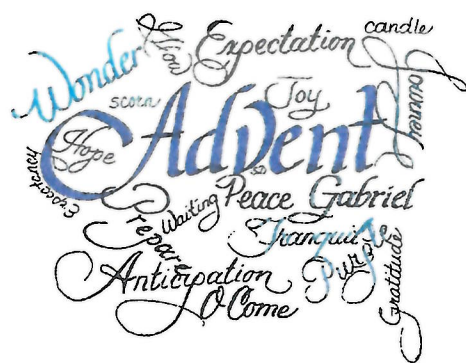


The Parish Voice

St. Thomas Lutheran Church — Streetsboro, Ohio

December 2021



“Occupy until I come.”

You will see these words over the doors of some churches. It comes from Luke 19:13, in the King James Version, part of the story of the talents, as Luke recounts it. The words sound a little strange to our ears, as if to say that we should just take up space until Jesus’ return. A more contemporary translation of this phrase would be: “Do business until I return,” or, more simply: “Stay busy!”

What an appropriate message in Advent for us at St. Thomas. There is so much work to get done, and we only have a slight hint of the time in which to do it.

That last sounded a little ominous. It almost sounds like the end could come any time. Precisely! The Advent message reminds us that we do not know the time of Jesus’ return. We may count down the days until Christmas, and we may recognize that we have a deadline to complete various tasks . . . but we do not know when the great event of the Second Coming will occur.

Pope John XXIII was once asked what he would do if he got word that Jesus was to return the next day. He replied: “I would tell everyone in the Vatican, ‘Look busy!’” I hope (and am pretty sure) he was kidding. Yet this is one way that people do react to the idea of the return of Christ — we need to look good — as if we could deceive Christ from knowing what is really in our hearts and minds.

The message of Advent is not to “look busy,” but to “be busy.” Not just any busy-ness will do, however. We are called upon to prepare our minds and hearts to receive the Coming King. That is the work of time spent in relationship with Jesus each day — through prayer, meditation, Scripture reading, just being in His presence.

There is other Kingdom work that needs our time and attention. There are people close to home who are hurting. There are people far away in need of our aid. Many have not yet heard the message of God’s love in Christ. Many more are trapped in false beliefs and religious systems. Some are bound to the things they possess; others caught in the web of addictions; still others overwhelmed with poverty, stress, anger, sickness, homelessness (the list seems endless).

And then there are our future plans. We have been in conversation with Christ Lutheran in Mantua for some months now, and it appears we are ready to ask the officials of both the English and Ohio to take us to the next step of calling a shared Pastor. There is yet work to be done to prepare for that task and more preparation to receive a new Pastor.

But that’s what we are called to do. We cannot just sit around and wait. The Master bids us, “Occupy until I come.” So . . . let’s get busy!

Our Worship This Month

Sunday Worship



December 5 — Advent II

Sermon: *"Seeing the Gospel"*

Texts: Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

The prophet Isaiah had promised that "all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Our eyes now behold it.



December 12 — Advent III

Sermon: *"The Baptist's Legacy"*

Texts: Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

John the Baptist's message is as lively today as it was two millennia ago. We would do well to listen and follow this prophet of God



December 19 — Advent IV

Sermon: *"The Voice of Praise"*

Texts: Micah 5:2-5a; Psalm 80; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-56

Not all voices that sing are voices of praise. Our voices need to swell the praise to God that God's grace deserves. Mary gives us a fine example.



December 26 — Day of St. Stephen, Deacon & Martyr

Sermon: *"Merry? Christmas"*

Texts: 2 Chronicles 24:17-22; Psalm 17; Acts 6:8-7:2a,51-60;
Matthew 23:34-39

The days after Christmas bring us stories of pain, death, and sorrow. Is this any way to celebrate?

Midweek Worship

On Wednesdays throughout Advent we gather for a Soup Supper at 6:30 PM and join in worship at 7:30 PM. This Advent season, Pastor Just shares a series focusing on **Four Words for Advent:** Hope, Peace, Joy, Love.



December 1 — Advent Midweek I: HOPE

Sermon: *"What Are You Hoping For?"*

Texts: Isaiah 2:1-5; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44

The season of Advent is a time for hope. It is essential that we focus our hope on the right object. Jesus points us to the signs that lead to hope.

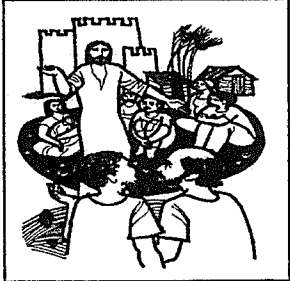


December 8 — Advent Midweek II: PEACE

Sermon: *"Anything But Peaceful?"*

Texts: Isaiah 11:1-10; Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

The prophet Isaiah sees the Messianic age as a time of peace; yet the Baptist's cries sound like anything but peace. Do we understand peace?



December 15 — Advent Midweek III: JOY

Sermon: *"It All Points to Joy"*

Texts: Isaiah 35:1-10; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

How often do we confuse happiness and joy? It has a lot to do with what we understand will lead us to joy.



December 22 — Advent Midweek IV: LOVE

Sermon: *"A Sign of Love"*

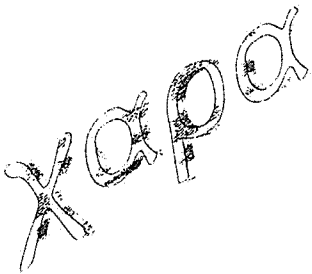
Texts: Isaiah 7:10-16; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

The prophet Isaiah provides a sign of the Coming One. When that sign appears, we come to know the fullness of God's love.



Christmas Eve Eucharist at 7:30 PM

We celebrate the Nativity of our Lord with our a traditional service of lessons and carols, complete with candlelighting and the Lord's Supper. As part of our celebration, Pastor Just will share a storybook he wrote some years ago, The Legend of the Golden Apple. His sermon that evening will be, *"The Miracles of Christmas."* Plan to join us; invite your family, friends, and neighbors.

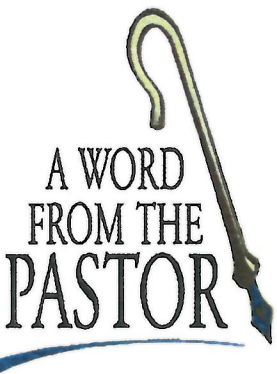


Pastor Just will be completing the study, The Third Peacock, on December 5. There will be a slight hiatus for the remainder of December. On January 9, he will begin a new study on the Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians. The study is entitled simply, **Χαρά** (Chara) — the Greek word for joy. Plan to join us each Sunday at 9:00 AM as we "walk through" St. Paul's exploration of the joy to be found in the Gospel.



Congregational Meeting

On December 5, we will hold our **Annual Congregational Meeting** after our worship service. All members are encouraged to join us. Along with the usual items like the budget, the Church Council will bring a proposal regarding membership. For the past several months, Diane Lee and Robin Hoffman have been combing through to update the Parish Register and identified a number of names that appear to no longer meet the terms of membership that are in the by-laws. That list of names will be made available the week before the meeting so that you can take it home to review and help us make proper decisions about these memberships. We ask you to pray about how we can best handle what can be a delicate decision.



As you have read or heard from news reports, a large number of Afghani refugees have fled their native land due to the resurgence of the Taliban. Several congregations from the English and Ohio Districts in the Greater Cleveland-Akron area have indicated willingness to join in an effort to sponsor, and/or support such refugees. I have since learned that Building Hope in the City, an organization begun by Lutheran congregations on the west side of Cleveland, has already become involved in that effort. Rather than try to “reinvent the wheel,” it would seem wise to join forces with those who have already started the process. I will be in touch with the people directing the energy at BHIC.

In the meantime, I encourage you to direct your energies toward two tasks:

- 1) Go online to the Building Hope in the City website — <https://www.buildinghopeinthecity.org> to learn more about this organization;
- 2) Write to your congresspersons and U.S. Senators in support of the Afghan Adjustment Act, which will be necessary to make it possible for the more than 30,000 who escaped out of Afghanistan who now are in what are called “military lily pads” awaiting visas that will allow them to resettle in the United States.

Continue to pray that we can become caring witnesses to the Gospel by reaching out to a group of people who need help, and with whom we can share the Good News of Christ.



The Children’s Advocacy Center of Portage County (CAC) is looking for help with supplies for the teens they support. There is a long list of items that are shared with families and children throughout the year; they have specifically requested items for teens. I will propose at our Congregational Meeting that we take on a project to assemble such items (as we did a few years ago in support of Lutheran World Relief) and provide them to CAC early in 2022 (the appeal is likely geared toward the holiday season, but the need will continue beyond that).

SERVICE PROJECTS

We have several projects going on. The first is to help those in Haiti with all their needs after the earthquakes. Monetary donations are being accepted with checks made out to the church. They will be given to the Lutheran Missions Ministry. Thank you for your support!

The second one is for our Streetsboro Community Pantry. They are always in need of food and monetary donations. Please bring your items to the church any Sunday. We will make sure they get to the cupboard. Thanksgiving is coming so they would appreciate your donations. Thank you for your generous giving heart!

SINGERS NEEDED



Marla would love to gather a group of people who love to sing to sing during the worship service. Please let her know if you are interested. We can meet briefly after the worship service to go over a song.

WANTED—SUNDAY READERS

We need volunteers for Sunday morning to read the First and Second Lessons. There is a signup sheet in the Narthex. Readings are beside the signup sheet. Please sign up this Sunday. Thank you for volunteering your services!

SOLDIERS FOR THE KING

Have you been missing Chuck and Ruth Dennison's drama performances as much as I have? Then you are in luck! Chuck and Ruth are presenting "Soldiers for the King" at The New Testament Baptist Church, 3583 S.R. 59 in Ravenna on Sunday, December 19 with performances at 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Come and see how the world changing event of the birth of Jesus would be reported today with modern technology. This version of the nativity story mixes biblical truths with present day elements. I hope to see you there!

SOUP SUPPERS AND WORSHIP

Please join us on Wednesday evenings with Soup and more starting at 6:30 p.m. and serving through 7:15 p.m. Join us anytime! It's a great way to not have to cook for the night. We have great soups, salads, pizza, desserts and more. We will be having our midweek Worship service at 7:30 p.m. with the themes Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. We hope to see everyone join us.



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Don't forget to join us Sunday, December 5 after the worship service for our annual congregational meeting. We have a lot to discuss. A luncheon of sandwiches and chips will be provided. Please plan on attending!

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Bill & Sharon Crile	Jim Doerfler	Carol Earle	Corey Hautmann
Linda Hautmann	Palagia Hlava	Lorene Kozar	Becky Larkins & Holly
Steve Manijak	Ken Nicely II	Kenny Nicely III	Kenny Nicely IV
Carol Poston	Heather Poston	Rory Wolff	Jenna Zimmerman
Alexa	Alice Artman	Aaron	Chip Black
Patty Bowman	Carl	Debbie Conrad	Leona Corban
Dan Erlandson	George Foerster	Christine Frank	Pastor Frerich's father
Ken Granville	Kelly Heritage	Anita Hlava	Patty & Kenny Hansen
Charles Hovavetz	Debbie Hovanetz	Janice	Jayme
John	Mike Latham	Laura	Dave Lauver
Lexi	Lori	Frank Manijak	Joe Manijak
Samantha	Amanda Nicely	Jodie Powers	Peter Power
Leo Rohaley	Kathi Rohrer	Sharon	Jim Shuster
Leslie Slanina	Angela Smith	Joe Svidron	Ed Szumski family
Tim Tolodzieski	Bennie Wegener	Dan Wiley	Linda Valetta and family
Donny Wood	Carol Yurkschatt	Terri Zeigler	
Doris Zimmerman	COVID-19 patients	Missionaries being held hostage in Haiti	
Haiti Earthquake Victims	Homeless served by LMM		

All natural disaster victims from fires, floods, earthquakes etc.

Our shut-ins—please send them a card

Mrs. Audrey Holland
Willowood Care Room 1001
1186 Hancock Rd.
Brunswick, OH 44212-4582

Carole & Heather Poston
3096 E. Pioneer
Aurora, OH 44202

Lorene Kozar
has moved to Mentor will have an
address soon

Our College Students—Grace Rohaley, Abigail Ayers, Corey Hautmann, Thomas Ayers and Joanna Nicely
Our Military member—Troy Roman

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays

2-Pastor Just
13-Robin Hoffman
17-Vicki Weber
21-Ben Wolff
31-Diane Pencin



DECEMBER BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

Baptism Birthdays

19-Elizabeth Ayers
19-Madelyn Ayers
27-Linda Hautmann

Happy Anniversary to...
8-Anibal & Joyce Torres

If anyone has been left off this list or any other list, please let Marla Manijak know so she can add you. I would love birthdays and anniversaries and baptism birthdays if you know when it is. Thanks!

Church Council will be meeting December 19 after the worship service. If there is anything you would like the Council to discuss please let one of these members know...Steve Hlava, Jim Doerfler, Deb Wolff, Joyce Torres, Diane Lee, Del Groff, Marla Manijak or Pastor Just

If you haven't checked out our church website yet, please do and let Del Groff know how you like it or if there is something you would like to see added. The website is www.stthomasstreetsboro.com

Check out our Facebook page also. You will find our worship services and bulletins each week on the page.

Our January-March Portal of Prayers devotionals are available now. You can find them on the table by the door or ask Steve for one and he will bring it to your car.

Contact Person: Please call Pastor Just at 216-789-6688 or Council President Steve Hlava at 330 422-1959 for any emergencies or questions. Pastor Just is in the office on Wednesdays or Thursdays from 8:00-4:00. Please call ahead to make sure he is there.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS!
JOIN US CHRISTMAS EVE AT 7:30 P.M.!

HAVE A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS!

**St. Thomas Evangelical Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 2247
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Streetsboro, OH 44241**

CLEVELAND OH 440
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THE PARISH VOICE NEWSLETTER

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Pastor Just office hours—Thursdays 8:00-4:00

Cell Phone (216) 789-6688 Email: doctorjust@gmail.com

Web Site: www.stthomasstreetsboro.com

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

BIBLE STUDY 9:00 A.M.

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE 10:00 A.M.

IN THE CHURCH PARKING LOT ON CHANNEL 96.9 FM

LIVE ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

OR PLEASE JOIN US INSIDE