



CHRIST LUTHERAN
CHURCH & PRESCHOOL
LONG BEACH, CA

Life in Christ, Vol. 68 Issue 12 December, 2024



Advent Greetings!

With the calendar flipped to the last month of the year, December is upon us and here comes all that this time of year brings.

This season is certainly a busy one for pastors, deacons, youth directors, administrators, and ministry professionals, but also for you, the congregation. The month of December brings a whole host of exciting, yet time-consuming responsibilities, joys, stresses, and more. In addition to the normal things that require your energy and attention, family life, work, volunteer commitments, housework, etc., this month pulls you in numerous directions, some welcome and some unwelcome. With this laundry list of things to do, you might be feeling weary already. Is “the most wonderful time of the year” meant to be this exhausting?

Please consider this your invitation to slow down this Advent and Christmas season. Prioritize the things that are life-giving, the things that give you hope, peace, joy and love (the buzzwords of the season), and the things that help you best to prepare for the coming of the Christ child. We cannot do it all. There is no prize for doing all the things and sacrificing our joy in the name of who knows what. As we approach one of the busiest times of the year, we invite you to pause, reflect, pray, and discern how you will navigate this busy time while leaning into the promise of Emmanuel, God with us.

One way, we’re inviting you to focus in on what matters is through our Advent theme: **A Thrill of Hope**. “A Thrill of Hope” is taken straight from the lyrics of the beloved carol, “O Holy Night.”



O Holy Night

O holy night! the stars are brightly shining;
 It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
 Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
 Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope- the weary world rejoices,
 For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!
 Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
 O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
 O night, O holy night, O night divine!

“A thrill of hope- the weary world rejoices...” As I write, it is November 21st and we are 33 days out from Christmas Eve. And I am already feeling the weariness of the world in full effect. Are you feeling it too? But in this small line, I hear a great promise. That “a thrill of hope” will appear and we can count on it, and it will cause this world, in all its messiness, heartache, and maybe even despair, to rejoice. Hallelujah! Let it be so. And so we lean in, with trust and expectation, and ponder what this Christ child will mean for me and mine, you and yours, and for the whole world. And we bank on hope, God’s divine hope.

Blessings-

Pastor Nikki

Check out the description below from Church Anew regarding this program and prepare for all that is to come.

It goes without saying that the world we live in feels stressful at best, and downright apocalyptic at worst. Engage with us as we follow the Revised Common Lectionary through the apocalyptic texts that always show up in the season of Advent. From John the Baptist to Isaiah, we’ll uncover a thrill of hope that challenges and uplifts at the same time. The Bible is no stranger to stress, chaos, and fear - and we will seek the hope in every page, and unveil the promise that lies within the chaos, fear, and anxiety of the world around us today.

December 1: Watch and Wait

Jeremiah 33:14-16; Luke 21:25-36

December 8: The End Arrival is Near

Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 3:1-6

December 15: Baptism by Fire

Zephaniah 3:14-20;

Luke 3:7-18

December 22: This is Our Fight Song

Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:39-55

December 24/25: A Thrill of Hope

Luke 2:1-20

+++++

a thrill of
HOPE

AN ADVENT
WORSHIP SERIES

The 4 Weeks of Advent

- The **1st Sunday of Advent** symbolizes **Hope** with the “Prophet’s Candle” reminding us that Jesus is coming.
- The **2nd Sunday of Advent** symbolizes **Faith** with the “Bethlehem Candle” reminding us of Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem.
- The **3rd Sunday of Advent** symbolizes **Joy** with the “Shepherd’s Candle” reminding us of the Joy the world experienced at the coming birth of Jesus.
- The **4th Sunday of Advent** symbolizes **Peace** with the “Angel’s Candle” reminding us of the message of the angels: “Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men.”



Preschool News

Friday, November 1st, we closed for a staff development day. Our staff were able to spend time reflecting on their teaching goals for the school year as well as participate in a staff bonding experience at an Escape Room where they worked together to find their way out of an "Office" themed escape room.

Saturday, November 16th, we held our monthly Family Get Together. One of our families hosted a "Teddy Bear Picnic" at Whaley Park where all families were invited to join for a picnic and special activities for the children.

Sunday, November 17th, Music Maker students were invited to sing at the 9:30am service. This has been a great way to include Preschool Families with Church.

On the 27th we celebrated Thanksgiving with individual classroom feasts. The children had lots of fun making centerpieces and placemats to decorate their tables. They also sang and said a prayer before the meal. Pictures and video were posted on the Procure app for parents to see.

Our pajama day will be on December 3rd. We will have a school-wide pajama day where the children can come to school in their pajamas and we will collect donations of new pajamas and new or gently used books to donate to Lutheran Social Services.

We will have a special family outing on Dec 11th with a Christmas lights tour of Naples on the Big Red Bus. We will start with cookies and cocoa and then board the open air, double decker bus and listen to a live guitar player leading us in Christmas carols as we take in all of the beautiful lights. What a great way to get in the Christmas spirit!

Our annual Christmas program, "Who Is Coming to Our House" will be on Friday, December 20th at 3:30pm in the sanctuary. All of the children participate. Room 4 & 5 will be our stable animals and Mary & Joseph, Room 3 will be angels, Room 2 will be little drummer boys & girls, Room 1 will be shepherd and sheep, and Room 6 will be the star and "wise babies".

We will be closed for winter break December 23 through January 1st. School will resume on January 2nd.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!
Lisa Clinton/ Rachyl Theriault

Bishop's Message Regarding United States Elections

Dear ones,

I am writing in response to our nation's elections more than two weeks after the votes were cast. I am confused, exhausted, unsure how to lead. And then it occurred to me: this "not knowing" is exactly the place God invites us to. II Corinthians 9 tells us God promised, "My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness" and later Paul admits, "When I am weak, then I am strong," (II Corinthians 9). It seems to me the problem in American politics is we can never talk about weakness, except when mocking opponents. The world is filled with terrible strife and need, and each candidate must promise to have the answers in order to get elected. Of course people vote for that promise, in whatever package it is presented.

What the 2024 election clarified for me is we simply cannot convince each other about anything. People on "the other side" think I'm crazy and dangerous, and the truth is, I often feel the same about people who vote for a different party than I do.

I also think we struggle, as individuals and as the church, to know what our place in society is. Can one pastoral letter change Congress' vote? No. Can I fret enough to sway an election? Clearly not. This does not mean I can abdicate from being a religious leader; but it helps to know what my "lane" is.

Bishop Dave Nagler of the Pacifica Synod says the nation is in spiritual crisis. I agree. We are not calling for the United States to become a Christian nation – I believe that is part of the problem – believing one religion has all the answers. But the soul of our country, our compassion,

our generosity, our hope, hang in the balance. How shall we respond? Jesus drew us a picture of what the kin-dom of heaven looks like, filled with reversals of fortune and surprise endings and power being used in confounding ways. Why do we expect things to make sense when Jesus promised they wouldn't?

What is the church's role today? The same it always was: care for the widow and orphan, feed the hungry, heal the sick. Visit those in prison, welcome the stranger. I'm not being political, I'm quoting scripture. The Bible never said, "Secure your borders, increase productivity and make sure you hoard wealth." And look, I'm writing to the liberals as well as the conservatives here: we all hoard wealth, we all struggle with scarcity models, we are all afraid to lose too much. We all want power, and the church should be engaged in critiquing power and its use.

Intolerance, both on the left and on the right, is the devil's work. As soon as we decide our enemies are not really human, are sub-standard and impossible, we have lost any ability to move forward together. Putting up walls against enemies is the easy answer. The most vulnerable do need protection. I am not asking them to enter into the fray. But those of us with privilege and safety must engage deeper conversations to make life possible for those who do not have those rights. This is nuanced, complicated work. Jesus knew something about that, and I believe the Holy Spirit is poised to inspire us.

Cruelty is unacceptable, in every situation. If President-elect Trump's agenda moves forward, we will personally know people who are deported, or lose their marriage rights, or lose reproductive options. Our public lands will lose federal protections, our borders will be managed differently, international war and peace will shift. We need to be ready to respond, and most importantly, we need to be ready to care for those whose lives will be damaged or destroyed.

We need to listen deeply to people who say they are suffering, even if we do not see it ourselves. Let's listen when people complain about high prices and lost wages. Let's listen when people worry about losing their marriage rights and risk deportation. Imagine that, listening and caring for all people, rather than just the ones we like. This is what it is to follow Jesus' commandments.

And here's the really bold idea: let's pray for our enemies. This is not weak – this is invoking the Holy Spirit to help us navigate our way forward. I know churches who prayed weekly for the president, until Kennedy was elected, or Nixon, or Clinton, or Trump. We seem to have missed the point: we are to pray for leaders, even if, maybe especially when, we consider them an enemy. We need divine help to heal our differences and stop hate. I'm not abdicating my responsibility to bring about change; I'm admitting we are going to need a spiritual revolution to get this done, and I for one have no idea how to do that, without spending enormous amounts of time in prayer and conversation.

We need to stand in the midst of the chaos and understand it better. We also need to call out evil when we see it. But we must be willing to see evil in ourselves, beg God's forgiveness, and be healed. I believe God will give us answers, if we ask the harder questions. Let's not rush to feel better. Let's sit in this difficult place of unrest and confusion, realize the Kin-dom of heaven is being birthed, and acknowledge this is exactly the place where God abides. Jesus told his disciples he was sending them out among wolves and commanded us to be crafty as serpents and innocent as doves. (Matthew 10:16) I think it's time to take this commandment, along with love our neighbors as ourselves, very, very seriously. I will, and I ask God to help me.

Bishop Brenda Bos

Lutheran Maritime Ministry



Lutheran Maritime Ministry requests the items listed below for Christmas Gifts for the International Seafarers Center. The seafarers are very grateful for these gifts, and your thoughtful concern for them during the holiday season.

Please bring a Christmas gift bag filled with items from this list. The staff at the Seafarer Center will add bibles, devotionals and other appropriate spiritual support materials.

Suggested Items (full size only, no samples):

Body wash, shampoo, shave cream (some brands make a 3-in-one product)
 Deodorant, comb, socks,
 Tooth paste, toothbrush
 Note pads, pens, envelopes

Other Gift Items:

Cologne or aftershave
 Microwave popcorn, chewing gum, deck of cards, cup soup Individually wrapped hard candy (no chocolate)

**Deadline for Christ Lutheran to receive:
 December 8**



We will once again be collecting pajamas and books for children attending Lutheran Social Services Christmas Party

During the Black Friday sales and the Cyber Shopping days would be a great time to get some deals on little pairs of jammies for babies, toddlers, and young kids. The children are given an age appropriate book to go with their pj's at the Christmas party, so we are looking for donations of those too. New or gently used are most welcome. Please drop these items off at church on Sunday, December 8th or make arrangements with Kim for weekday drop off.

Lutheran Social services will need volunteers again this year to help get things organized for the community party. We'll meet at church on Friday, December 13 at 10am to carpool to LSS. Please contact Claudia Fitzpatrick if available to help.



Adult Education Schedule December 2024

1. Sunday, December 1 - Peace Session 4: What Are the Components of International Cooperation and Peace? by Don Koepke and Andrea Joseph in the Conference Room
2. Sunday, December 8 – Making Christmas Crafts and Sewing Christmas bags by Deb Albrecht, Kim Magee, and Heather Nielson
3. Sunday, December 15 - Peace- Session 5: What Does It Mean to Foster a Culture of Peace and Justice? by Joyce Carter in Conference Room
4. Sunday, December 15 – Mom’s Connect 11am in the Founder’s_Room

We're moving our live-stream to YouTube!

As of Sunday, November 3, we will live-stream our worship services through YouTube. The link to our YouTube site is:

<https://www.youtube.com/@christlutheranlb>

Too techy? Not to worry. There's good news!

You can still go to our Facebook page on Sunday mornings. We'll post a link there so you can easily connect to YouTube on Sunday mornings or whenever you watch worship. Click on that link and you can watch the live or recorded worship service.

We hope this transition will be an easy one. If you have trouble come November, please contact the church office at 562-598-2433 and we'll do our best to assist. Thank you!

Christ Lutheran Church Presents our 4th Annual



Christmas Craft Market



December 7, 2024

10:00am to 2:00pm

6500 Stearns Street

Long Beach

Come stroll through booths of crafts, food, fair trade items and more. We offer a children's area of games and crafts, and family photos will be taken. A fun day for all!





Members at Home or in Care Centers: Laurie Ennen, Ione Marchael, Gale Mussleman, Sydney Nichols, Bary & Janice

Schlieder, and Frances Willms.

Those struggling with illness or other concerns:

Don Darnauer, Judy Haenn, Daniel Howard, Sheryl Hunter, Chris and Kathy Klute-Nelson, Kristine Trost, Rich Williams, Gary & Linda Zimmerman.

***Family & Friends:** Noah, Lois Brown, Charlie and David Corm, Mary Croes, Denise Davis, Jessica, Clark Enebo, Tamra Fitzgerald, Brechin Flournoy, Cindy Gray, Jerry & Joan Green, Shar Higa, Kylie & Crystal Huber, Bryan Koenen, Aaron, Kim & Sienna Koepke, Barb Korsmo, Katrina Lahr, Carolyn Laitsch, Luke McCann, Cameron, Kristina & Scott Randolph, Sharry Reed, Debbie Renner, Heather Robinson, David Sarvela, Marlene Shafer, Vicki Thompson, Kathy Vonbuskirk, Jessica West.

We pray for the ongoing work of:

- + Linda Gawthorne among the Kogi people of Colombia
- + First responders who provide safety, security, and care

- + Those serving in our nation's Military, especially Samuel Brown, Ryan Dorris, Morgan Llewellyn, Austin Marsh, Johnny Luna, Jim Reeder, Steven, Brina and Michael Navarro.

We remember :

- + Our unhoused neighbors, who find themselves without shelter and a place to call home. We pray for their safety, health, and wellness. We commit to treating them with compassion and working to combat systemic issues that leave our neighbors in need.



12/3	Angel Trujillo
12/6	Shirley Pierce
12/8	Judy Haenn
12/13	Daniel Peralta
12/13	Linda Zimmerman
12/15	Clauda Fitzpatrick
12/17	Robin Black
12/18	Renu Moon
12/19	Angie Nelson
12/23	Annette Rodrigues
12/24	Olive Clements
12/27	Pat Barnett

God Loves

L K X K G E B D Q F R O O V E R C O M E R M E E
 N J A A K J Y G N I K N B R E H T A F W L V V T
 B S B V M N I T S G I Y L U F H T I A F M M I Q
 Z L T W H E S I A R P F O Y H T R O W N O S T T
 T R E R L P O W E R F U L S U O E T H G I R C U
 O G O S E Y T I N I R T B S S Y Y U E G U F E R
 V H G T S N Z I V P I C O M P A S S I O N A T E
 N S B Y A E G V L X N N C O M F O R T E R W O M
 Z O D L M E D T J N R E V E R L A S T I N G R T
 G P S O R T R L H B A C H R I S T V J F Y R P U
 U E V H D P V C V Z F O R E V E R Q W S E M F X
 X R F O J X J G K F W A L M I G H T Y D R Q N D
 F F D K W X A G G C O R O I V A S U E L L A L H
 R E O B R L U F I C R E M N V D L E G I J H L O
 T C Y R N E J V J J S W P B C I M I T N E M F L
 Q T Y Y H L F D D G H F U M H E C N F R S D F Y
 R E V I G R O F R J I P Y T R L E T W K U A V S
 H I B V Q W F G O O P P H R E I J V O J S X R P
 W E G N I R A C L Y E N U T T Y X P M R Z S Y I
 B O A O E M M Q Q G D W X A G K E H S W I W J R
 U Y E L R Y M E V C Y G P R O M I S E S G O C I
 X V D D E D N E L O V I N G T H T Q E G C H U T
 G E X L W R W S C F E C A E P W D R X X F Y G S
 D G R A C E L T T A B E H T N O W D I X O M R P

merciful
 strength
 compassionate
 perfect
 forever
 son
 grace
 forgiver

blessed
 refuge
 protective
 jesus
 promises
 christ
 savior
 creator

redeemer
 worshiped
 powerful
 loving
 faithful
 won the battle
 lord
 almighty

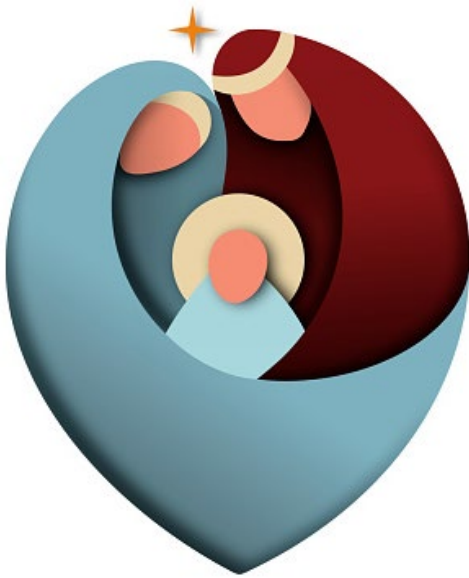
comforter
 victorious
 holy
 caring
 trinity
 overcomer
 father
 everlasting

peace
 healer
 righteous
 patient
 holy spirit
 worthy of praise
 king



***Wishing you a blessed Advent
season and a very merry
Christmas!***

*Pastor Nikki, Roger, Kim P,
Kim C, Brad and Josh*



Open Invitation: Christmas Fellowship Events

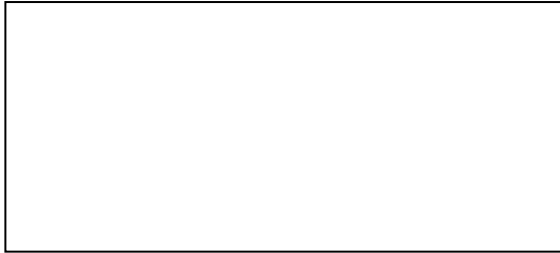
Saturday, December 7, 10am-2pm	Christmas Market
Sunday, December 8, 11am	Christmas Craft Making
Saturday, December 14, 4pm	Christmas Carols with the Choir Followed by Mac n' Cheese cook off & supper
Tuesday, December 24, 5:30pm	Christmas Eve Worship
December 24, 10pm	Christmas Eve Worship,
Wednesday, December 25, 10am	Christmas Day Worship

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www.christlutheranlb.com

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6500 Stearns Street
Long Beach, CA 90815-3497

Return Service Requested



Mission Statement

Living by Christ's example,
we welcome, serve, and love
all through God's grace.

Vision Statement

Embracing the truth that God's love
and grace is for all, Christ
Lutheran Church is a vibrant
and active community spreading
the good news through acceptance,
action, and benevolence.

Our Position

Christ is ALIVE!

January Newsletter Deadline:
December 15

Life In Christ

Is the newsletter of

Christ Lutheran Church
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562.598.2433

www.christlutheranlb.com

[email:officemanager@christlutheranlb.com](mailto:officemanager@christlutheranlb.com)

**Please join us in person for Sunday
Worship 9:30am**

**Live on FB or later on our
YouTube Channel**



Be sure to LIKE us on Facebook.

facebook.com/christlutheranlb