



PO Box 1259, Livingston
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ALC DECEMBER 2022 Newsletter

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR MELISSA...

Dear Children of God at ALC,

In my work as a chaplain one of the things I hear about and witness most often is the difficulty of waiting. Waiting for test results. Waiting for the doctor to come. Waiting for the doctors to have answers about what is wrong. Waiting for the pain medication to start working. Waiting to be discharged from the hospital. Waiting for a bed to open in a rehab or skilled nursing facility. Waiting for family or friends to come to be present or say goodbye. Waiting for a loved one to take their final breath.

In the midst of waiting, really all that I can offer these patients and families is to acknowledge that waiting is really really hard. As a society it seems like our tolerance for waiting is becoming less and less. We want faster electronics and faster cars. We want same day delivery of the things we order in seconds online. Black Friday shopping deals no longer start the morning of the day after Thanksgiving but rather weeks before. Christmas decorations can be found in stores in the summer. We don't like to wait.

And here we are 2000 years after Jesus lived waiting for him to come back. But if you're anything like me, most days waiting for Jesus to return isn't on the top of your mind. Two thousand years is just too long to wait without getting distracted or perhaps even giving up. To remain awake and alert for so long is exhausting if not impossible.

Advent, the season of the church year leading up to Christmas, is known as a season of waiting. It is a time to practice waiting. A time when we get to practice being present in the here and now while at the same time holding on to the hope of what is to come. We practice waiting to celebrate Jesus' birth as a way of also practicing waiting for Jesus' return.

I would much rather skip to the good part (Christmas or Jesus' return), but the reality is that I have to wait. One thing I'm reflecting on this Advent is wondering about what holy things I might discover in the waiting. Even in these dark days leading up to Christmas, I trust that there will be something holy. God is present with me in the waiting and in the arriving. I pray that you might discover something holy in your waiting.

Peace,

Pastor Melissa

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT RANDY MOGEN...

I don't know if you have ever had a song stuck in your head, the tune that is with you all day long. Or perhaps you have had a part of a song, the lyrics that just stick with you. Well, I recently attended a concert by Shane and Shane, a contemporary worship music band. I had never heard of them before, but my wife's cousin wanted to see them, so we went to Billings for the event. As they played some of their songs, one caught my attention, or should I say got stuck in my head. It was from a song, titled "You've already won" and there were a couple of lines that I remember from the chorus. "I don't know what you're doing, But I know what you've done". Now I don't know why those lines stuck with me, but they have.

I think about the times when God has been part of my journey, a journey unknown to me. I say that not to mean that God is only with me during parts of my life journey, but especially during times of stress or high anxiety or fear of the unknown. It seems that is when I may feel confused or perhaps frightened of what will happen next. During those times I may seek God but not really know what He is doing. My assurance that He is with me and guiding me during those times is when I reflect on my life after that time. I can usually see what God was doing and that He was with me the whole time. That is perhaps why those lines from the Shane and Shane song stuck with me. It is like looking in a rear-view mirror and seeing what God has done along the way. That to me is very comforting, especially when I am experiencing those confusing and dark times.

So, I think about our church, American Lutheran Church, and I think about those lines again from the song. Sometimes I feel like I don't know what God is doing among and through us right now. And then I will feel that pang of uncertainty and twinge of fear about the future. But again, I simply must look back at the history of our church and all those faithful believers that we can remember and those even further back that we do not know. I know that God has done marvelous things with the church in the past and I trust that God will do marvelous things with us now as we go forward. So let us not cling to our stress, anxiety, and fear of the unknown regarding our future, for God is with us, we just don't know what He is doing quite yet.

Yours in Christ,
Randy Mogen

A MESSAGE FROM LPA DALE GUIDI....

For centuries, Christians around the world have used the four weeks leading up to Christmas to prepare themselves for the celebration of Jesus' birth. It's a time when we observe His first coming while we also look forward to His second coming. Each of the four weeks leading up to Advent is focused on hope, peace, joy and love respectively. Hope can be described as an eager anticipation for good. It carries the connotation of waiting. Peace in the Bible is not just the absence of conflict but the presence of something more significant. The third key theme of the Bible is joy, which is an inner sense of wellbeing. Love, the most of these, is not just something that God shows, it is something that He is. It's a part of His nature and character.

Hope: waiting for God to bring about good in our lives. It is different than optimism, which looks for the silver lining in the cloud of circumstance. Instead, biblical hope chooses to wait expectantly for God to bring His goodness to bear in our future regardless of how dark our circumstances are. This hope comes from God's past faithfulness. At Advent, we look backward in order to look forward to a better future. Our hope is that God will liberate humanity, and the entire universe from evil.

