

December 2020

VOL. #12 ISSUE #11

# SHEPHERD'S STAFF

## Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church



### *Christmas Services with SVLC*

- Dec 21<sup>st</sup> **Blue Christmas Service (Zoom)** 7:00 pm
- Dec 24<sup>th</sup> **Christmas Eve Service (Video)**
- Dec 25<sup>th</sup> **Communion Service (Zoom)** 10:00 am
- Dec 27<sup>th</sup> **Lessons & Carols (Video)**

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*Shepherd of the Valley Mission Statement: Grounded in the word of God and centered in Christ, SVLC is an accepting and caring community sharing God's love, grace and forgiveness with all.*

Shepherd's Staff is published eleven times each year. It is the voice of the congregation; your articles, letters, and comments are welcome at any time. Submissions to the newsletter must be signed when received, although names may be withheld from the newsletter upon request. Submissions are subject to editing for space and clarity. Please submit articles by email or directly to the office.

The deadline for the January 2021 issue is Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

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# Pastor's Report

Pastor Kristen Steele

Advent in the church is usually not all about preparing for Christmas but rather a time to also reflect on what God's in-breaking into our world might mean for us, as well as to hear texts where Jesus talks about the end of the world. Often used as a way to "scare people straight" I think it is important to recognize the end of the world as an invitation to reflect on what parts of our world aren't working anymore. We can also be reminded that in those moments where it feels like the world is ending, God is present. I invite you to hear the assurance of God's Advent promise to be present in worlds' endings in this poetic blessing by writer and artist Jan Richardson (<https://paintedprayerbook.com/2016/07/18/blessing-when-the-world-is-ending/>):

## Blessing When the World is Ending

Look, the world  
is always ending  
somewhere.

Somewhere  
the sun has come  
crashing down.

Somewhere  
it has gone  
completely dark.

Somewhere  
it has ended  
with the gun,  
the knife,  
the fist.

Somewhere  
it has ended  
with the slammed door,  
the shattered hope.

Somewhere  
it has ended  
with the utter quiet  
that follows the news  
from the phone,  
the television,  
the hospital room.

Somewhere  
it has ended  
with a tenderness  
that will break  
your heart.

But, listen,  
this blessing means  
to be anything  
but morose.  
It has not come  
to cause despair.

It is simply here  
because there is nothing  
a blessing  
is better suited for  
than an ending,  
nothing that cries out more  
for a blessing  
than when a world  
is falling apart.

This blessing  
will not fix you,  
will not mend you,  
will not give you  
false comfort;  
it will not talk to you  
about one door opening  
when another one closes.

It will simply  
sit itself beside you  
among the shards  
and gently turn your face  
toward the direction  
from which the light  
will come,  
gathering itself  
about you  
as the world begins  
again.

—Jan Richardson

# Music Director's Report

Sylvia Duncan

As we begin the new church year this Sunday, it is good to reflect on the past year. What an incredibly wacky year it has been. I don't think any of us is going to forget 2020. But through it all we are reminded that God walks with us, whether on the mountain tops or in the dark valleys.

Advent begins this Sunday, and we are trying to keep some of the traditions that we love and know so well. The Advent wreath is up, the familiar carols will be heard, the story is the same, but there is also so much that is different. We won't be gathering together; we won't even be gathering with our families. This will be very hard for all of us. But let's focus on how we can make the best of it. What sorts of way can Christmas be special. For one, it will be a quieter Christmas, more introspective, making it easier to focus on the true meaning of Christmas.



We are working hard at the church to help make it meaningful too. On Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, instead of our usual choir practice we are going to have a night of **carol singing**. Please stay after the communion service to sing some of those old familiar carols. And yes, this is all on Zoom.

The **Blue Christmas Service** will be happening on December 21<sup>st</sup>, which also happens to be the longest night of the year. Please join us for this, even if you have never attended a Blue Christmas Service before. It's a lovely experience.

**Christmas Eve service** will be available for you to watch in your homes, and on Christmas morning we will have a **Zoom communion service**.

And remember, it is just one Christmas, and just one year. We can do this. We can be safe for all those whom we love. We can survive!! With God's help always.

Now, looking towards Epiphany, we thought this year we would have an event where we can showcase our gifts. Our church resource, Sundays and Seasons, describes Epiphany as the "conclusion of the Christmas season with a celebration of God's glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God's love to all people."

On a night when we celebrate the revelation of Jesus Christ, why don't we offer our own gifts to Him. This could be in the form of a reading, a story telling, a song, a poem, etc, etc; whatever you feel that you can give as a gift. On **Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>** we will meet at 7:30 on Zoom for our special gift giving night. Please join us, and please say yes to the sharing of your gifts.



Now may you all have a cherished Advent season.

In peace,  
Sylvia



# emmaus place

Welcoming new tenants! The application process has started and qualifying applicants can start to move into their new homes starting in January 2021. Bishop Greg Mohr and Pastor Kristen plan to offer a blessing on the space before our new neighbours arrive. It will be a video recording, available to all. Visit [www.rentemmausplace.ca](http://www.rentemmausplace.ca)

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Daily devotions that come right to your iPhone, smartphone, iPad and tablet!

*Eternity for Today is produced by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.*

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## BIBLE BOX

### Monthly Verse, for December:

(as chosen by Peter Mathiasen)

*A Commitment*

The Lord your God is  
in your midst.

Zephaniah 3:17 NRSV

# From Church Council Seeking Synergy on Church Council

Submitted by Edna Schuerhaus

As was to be expected, this September on church council began very differently than last year. We continue, as a council, to gather virtually via ZOOM, knowing that our church is not closed. Our mission remains the same: to carry out God's work. We have learned new and creative ways for us to serve with the knowledge that we are in this together.

It is important to define and clarify, at the outset of the year, what it means to serve our church on council. A mentor of mine once shared with me that "I should remember to always put people in situations where they can be successful"; advice that guides me to this day.

"I would like my council colleagues to know that your willingness to make a contribution to the life of our congregation is significant and appreciated, NOW more than ever before."

Several years ago when I was first approached to serve on council, I was very unsure about what was expected of me. A practicing Lutheran all of my life, I was raised in the Missouri Synod, an organization of churches which didn't always afford women the right to vote. Now yes, change came to the Missouri Synod, but this inequity clearly left an impression on me and likely contributed to my dearth of knowledge about what function church council really served.

Just two years ago I retired, after thirty-three and a half years of service as a public school teacher and administrator. Initially, as a teacher and then as an administrator, I was entrenched in working collaboratively with students, teachers, colleagues, parents and the community, towards the goal of achieving success. Educators just work together.

"Positive team synergy is operating when the outcomes a team creates together are far more innovative, effective, and remarkable than if members created those solutions individually."

And so clearly, for me, working together should also be the obvious direction for church council as well. The notion of working individually towards a common goal – or rather, not contributing at all – was simply foreign to me.

So what does serving on church council mean for me?

My experience has shown me that there is some overlap in terms of the common purpose between schools and churches. Really both exist to meet the diverse needs of their respective communities; (educational, social/emotional, psychological, and physical (nutrition; shelter; clothing).

As was my experience in the school system, serving on church council means I work hard to:

- ensure that our goals and activities reflect the mission.
- involve everyone.
- hear, listen to, and address issues and ideas that may arise.
- maintain supportive relationships with staff, and be a champion for them in all their interactions.
- make sure there is a welcoming environment for all.

So, I wondered whether my thoughts about serving on church council were just my own, or are they in alignment with generally accepted beliefs and practices?

As I read up and researched this topic, I learned that, generally, those who serve on church council want to:

1. **Lead the congregation in its long-range planning, setting goals and priorities;**
2. **Oversee and enable the administration of functions to fulfill the church's mission;**
3. **Maintain supportive relationships with the pastor and staff;**
4. **Foster a congregational climate of peace and goodwill;**
5. **Be responsible for the financial and property matters of the congregation.**

Our church council is blessed with a diverse group of individuals, each of whom possesses a richness and a keen desire to serve. We all serve under certain constraints – work, family, time, energy constraints, confidence, just to name a few – but we must find a way to contribute – success only comes with active participation. We come together to serve our congregation, our pastor, and our community.

Election to our church council carries with it the respect and trust of our congregation and each of us have been called to this worshipful work.

I would like my council colleagues to know that your willingness to make a contribution to the life of our congregation is significant and appreciated, NOW more than ever before.

**“I’m feeling hopeful and optimistic about all the work we will accomplish together as a council this year – I’m reminding you that we are a ‘church’ council, and not a council of individuals.”**

But, contribution to council needs to involve your expertise, your enthusiasm, your voice, your energy, and YOUR TIME. We are grateful that you have committed to this responsibility.

*“Positive team synergy is operating when the outcomes a team creates together are far more innovative, effective, and remarkable than if members created those solutions individually.”*

When we have synergy on council, we have community. **What that means is, when we work together, we can be successful.**

Muriel Reid, my council co-chair, and I have shared many great conversations about ‘what working together’ means for us. We know that God has called us to serve, **but not by ourselves**. I’m feeling hopeful and optimistic about all the work we will accomplish together as a council this year – I’m reminding you that we are a ‘church’ council, and not a council of individuals.

It is a blessing to serve with you all as council colleagues and I look forward to working collaboratively with you all this year! Peace be with you!

*Edna Schuerhaus  
Church Council Co-Chair*

# Advent Adventure! Jesus, the Light of the World

For Sunday School kids!

Since we can't gather in person for Advent this year, you can join us on



Sunday School kids, you will find some important tools for your adventure in your mailbox at home.

Your parents will get an email with more information on how to connect to Zoom.

We will gather on **Sunday evenings at 7:00 pm** for stories and songs and more!

**Our first adventure starts this Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup>.**



## SVLC Talent Show

Talent Show!  
Wednesday  
January 6<sup>th</sup>  
7:30 pm  
On ZOOM



**As already described in Sylvia's article on page three, this online talent show is an event where we can showcase our gifts. This could be in the form of a reading, a story telling, a song, a poem, etc; whatever you feel that you can give as a gift.**



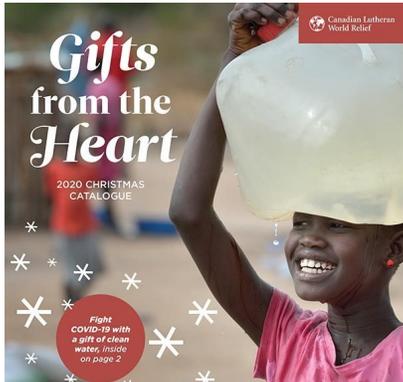
**On Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup> we will meet at 7:30 PM on Zoom for our special gift-giving night. Please join us, and please say yes to the sharing of your gifts.**

# Parish News and Reminders



Canadian Lutheran  
World Relief

## Gifts from the Heart Catalogues



Give a meaningful gift from the comfort of home with CLWR's Gifts from the Heart catalogue. Your gift to a loved one will provide meaningful, tangible items for people around the world facing hunger, poverty and the threat of COVID-19. No matter which gift you choose, the gifts you give will change lives and touch your loved ones! Visit [www.clwr.org/GFTH](http://www.clwr.org/GFTH) to learn more. Catalogues can be picked up or mailed - please ask the church secretary.

**The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) work in partnership to ensure that every gift supports important global development work in the coming year.**

## Christmas Hampers

If you know a family who needs a hamper gift card, please be in touch with Pastor Kristen before Monday, November 30<sup>th</sup>.

Things will be a little different this year for our Christmas hampers. The Langley Christmas Bureau (who we typically work with) is shifting to gift cards for hampers, rather than food and toys. We will follow this practice as well.

Please make a donation to the church through the regular channels (drop off, by mail, e-transfer) and mark it "Christmas hampers". Deadline is Monday, November 30<sup>th</sup>.



### Blue Christmas Service

Monday, Dec 21<sup>st</sup>

7:00 PM

Zoom

### Christmas Eve Video Service

Thursday, Dec 24<sup>th</sup>



### Christmas Day Service

Friday, Dec 25<sup>th</sup>

10:00 AM

Zoom



### Lessons & Carols

Video Service

Sunday, Dec 27<sup>th</sup>



### Office Closed

Thursday, Dec 24<sup>th</sup> and

Friday, Dec 25<sup>th</sup>





## *Church Contact Information*

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