

Advent is one of my favorite times of the year.

In the church, just after we celebrate Thanksgiving with food and family, we join in worship to celebrate Christ the King Sunday. On this final Sunday of the church year we give thanks to God for Christ's victory over pain, suffering, illness, and death. We give thanks that the One who died and rose again now stands victorious over all the powers and forces of this world. When things seem to spin out of control, when families argue and fight, when elected leaders seek their own interests above the common good, when nations posture for war, we remain ever confident that Christ reigns over it all and nothing can separate us from God's love in Jesus Christ.

And then we begin the journey toward Christmas.

On "Black Friday" we always see cultural preparation for the celebration of Christmas. Oakwood mall parking lot: full. Target parking lot: full. Menards parking lot: full. Best Buy parking lot: full. Walmart parking lot: full. McDonald's drive-through: lined with cars looping around the building.

Culturally, we welcome this season with a mad shopping rush. Looking for the best deals on the stuff we want for ourselves or to give as presents, we pack stores and malls.

For 4 weeks, starting December 1st, the Church witnesses the season of Advent. In Advent, we wait. We wait for the birth of God in the world. We wait for the coming of Jesus Christ. We wait for that day when the victorious Christ the King will come again into this world to conquer all sin and brokenness and death. We light candles around a wreath and we wait.

We know the story of Christmas. We know Jesus will come again into this world, born among us to redeem us from sin. We light candles and pray, knowing that the very thing we, and this whole world need, is coming so very soon.

As you gather with family and friends and celebrate this holiday season, take a few moments each day to pray. Pray that the One who brings healing, wholeness, and life returns soon. Pray that all sin and brokenness are defeated. Pray for that day when death is no more.

And join us. Join us each Sunday this season as we, together, light candles and wait with hopeful expectation for the birth of God among us.

And may you and your family enjoy a wonderful and merry Christmas.

Peace,

Pr. JonPaul

**Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church
Council Minutes, Sunday, November 3,
2019**

The meeting was called to order at 10:40 by President Sands.

Reports

The secretary's report was reviewed. The treasurer's report was reviewed. Income in October exceeded expenses by \$6,332.26, with \$5,000 coming in the form of a gift from the Dale and Avis Erickson Estate. The Mission Offering for Mondovi backpack food program was \$232.

The Pastor's report was oral. He has chosen a service for Advent called Everlasting Light. Liturgy will be set to Christmas tunes, and will begin on December 1. Dale made a motion to accept all reports. Second by Roxie. Motion carried.

Unfinished Business

Education – Sunday school has been going well. We NEED people to volunteer as teachers, and it would be helpful, with the children at such young ages, to have an aide each Sunday.

Corissa is able to handle the Sunday School Christmas program on the 15th. Ruth will purchase the apples and candy bars to be handed out after the program. There will be a birthday cake for Jesus served during coffee. Ruth will handle getting that. On Saturday, December 14, we will have rehearsal for the program at 9 a.m., followed by a Christmas party at noon. Ruth will arrange the food and serve it for the party.

Worship – Highlighted in Pastor's oral report.

Property – Kurt Tonn Excavating LLC has been on-site, taken out the trees and brush on the side hill of the park, seeded the hill and put down matting. We have received the bill. They also dug a trench, put in drain tile and gravel to route the rain and snow melt and keep the basement dry. Thanks to the guys that helped them. We received a separate bill for that.

Dwight and the Park Committee will work on solidifying a plan for the next step in planning for park access. He has been working with S&K Landscaping, who will be doing the work.

Ruth will speak to All Star Elevator and see if we can get a bi-annual maintenance program, since we use the lift so infrequently. I will also see if we can set the date of maintenance to coincide with any service we may need, reducing the cost of a service call. If a call is not needed, we will set the maintenance date to the end of our yearly contract.

The new furnace has been installed in the basement. The bill of \$2,500 has been given to us. We will pay that from the Building Fund line item in the budget.

Other – Bill and Julie Schwensen, as per their request, have been removed from our membership list.

New Business

Mission Offering:

November – Mondovi Food Pantry

December – Feed My People

Other items – Roxie has asked to use the church. She will make sure her use doesn't coincide with other things happening at church.

We will need to find replacements for Dale and Mark, since their terms on council at large are over in January. We also need to find a replacement for Roxie as treasurer. Two people as co-treasurers would be even better, so one person could miss an occasional Sunday. Pastor will highlight the needs for volunteers on the Opportunities to Serve list, for Sunday School teachers, and council members during announcements.

Next meeting – December 1, 2019.

Ruth made a motion to adjourn. Second by Dale. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:32 and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted:

Ruth Poore

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

Treasurers' Report

(No report submitted)

Roxie Ulness, Treasurer

WELCA

Thankoffering service was held on November 24th.

The hat and mitten tree is up, so please donate to fill up the tree.

Praise Team News

The Praise Team will play in worship at Pleasant Valley on December 22 and 29. The group will lead worship at Chippewa Valley Correctional Treatment Facility on December 22, 25 and 29.

Join us for Christmas Caroling this year on December 8. We will meet at the church at 1 pm.

Let Kim Vlcek or Monica Bahr know if you can attend.

Happy Birthday!

To everyone who has a
December Birthday.
Blessings on your Special Day!



IN NEED OF PRAYER

Here is our Prayer Concern list:

The family of Judy Hanson – friend of the Bahr's
Abi Martin – Evelyn Mousel's great
granddaughter – having surgery to remove tonsils
and adenoid's on December 3rd.

Baby Robbie - needs another surgery remove
scar tissue around his eye

Herb Bias – Joy's father in law is hospitalized,
complication due to to Agent Orange

Kim Johnson - Sadie's niece - has been
diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer.

Donna- Stephanie Kuehl's grandmother – healing

Brenda Johnson – chemo – friend of the Bahr's

Henry – Kari Karnatz's Dad- suffering with
dementia

Lyle Larson – Kim Koser's dad – in memory care
unit now

Victoria – undergoing chemo, cousin to Pastor

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

Catherine Erickson – pancreatic cancer

Gerri Sessions – strengthening & healing

Holly Poore – in Thailand for 1 year, teaching
English

Maritza Nohemi – student we are sponsoring in
Guatemala

Dan and Shelby Hill and family - missionaries
living in France

Our service men and women; Alex Bauer
stationed in South Korea

The inmates at CVCTF

**The neighborhood people we will pray for this
month.**

All those on our visiting list:

**Bob Dutter, Gary & Sharon Hazen,
Jim & Janice Teigen**

December's Mission offering recipient:

Feed My People

Sunday school / Confirmation

Sunday school has begun. Please sign up to
teach. Also, sign up to give the children's message
during the worship service.

The Christmas program is well under way.
Practice on the 8th during class time. Practice and
dress rehearsal, is December 14th, begins at 8:45,
with party and lunch at 11:45. We will be done about
12:15. Program during worship time on December
15th, ending with Birthday cake for Jesus during
fellowship time.

The confirmation class is studying the
Apostle's Creed.

Thank-You's

Dear Church Members,
With Sincere Gratitude and Appreciation.

We wanted to acknowledge the 2 checks we
received for use by the Mondovi Backpack Program.
Your donation from you Mission Sunday collection,
and your prayers and support are very much
appreciated!

Thank you Mondovi Backpack Program

The Eleva-Strum Community Support
Network Gratefully Acknowledges your gift of:
\$219.35

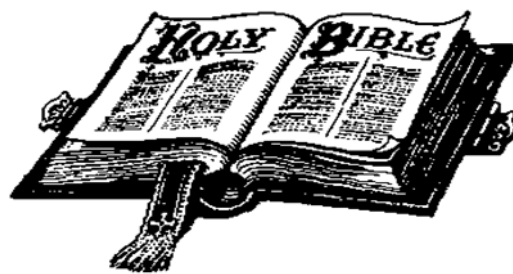
Thank You for Your Thoughtfulness and
Generosity.

TEXTS AND READERS FOR DECEMBER

First Sunday of Advent – 1st

Blue *Kathy Tweet*

Isaiah 2:1-5
Psalm 122
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:36-44



Second Sunday of Advent - 8th

Blue *Kim Vlcek*

Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

Third Sunday of Advent – 15th Sunday School Christmas program

Blue *Monica Bahr*

Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10 or
Luke 1:46b-55
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Fourth Sunday of Advent – 22nd

Blue *Jessica Dragseth*

Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

Christmas Eve service – 24th

White *Roxie Ulness*

Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14[15-20]

First Sunday of Christmas – 29th

White *Kay Sands*

Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE:

***NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS:**

Sunday, December 22nd - 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.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart

Psalms 119:11

**That could explain why I seem to be
particularly joy filled these days**

By the light of the Psalms By Chris Shea

“Don’t Lose the Baby”

An Advent Message from Bishop Laurie



On the First Sunday of Advent, every year, our family unpacks the wreath. Our tradition is to put an incomplete nativity scene in the center. We use the ceramic figures my mom made for us the first year we were married. The magi are put up on a high shelf until they make their appearance on Epiphany. Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, a few sheep, and an empty manger go in the center to wait.

One of our children would hide the tiny figure of the baby Jesus in a cup in nearby cabinet. Every year I’d worry a little and give a warning, “Remember where you put him, we don’t want to lose baby Jesus.” They were careful, but I would still worry that we might lose the baby Jesus. Before supper we’d light the blue candles on the Advent wreath and pray “Come, Lord Jesus be our guest.” Advent was about waiting to put the baby in the manger. On Christmas Eve, we retrieve the hidden baby Jesus, give a sigh of relief that we haven’t lost him, put him in the manger and light the Christ candle.

It’s possible to lose baby Jesus in the craziness of Advent. As Christians, surrounded by the most commercialized and secularized holiday of all, we are always in danger of losing Jesus. Not the ceramic Jesus figurine from our nativity set, but losing our way in Advent and never finding the holy in the midst of the hectic; never experiencing the expectant purposeful waiting that brings us to the awe and wonder of Jesus Christ, the baby born in Bethlehem.

Every year I want to issue some motherly WARNING: Don’t lose the baby! If you lose the baby, Christmas doesn’t make any sense at all. Without the baby, Christmas is a beautifully wrapped box with nothing inside. It is empty of meaning, but most of all it is empty of hope.

I want to issue a motherly CAUTION: Don’t lose the baby. If you lose the baby, Christmas doesn’t work. It is broken and like a cracked snow globe, the hope leaks out. The world needs Jesus this Christmas more than ever. There are so many broken things in our personal lives, the pain leaks out over grief, loss, and disappointment. There is so much systemic brokenness in our communities and in our country that it leaks out as violence. We need the hope and healing that only Jesus can bring.

Theologically, we don’t need to worry about losing Jesus because Jesus is with us. First in Luke 2 ***“She gave birth to her first born son and laid him in the manger;”*** then the incarnation of John 1, ***“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”*** The incarnation Jesus hasn’t been lost. In Matthew 28 Jesus promises to be with us ***“always to the end of the age.”***

Perhaps a more accurate warning is this: DANGER: Don’t lose **sight** of the baby. That baby, that Word made flesh is the light of the world. In these dark days of winter we need the light of the world to shine in us and through us.

Now a little ENCOURAGEMENT for this Advent and Christmas: **PRACTICE INCARNATIONAL MINISTRY.** That means just show up and be Jesus for others. Go and be Jesus for those who may have lost sight of him. Go and be the Church, show your neighbors, your community the love of Jesus. Go to the dark places and bring Jesus. Go sit with those who are sad and be Christmas. Go and speak the truth into the cracks of the broken places in our society. Go, just show up and be the hands, feet, the voice, the love of Jesus. Go and let your light so shine before others, go be the light of Christ, the light no darkness can overcome.

May God bless you, your family and congregation, and may the peace of God made real to us in a baby born in Bethlehem fill your hearts this Advent and Christmas Season.

Rev. Laurie Sh. Olesen

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"That all May come, Serving all the People of God"

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PLEASANT VALLEY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2019