Peace: Biblical peace means to make complete or to restore to a state of wholeness. The Advent of Jesus is the arrival of peace. He not only made peace with God for us, but He became our peace. Through the Advent of Jesus, not only are we no longer in conflict with God, but much more God has restored us to a state of wholeness.

Joy: Biblically, it is an attitude that God's people adopt, not because of good circumstances but because of God's love and promises. It's our future destiny, not our current struggles that determine our joy as we anticipate our future redemption. But joy isn't about ignoring the negative aspects of life, but rather it's a profound decision of faith and hope in Jesus' life and love.

Love: It's the kind of love that seeks the well-being of others, even enemies, without looking for anything in return. The magnitude of God's love was revealed in the Advent, life, and death of Jesus. The heart

of the Christian faith is a trust at the center of the universe is a being that is overflowing with love for this world and that our primary purpose is to receive His love and express it back to others.

May the love of God, His son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit be with you this season of Advent and through the entire year! Merry Christmas!



FINANCIAL REPORT The financial reports for October was presented by Anna. Revenues for the month of October were \$20,615.79 which includes \$10,000.00 from the Endowment special contribution. Year to date revenues as of October 31 were \$83,632.45 also including the Endowment special contribution and expenditures for the month of October were \$5,149.02. Year to date expenditures as of October 31 are \$90,773.59. Net Revenues for the month of October are \$15,466.77. Year to date net revenues as of October 31 are (\$7,141.14).

PASTOR'S REPORT Pastor Melissa will be attending the Pastors First Call education days Nov. 14-17 in Great Falls. She will be taking vacation days from Dec 25-Jan. 1.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS Painting and gutter work has been postponed until spring.

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS COMMITTEE reported they have finished work on the constitution and will be continue with the Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions.

FINANCE COMMITTEE clarified that Diane Mueller will continue as the ALC Bookkeeper.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE has completed the job descriptions and employee evaluations for the secretary and custodian.

NEW BUSINESS Christmas decorating will be done on November 20th. The Endowment Committee considered funding for Christikon scholarships and purchase of a safe to hold important documents. The ALC Annual Meeting will be Sunday, January 29th. The five elected officials agreed to continue their positions. Lana will create a ballot for the meeting.



Please join us for candlelight worship on Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24 at 6:00pm. There will be no worship on Christmas Day (Sunday, December 25).



OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor Melissa is typically in the office during the day on Tuesdays and Thursdays (although this can vary depending on meetings or other events). You can always email Pastor at pastormelissaj@gmail.com. If you have an urgent matter call or text her cell phone at (630) 981-7910. LoAnne is typically in the church office Monday-Thursday from 9:00-noon (this occasionally varies). You can reach her by email at alclivingston@gmail.com or call the church at 222-0512. Messages left at the church will be checked and returned the next time LoAnne is in the office.



"What's for dinner?" Not just a familiar question in many homes but it is also more often heard on the lips of folks who have no money to buy food, no kitchen to prepare it in or maybe lack the physical ability to prepare it. As Christians we pride ourselves on doing our part to make lives of others happier by presenting nutritious food and kind words to others who need help. Livingston has several options for getting prepared food. The problem comes from being able to get it to those without transportation or due to personal physical limitations.

Ta Da! "Meals on Wheels" to the rescue! They call on local churches to recruit volunteers to deliver these meals. Another side benefit for delivery folks is that they are often the only humans these people see and they may even spot problems that need to be addressed. Won't you please volunteer? It will do your heart good!



ALC WELCA will be meeting following worship on Sunday, December 4. Christmas greetings for our special members will be written and sent as well as decisions made with the proceeds from the Norwegian Goodies sales. WELCA would like to thank all those members of ALC for their participation in the making of the meatballs, coleslaw, and lefse sold. Your help was so appreciated!! It is wonderful to work together with everyone. It certainly takes a team to get this accomplished. Thank You!!!

Thankofferings given by women of ALC are gifts from individuals in gratitude for blessings. Lutheran women have been carrying out this tradition for more than 100 years. Women practice the Thankoffering daily by setting aside coins or small offerings in a Thankoffering jar or box, giving thanks for blessings in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of life. The offerings will be sent to the church wide women's organization. Thankofferings support Women of the ELCA outreach ministries, which include scholarships, grants, Raising Healthy Women & Girls, Discipleship and Spiritual Gifts, Bible Studies, GATHER Magazine, and others. All women of American Lutheran are welcome to participate. Thankoffering boxes are available on the table at the back of the sanctuary. **Please take a box.** We will be collecting our offerings Sunday, December 4 during worship.

DECEMBER LOCAL BENEVOLENCE



In For the past 39 years, the Livingston Elks Lodge #246 has been providing Christmas food baskets for our friends and neighbors in need. By partnering with the Livingston Food Resource Center, Albertsons, and Town & Country we were able to provide over 300 baskets to families in Park and Sweet Grass counties last holiday season! The basket is filled with everything a family would enjoy for a complete holiday meal. In December, our benevolence will be going to the Elks Community Food Basket Program. If you would like to help support this please designate your donation for this program in your offering during December.



Lynnette Evanson, Linda Holland, Mike and Vicky Ryles, Carole Fagerli, Carol O'Dell, Holly Happe, Anita Bueling, Bill Harris, Olga Mogen, Doug Linsted



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- 4- Rich Muza
- 5- Willa Swandal-Berntsen
- 9- Anna Smith
- 11- Chris Tokash
- 12 -Marcia Olson
- 16- Dee Gosda
- 20- Bonnie Evanson
- Holly Happe
- 26- Dorothy Jett



Marilyn Olson
Country Home Residence
628 24th Street West
Dickinson, ND 58601



LOAVES AND FISHES



Serving a meal at Loaves and Fishes has always been an important outreach opportunity for members of ALC. We are serving the evening meal on the third Monday of each month. In November 27 meals were served to the community. If you would be willing to help let Pastor Melissa or LoAnne know or just come down to Loaves & Fishes.

REVISED SERVICE TEAM SCHEDULE

December, 2022

4th-Jim & Bonnie Evanson 222-6072
 11th--Jane Haugen & Dana Latsch – 222-6974
 18th Randy & Joan Mogen – 222-5772
 24th-Dale & Gloria Guidi

January 2023

1st-Doug & Cookie Linsted
 8th-Jim & Bonnie Evanson
 15th-John & Diane West
 22nd-Billie Roberts, Anna Smith, Karla Pettit
 29th-Verne & Leslie Beffert

February 2023

5th-Dennis & Kitty Springer
 12th-Don & Lana Sheen
 19th-Jane Haugen & Dana Latsch
 26th-Tena Versland, Dale & Gloria Versland

American Lutheran Church

Statement of Financial Position Summary For All Funds as of 10/31/2022

Assets

General Funds

American Bank Checking	\$	10,144.63
ELCA Money Market 286045	\$	267,663.71
American Bank Savings	\$	7,786.64
Accounts Receivable	\$	-

TOTAL General Funds	\$	285,594.98
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Endowment Funds

ELCA Endowment Fund - E272580	\$	28,767.46
Thrivent Mutual Funds Endowment Funds	\$	16,269.33
Mission Endowment MM Fund 9794	\$	34,470.64

TOTAL Endowment Funds	\$	79,507.43
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Total Assets	\$	365,102.41
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Liabilities

Visa Credit Card	\$	-
Payroll Taxes	\$	309.24
Building Usage Deposit	\$	200.00
ELCA Montana Synod	\$	997.00
Local Benevolence	\$	-
Estate Gifts	\$	7,277.43
Sunday School Memorials	\$	198.94
Unrestricted Memorials	\$	2,250.00
Office Supplies Payable	\$	1,016.26

Total Liabilities	\$	12,248.87
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Total Net Assets	\$	352,853.54
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Total Liabilities + Net Assets	\$	365,102.41
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American Lutheran Church

Revenue/Expense Report for YTD October 31, 2022

Account	Oct 2022	YTD 2022
Revenues		
General Contributions Revenue	\$9,970.00	\$79,720.00
Bank Interest	\$170.79	(\$6,843.55)
Building Usage	\$475.00	\$595.00
Special Contributions (Endowment)	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Thrivent Choice Auto Deposit	\$0.00	\$161.00
Total Revenues	\$20,615.79	\$83,632.45
Expenditures		
Building Maintenance Expense	\$96.98	\$6,892.88
Charities Expense	\$200.00	\$2,000.00
Convention Expense	\$0.00	\$917.66
ELCA Benevolence Expense	\$997.00	\$7,972.00
Insurance	\$0.00	\$6,021.00
Misc. Expense Account	\$0.00	\$198.50
Office Expenses	(\$2,592.28)	\$2,605.43
Outreach	\$0.00	\$228.19
Pastors Reimbursable Expenses	\$114.08	\$1,141.37
Pastors Package	\$3,957.05	\$39,570.50
Supply Pastor	\$301.88	\$3,453.00
Staff Taxes/Insurance	\$96.65	\$1,536.57
Staff Salaries	\$1,265.00	\$10,892.50
Telephone/Internet Expense	\$77.97	\$967.43
Utilities	\$234.08	\$5,218.58
Worship/Education Expenses	\$400.61	\$1,126.43
Bank Service Charges	\$0.00	\$31.55
Total Expenditures	\$5,149.02	\$90,773.59
Total Revenues	\$20,615.79	\$83,632.45
Total Expenditures	\$5,149.02	\$90,773.59
Net Revenues	\$15,466.77	(\$7,141.14)

