

THE GOOD NEWSLETTER

of New Jerusalem Lutheran Church

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Church Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday 9:00 a.m.–12:00 noon
Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!



God is with us – Emmanuel.

THE MISSION OF
NEW JERUSALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH:

*We are a group of people who
gather together in friendship and love
to worship God, to spread God's Word,
and to care for God's people.*



All this happened in order to fulfill what Adonai [the Lord] had said through the prophet,

“The young virgin will conceive and bear a son,
and they will call him ‘Immanu El’ (The name means “God is with us.”)

Matthew 1:23 Complete Jewish Bible, an English Version by David H. Stern

Dear Friends and Siblings in God’s kingdom,

A number of years ago I was in a Ten Thousand Villages store with my daughter-in-law, Heather, and admired a nativity set made from tightly rolled newspaper. It wasn’t particularly beautiful, but its significance struck me: How well this conveys that Jesus’ birth is new, really good news! A few weeks later I was surprised when I opened a box from Heather with that nativity inside. I put it out every year.

“God is with us!” How badly we need to hear that news this year! So many of us are struggling with isolation and major disruption of daily life due to the pandemic and even congregations have had to refrain from meeting inside their buildings. Many of us are deeply depressed by the outcome of the election and fear that nothing will really change in our government because leaders will still not be willing to work together. Many among us are struggling to make ends meet and so many are seriously ill. In times like this many around us and even among us feel abandoned, especially by God.

I confess, I, too, need to be reminded: Immanu El! God is with us. God has not abandoned us.

Immanu el (also spelled Emmanuel): *El* is a Hebrew name for God. *Im* means *with*. *Mannu* means *us*.

El is a very ancient name for God. It conveys power and majesty. That the powerful Ancient of Days is with us is comforting to me. It reminds me God has “been around the block before.” *El* is often combined with other nouns and adjectives. *El Shaddai* means “God Almighty.” *El Roi* means “the God who sees.” All of these names comfort me: The all-mighty one who sees what we are going through and has experience with us humans, *this* is the God who is with us, who is with us today, and promises to stay with us through whatever may come.

I am currently reading a book named *The Secret Gift*. It is about a man in Canton, Ohio, who took the alias B. Virdot during the depths of The Great Depression and put an ad in the local newspaper. The short ad asked men or families who were reluctant to accept charity directly from welfare organizations, to send him a letter explaining their true circumstances. In return he promised to keep their identity a secret and hoped to share some financial aid that would help each spend a merry and joyful Christmas. Even before the ad appeared, it caused such a stir in the newsroom that the paper ended up posting a headline “Man Who Felt Depression’s Sting to Help 75 Unfortunate Families.”

B. Virdot received hundreds of letters, many from men who had been prominent businessmen in the community but had now become penniless and were too embarrassed to ask for help from welfare organizations. Many expressed great relief to just be able to voice their distress to someone who would understand, that even if they did not receive the financial aid, they appreciated a chance to be truthful about what was going on in their lives. B. Virdot decided to help 150 families. Instead of sending \$10 to 75, he sent each \$5, the equivalent of \$100 today. Five dollars was a drop in the bucket considering many were not even able to put food on the table for their families, but the thank you letters he received in return spoke of the huge impact this encounter made in their lives. It gave them hope to know that somebody who knew what they were going through and cared enough to reach out. Some even said that it prevented them from committing suicide.

The news that God is truly with us is the news that we are called to publish today, to publish with our lives and our words and our deeds, even with our decorations. May we, like B. Virdot, reach out and let others know that they are not alone and that we care about them. That may not seem like much, but doing so is one powerful way we will each experience that God is, indeed, among us.

May the assurance of God’s presence give you comfort and great joy in the days and weeks to come.

– *Pastor Ruth*

NEWS & EVENTS

in New Jerusalem and the Synod

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The following items were discussed and decisions made at our council meeting on November 9:

- Discussed the Christmas Eve services. More definitive details about the times and guidelines will be made at the Worship and Music Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 10. **(Please see the article on page 4 with an update about the worship service.)**
- Further discussion took place regarding how to get the congregation involved in discussing the future of our ministry. Pastor will look into resources to help guide us through this process.
- Discussion of notice from the ELCA and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) about the bankruptcy procedure the BSA is going through. We have been advised to file a claim which Cheryl Wiltrout will do as soon as we receive advice on how to fill out the form. This is to protect the congregation from possible future lawsuits.

BIBLE STUDY

The Bible Study group has finished its study of the Book of Acts. We plan to start studying the Letter to the Galatians **Monday, January 11, at 11:00 a.m.** Let Pastor Ruth know if you would like to join.

THREADS FOR OTHERS

Hats, scarves and cowls are due by **December 1** for this year's shipment to Seafarers. Don't stop knitting or crocheting, though. We will send more next year. If you need material to make masks or yarn for cowls and hats for seafarers, let Pastor Ruth know. Supplies are available at church.

COLORING GROUP

Our Coloring Group continues meeting monthly. On **Thursday, December 3, at 10:00 a.m.** the group will get together downstairs at church to color Bible-themed pages while visiting with one another. Pages provided. Feel free to bring your own supplies, though colored pencils and markers will also be provided. There is plenty of room to maintain a safe distance from one another. Participants are asked to wear masks. Friends are welcome.

If you are interested, please let Phyllis Fenstermacher (610.682.2423) or Diane Keller (610.682.4152) know. Not able to get to church or don't feel comfortable getting together there? Just let them know and pages will be sent to you and you can visit with other members by phone.

WORSHIP AT NEW JERUSALEM

As we continue to monitor the pandemic in our area, we are, as of this writing, offering two ways to worship with members of our congregation. We know not everyone feels safe gathering with others in the sanctuary, so we are trying to make sure there are options.

Worship will again be **in the sanctuary on Sunday, December 6 and 20.** We will be worshipping via **Zoom on Sunday, December 13 and 27 at 10:00 a.m.**

Information on how to connect for Zoom worship via internet, phone, and other methods is available. If you are not already receiving information about how to connect, please contact the church office.

In addition to these opportunities to "gather," bulletins are being mailed or emailed to those who request them so that they can worship at home. Those not able to join us for our Zoom worship services on Sunday mornings, can watch the services on our Facebook page or on our website <https://newjerusalem.lutheran.weebly.com> under the "Zoom Worship Services" tab. We actually know that people who are not members are joining us in worship through these means, so this has become an opportunity for sharing the good news with others, an opportunity for what is known as evangelism.

If you would like to receive a bulletin via mail or email, please let us know at 610.682.6064 or njelchurch@windstream.net.

Bulletins are also available on our website: <http://NewJerusalemLutheran.weebly.com>.

JANUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for the December 2020 newsletter is **Sunday, December 13.** Please have all articles and announcements to the church office by this date.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES

This year we will gather on **December 24 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom**. We hope you will join us in this celebration of our Savior's birth, including many opportunities to express our joy through song.

Below you will find other opportunities to join in worship with our sister congregations:

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Mertztown will be holding two in person and livestreamed Facebook services with communion at 7:00 p.m. and 10:45 p.m.

Maidencreek Church, Blandon will not be meeting in person, instead, they will have a pre-recorded candlelight Christmas Eve service as a Facebook Watch Party at 4 p.m. with communion and lots of music. You will also be able to access the service on Facebook and YouTube any time after the service.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Fleetwood is currently planning parking lot services at 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Also, indoor services at 5:30 p.m., 7:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

THE BEST – OR MOST UNUSUAL – CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER

Our worship service on **December 27** will include our first attempt at a virtual pageant and many chances to sing our favorite Christmas carols. Young and young-at-heart members have been busy recording their scenes.

Unusual times call for unusual ways to share the good news. Tune in to find out just who will be playing Herod and the Wise Guys – oops, – I mean the Magi.



STILL LOOKING FOR YOUR FAVORITE HYMNS, especially those for Advent and Christmas.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Christmas cards with a picture of the inside of the church are available for free. Please contact the church office if interested.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

Envelopes for the first half of 2021 will hopefully be arriving in your mailbox the first or second week of December. If you do not receive your envelopes, please contact the church office.

WATCH FOR YOUR ADVENT CALENDAR AND DEVOTIONAL COMING SOON!

DECEMBER WORSHIP SPONSORS

The cost to sponsor bulletins for a week is still \$7.00 and sponsorship of the Sanctuary Candle is \$15 for a month. Altar Flowers can also be sponsored on the Sundays we gather in our church building. The cost for sponsorship is \$35.00.

Since the pandemic limits our ability to gather, we are now mailing bulletins to members. The cost for that is about \$45 per week. Any contributions to help offset this cost are appreciated.

Flower Sponsors for December:

December 6 – *sponsor needed*

December 20 – *sponsor needed*

Bulletin Sponsors for December:

December 6 – *sponsor needed*

December 13 – *sponsor needed*

December 20 – *sponsor needed*

December 27 – *sponsor needed*

Sanctuary Candle Sponsor for December:

Sponsor needed

ADVENT OUTDOOR DISPLAY

Come one, come all, and invite others to New Jerusalem's outdoor display. During Advent and Christmas, we will have a tree with lights focused on it on the grassy area next to the church. Nearby will be two mailboxes with handouts including devotional and coloring material for anyone to pick up. Our prayer is that this will be a space people can come and just enjoy the beauty of a simple evergreen tree, especially when lit against the darkness of the night. We are hoping visitors, including those who come to the cemetery, will find it a message of God's love and even pick up some of the material to use at home.



WITH SYMPATHY

Our condolences to the family and friends of the following members:

Shirley F. Marks, born August 24, 1937 and passed away on August 19, 2020. Shirley lived in Mandarin, Florida with her husband, Ray, of 63 years.

Helen (Miller) Fair, born December 9, 1939 and passed away on October 30, 2020.

Penny (Isamoyer) Keller, born on August 19, 1957 and passed away on November 5 2020.

PASTORAL CARE DURING THE CURRENT SITUATION

Pastor Ruth is available via phone and electronic means to provide care to anyone in our congregation or seeking care from us. Currently she is not entering hospitals or nursing homes. At times she has been able to “meet” and even offer communion while standing outside a window or door and speaking on the phone. Please continue to let her know when someone enters the hospital or when anyone is experiencing a change in health or situation.

Please note that pastoral care services (chaplains) are available at each hospital to support and attend to patients’ diverse spiritual needs. So even if Pastor Ruth cannot or does not deem it wise to enter a facility, care is available. Some of our parishioners have reported excellent care from these servants and, at times, when given permission, pastors and chaplains are in dialogue to enhance that care.

ONLINE ASSEMBLY 2020 VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS NOW AVAILABLE

Video recordings of several key events at the Assembly are now available. These include Bishop Zeiser’s sermon during the opening Worship Service, Vice President Kristen Edeman-Weiner’s report, Presiding Bishop Eaton’s Message, the 50/40/10 Celebration, and Bishop-Elect Christopher deForest’s remarks. Four Mission Support videos that were shown at the Assembly are also available. Click on the link below to visit the “Video Highlights” page of the synod website: <http://nepasynod.org/assembly-2020/>

INSTALLATION SERVICE FOR BISHOP-ELECT CHRISTOPHER DEFOREST

Because of safety concerns related to COVID-19, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has agreed with synod leadership to postpone the installation of Bishop-Elect Christopher deForest until a more suitable time. Please visit the synod website at www.godslove.org for updates.

LEARNING MINISTRIES DAY 2021

January 23, 2021. Learning Ministries Day 2021 is Going On-Line! Plan to join us Saturday January 23, 2021 when our keynote speaker will be Dr. Barbara Rossing, author of "The Rapture Exposed." Dr. Rossing will speak on "Journeys Through Revelation," and a number of workshops will be offered as well. More details to follow, so please check the synod website at www.godslove.org.

UPDATE ON STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Yes, these are a lot of opportunities all at once, but we had 6 grants available to us that had to be used by December 31.

Note: Please contact the church office to arrange a time to drop off items to be donated. If you have items to contribute, but need to have them picked up, also contact the office.

BRANDYWINE FOOD PANTRY

Our congregation has completed its special drive using a Thrivent Grant to provide food for the **Brandywine Food Pantry**. One delivery was made in early November and then on the 17th our Boy Scout troop took the remainder of what we had collected (250 lbs.) as well as what came in for Scouting for Food for a total of 1,000 pounds. As a result of receiving our Thrivent grant, members of New Jerusalem donated over 250 items as well as \$87 to the Pantry as a result of this drive. Now we will continue to collect items as normal.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR CHILDREN

In addition to the 18 people from our congregation who are providing gifts, the Thrivent grant has enabled us to purchase gifts for 8 more children. This means our ministry will help put smiles on **26** local children this year.

SATCHELS FOR SEAFARERS

We have received a Thrivent Grant for \$250 to supplement our donations to Seafarers International. This year, in addition to providing hats, scarves and cowls, we have decided to help fill satchels for “Christmas at Sea.” Here are the items that are included in each:

- One sweatshirt (hooded or unhooded - size M-L- XL)
- Three pairs of socks (thermal or gym)
- One t-shirt (size M-L-XL)
- One knitted winter cap (coordinating scarf optional; no pastels please)
- One can of nuts, large bar of chocolate, or health snack bar
- A Holiday or Christmas card from YOU!

You pick the colors, styles and brands, but please no substitutions from the list. For the safety of seafarers, please do not add fringes or pom-poms. **and T-shirts of the same size.** Items are due by **December 1st.**

CLEAN-UP BUCKETS for survivors of physical disasters:

- One five-gallon bucket with re-sealable lid (no screw lids – may be used but free of residual product. Advertisement on outside okay)
- One 32-64 oz. bottle liquid laundry detergent
- One 16-40 oz. bottle liquid concentrate household cleaner (no spray cleaners)
- One 16-34 oz. bottle liquid dish soap
- One 4-8 oz. pump spray air fresheners (or 3 solid or 3 gel)
- One 6-14 oz. pump spray insect repellent (or pack of 10-20 wipes) pump spray must have protective covers
- One scrub brush (with or without handle)
- One 18 reusable cleaning wipes (no terrycloth, microfiber or paper towels, remove from packaging)
- Five scouring pads (no stainless steel or pads with soap – remove from packaging)
- 36-50 clothes pins (place in plastic re-sealable bag)
- One 50-100 ft. clothesline (cotton or plastic)
- 24 roll of heavy duty trash bags (33-45 gal. sizes)
- 5 N95 particulate respirator dust masks (1-3 mm thick) no surgical masks
- 2 pairs kitchen gloves (durable)
- One pair work gloves (cotton with leather palms or all leather)

Items due by **December 13**. The Thrivent grant will help us fill in items in each bucket. *Note: we have opened this appeal to other congregations in the area. Let's see what we can do together!*


KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY FOOD PANTRY

Food and personal care products are needed by students at the university. These are distributed through the Lutheran Center, 15175 Kutztown Road. Please bring your items to New Jerusalem by **December 27**. The Thrivent grant will help us purchase additional items.

Bible Quiz

Which of the four Gospels name(s) Bethlehem as the place of Jesus' birth?

- A. Only Luke
- B. Matthew and Luke
- C. Mark and John
- D. All four



Answer: B (See Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:1-7.)

NEWS & EVENTS

in our Community

VIRTUAL COMMUNITY ADVENT CONCERT

Several churches within the Brandywine Heights area are hosting a virtual Advent concert. Everyone is invited to virtually attend. The service is being hosted on the Trinity Lutheran Church in Topton YouTube channel and can be accessed any time on or after the premiere on **Sunday, December 20, at 2:00 p.m.** Those without internet access can even attend by phoning into either of two Zoom presentations of the concert at 2:00 p.m. or at 7:00 p.m. on December 20. To share in the concert by phone at 2:00 p.m., dial in at 312-626-6799 and enter Meeting ID: 891 1595 0072 and Passcode: 052181. To join by computer, the Zoom link is listed below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89115950072?pwd=ajBLV1E1S2hBVEQ5cGg2Smh1SEdWQT09>

To share in the concert by phone at 7:00 p.m. dial in at 312-626-6799, enter Meeting ID: 830 6330 3302, and Passcode: 904262. To join by computer the Zoom link is listed below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83063303302?pwd=Ny90bHUrT1BWK1dWRUdvNHJxaXREdZ09>

CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK - Churches Share the Story (A drive-thru Living Nativity Celebration from your car) – You will see and hear live displays from local churches, telling the story of Jesus' birth including: Mary and Joseph on the Journey – Angels – Shepherds and Sheep – The Inn and Inn Keeper – The Magi and the Star – The Stable with the Holy Family. Held at the Kutztown Park, **Sunday, December 20, from**



3:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m. (snow date: December 27th). Follow the signs: enter at Laurel Street near the retention pond/ exit at Kemp Street. **FREE!** No-contact event (stay in your cars, stay safe and warm!) Any questions, call St. John's Lutheran Church, Kutztown, at 610-683-3140.

“Bless us, Lord, this Christmas, with quietness of mind; teach us to be patient and always to be kind.”

—Helen Steiner Rice

New Jerusalem Lutheran Church Statement of Accounts

October 31, 2020

<u>Asset Accounts</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Memorial	\$ 19,691.48
Thrivent	8,621.74
Checking	2,343.49
Youth	406.50
Fidelity	94,789.18
Cash Reserve	15,094.03
Mission Investment	11,546.22
Local Care	2,051.43
Total:	<u>\$ 154,544.07</u>

Total Balance of Asset Accounts
from **October 31, 2019** \$ 187,862.96

October 2020 – ‘Actual’ vs. ‘Required’ Income

Income	Income	Actual	Difference
<u>Used For:</u>	<u>Required</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Operating Expenses	\$ 9,565.00	\$ 4,019.33	\$ (5,545.67)

*Income Required per Month — Based on 2020
Budget Passed by Congregation
Less Budgeted Benevolence Contribution*

Parking Lot – Funds received to offset expenses
for Driveway/Parking Lot Repaving
\$ 37,140.00 Total Expenses for Parking Lot
Project
\$ 32,823.52 Funds Received to Offset Expenses

THE ADVENT WREATH

The Advent wreath is a symbol of watchfulness and increasing joy as we anticipate Jesus’ birth. The wreath’s circular shape symbolizes eternity, or life without end. The candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World—he brought light and life to a dark world (see John 1:4-5). On each of the four Sundays of Advent, we light a new candle. As the light grows, so do our hope and joy.



Reprinted from *The Newsletter Newsletter*

GOD EQUIPS US FOR ‘NEW THINGS’

“I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”—Isaiah 43:19

Advent and Christmas are all about celebrating that most amazing “new thing” God brought about for our sake – incarnating God’s divine essence in the human form of Jesus, our Savior and Lord.

We prayerfully ask at the beginning of every church year, “To what ‘new things’ is God calling us?” But this Advent the question holds special significance.

With its racial unrest, political divisiveness, riots, wildfires, hurricanes and COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 will be remembered as one of the most troubled years in recent history. And everybody is bracing for a “new normal” that is still unknown.

The pandemic has caused us to cancel many of our cherished Advent and Christmas observances. We pray the Holy Spirit will give us the creativity and wisdom to find new ways faithfully to steward the mystery of the incarnation and tell God’s story.

More broadly, we also pray for guidance to steward our lives that we may be, as Jesus directed, the salt of the earth and light to a world that needs us more than ever.

As we listen for God’s direction, preparing us for “new things,” the four traditional Advent themes may offer a path. We cultivate these themes in our hearts and congregations and share them with the world:

- **Hope** as an antidote to the culture of despair.
- **Peace** in our hearts to bring to an angry world.
- **Love** for our friends and enemies alike.
- **Joy** in Christ, who makes all things new.

God, who promises to make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, will prepare us and equip us to do “new things” to steward our lives and congregations to meet the challenges ahead.

—Rob Blezard

Copyright © 2020, Rev. Robert Blezard. Pastor Blezard serves as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, MD, and works as content editor for www.stewardshipoflife.org. He blogs at www.thestewardshipguy.com





- 3 Sheila Gehman
- 5 Sarah Bailey
- 6 Pastor Ruth Doty
- 6 Vikie Seyfert
- 6 Amanda Herman
- 10 Dawn Wengert
- 11 Jennifer Musser
- 15 Randy Cleaver
- 15 Jared Keiser
- 16 Elwood Cleaver, Jr.
- 20 Sheila Long
- 21 Clinton Allen
- 22 David Moyer
- 26 Marleise Matz
- 31 David Wartenluft



- 2 Rodney and Diane Keller (48 years)
- 24 George and Jeannette DeLong (60 years)

FEAR NOT!

On that first Christmas night the angel said to the shepherds: “Do not be afraid” (Luke 2:10). What is there to fear from a baby? A baby is powerless, with no guile, no anger and no judgment, only needing from us without fearing we will not provide: simply trusting, and content to be resting in our arms. This is how God came. This is Christmas. This one child, and for a time, perhaps too brief, our fears are taken over by our love for this child, and he is able to change our hearts. ... In Jesus, we are free to live life as fully and as joyfully as we will allow ourselves. For it is only we who hold ourselves back. God does not. For God has forgiven us in this baby and will not restrain us from living with sheer abandon, trusting in this gentle and gracious God, who keeps telling us: “Do not be afraid.”

–Gary Westgard, *At Break of Day*

Reprinted from *The Newsletter Newsletter*



PRAYERS FOR AWARENESS OF GOD’S PRESENCE for Those with Limited Mobility or in Care Facilities: Anna Angstadt, Bertha Bennecoff, Verna Guinther, Shirley Hertzog, Leon Moyer, and Irene Noll.

PRAYERS FOR HEALING AND SUPPORT Members: Myles Angstadt, Tara Basta, Dallas Bennecoff, Sara Jane Beshore, George DeLong, Family and friends of Helen Fair, Erma Guinther, Virginia Guinther, Lucille Jones, Patricia Keck, Family and friends of Penny Keller, Sheila Long, Forrest Merkel, Roy Merkel, Edna Miller, Grace Miller, Linda Moyer, Betty Musser, Horace and Joyce Rothermel, Gabriele Sanders, Dale Schwoyer, Gary and Vikie Seyfert.

Friends of the congregation: Carrie Bausch, Adam Bell, Darlene Bogert, Bob Bright, Thelma Bright, Joshua Buck, Anne Cunningham, Mark Derr, Lee Dice, Randy Dreibelbis, Jennifer Engle, Nicole F., Eric Fox, Harry Geidner, Jason Grof, Mamie Guinther, Denise Haage, Shirley Hahn, Nancy Harnish, Johnson-Agiri Family, Angie Kistler, Kelly Kline, Family and friends of Ann Kipple, The Koontz Family, Edna Kramer, Cayden Kresge, Mary Kring, Michelle Kurtz, Catherine Lenio, Ella Loose, Joe M., Rodney Miller, Johnathan Naugle, Ruth Ramsey, Patricia Sigfried, Carol Spigelmeyer, Robert Taylor, Jerry Warmkessel, Leticia Weaver, Linda Wegman, Terry White, Althea Young, Alton Zentner, Barry, Lynn, Pat, Sam, and Tim.

OTHER PRAYER CONCERNS: We pray for all seeking to respond responsibly to COVID-19, especially healthcare workers; our nation, including our president, congress, judicial system, and leaders of our communities; an end to the many ways prejudice and systemic racism maintain inequality between people and injustice; an end to threats between nations; peace in the world; our military personnel serving around the world; areas enduring disaster; and migrants and refugees.

LONG-TERM PRAYER LIST: Gary DeWees, Don Gajewski, Erma Gajewski, Lorelai Gold, Amanda Herman, David Jenkins, Sue Kearney, Anh La, Michelle Meck, Nancy Meck, Joanne Pauley, Arlene Reider, Leilani Rodriguez, Andrew S., Joshua S., Roger Schollenberger, Donna Schwoyer, The Spatz Family, and Leah Wiest.

LET IT snow!

Create a winter wonderland with this fun craft.



What you need:

- Glass jar with lid but no label
- Laminated photo (that will fit in the jar)
- Small plastic Christmas trinkets
- Hot or waterproof glue
- Container with spout
- 1 cup distilled water
- 3 tsp. glycerin
- Glitter



What you do:

1. Unscrew lid and flip jar upside down. Glue the photo and trinkets to the inside of the lid, standing upright.
2. In a container, mix water and glycerin. Pour the mixture into the jar, leaving space at the top.
3. Spoon in some glitter.
4. When glue is dry, attach the decorated lid tightly. Shake the jar to see "snow" swirl and settle.



WHITE AS SNOW

Jesus, our Savior, came to earth to purify sinners.

Directions: Figure out which path through the puzzle is correct. Choose one to try, starting at the first picture under the "Path" box. Follow each picture's directional cues to see if the words make sense when placed in order in the blanks below. If not, try a different path until you figure out the Bible verse.



PATH 1	PATH 2	PATH 3	PATH 4	PATH 5	PATH 6
❄️ for	❄️ give	❄️ come	❄️ together	❄️ around	❄️ after
❄️ self	❄️ into	❄️ settle	❄️ eternal	❄️ thanks	❄️ forgive
❄️ God	❄️ LORD	❄️ says	❄️ without	❄️ Christ	❄️ warmth
❄️ love	❄️ sins	❄️ scarlet	❄️ other	❄️ light	❄️ praise
❄️ red	❄️ star	❄️ white	❄️ snow	❄️ winter	❄️ peace



"_____ now, let us _____ the matter," _____ the _____ . "Though your _____ are like _____ , they shall be as _____ as _____"

ISAIAH 1:18, NIV

Answer: Path 3; come, settle, says, LORD, sins, scarlet, white, snow

DECEMBER GUIDELINES FOR WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY OF NEW JERUSALEM

Due to the current pandemic, it has been a long time since we gathered for worship in our sanctuary. While many of us have missed being in the space that is very sacred to us and have longed to be among our brothers and sisters, we have refrained for the sake of protecting the health of our brothers and sisters. We are also thankful that some of us have had the options to worship together via Zoom and/or to celebrate communion by gathering on the parking lot.

We grieve that not everyone will be able to or will feel safe to gather in the sanctuary. For those who *do* wish to enter, we have set the following guidelines:

- 1) If, within the past 14 days, you have tested positive or been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or are experiencing any symptoms or are feeling ill in any way, stay home.
- 2) Masks are to be worn by everyone entering the building and to remain on until they depart. Hand sanitizer will be available in multiple locations. Worshippers are asked to bring their own masks. However, a few will be available if someone does not have one. If you are not able to wear a mask due to health concerns, we ask that for your sake and the sake of others you do not come to worship in the sanctuary.
- 3) At all times, a distance of at least 6 feet from people other than family members is to be observed.
- 4) Everyone is to enter and exit using the door at the top of the ramp. This way no one will need the elevator and we can keep that area of the building sanitized.
- 5) Bulletins for each person to pick up and an offering basket will be located on the shelves in the entrance way. We also plan to mail out bulletins ahead of time, so, if you can remember, please bring the one you have been mailed. That way we will not need to print as many.
- 6) Seats that respect social distancing have been designated. Some are designated so that family members may sit together. Please only sit in the designated seats.
- 7) When entering the building, those who enter first are to proceed to the front seats. Others who enter will fill in seats immediately behind those who are seated. While these may not be the seats you normally sit in, we ask you to follow this guideline for the sake of everyone present.
- 8) When the service is over, those who are seated in the back are to exit first and go directly to the parking lot.
- 9) If you wish to visit with others in the parking lot, please continue to wear your mask and observe the appropriate distance from one another.
- 10) Only one person at a time is to use the bathroom, unless a family member is needed to give assistance to someone. When unoccupied, the door to the bathroom is to remain open. Please close the door when you enter and leave it open when you exit.

The services that are being planned will be shorter than normal, probably lasting about 30 minutes. This has been recommended in order to reduce exposure time.

Members of Worship and Music Committee, Congregation Council and others have been working hard to enable those who desire to re-enter the sacred space of our sanctuary. They are also aware that plans will need to be adapted to changing conditions. We pray that the current arrangements will allow those who choose to attend an opportunity for meaningful worship of the God who never forsakes us and refuses to be confined.

Christmas In The Park



Churches Share the Story



Kutztown Park
Sunday, Dec 20 (Snow Date: Dec. 27)
3PM-5PM

A Drive-Thru Living Nativity Celebration!

Kutztown Park re-opened just for this event!
Please follow the signs - enter at Laurel St, near retention pond - exit at Kemp St.
FREE! No-contact event - stay in cars, stay safe and warm!

From your car: See and hear live displays from local churches,
telling the story of Jesus' birth Including:
Mary and Joseph on the Journey - Angels - Shepherds and Sheep
The Inn and Inn Keeper -The Magi and the Star - The Stable with the Holy Family

Questions? Call St. John's Lutheran Church office: (610) 683-3140
Event approved by Kutztown Borough Council

SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

Moving Forward as Church Together

A Farewell from Bishop Zeiser



I want to say thank you to all who served the assembly as voting members. Your patience, your willingness to accompany this synod in a new direction, and your faithful participation to the end of the assembly are important components of this synod's strength, and sure signs that "We Are Church Together".

During Assembly 2020, it was especially encouraging to see such a gifted slate of nominees and candidates for the office of bishop. Thank you to all who were open to the stirring of the Holy Spirit by allowing their names to go forward in the balloting.

I have known Bishop-elect deForest for ten years, and I have worked with him as he helped envision, plan, and produce our last six synod assemblies. Now, he and I have been, and will be, working together to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. I know that God has given Christopher substantial gifts to serve in this office and to work with the Rostered Ministers and congregations of the Northeastern PA Synod. Just as I look forward to my retirement, I also look forward to Christopher's leadership as Bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

A Greeting from Bishop Elect deForest

These are challenging times. I don't need to tell all of you what that means. But these are also times to give deep thanks. And to hold tight to the promise that Jesus is here, and Christ is coming. Advent. Christmas. Epiphany. Ash Wednesday. Lent. Holy Week. Easter. They are all coming. They will be here, soon. Not to bring us more anxiety and more things to do. But to bring us love, joy, peace, and hope.

This is also a time of opportunity: to heal, to grow, to dream, and to act. Working alongside Bishop Zeiser, I hope to hear from many different voices to seek their wisdom, guidance, expertise and involvement going forward. I'll be hearing from our Synod staff. From congregational leaders.

From other synods and their leaders. From other faith communities. And from the others who were nominated to this office of Bishop at last month's Online Assembly. And I can promise you that I will be praying, listening, and learning, in these days to come, to help us all discern how to be, and to act, and to remain: Christ-centered, Spirit-Led, and God-Reliant.

And so, I am here to commit to you that when I take office on January 1st, 2021, I will begin my tenure as your Bishop by taking a sabbath rest. I will not come into the Synod offices or do any work until Monday, January 11. No email. No social media. Only time for rest, with my family, and with our God. I want to start my time working with you as the most sabbath-rested servant-leader I can possibly be.

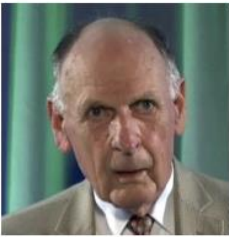
And then, after resting, let us return - refreshed, and ready to go where the Spirit is leading, centered in Christ, relying on God. We wish you blessings, love, joy, peace and hope, in this season and into this bright new year. God bless.



Online Assembly 2020 - We Did It!

Our Synod was the first in Region 7 to hold an online assembly, and it went really well.

Elections were held. Resolutions were adopted. Reports were received. Events were celebrated.



Elections. The process for electing a bishop was overseen by Mr. Ed Cool and by Mr. William "Bill" Horne II, Vice President of the ELCA, who also brought greetings and a report from ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. Pastor Christopher deForest was elected to serve a six-year term as bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod on the 5th ballot, with 260 votes. Pastor Ryan Hersch, of Atonement Lutheran Church in Wyomissing, received 222 votes. The other five candidates were Pastors Charles Grube,



Becca Middeke-Conlin, Nelson Quiñones, Susan Ruggles, and Martha Sipe.

Additionally, Pattie Corcoran, Joshua Fink, Pastor Gregory Frey, and Louise McCLaughan were elected to the Synod Council either by their Mission District or by the Assembly; and Dr. Margaret Ann Rapp and Pastor Michael Ware were elected to the Synod Discipline Committee.

Worship. Assembly worship was coordinated by Deacon Michael Krentz, who also composed a hymn "We Are Church Together" especially for Assembly 2020. Opening worship was a Service of the Word and included participants from around the synod, as well as a sermon by Bishop Zeiser. There was also music and prayer throughout the course of the Assembly.



Celebrations. A highlight of the first Friday evening was a video celebrating 50/40/10, the 50th anniversary of U.S. Lutheran churches' decision to ordain women, the 40th anniversary of the ordination of the first women of color, and the 10th anniversary of the ELCA's decision to officially ordain people in same-gender committed relationships. The Assembly also recognized major anniversaries of rostered ministers, especially those celebrating 50 years of ordained ministry.

Vice President Kristen Edelman-Weiner's Report. Vice President Kristen emphasized the importance of "Moving Forward as Church Together." Using the metaphor of an old tree line on her property and the efforts she made to revive it, Kristen acknowledged that new growth doesn't happen easily. It requires hard work; attention to caretaking; patience; the willingness to take risks and encounter failures; and above all, faith in God's promises and an optimistic hope in the future God intends for us.



**Because of COVID-19 safety concerns,
Bishop-Elect deForest will be installed at a future date.**

Please visit the synod website at godslove.org for updates.

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View the full color edition online at <http://nepasynod.org>.

DECEMBER 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Hats, scarves, and cowls due for the Searfarer's	2 10:00am-Worship & Music Committee Mtg.	3 10:00am-Coloring Group	4	5
6 2 nd Sunday of Advent 10:00am-Worship in the Sanctuary with Holy Communion	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 3 rd Sunday of Advent 10:00am-Worship on Zoom Clean-up bucket items due Newsletter Deadline	14 7:00pm-Council Meeting	15	16 11:30am-Fellowship Luncheon	17	18	19
20 4 th Sunday of Advent 10:00am-Worship in the Sanctuary 2:00pm and 7:00pm-Virtual Community Advent Concert 3:00-5:00pm-Christmas in the Park Drive-through Nativity	21	22	23	24 7:00pm-Christmas Eve Worship Service on Zoom (See the newsletter for additional worship opportunities in the community) Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26
27 1 st Day of Christmas 10:00am-Worship on Zoom Virtual Christmas Pageant on Zoom Kutztown Uni Food Pantry items due	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve		