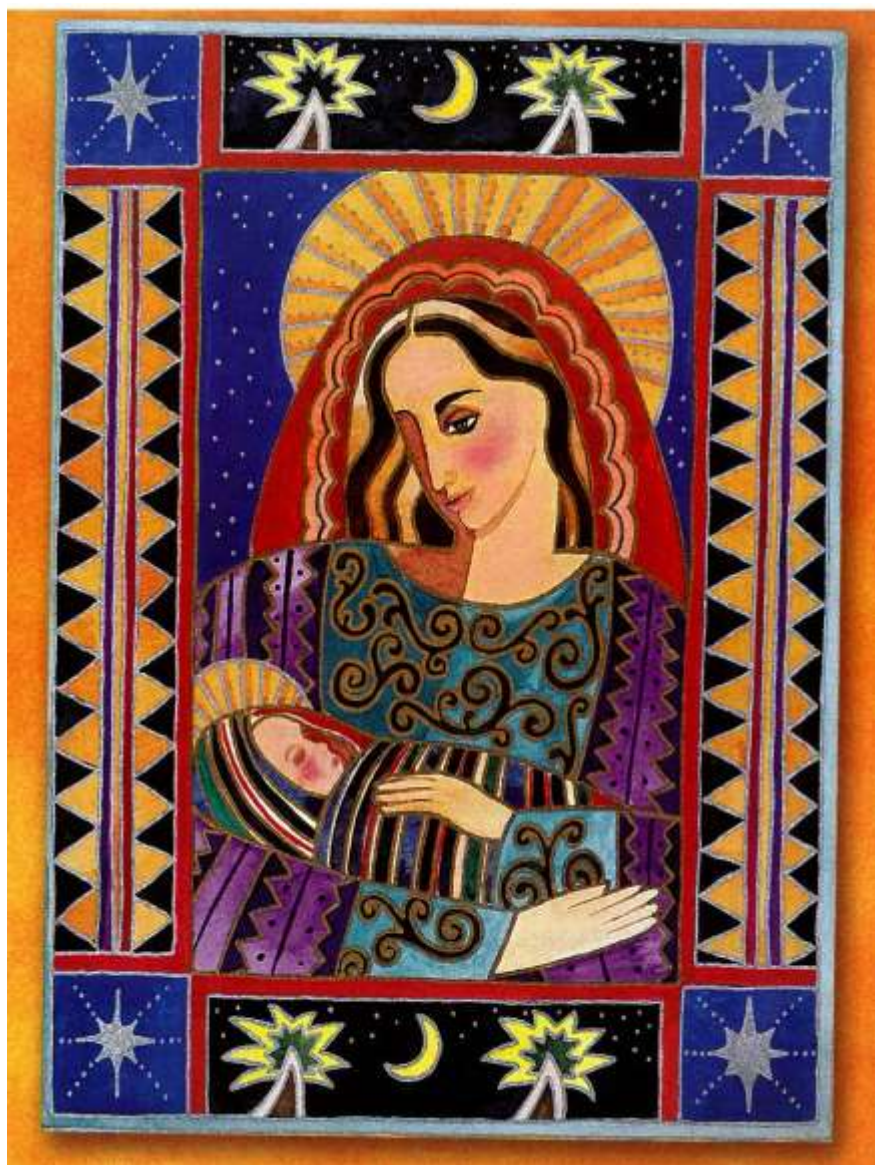




The Epistle

The Monthly Parish Visitor of:
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Tampa, Florida

DECEMBER 2017
Volume 62 Number 12





Come and Worship

*Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

December is when the Church Year begins with the season of Advent, the season of hope. The word “advent” comes from Latin and refers to the coming of Christ in history, in our hearts, and in the future.

The hope for God’s Anointed One – the Christ, which is an English version of the Greek word, or the Messiah, the English version of the Hebrew word – that hope was expressed by prophets in Israel’s ancient history. God’s Anointed One would put Israel right, which is to say return the governance of Israel to the intentions of God made known through the Torah of Moses. God’s Anointed would also set human hearts right, as Malachi says at the end of the last book in the Old Testament: “He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents.”

I’ve missed Isaiah. The songs of Isaiah express much of the hope for the Messiah in powerful and poignant images. This month, we’ll open Isaiah’s poetry to enrich our Advent so that we can prepare our hearts and minds and homes for the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ.



The First Sunday in Advent focuses on God the Potter from Isaiah 64. We are God’s clay, molded, shaped, formed, and fired. In a world all about the self-made person, it’s easy to forget how God oversees our lives.

“Comfort, comfort my people!” God tells Isaiah in the 40th chapter on the Second Sunday of Advent. It’s a moment of great despair for Israel, who has been taken into exile and fears her life as a nation and a people, indeed as individuals, may be over. So the prophet comforts in the face of calamity when all the moorings of meaning have been destroyed.

On the Third Sunday in Advent, we hear the mission that Jesus undertook to define his ministry. “The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.” Isaiah 61:1-2 NRSVA

The Fourth Sunday in Advent turns toward the immediate expectation of Christmas Eve, and this year it is immediate, as they both are on Sunday. So, the parish will have one combined Sunday morning Advent service at 10 AM at St Paul, and then separate Christmas Eve services: 7 pm at Faith and 10:30 pm at St. Paul. Our prophetic text will come from 2 Samuel, from which the story of Jesus’ birth draws much imagery. There, the prophet Nathan tells king David that God has provided Israel’s future: “Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.”

Also throughout Advent, we will have our Wednesday evening suppers and prayer service. Our readings will be drawn from Malachi according to the daily lectionary. We’ll look at scriptures around reconciliation and what it means to be a Reconciled in Christ congregation. We’ll alternate between St. Paul, Faith, and St. Paul according to our continuous pattern of rotation. See the schedule elsewhere in the Epistle.

One last thing to look for: last Christmas Eve we switched our service time to 10:30 AM at St. Paul to see if it would attract and encourage more households by avoiding the noon hour. A poll will be published to see whether the congregation wants to keep the 10:30 AM worship time or return to 11:00 AM. Look for it and take it, so the Council can choose wisely!

Grace and peace as God prepares a way in our hearts for the Christ child to be born – again!
Pastor Russell Meyer



MUSIC NOTES

Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one body. Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.

Come now, O God of love, make us one body. Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people. (ELW 247, sts. 1 & 2)

This beautiful Advent hymn from Korea invites us to be one with God. We will sing this as our Offertory Hymn throughout the season of Advent.

WE NEED VOICES! We need your voice in the choir. There have been a few Sundays now that we weren't able to sing the anthem we had planned because a couple of people were missing. Please consider joining us, even if it's just for Christmas. We need you now!

The following performances are coming up quickly at Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church (3501 San Jose St, Tampa): **HANDEL'S MESSIAH** with the Tampa Oratorio Singers and Palma Ceia Presbyterian Chancel Choir on Sunday, December 10 at 6pm and Monday, December 11 at 7pm. Free-will offering. **SINGING THE SEASON** with the Tampa Oratorio Singers on Sunday, December 17 at 4pm. Tickets are \$20, Seniors \$10, Military \$15, Students \$5 with ID, and children under 12 are free. For more information about either of these fabulous programs, visit TOSTampa.org or email tostampa@gmail.com

Many thanks to our musicians for their participation and sharing their time and talents with us on a regular basis: Ann Delach, Gabriel Morgan, Hilde Reno, Dave Stroupe, Michael Brannan, and Jeanine Romano (cantors); Curt Fritz (guitar).

Soli Deo Gloria (to God alone be the glory),
Dennis





WORSHIP MINISTRY ALTAR GUILD



MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

We had a beautiful All Saints Sunday/Healing Service and a very successful Throwback Sunday (thanks Jimmy & Eleanor). It's so nice to see everyone come and enjoy our church!

Thank you to all that attended our training meeting. We shared ideas and suggestions and made some changes. I will send them out in an email, a very heartfelt thank you to all that have agreed to serve during Worship.

Decorate for Advent December 2nd at 9:00 am. Meet in the Sanctuary. My Grandson's party is at 11:00am on Saturday so I will begin on Friday to get a head start.

Wednesday Advent schedule:

December 6th St. Paul Pot Luck

December 13th Faith Soup

December 20th St. Paul Pot Luck

All suppers begin at 6:00pm with service at 7:00pm. We will continue with the practice of having a Christmas Carol sing a long after each service.

Christmas Eve morning December 24th Faith will join us at St. Paul at 10:00am. St. Paul will have their Candlelight Service at 10:30pm. Communion by Intinction.

December 31st – Epiphany & New Year's Eve

St. Paul received an early gift! Thanks to our gracious donors our Intinction set has arrived and it's beautiful. This will be a wonderful addition for our Altar Guild. We've been wishing for one for quite some time so I'm very excited!!

Patty Tolzman, Chairperson

Worship/Altar Guild

REBECCA CIRCLE



It seems the holidays and life have caught up with us. Rebecca Circle's regularly scheduled meeting for December is just five days before Christmas and a lot of people will be out of town! Therefore, it might be nice to have a holiday lunch together, but not a regular meeting. Watch for details.

Our next regular Rebecca Circle meeting will be the third Thursday in January - January 18th. In the meantime we'll start collecting items for the Lutheran World Relief Health Kits. Please help us collect nail clippers, toothbrushes, combs and full-sized bars of soap. We hope to have a Thrivent grant to cover the cost of the bath towels.

We'll plan to have a joint "kit building" party with the ladies of Faith in late January or early February to be followed by a catered lunch. This will be a great opportunity to spend a little quality time with the ladies from our sister congregation.

Have a blessed Christmas.
Hilde Reno

ELCA GOOD GIFTS

Looking for a meaningful way to give where it's needed the most?

This gift is for you!

The Rebecca Circle is supporting the **ELCA Good Gifts Campaign** and you are invited to participate on the next few Sundays by choosing an ornament and writing a check (or cash) supporting your favorite Mission activity. Look for the Christmas tree in the narthex!



WITNESS MINISTRY

Sharing our Faith With Others

What a fantastic fall for our church! There were so many events that St. Paul was involved with.

October: The **Matsiko World Orphan Choir Concert** was the first of the season. It was a gem of a special concert and we were fortunate to host it and be able to furnish the children housing for a few days. Then, the **Seminole Heights Neighborhood Yard Sale** allowed us an opportunity to be involved with the neighbors.

November: **Throwback Sunday** was a wonderful success with 106 in attendance on Sunday, November 12th. St. Paul and Bill Lindsey, our Elvis, were featured in a complimentary *Tampa Bay Times* article. The sun came out just in time for the ice cream social and Elvis's outdoor entertainment. Thank you Jimmy Dunn, for all your organizing and hard work to create such a special Sunday. Then, the **ChoRuss, quartet from Russia** presented a free concert and had Russian crafts and gifts for sale. It made an enjoyable evening. Thank you Dennis, for setting up the two fall concerts for our church. And, thanks to all who came out and supported these special events sponsored by our church!

December: Soon Wayne will hang our Christmas banner with the 10:30pm Christmas Eve service time listed. We'll print postcards and have them available to invite friends and neighbors to our Christmas Eve services – both 10:30am and 10:30pm. We'll also send these postcards to all the visitors who have attended services this year. We may purchase an ad on Facebook and in the *Tampa Bay Times*. Invite someone to come to worship on Christmas Eve!

As the year ends, we are looking for new ideas and new leadership for the Witness Ministry in 2018. Please let Pastor or Ann Delach know if you're interested in heading up this important ministry of our church.

“Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” Romans 15:7

Ann Delach,
Witness Chair

8 DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
<i>1st SUNDAY</i> 2 PM Suncoast Area Convention	<i>WEEKLY:</i> 11-1 <i>New Bite of Serenity</i> 6:30pm Together <i>We Can</i> 9 pm Never Too Young <i>New Bite of Serenity</i>	<i>WEEKLY:</i> 11-1 <i>New Bite of Serenity</i> 6 pm Men's Lit Study 8 pm NA Speakers Grp	<i>WEEKLY:</i> 1 11-1 <i>New Bite of Serenity</i> 5:30pm <i>Sunset Solutions</i> 8 pm <i>New Life</i>
3 1st Sunday of Advent 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship	4	5	6 10 am Bible Study/Faith 12 Noon Meditation 6 PM Advent Supper - St Paul's 7 PM Advent Service—St Paul's 7:30 PM Choir
10 2nd Sunday of Advent 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship	11	12 7 pm Council Meeting	13 10 am Bible Study/Faith 12 Noon Meditation 6 PM Advent Supper - Faith 7 PM Advent Service—Faith 7:45 PM Choir
17 3rd Sunday of Advent 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship	18	19	20 10 am Bible Study/Faith 12 Noon Meditation 6 PM Advent Supper - St Paul's 7 PM Advent Service—St Paul's 7:30 PM Choir
24 CHRISTMAS EVE 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Joint Service at St. Paul 10:30 PM Candlelight Service at St. Paul	25 CHRISTMAS DAY church office closed	26	27 10 am Bible Study @ Faith 12 pm Meditation / Sanctuary
31 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship			

2017

Thurs	Fri	Sat
<i>WEEKLY:</i> 11-1 <i>New Bite of Serenity</i> 8 pm <i>A New Way</i>	<i>WEEKLY:</i> 11-1 <i>New Bite of Serenity</i> 1	<i>WEEKLY:</i> 10am <i>Aging in Recovery</i> 4 pm <i>Our Common Welfare</i> 7 pm <i>Triple M Men's</i> 2
7	8	9
14	15	16 8:30-11 am THE WELL @ Good Samaritan Inn/ FL Ave.
21	22	23
28	29	30



NEW BIBLE STUDY

Wednesdays, 10 AM

December 6, 13, 20, 27

at Faith Lutheran Church

Greetings in Christ Jesus! I would like to invite you to join us at Faith Lutheran Church (12703 N. Florida Avenue, Tampa 33612), for a Bible study on Christian-Muslim relations, led by Gabriel Morgan. The purpose of our study will be to offer an introduction to Islam and to deepen our faith in Jesus Christ. We will explore common ground and seek ways of engaging our Muslim neighbors in peace and justice, and we will also explore areas of difference and gain clarity about our own faith through the study of God's Word. In order to best facilitate this process, we will use the "Talking Points" published by the Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. The "Talking Points" are an easy, story-based introduction to these topics that can get the conversation going. For those interested, they can be found online at

<http://ccme.lstc.edu/resources/COMPLETED-VERSION.pdf>



The Sanctuary at St. Paul Lutheran Church will be open for Meditation at noon on Wednesdays for silent reflection, with chanted psalms and scripture recitation at 12:15 pm.

STEWARDSHIP



ELCA Good Gifts

Not sure what give someone for Christmas? Want to give something that is useful, doesn't wear out and is certain to be appreciated? Check out the ELCA Good Gifts catalog for over 50 items you can give that will make a real difference in someone's life. Gifts range from \$10 for ten baby chicks which will soon provide eggs for a struggling family, up to \$2500 to build a simple water well so communities can have access to clean drinking water. Other categories of needs that can be fulfilled include international emergencies, health care, and growing the church. These gifts will make a real difference in people's lives around the world.

So how does it work? Easy, just go to www.elca.org/goodgifts to see the catalog, learn what each gift can do, and order. Or call 800-638-3522. You can even print off a card to send announcing your gift. A print catalog is also available in the narthex for you to review.

Over 90 percent of your gifts directly support these programs, which are happening in over 80 countries.



YEAR TO DATE (October 31 2017):

Total Offerings (pledged, non-pledged, loose plate): 66,062.00
Total Special Offerings 687.00

Total Other Income (Building use donations, etc): 23,676.00

Total Year-To-Date Income as of Oct 31: 90,427.00

Total Year-To-Date Operating Expenses: 118,919.00

Year-To-Date Net Deficit as of October 31: -28,492.00

This amount is offset by

Retained Earnings of +17,815.00 for an

actual net loss of -10,677.00

Total Specified Donations - 1,000.00

**(this amount is collected for other causes and
not included in the church's income.**

Amount shown = that not yet distributed).

Fund Balances as of October 31 (Those over \$1,000.00):

Northstar Investment Equity:	73,066.00
Capital Improvement Fund:	6,508.00
Hamilton House Sale Proceeds:	15,364.00
Thrivent Choice Fund:	1,885.00
New Snyder Windows:	16,925.00

*Prayer
Works*

Watch dear Lord, with those who wake, watch over, or weep. Tend the sick, rest the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous. In you love give us all this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER LIST

Jeanne Cameron	member
Dennis Douglas	member
Fabio & Joyce Toledo & family	member
Carolyn Kelley	member
Teresa Jones	member
Jeanne Pursell	member
Ron Tillis	member
Joyce Toledo	member
Danny Williams	member
Lynn Bowman	former member of St. Paul
Christine Clifton	niece of Tina Fritz
Diane Tolzman	mother of Wayne Tolzman
Ray Garrett	father of Curt Fritz
Lou Hiza	mother of Margaret Tillis
Bishop Chuck Leigh	friend of St. Paul & Faith
Hailey Miller	great niece of Tina Fritz
Gloria Tillis	mother of Ron Tillis
Alina Toledo	daughter in-law of Fabio & Joyce
Gary Toledo	son of Fabio & Joyce Toledo
Donna Reyes	aunt of Eddie Malmquist
Dot Ward	aunt of Eddie Malmquist
Ed McFadden	friend of Jimmy & Eleanor Dunn

The prayer list is generated monthly.

