

I love reading. I like reading just about anything, from adventure, to science fiction, to history and biographies. I really enjoy reading young adult novels. I'm a big fan of The Hunger Games, the Ender's Game series, the Divergent series, the Percy Jackson novels, The Ranger's Apprentice, Lord of the Rings, and the Star Wars novels.

Of course, as the father of a three-year-old, and soon-to-be newborn, I don't have much time for "pleasure reading." Most of the reading I do at this point is updated Physical Therapy and medicine research, commentary on Biblical passages, and books for young children.

Yes, my reading now is primarily composed of Llama, Llama, Little Critter, Bernstein Bears, Pete the Cat, and Winnie the Pooh.

The other night, as we sat down for our nightly reading with Abby, we opened a new book we had just purchased: Llama Llama Holiday Drama.

This is a book by Anna Dewdney and is another in her series of stories about Llama, his Mama, and his neighborhood friend. Like all the Llama Llama books, this one is in rhyme.

In "Holiday Drama," Llama and his Llama Mama are getting ready for Christmas. Llama sees and hears the changing season: the holiday lights, the Christmas music, the candy and cookies, signs, store displays, snow, and elves. But, on every other page, as Llama takes in all the sights and sounds of the season, he asks his mom over and over and over how much longer he has to wait. And then comes this:

"All this waiting for one day?
Time for presents RIGHT AWAY!
Too much music, too much fluff!
Too much making, too much stuff!
Too much everything for Llama
Llama Llama, HOLIDRAMA!"

We've all felt the same as little Llama. Every year, the rush of the season seems to get pushed further and further back. Store displays start

appearing right after Halloween (or even before, in some places!). We start planning food and shopping lists and travel plans. We can get so overwhelmed by all the things we have to get done for this Christmas season. But, listen to Mama Llama:

"Come and listen, little Llama.
Have a cuddle with your mama.
Sometimes we should take a rest
and hold the ones we love the best.
Wishing, waiting, wanting things...
We forget what this time brings.
Gifts are nice,
but there's another—
The true gift is
we have each other."

This is a season of waiting, watching, and expectation for the coming of God among us in the person of Jesus Christ. Most certainly, the planning and the expectations of our family gatherings can seem to overwhelm us. We can get caught up in the "holidrama" and miss the beauty of this season.

It is God's eternal desire to be in relationship with you and me. God is willing to risk everything; to give up everything, so that you and I might experience fullness of life.

In Jesus, God is born among us so that you and I can more fully live into the fullness of relationship—relationship with God, and our relationships with one another.

That is what this Advent season of waiting is about—preparing ourselves for the coming of God. We reflect on our lives and our relationships. We pray for God's Kingdom come, in which all pain, all sorrow, all war, all death, all brokenness will be restored.

In those time, in those moments, when we feel this season begin to overwhelm us like little llama, remember this: you are beloved of God, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit for life and relationship.

The true gift is not found in packages that are wrapped and topped with a bow—the true gift is our relationship with God in Jesus and our relationship with each other.

So take a moment, this holiday season. Stop and take a deep breath and look around you. Look around the dinner table, around the living room, and around the pews at Christmas Eve service. As you do, not only will you see family, friends, and neighbors, you will see God in Jesus among us.

Merry Christmas!

Peace,

Pr. JonPaul

Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church

Council Minutes

November 4, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 10:47 by President Kim Vlcek. When Pastor JonPaul joined us he led us in a devotional prayer.

NON-AGENDA - none REPORTS

The secretary's report was reviewed.

The treasurer's report was reviewed. The September Mission Offering for Mondovi Weekend Backpack Meals was \$247. The October Mission Offering for Shane Giacomino, victim of a swimming accident, was \$279. The profit from the chicken meal at the bazaar sent to Skogden Church to help with flooding concerns was \$774.40. We are a little behind previous year in the positive balance at the end of October.

Pastor report was oral. He performed one wedding during the month of October. There were no baptisms or funerals.

We are now using setting 1 in the hymnal. Pastor is researching the setting to be used during Advent, starting December 2. He will also check to see if we have the candles we need for the Advent season.

Sunday School is going well. Confirmation attendance has been up and down to date.

Pastor would like to have some time off for paternity leave. The Synod allows 6 weeks of paid time off for a full time pastor for maternity/paternity. Pastor will be taking 3 weeks off from Mayo. He has requested the same from us, beginning with the birth of the baby. He will still be available for hospital visits and funerals. If the time off should coincide with Christmas, he will still perform the 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service.

Kay made a motion to give the Pastor 3 weeks of paid paternity leave. Ruth seconded it. Motion carried.

We questioned as to a list of substitute pastors for the three Sundays. If we hire a sub we can still have communion.

Pastor JonPaul needs a device (Chrome Book or other computer) to use for church business. He questioned if money set aside for continuing education could be used for such a device, or do we have a line item in the budget that would cover this? We didn't decide at this time if it would belong to the church or to him or who would pay for the maintenance or anti-virus program. Pastor is going to look at some options and get back to us as to what's available and what will do what he needs it to do.

There have been no Ambassador's activities.

A motion was made by Kay to accept all reports. Second by Dale. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Education – Sunday School is running smoothly. We are looking for teachers to sign up for the year. There may be some practice for the program on November 25 and December 2 if the music and scripts have been chosen.

Worship – The Christmas Eve program will be on Christmas Eve at 5:00 p.m. We will have communion.

Property – Dwight has purchased a new TV monitor. It needs to be installed.

We will need someone to plow snow. Dwight will ask Aaron if he is able and interested in doing that. If not, Dale will ask Mark Koser or get a price from Jerry Larson. Dale and Sharon will again handle salting or sanding to keep the ice at bay.

Also, the water system will be looked at to see if we can get some more pressure in the kitchenette. The old part of the church may need to be replumbed, using PEX. We would probably need a fundraiser to cover the cost.

Bazaar – Kay used a Thrivent Community Impact Card for the dinner. She has since found out that we could use another one for other parts of the bazaar. We would need to ask someone else if they would get a card for that. Costs for the bazaar were higher than the last 3 years. Profits were also lower than the last 3 years. We will start a discussion earlier in the year and see if we can come up with

another way to make money for the church; or perhaps have the bazaar at another time of the year.

The letter to the neighbors, the prayer chain, and the congregational study information dissemination are all on hold until the Annual Meeting, January 27, 2019, or later.

We have not yet updated our computer software. Dan Herzberg is still paying \$100 a year for Norton Anti-virus 360. Roxie will call Tri-County and check on our anti-virus to see if that came with the bundling package.

Dave Vlcek is working on forming a Men's group. That, as well as a women's group will be brought up at the Annual Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Ruthann Kilde Hillesland has requested a transfer to her new church in Sidney, Montana. We will ask Monica to handle that. Ruth made a motion to approve the transfer. Second by Kay. Motion carried.

Pastor JonPaul will connect with some possible new members.

Roxie is working on the 2019 Ministry Plan (budget) and the Opportunities to Serve for 2019.

Sadie is no longer quilting. She has given the leftover yarn to Military Caps ladies group in Durand. They make hats for Operation Shoe Box.

Mission Offering:

November – Feed My People

December – Mondovi Food Pantry

For January we will consider Zach Caterer, an Eau Claire teen that suffered paralysis in a swimming accident; a fund set up to help the 3 children and one mother that were killed on November 3 in Chippewa Falls; or the Jayme Closs fund, the teen missing from her Barron home.

OTHER ITEMS –

Next meeting – December 2, 10:30

Roxie made a motion to adjourn. Second by Dwight.

We adjourned at 12:03. Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ruth Poore

Members present: Pastor JonPaul, Dale Anderson, Kim Vlcek, Kay Sands, Dwight Sands, Roxie Ulness, and Ruth Poore

Parish Nurse

Needed

Sunday school / Confirmation

Sunday School is running smoothly.

Beginning at 10:15 there is a group opening in the sanctuary with Pastor JonPaul. Then dividing up, the Sunday school students go to the classroom downstairs with their teacher. The Confirmation Class remains in the sanctuary with Pastor. We are still looking for teachers to sign up for the year. The sign-up sheet is in fellowship room

The Christmas program will be held on December 9 at the 9 o'clock service. Practice will be on December 8 from 9 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. with the Christmas lunch party following, ending about 12:30. There will both Sunday School students and confirmands in the program.

Praise Team News

The Praise Team will play in worship at Pleasant Valley on December 23 and 30. The band will lead worship the evenings of December 23, 25 and 30 at the Chippewa Valley Correctional Treatment Facility. Members of the Praise Team will be making visits to our homebound members and Christmas caroling on December 9. We will leave from the church at 1 pm and everyone is invited to participate!

Treasurers' Report

None submitted

WELCA

Thank you for your monetary gift to the Thankoffering service. If you haven't brought in your Thankoffering gifts please do so. It's not too late. Leave them with Monica in the office.



IN NEED OF PRAYER

Here is our Prayer Concern list:

Jayne Closs - Barron teen missing

Chris Hillesland - He was diagnosed with kidney cancer had surgery. Alton's son

Troy Gilbertson – had surgery for colon cancer - healing

Victoria – healing from cancer surgery, a cousin to Pastor

Julie Werlein – healing- back in the hospital

Kay Johnson – needs eye surgery, hip replacement and a heart procedure – friend of Monica's

Joy Glende – suffering with neck pain

Romaine Knutson – cancer; a member of Pastor's family

Nick Polkowske – prostate cancer and heart trouble

Gerri Sessions – strengthening & healing

Catherine Erickson – pancreatic cancer

Christine Thompson – struggling with lupus: is in the American Lutheran Home in Mondovi.

Mariah Sands – Mission trip to Rwanda

Maritza Nohemi – student we are sponsoring in Guatemala

Our service men and women; Kendall Dragseth, She is Pastor's cousin and serves in the Navy, deployed to the Middle East.

The inmates at CVCTF

All those on our Visiting list:

Avis Erickson,

Gary Hazen,

Bob Dutter,

Jim & Janice Teigen

December Mission Offering Recipient:

Mondovi Food Pantry



TEXTS AND READERS for December

First Sunday of Advent – 2nd

All Saints Day

Blue Kathy Tweet

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Psalms 25:1-10

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Luke 21:25-36

Second Sunday of Advent – 9th

Blue Kim Vlcek

Malachi 3:1-4

Luke 1:68-79

Philippians 1:3-11

Luke 3:1-6

Third Sunday of Advent - 16th

Blue Monica Bahr

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

Fourth Sunday of Advent – 23rd

Blue Roxie Ulness

Micah 5:2-5a

Luke 1:16b-55 or Psalm 80:1-7

Hebrew 10:5-10

Luke 1:39-55

Nativity of Our Lord

Christmas Eve – 24th

White Monica Bahr

Isaiah 9:2-7

Psalm 96

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-20

First Sunday of Christmas – 30th

White Kay Sands

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26

Psalm 148

Colossians 3:12-17

Luke 2:41-52

Epiphany of Our Lord

January 6

December Schedule

2nd – program practice at 10:15- 11:00
8th – program practice at 9 a.m. until 11:45;
party and lunch after, until 12:15
9th Worship at 9 a.m. with Christmas program
Coffee fellowship following, also at
1 p.m. gather at Church for Christmas Caroling
with the Praise team
16th – Worship at 9 a.m. Sunday School class
and Confirmation class at 10:15
23rd - Worship with Praise team at 9 a.m.
24th – Christmas Eve worship at 5 p.m.
25th - Praise team at CVCTF at 6 p.m.
30th –Worship with Praise team at 9 a.m.

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE:

***NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS: Sunday,
December 16th - for the January Newsletter**

Call Monica Bahr - 715-287-4742,

or E-mail: dmbahr@tcc.coop. Also, E-mail the church at: plesntvalleyluth@tcc.coop with any bulletin or newsletter announcements, especially prayer requests and updates, by Wednesday, so I can print them. Thanks.

Announcement: If you would like to bring Poinsettia or any flowers to decorate the sanctuary. Please let Monica know so I can print it in the Christmas bulletin.

Sing unto the Lord

all the earth

Psalm 96:1

Sing with lights and bells,

candles and snowflakes

“by the light of the psalms”

By Chris Shea

Silent, praying people

Contemplative prayer comes in all sorts of postures, programs and procedures, but the type to which I return time and again I first encountered years ago.

I'll never forget how workshop leaders arranged the chairs in a circular formation; made space available for kneeling, sitting or reclining; dimmed the lights; scattered beautiful icons and fabrics throughout the worship space; and gave each participant a candle.

While I had lit a candle on Christmas Eve, I had never quietly placed my candle together with those of others in a container of sand, reflecting the power of our combined lights, our combined prayers. I learned to focus on the large icons and cross bathed in candlelight. I learned there is nothing like being in a large group of silent, praying people.

This message is an excerpt from "In the stillness" by Betty E. Landis in the July/August 2018 issue of Gather magazine.

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“That all May come, Serving all the People of God”

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PLEASANT VALLEY NEWSLETTER

*'That all may come,
Serving all the people of God'*

DECEMBER 2018

Merry Christmas

Christmas program 9 a.m. on the 9th

Christmas Caroling 1 p.m. on the 9th

Christmas Eve service 5 p.m. on the 24th