

the CHALLENGE

A circular graphic with a white border and a dark blue background. Inside, the text "December 2019" is written in white, sans-serif font.

December
2019

From the Desk of Brennan Blue

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Hopeful Expectancy

Once again, we enter the brief and often overlooked season of Advent, which marks the beginning of the new year in the Church's liturgical calendar. I say overlooked because most churches – ours included – leap right into the joyful cadence Christmas carols, concerts and pageants without experiencing the lingering hope-awaiting-realization rhythm of Advent. With the holiday season so pack and the canon of Christmas carols so large, I don't blame us, but it is worth pausing to remember that long before the Christmas star shone in the dark of night, Mary, Joseph, and a great host of characters leaned hard into the promise of an unknown hope.

I don't know about you, but I could sure use a season of hope unlooked for right about now. Despite all of the goodness and joy that comes with sharing life together as a community, there are real heavy happenings that are weighing us down. Lingering injustice and violence. The bitter partisan divide in our country. The loss of many dear saints and friends in the life of our community this past year. While we've all much to be grateful for, it's nonetheless difficult not to carry an underlying sense of dread about what setup may be lying just around the corner.

The season Advent calls us to look ahead in a different manner: with a posture of hopeful expectancy. As we weave our way through the Advent story this year, we will lift up themes of surprising hope breaking through the heavy hurts of our world. Whether it feels sincere and possible or not, I invite us to try on this posture of hopeful expectancy during this Advent season to see what it may teach us. This is not a call to joy or even optimism. No, Advent calls us to look purposefully about

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Photo: Rhus typhina; Staghorn Sumac; Andreas Krappweis

From the Desk of Brennan Blue continued

our world – pain, sorrow and all – and believe that the good grace of God will break forth like the dawn after darkness. Could it be that peace, love, hope and joy are coming just around the corner, if we but have the eyes to see it, ears to hear it, and hearts to hope it into being?

That's what I'll be searching for this Advent season.

Yours with hope and
expectancy,

Brennan



Session Slices

At the November 19 meeting, Session members focused on the 2020 budget.

Don Davies presented a draft budget based on preliminary pledges as well as proposed personnel and operations expenditures. Session members profited from Don's in-depth information and explanations. Session intends to finalize the 2020 budget at our December meeting.

Session noted with pleasure the joining of our fall new member class: Mary and Jim Sauter; Lindsay and Matt Juricek, with their children Otto and Nori

Our unsung hero this month is Frank Babka. Among the many ways Frank contributes to St. Luke, he has officially taken on the Sunday morning duties of retrieving the St. Luke portable sign and locking up the church. He has generously offered to take this responsibility on permanently. Those previously responsible – Session members – are VERY grateful to Frank!

Worship Sundays 10:30 am

December 1 Communion

Preaching: Brennan Blue
Welcoming: Sue Kirchhoff

Greeting: Jim Gresham, Jill Wheeler

Liturgist: Bill Frank

Ushers: Cel Smith, Greg Smith

Sound: Larry Stickler

December 8 Christmas Cantata

Announcements

Welcoming: Janet Kramer-Barr

Greeting: Bob Haskin, Kathy Haskin

Liturgist: Evelyn Headen

Ushers: Todd Lindberg, Steve Warner

Sound: Jim Gregory

December 15 Pageant

Welcoming: Carrie MacLeod

Greeting: Curt Hill, Mary Lou Hoff

Ushers: Nancy Anderson, Don Ellenberger

Sound: Ken Corens

December 22

Announcements

Preaching: C. P. Elliott

Welcoming: Lynn Cox

Greeting: Ann Hommeyer, Chuck Hommeyer

Liturgist: Linda Thomson

Ushers: Frank Babka, Peter Whatley

Sound: Ken Corens

December 29

Welcoming: Connie Blodgett

Greeting: Becky Kajander, Judy Leatham

Liturgist: Janet Kramer-Barr

Ushers: Frank Babka, Peter Whatley

Sound: Larry Stickler

Deacons: Cecy Faster, Lucille Goodwyne

Christmas Eve Worship

December 24

4:00 pm

Festival of
Lessons and Carols



Compost News

Compostable forks are here! You can know them by the open handle.

We are still working down our supply of non-recyclable, non-compostable spoons and knives, but will convert to compostable soon.

For clarity sake, please do not bring any non-compostable cups, plates or utensils into the building.



Dementia Friendly Church

December Dementia Awareness Information

Dementia is not a specific disease. It's an overall term that describes a wide range of symptoms associated with a decline in memory or other thinking skills severe enough to reduce a person's ability to perform everyday activities.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia and accounts for 60-80 percent of cases. Other types of dementia include Dementia with Lewy Bodies, Frontotemporal and Vascular.

People with dementia need to be understood and supported in their communities.

You can help by becoming a Dementia Friend. Visit www.actonalz.org/dementia-friends to learn more. (from ActonAlz.org)

*Please note that this month we have pamphlets on the back counter called "COMMUNICATION - Tips for successful communication during all stages of Alzheimer's disease."

They have been provided by the Alzheimer's Association. (alz.org)

For more info. or support, please contact Jill Engeswick (jillengeswick@gmail.com).



Adult Education

Sundays at 9:15 am in the East Room

December 1 - No Adult Ed.

December 8 - Gently Winding Down Gail Conroy, Certified Senior Advisor with Äldre Senior Living Navigators will give us a brief overview of how to prepare for transitioning over the next 5-10 years to elder living. She will provide a framework as to what are the signs of need for change, senior community options, social support needs, how to broach conversations with children and more. A panel of St. Lukers who have successfully transitioned will share their experiences and dialogue with us on questions and concerns.

December 15 - Holiday Yoga - Martha Williams, St. Luker and premiere yoga instructor will lead us through some breathing exercises, meditation and poses designed to encourage relaxation and reduce holiday stress.

December 22 - Caroling, Cookies and Cocoa - Come All Ye Families! Join Brennan and Nicole Egan for caroling in the Sanctuary followed by cookies, cocoa and coffee at 9:30 am before the service.

More Blankets

Seasoned Lukers

Tuesday, December 10, 1:30 pm

We had a great turnout for the blanket making for people who are homeless, so now we will make 100 blankets that will be distributed by Alike Galloway/Liberty Church to northside students. Bring your scissors and enjoy community!

The Book Group

The St. Luke book group will meet Wednesday, December 11, at 9:30 at the home of Cecy Faster, 4717 Maple Hill Drive, Excelsior 952-474-7174.

We are reading *News of the World* by Paulette Jiles:

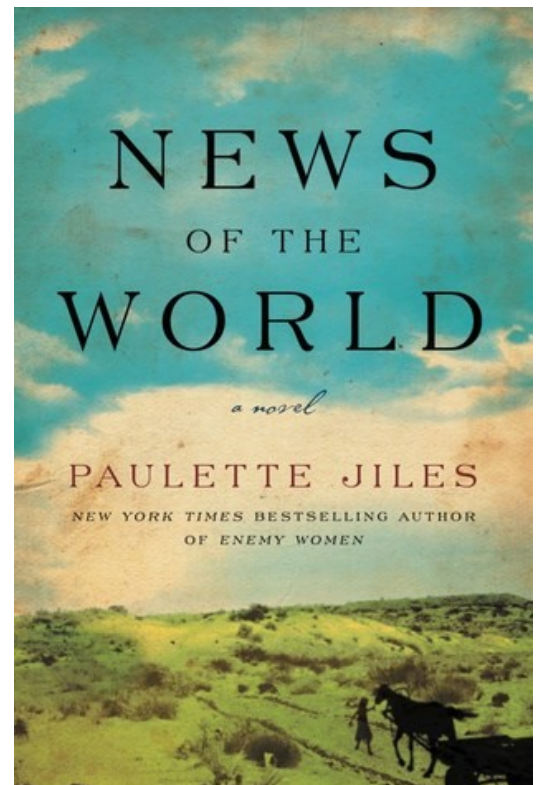
In the aftermath of the Civil War, an aging itinerant news reader agrees to transport a young captive of the Kiowa back to her people in this exquisitely rendered, morally complex, multilayered novel of historical fiction from the author of *Enemy Women* that explores the boundaries of family, responsibility, honor, and trust.

In the wake of the Civil War, Captain Jefferson Kyle Kidd travels through northern Texas, giving live readings from newspapers to paying audiences hungry for news of the world. An elderly widower who has lived through three wars and fought in two of them, the captain enjoys his rootless, solitary existence.

In Wichita Falls, he is offered a \$50 gold piece to deliver a young orphan to her relatives in San Antonio. Four years earlier, a band of Kiowa raiders killed Johanna's parents and sister; sparing the little girl, they raised her as one of their own. Recently rescued by the U.S. army, the ten-year-old has once again been torn away from the only home she knows.

All are welcome.

Liz Heuser



Christmas Sharing Trees

Lots of people say “Thank You!”

It's tradition! Each year at this time we give folks a chance to spread a bit of Christmas Cheer through four organizations where St. Luke has a connection:

Liberty Church, Minnesota's only African American Presbyterian church, provides 21st Century a large after-school program and Northside Healing Space for north Minneapolis. Gifts are Cub cards for families without resources.

ICA Food shelf, provides food, financial assistance and employment services to folks in communities from Hopkins through Excelsior. Gifts are Cub and Great clips cards for our neighbors.

MoveFwd provides support to youth in the western suburbs, through counseling, a drop-in center and living arrangements for the homeless. Gifts support individuals and the drop-in center.

Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, occupies the poorest county in the U.S. where homes may not be heated well. Gifts are warm blankets for the residents.

Trees are in the back of the church on the ramp. Take a post-it off the tree, purchase the named item and return the item to the tree by Sunday, December 22. Do not wrap the gifts.

Fair Trade Holiday Sale

Once again, we will have **great fair trade** merchandise and products available for sale in the Garden Court: clothing, crafts, coffee and cocoa products, greeting cards, etc. Products come from indigenous people in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. This has been a very popular event for our holiday shoppers in recent years, and it continues this year. Sale dates are December 1, 8, 15, and 22, and we may also have some vendors selling during our Friday evening concert on December 20. Frank Babka



Lumina: Calling All Angels

In the first of the St. Luke Performing Arts Series: Lumina presents "Calling All Angels."

Exploring mystery, beauty, and hope in music spanning centuries, Lumina creates a richly diverse program from medieval carols to pieces by living and local composers. Featuring music for Solstice, Advent, and Christmas, these four radiant voices will illuminate even our darkest days.

December 20, 2019 7:00 pm at St.. Luke



Lynn Cox - Recipient of the 2019 Donald S. Milloy

Lynn Cox was awarded the 2019 Donald S. Milloy Disability Advocacy Award at the Presbytery meeting on November 16, 2019. Her life has been one of persistently lifting up persons with disabilities, whether it be skiing with the blind (yes!) or helping her church make adaptations, or teaching parents with special needs kids, or serving national PC(USA) ministries for disabilities. She inspires many and models God's persistent love and care.



Award plaque with painting by Don Milloy.



With Dixie Brachlow and Jerry Cox

Faith Formation

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Well, it's certainly one of the BUSIEST times of the year. Last month we had our largest competitive game night ever, went on the Amazing Bible Race in Confirmation, and relaxed with some small group table top gaming as well. All preparing us for the coming Advent season!

We'll be preparing a Christmas Pageant for Dec 15 the next couple weeks during worship in our break out youth faith group. Plus, Saturday, December 7 is the annual Gift Making Workshop, 9:00 am-11:30 am. Come early and celebrate the season!



Youth working to create an origami mobile as a token of gratitude for a pillar of our community



The junior high focus group played a beautiful game called Photosynthesis, where you get points for growing trees with a rotating light source



When more people show up for game night than you expect, what do you do? Make a longer table!



The senior high playing a game called Gizmos, where you build gadgets that link together to give you a massive sequence of chain reaction events

December Birthdays

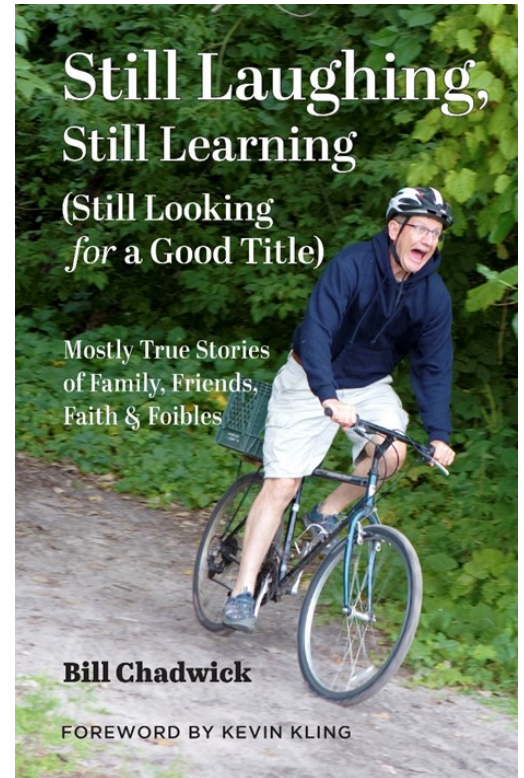
December 1 Kathy Haskin	December 11 Jennifer Kirk	December 20 Kai Stevensen
December 1 Teta Roberts	December 11 David Cline	December 22 Jeff Klepfer
December 2 Rafe Williams	December 14 Amy Marks	December 23 Emilia Muñiz
December 3 Kevin Kirk	December 15 Marlee Clymer	December 25 Brent Williams
December 5 Cliff Buikema	December 16 Maureen Henderson	December 25 Marcia Yockers
December 7 Evelyn Orr	December 16 Luci Drill-Mellum	December 26 Noelle Ness
December 9 Alex Messenger	December 17 Janie Warner	December 26 Mary Lou Ratz
December 9 Dickie Smith	December 17 Nate Williams	December 31 Bob Haskin
December 10 Katherine Roubos	December 17 Ben Williams	December 31 Brad Johnston
December 10 Val Honey	December 17 Randall Lofgren	December 31 David Taintor
December 10 Becky Thacher-Bell	December 19 Marion McNurlen	
December 10 Lori Johnson	December 19 Jean Worrell	

December Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Advent Fair Trade Holiday Sale 9:00 AM Infant/Toddler Play Date 10:30 AM Worship w/Communion 10:45 AM Sunday School 11:45 AM Dementia Friends 11:45 AM Sunday Club Play Date 6:00 PM Youth Group Dinner 6:30 PM All Youth Game Night	2 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM AA	3	4 9:30 AM Staff Meeting 6:30 PM Minnetonka Climate Initiative 7:00 PM ACA Study Group	5 7:00 PM ACA 7:00 PM Depression, Anxiety & Grief Support	6	7 9:00 AM Gift Making Workshop 1:00 PM Choir Rehearsal
8 Fair Trade Holiday Sale 9:00 AM Infant/Toddler Play Date 9:15 AM Adult Education 10:30 AM Worship 10:45 AM Sunday School 6:00 PM Confirmation	9 10:00 AM Minnesota Peace Project 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM AA	10	11 9:30 AM The Book Group	12 7:00 PM ACA 7:00 PM Depression, Anxiety & Grief Support	13 4:00 PM People Serving People 6:00 PM Seasoned Luker Party	14 7:45 AM Hermanos 9:30 AM Haakenstad Recital
15 Fair Trade Holiday Sale 9:00 AM Infant/Toddler Play Date 9:15 AM Adult Education 10:30 AM Worship/Pageant 10:45 AM Sunday School 11:45 AM Social Justice Collaboration Team Mtg 4:00 PM Haakenstad Recital	16 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM AA	17 6:00 PM Adult Ed FG 6:45 PM Session Meeting	18 10:00 AM The Seekers 7:00 PM ACA Study Group	19 2:00 PM Challenge Deadline 7:00 PM ACA 7:00 PM Depression, Anxiety & Grief Support	20 12:00 PM Concert prep 7:30 PM St. Luke Performing Arts Series: Lumina in Concert	21
22 Fair Trade Holiday Sale 9:00 AM Infant/Toddler Play Date 9:15 AM Adult Education 10:30 AM Worship 10:45 AM Sunday School 4:30 PM Jr. High Youth Group 6:00 PM Youth Group Dinner 6:30 PM Sr. High Youth Group	23 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM AA	24 4:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship	25 Christmas Day	26 Holiday - Office closed 7:00 PM ACA 7:00 PM Depression, Anxiety & Grief Support	27 4:00 PM People Serving People	28
29 9:00 AM Infant/Toddler Play Date 9:15 AM Adult Education 10:30 AM Worship	30 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM AA	31	1 New Year's Day 9:30 AM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM ACA Study Group	2 7:00 PM ACA 7:00 PM Depression, Anxiety & Grief Support	3	4

Book Launch Party

Former St. Luke pastor Bill Chadwick will be holding a Book Launch Party on Sunday, December 7, 2:00-5:00 pm, at Oak Grove Presbyterian Church, 2200 W. Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington. His book, *Still Laughing, Still Learning (Still Looking for a Good Title): Mostly True Stories of Family, Friend, Faith & Foibles*, will also soon be available through his website—billchadwick.com—and on Amazon.



ICA

The holidays are coming – don't forget ICA!

Donate a holiday meal!

- For \$15 you can buy a family in need a turkey and all the fixin's.
- Donate to Carol Allis, or go to ICA website – icafoodshelf.org.
- ICA volunteers will also be available to accept your donations at Cub Foods (Hwys 7 and 101) Nov. 15-16. If you or someone you know needs a free holiday meal:
- ICA will distribute the holiday meals Thursday, Nov. 21, at Zion Lutheran Church in Hopkins from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Christ Community Church in Excelsior from 6:30-8 p.m.
- No registration needed, but you must live in ICA's service area. For more information, go to the ICA website. ICA volunteers will be bagging for tips at Cub Nov. 26-27.

ICA day at Maynard's in Excelsior!

- Monday, Dec. 2, 11:00 am to midnight
- All proceeds go to ICA!

Welcome, New Members!



Juricek Family: Matt is an engineer working for Integer in Chaska. Lindsay is a stay at home mom. We have 2 biological kiddos Otto (3) and Nori (7 months). We have a foster son turned forever Roman (22). We moved from Marquette Michigan to Victoria 2 years ago. We enjoy being outside, mountain biking and Matt and Otto both play soccer. We are happy to have found St Luke.



Jim and Mary Sauter moved to the Cities this summer from Eau Claire, WI, where they lived for the past 32 years. While living in Wisconsin, they were each employed in school systems - Jim as a high school principal, and Mary as an elementary art teacher. They have 2 grown daughters and 3 grandchildren, and they love to spend time babysitting and attending grandkids' activities!

Since retiring, Jim's favorite activities center around fishing, particularly fly fishing. He's hoping to explore some new trout streams here in Minnesota and is an active member of Trout Unlimited. Mary's passion is making art - watercolor and acrylic painting are her favorite past-times. She spends time at the Minnetonka Center for the Arts and at an open studio class at the Minnesota Arboretum.

Jim and Mary live in Victoria, MN, and look forward to becoming involved in their new community and in the St. Luke community, too!

St. Luke Staff and Communications

Every member and friend, Ministers

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Randy Lofgren, Custodian/Sexton

952-473-7378

Jill Engeswick, Dementia Friendly Coordinator

952-426-2831, jillengeswick@gmail.com

Mary Lou Hoff & Ginny Larson, BeFriender Coordinators

952-920-1976 and 952-210-8388

Joe Anderson & Brenda Davis, Sunday Morning Custodians

Solveig Lee (she/her/hers), **Childcare Worker**

St. Luke Presbyterian Church
3121 Groveland School Road
Minnetonka, MN 55391

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday
8:30 am-4:00 pm

MAILING ADDRESS

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Minnetonka, MN 55391

WEB ADDRESS

www.stluke.mn

NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

"The Challenge" is published monthly.
The deadline for submitting articles
for the January newsletter is:
2:00 pm, December 19
to office@stluke.mn

St. Luke is a joyful, inclusive and compassionate community on a spiritual journey
seeking to do justice, make peace, act mercifully, and walk humbly with God.