If you wish to continue to have a name on the prayer list, please call the church office 813-239-3113

DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Dec. 3: 1st Sunday of Advent

AM: Eddie Malmquist

AC: Isaac Fritz

Greeters: Wayne & Patty Tolzman

USH: Wayne & Patty Tolzman, Curt Fritz, Brad Haarer

Refreshments: TBD

Dec. 10: 2nd Sunday of Advent

AM: Linda Rosche

AC: Isaac Fritz

Greeters: Brad & Arlynn Haarer

USH: Wayne & Patty Tolzman, Curt Fritz, Brad Haarer

Refreshments: TBD

Dec. 17: 3rd Sunday of Advent

AM: Jeanine Romano

Acolyte: Rico Gordon

Greeters: Jimmy & Eleanor Dunn

USH: Bob Delach, Jimmy Dunn, James Clark, Peggy Reineking

Refreshments: TBD

DEC. 24: CHRISTMAS EVE

10:00 AM Joint Worship Service

AM: Ann Delach

Acolyte: Mariana Gordon

Greeters: Federico & Jessica Gordon

USH: Bob Delach, Jimmy Dunn, James Clark, Peggy Reineking

Refreshments: TBD

10:30 PM Candlelight Service:

AM: Lewis Balsizer

Acolyte: Isaac Fritz

Greeters: Wayne & Patty Tolzman

USH: Wayne & Patty Tolzman, Curt Fritz, Brad Haarer

Dec. 31: 1st Sunday of Christmas

AM: Gabriel Morgan

Crucifer/AC: Isaac Fritz & Mariana Gordon

Greeters: Tina & Curt Fritz

USH: Wayne & Patty Tolzman, Curt Fritz, Brad Haarer

Refreshments: TBD



PLEASE NOTE: The next Lunch Bunch will be after the holidays in January.



Please update your phone listings for Eddie Malmquist & Danny Williams. They will no longer be using their home number but can be reached on their cell numbers:
Eddie: 352-848-5572 and Danny: 813-400-9328.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12/3 Arlynn Haarer

12/10 Dave Stroupe

12/11 Gary Levos

12/19 Isaac Fitz

12/19 Tom Feagin

12/21 Dennis Douglas

12/25 Nathan Tolzman



Please join us this month at The Well! Our next scheduled day is **Saturday, December 16, 8:30-11:00 am..** We will be assisting in setting up the free market at the Good Samaritan Inn on Florida Ave., helping clients shop for groceries, entering data and restocking groceries. Hope to see you on the 16th!



Help celebrate the Christmas season by placing a poinsettia. \$7.50 per plant, in the nave or the chancel. These traditional flowers may be donated to honor someone, in memory of someone, or just as a gift to St. Paul Church. Once the season has passed, you may claim your flower and plant it at home to help remember this Christmas or give it to a friend. Poinsettias may be ordered by filling out a form (which will be available in church the next few weeks) by calling the church office at 239-3113 by December 17 , or by mailing your order please include your Name, # of poinsettias, Dedication info along with your check. If mailing, please have order arrive by December 18. Thank you!



ANGEL TREE CHRISTMAS GIFT PROGRAM

A BIG THANK YOU to everyone at St. Paul's who volunteered to participate in the Angel Tree program of the national Prison Fellowship organization. Thanks also to Gabriel Morgan who will organize the teams for the gift delivery to the children's homes in the weeks before Christmas. This unique program gives us an opportunity to share God's love by helping to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the families of prisoners and we thank you again for making this possible!

Peggy Reineking & Tina Fritz



Please plan on attending the mid-week
NEW PARISH TAMPA ADVENT SERVICES!

DINNER 6:00 pm — SERVICE 7:00 pm

December 6, 2017 - St. Paul

December 13, 2017 - Faith

December 20, 2017 - St. Paul

Faith will be serving Soup and St. Paul will be potluck—bring a favorite dish.

Christmas Eve Worship

Sunday, December 24

Morning Worship

10:00 am

Joint Service

at St. Paul Lutheran Church

Evening Worship

10:30 pm

Candlelight Service

at St. Paul Lutheran

(caroling before service)