading the whole book of Luke, all 24 chapters. The library has books to accompany you on this challenge if you like.

Pastor Mike Anderson’s book Blessed Contradictions has a chapter comparing the gospels of Matthew and Luke. This chapter would be a wonderful introduction to reading Luke. If you don’t have your own copy of the book, the library has four copies available.

Whatever your choices, here’s wishing you a blessed Advent and Christmas. Happy Reading!

- Ruth Munger, HSLC Librarian
ruthmunger@comcast.net

Christmas Giving Trees

Our beloved Advent Giving Trees are back—and they look a bit different this year! Many of the organizations we’ve traditionally supported, including Hopelink and Attain Housing, have requested no physical gifts, and the retirement home we have partnered with for decades, The Gardens at Juanita Bay, has closed its doors (temporarily). This year our Giving Tree will support Helen’s Place (Sophia Way), Camp Unity, Bridge Ministry, or you can select “greatest need” and we will then direct your gift to the organization with the fewest returned tags. Each tag features an envelope requesting a gift card in denominations of $25 at Fred Meyer, Target, or Safeway. The organizations will disburse these gift cards to members of our community in need of help with groceries and gifts during this Christmas season. Thank you for your support of these organizations during the holidays.

We will also feature a Giving Presence tree, with suggestions on how to make a gift of your presence for the holidays. Whether you choose to give presents or presence, we hope that all are able to participate in Holy Spirit’s Advent Giving Trees this year!

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Nelson through the church office.

K-3 K’Motion Kids Gift Workshop
Saturday, December 4th at 10 am

Ho..Ho..Ho!! It’s time for the K-3 Christmas Gift Workshop!

All kindergarten through 3rd grade students are invited to gather for a fun morning of surprise-gift making activities for your loved ones (no adults allowed)! This event encourages children to make gifts for their loved ones.

We provide the holiday music and additional helpers to ensure we have enough extra hands. There will also be a snack bar where kids will pick out a few snacks to take home and enjoy. Please wear clothes that can get messy.

Questions or want to sign-up? Contact Becky Cole at children@hslckirkland.org.
Worship Services in December

Sundays at 8:00 am, 9:30 am, and 11:00 am

Sunday, December 19th at 11:00 am - "What's Your Song?"
The preschool and elementary students are excited to share the story of Mary during “What’s Your Song?”
Everyone has an experience that can cause them to sing…songs can be joyous, sad, hopeful, and so much more!
Join us on Sunday, December 19th for the Christmas program during the 11am service.

Tuesday, December 21st at 7:00 pm - Longest Night
Each year we honor the longest night of the year and the reality of grief and loss which accompanies the Advent
and Christmas seasons. The Longest Night refers to the "dark night of the soul" that many people experience this
time of year. Share a quiet moment of hope and inspiration during this bright busy season.

Friday, December 24th - Christmas Eve
at 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 8:00 pm, and 10:00 pm
Services include communion and candlelight.
Childcare and non-burning luminaries provided at 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm.