

The Contact

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH — NORFOLK

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NO. 1

Journey by Starlight

*A star rises in the silence of the night
and shatters the deep darkness of my heart's
loneliness and longing.*

*A star breaks away from the lowly horizon
and climbs into the heights
where its brightness sings forth in glory and in hope.*

*A star's shining song fills the dawn
and wakes my dull and sleeping spirit
and my blind eyes
with new light.*

*Set out upon the way, my soul, set out upon the way.
A Savior has been born for you.
Make haste and go and find him.*

*The journeying is long.
The way lies through wasted desert land,
yet grace is in the very seeking.
With each step the star's light
burns deeper into my heart
and fills me with its searing brightness
till all of me is aglow with its fire.*

*With each step my burdens and my poor, shoddy riches
are laid down by the wayside
as I press on toward the new life awaiting me
and approach with heart and hands
open wide to its embrace.*

*Yes, grace lies upon the edges of this long journey,
and time to prepare the heart.*

In Advent we wait for God to break into our world, to shed light into our darkness. In Christmas, we celebrate the mystery of incarnation, of God coming down to our world, taking on our flesh, becoming one of us, a child named Jesus, helpless and poor and needy. In Epiphany, we marvel at the revelation of Jesus as God's holy Son and our Savior, beginning with the arrival of the magi who came from afar to pay homage to the Christ child. The glory of God shines through this whole season to reveal and make known – to help us see the mission of Jesus more clearly, to broaden our understanding of God's kingdom, and to open up the ways we participate in Jesus' mission.

As Pastor Scott and I begin our ministry here at First Lutheran on January 10th, we will be embarking with you on an Epiphany journey, a journey by starlight of seeking, discovery, and new life. Together we are starting on something new, where we will have to let go of some of our old ways, risk following new paths, and keep our hearts and eyes alert to God's grace on the edges. The brightness of the star promises to "sing forth in glory and in hope" and to fill us with the fire of God's Spirit and promises, but we will have to keep walking, stay committed to the journey, trust that God is leading us into a bright future filled with possibility and new life.

We are looking forward to this new start, this new ministry! These first few months will be a time of Epiphany, of revelation, as we share our lives with one another, as we serve and praise our God together, as we name the values which guide us and set forth our purpose for this time and place, and as we engage in mission for the sake of God's reign of light and love. These first few months will be a time of adjustment from what was to what will be, a time of getting acquainted and of establishing priorities, direction, boundaries, and mutual ministry. And together, as the Epiphany star shines upon us, we "press on toward the new life awaiting (us) and approach with heart and hands open wide to its embrace."

Yes, grace lies upon the edges of this long journey, and time to prepare the heart.

Peace,
Pastor Cathy

Christian Stewardship

As followers of Jesus, we recognize God's abundant generosity and provision in our lives – how all that we have comes from the gracious hand of God, from our homes, the clothes we wear, the food on our tables, to the air we breathe, the beauty of the natural world, and the people in our lives who love us. How we use and care for all the gifts of God is called stewardship. God entrusts to us the wise use of all that we have been given, including our financial resources, our time, our gifts and talents, our very lives! What a remarkable honor that God trusts us this much, to believe that we can and will be good stewards of divine generosity – that in our own lives we will also be generous!

One of the gifts of being good stewards is the connectivity we discover with others across time and distance when we are generous. When we give, for example, to Lutheran Disaster Relief, our financial gifts connect us to God's people who have suffered devastation and loss, from tornadoes in Kentucky, earthquakes in Haiti, or flooding in the northeast. When we support the Faraja School, our lives become interwoven with the students in Tanzania. When we donate to the seminary, we become part of the spiritual and theological formation of the students who will become pastors and deacons. One of the Christmas gifts I get every year from my husband is a certificate of foster-care for Nabulu, an orphaned elephant at a wildlife refuge in Kenya; you can be sure that I'm much more interested in what happens in Kenya now (isn't she gorgeous?)!

Jesus said in Matthew 7 that "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Often we interpret that to mean that we give to those causes and organizations that are important to us. But what Jesus is really saying is that when we give our resources to a particular cause or organization, we will discover that that cause or organization becomes important to us. In other words, where your money

goes is where your heart goes! When we give to the Food Bank, we have a vested interest in seeing the Food Bank and its clients thrive. When we give to the church, we become more actively engaged in the ministry of the congregation. I know that, with a child attending St. Olaf College, I am much more invested in what is happening at the school than I ever was! Where your treasure is, there your heart will be! Our stewardship of God's good gifts involves us in the lives of others, and who we are and what we do has a rippling impact in our communities and in our world – sometimes in ways that we're not even aware of.

This web of connectivity to which we belong begins with God's immense love for our fractious, burdened world. God's love for this world – in all its joy and beauty and in all its sorrow and ugliness – inspires God's giving – of the Holy Spirit, of forgiveness, of possibility and hope, the renewal of life, of care and providing. The depth of God's love and of God's giving is known most fully in Jesus – Emmanuel, God with us. As Bishop Jim Mauney has written, "I won't get

near the ground to stop a leak in my house, but I am all over the floor around my grandchild! And what joy there is in giving time to this one and being asked to do nothing more than to hold the child so her mom can be about doing other things. The more I love, the more I desire to get connected into the very depth of the infrastructure!"

Emmanuel – God with us – is God getting into the very depth of the infrastructure of our lives – so rejoicing over us that actually taking

on flesh, becoming one of us, experiencing the totality of our lives, was the only way to truly express the depth of God's love for us – God getting on the floor to play with us, if you will! God has, in Jesus, become intimately involved in the infrastructure of our lives, the world, and all of creation.

Bishop Mauney continues, "Giving goes to the infra-

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structure of life. It not only is of the DNA of God's universe, it also impacts the whole world. Imagine the joyful, intentional, loving stewardship of a whole life that knows its giving is not in vain but is a willful, faithful desire to tap into the whole infrastructure of God's design!" When we give, we have no idea the lasting and widespread impact our gift may have. In Mark 12, Jesus extols the widow who gave 2 copper coins out of her poverty. Her story has captured the imagination and inspired the generosity of faithful Christians for 20 centuries! Here at First Lutheran, we benefit from the generosity of those who came before us, as their gifts from decades ago to the endowment continue to energize, fund, and create ministries here in 2022! Again from Bishop Mauney, "Our connectedness is both time specific, and across time. We are the recipients of the legacy of the faith of our forbearers. We have also

received a world they developed and tended. We are also leaving a legacy, whether we do so intentionally or not. Our stewardship to generations to come is all about the way we are stewards of life now."

The gifts we give today ripple beyond ourselves – impacting lives and ministries in our neighborhood and across the world. We are connected to one another – those nearby and those across the globe. We are connected to one another – to those who have long ago died and to those yet to be born. "Stewardship is a willingness not only to connect the giving to an intended hope and love; it is the willingness to be connected to all that is and can be in God's hands."

(adapted from James Mauney's article "A Well-Formed Stewardship Leader Perceives Connectedness")

"Troubling the Waters"

Whether progressive or conservative, people agree that we are living in a tumultuous time. It puts people on edge, which in turn heightens our political and economic divisions. It hampers the efforts of Congress to deliver the public services we expect from government. But as we think about it, it's possible to see some silver lining on these dark clouds. The seriousness of our predicament has served to heighten our awareness of the divisions that truly burden our common life. People are beginning to take more serious note of the astonishing gap between rich and poor, an ominous sign for any democratic society. That gap heightens the seriousness of many other disparities, such as inadequate housing, unaffordable child care, limited work opportunities, and lack of adequate health care. Many of these problems are connected with racial discrimination, a fact that has been increasingly recognized as well and often dramatized on our streets.

In the wake of this increased awareness, we are seeing a wave of concern among the nation's churches – including our own ELCA. As we would expect, that concern is being seen increasingly among our congregations, including our own. We can be thankful for this development because it is a genuine expression of our Christian faith in working for justice and a more healthy society. It signals to the secular world that churches have a meaningful and even significant role to play in the nation's quest for a fair and just society



January 2022

Office Hours: 9 AM—4 PM Monday–Thursday, 9 AM–1 PM Friday
Men's Bible Study: 7 AM, Wednesdays, IHOP, 114 E. 21st, Norfolk, VA 23517
Women's Bible Study: 2 PM Tuesdays online, please contact Pastor Mims for more information.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 9:00 AM Sunday School (Children's Sunday School resumes) 10 AM Worship 6:30 PM FLC Book Club	3 	4 12 PM Adult Ministry 5:30 PM Dinner Ministry 7 PM Martha Circle	5 7 AM Men's Bible Study 12 PM Lunch Ministry	6 7 AM Men's Bible Study 12 PM Lunch Ministry	7 Pastor Mims' Day Off	8 New Year's Day
9 9:00 AM Sunday School 10 AM Worship	10 Pastor Cathy Mims & Pastor Scott Mims arrive!	11 10 AM Quilting Group 2 PM Women's Bible Study 5:30 PM Dinner Ministry	12 7 AM Men's Bible Study 12 PM Lunch Ministry 6 PM Faith & Racial Equity Group	13 7 AM Men's Bible Study 12 PM Lunch Ministry 6 PM Faith & Racial Equity Group	14 Contact Deadline	15 Winter Celebration
16 9:00 AM Sunday School 10 AM Worship 11:30 AM NYG Prep Session 3PM Installation of Pastors Cathy & Scott	17 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day FLC Staff Retreat	18 2 PM Women's Bible Study 5:30 PM Dinner Ministry	19 7 AM Men's Bible Study 12 PM Lunch Ministry 6 PM Faith & Racial Equity Group	20 5:30 PM Laundry Love	21 Winter Celebration	22 Winter Celebration
23 9:00 AM Sunday School 10 AM Worship	24 Church Office Closed	25 10 AM Quilting Group 2 PM Women's Bible Study 5:30 PM Dinner Ministry	26 7 AM Men's Bible Study 12 PM Lunch Ministry 6 PM Faith & Racial Equity Group	27 9:30 AM Christian Service	28 9 AM—Let's Talk About Love Bible Study Congregation Council Retreat	29 9 AM—Let's Talk About Love Bible Study Congregation Council Retreat
30 9:00 AM Sunday School 10 AM Worship 1 PM Youth Committee	31 Community Groups (Strickler Hall): Mixed Groups—Sun. 7:00–9:30 PM; Happy Hour AA Home Group—Mon. 4:30—6:30 PM; Happy Hour AA—Mon. 5–7 PM; SAA—Mon. 7–8:30 PM; Thur. 7:30—9:30 PM; Just For Today—Tue. 10–11:30 AM; Continuing Quest—Fri. 12–1 PM; Candlelight—Fri. 8–9 PM; SNL AA—Sat. 7–9:30 PM	General Deadlines: 12 PM Tuesdays—Life Together Weekly Edition 3 PM Tuesdays—Altar Flowers 4 PM—January 15th—The Contact Email kminnick@flcnorfolk.com with your articles & information.				

Connect with Others

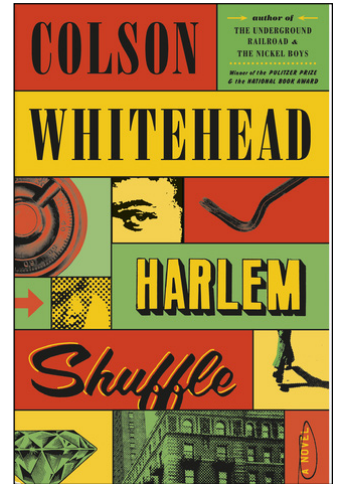
FLC Book Discussion Group

Book Discussion Group will meet Sunday, February 6, 2022 at 6:30 to discuss Colon Whitehead's new book *Harlem Shuffle*.

"Ray Carney was only slightly bent when it came to being crooked..." To his customers and neighbors on 125th street, Carney is an upstanding salesman of reasonably priced furniture. Then his cousin Freddie falls in with a crew who plan to rob the Hotel Theresa—the "Waldorf of Harlem"—and volunteers Ray's services as the fence. The heist doesn't go as planned; they rarely do. Now Ray has a new clientele, one made up of shady cops, vicious local gangsters, two-bit pornographers, and other assorted Harlem lowlifes.

Harlem Shuffle's ingenious story plays out in a beautifully recreated New York City of the early 1960s. It's a family saga masquerading as a crime novel, a hilarious morality play, a social novel about race and power, and ultimately a love letter to Harlem.

Pick up a copy and read this lighter side of Colson's wonderful writing and join in the discussion!



Warm Clothing Drive

As winter sets in, Ghent Area Ministry receives urgent requests for warm clothing. Items especially needed are coats, gloves, scarves, hats and socks - all for adults. If you can provide any of these, in new or gently used condition, please bring your donations to the Welcome Center and place them in the containers beside the water fountain. We will be collecting through the end of January, which means you will have time to shop the after-Christmas sales. Thank you for any help you can give.

Faith & Racial Equality

Do you want to address racism in your community, but you don't know where to begin? Presented through the lens of the Christian tradition, JustFaith Ministries' Faith & Racial Equity: Exploring Power & Privilege is an nine-session program that awakens individuals and groups to racial injustices within our systems and structures that empower some and oppress others. Starting on January 12th, we will meet on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 at First Lutheran. There are a few spots left and we'd love for you to join us. Contact Merrie jo-757-560-0781 or Gail P.- 757-619-9667 if you're interested in joining the small group.

Congregation Council Summary

At our December meeting held Monday December 06, 2021, via Zoom, the Congregation Council

- Council/Congregational Officers for 2022 were elected as follows:
 - President:** Maynard Schaus
 - Vice-President:** Julia Siik
 - Treasurer:** Karen Seigel
 - Secretary/Recording Secretary:** Sarah McGinnis
- Committee liaisons will be determined at next meeting.
- Annual reports are due January 14, 2022
- Council will be moving its meetings to the 2nd Monday of the Month beginning in March 2022
- Council agreed with Covid Task Force's recommendation to continue wearing masks but to remove blue tape between pews
- Next Meeting: Council retreat on January 29, 2021

SAVE
the
DATE

Please plan to join us as we celebrate the installation of Pastor Cathy Mims & Pastor Scott Mims on Sunday, January 16th at 3:00 PM.

January Birthdays

1 Jan John Krenzke	9 Jan William Wattai	18 Jan Karen Grogan	24 Jan Mary Fox
3 Jan Paula Barwick	13 Jan Melissa Zaletski	19 Jan Nancy Fuller	25 Jan Rick Pougher
3 Jan Matt Bourcier	14 Jan Katherine Sikorski	19 Jan John Kintsche	26 Jan Pam Baynard
3 Jan Caroline Griffin	14 Jan Crystal Wass	20 Jan Alexandra Hiser	27 Jan Dolly Hinton
4 Jan Sally Hurdle	15 Jan Merrie Jo Milner	22 Jan Savannah Davis	28 Jan Phyllis Hund
5 Jan Ken DiBiao	15 Jan Keith Winstead	22 Jan Krista Puttler	29 Jan Nancy Thorpe
5 Jan Mary Grubb	16 Jan Anders Bishop	22 Jan Beth Silsdorf	30 Jan David Basco
7 Jan Shirley Leaf	17 Jan Chris Cook	22 Jan Denise Stage	30 Jan Don Buckley
7 Jan Cathy Whittecar	17 Jan Jackie Kisa	23 Jan Richard Bauer	31 Jan Linda Braaten
8 Jan Wilma Robinson	17 Jan Kristin Kisa	23 Jan Natalie Schaus	31 Jan Robert E. Davis
9 Jan Adam Saich	17 Jan Patrick Young	24 Jan Ainsley Erwin	

Lydia Circle

Lydia Circle will not meet in January to give us all recovery time from the holidays.

Thank You Note

With grateful hearts, we thank each and every one of you for the love and care shown to us in the last 5+ months. Your cards, emails, with inspirational pictures and verses, delivered meals, phone calls, altar flowers, visits, and most of all your prayers, have kept us afloat and supported during Ken's journey post fall 7/17.

The days were brighter and passed more quickly of YOU who did God's work with YOUR hands.

Sending our love and gratitude,

Melissa & Ken Zaletski

Hope for the Holidays

Our project to make holiday cards for migrant detention centers was a big success! We made 203 original cards using your old ones. We hope to have the same success in 2022. As the holidays come and go, please save your old cards once again so we can continue this project. You may bring your cards to the reception desk. Please note that they are for Hope for the Holidays. Gracias and Dios le bendiga.

Thank you and God bless you.



Let's Talk About Love

The familiar verses from I Corinthians 13 are so frequently used at weddings that many suppose they speak to a marital covenant. For our American society, this has contributed to a misguided understanding about what love is and the perceived standards this text seemingly demands. Regrettably, we sometimes fail to honor our commitments, so it can be challenging to conceptualize a true love which never ends.

In preparation for its reading in worship the following day, you are invited to participate in an intensive Bible study on the passage. This interactive seminar, usually offered as a 24-hour overnight retreat, has been adapted in light of Covid-related restrictions. This slightly-shorter version will take place:

Saturday, January 29

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Conference Room

Please register your participation with Ryan-Michael by email. Lunch, by reservation, will be provided for a cost of \$10 per person. Food choices and dietary restrictions must be received no later than 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 25.

Connect with Word and Body

Prayer Concerns for January

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Give joyful thanksgiving

...For the renewal of the church and leaders who announce the good news

...For prophets who warn against captivity to greed and point us to the freedom found in generosity

...For musicians, choir, and everyone who enlivens this assembly with their talents

Help us

...Be inspired to live in harmony with one another and the planet

...Attend to any who are hungry, imprisoned, or ill

...Comfort those in their times of worry and need

Pray for

...All those affected by the devastating tornadoes and storms in the midwest

...Those affected by the Michigan school shooting

...Comfort and healing to the family of Jerry Walsh on his passing

...**Alice McCoy's** cousin & family, Cindy & Mark Ridenhour

...In loving memory of Joseph Lightfoot

...Comfort and healing to Nerissa Thompson on the death of her father, Darryl

...Comfort and healing to the Pickrell family on the death of Jim Pickrell

...Comfort and healing to **Jennifer Boykin** on the death of her father Robert Roman

...Peace and comfort to the **Hogan** family

...Blessing and protection of children, the elderly, and the sick who cannot be vaccinated

...Justice for the victims of racial oppression & violence

...Those who are dying, that they are secure in knowing that God loves them & will welcome them into everlasting life.

...People fleeing dire humanitarian situations for a better life.

...The sick, that they are comforted and the despairing, that they receive hope.

...Those struggling with addiction and mental health issues.

...Those mourning the death of loved ones.

...For all who cry out to God in any need.

Margaret & Ronald Ackley, Gail Anthony, Alvene Buckley, Don Buckley, Lucian Clare, Barbara Cordrey, Lynda Falkiner, Margaret Fleet, Jennette Franklin, Roger Fuller, Joelle Griffith (mother of Paula Barwick), Valerie & Jim Harvey, Marion Ingersoll, Joann Klotz, Kelley Minschke, Lorna Moss, Bill Newlon, David Perron, Betty Phillips, Fay Rogner, Gail Simos, Shirley Skees, Nancy & Jack Smith, Jeanne Walters, Melissa & Ken Zaletski, Betty Lou, Charlotte & Lee Peglow, Cynthia Moll, Dave, Gert, Harriette & Dave Wheatley, Jerry Walsh, Jimmy, Katrina, Mark, Megan (niece of **Melissa & Ken Zaletski), Rema, Rob, Stephanie, Sue & Jim Webb**

Those dealing with cancer

Alissa (friend of **Dorothy Shaffer**), Bob, James Collier, Iris Corbin, Dave Guelcher (father of Beth Zaletski), Harriette Wheatley (friend of the **Grogans**), Jenn, David Kelly, Chris Jones (nephew of **Karen Siegel**), Vickie Mack, **Mark, Melvin (Jack) Smith**, Phil, Ralph Munsey, **Randall R. Wiele**, Rob, Sandy, Andie Seagraves, Gerald Stover, **Dallas Williams**, Jess WineKing

Military and their families:

All military personnel around the world.

Fox family, Austin Davidson, Tom Douglas, Kyle Hefner, Dan Kelly, Bobby Masters, Nano Masters, Nick Masters, Ted Peterson, Brian Becker, Amy Hardbower, Nicolette Huntley, Tim Kelly, Eli Jones, Ian Logan, Kelly Mackenzie, John Marfield, Nikki Parkman

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus. — **Amen.**

Readings for January

January 2nd

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalms 72:1-7, 10-14

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

January 9th

Isaiah 43:1-7

Psalms 29

Acts 8:14-17

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 16th

Isaiah 62:1-5

Psalms 36:5-10

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

John 2:1-11

January 23rd

Nehemiah 8:1-3,

5-6, 8-10

Psalms 19

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Luke 4:14-21

January 30th

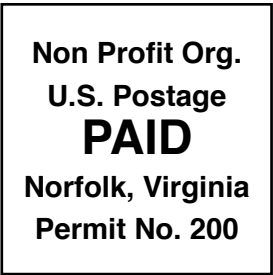
Jeremiah 1:4-10

Psalms 71:1-6

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Luke 4:21-30

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