

# *The Epistle*

December 2021

Vol. 48, No. 12

*"In silence we wait, in darkness we come to you, bring us your light."* (All Creation Sings hymn 998)

The All Creation Sings hymnal, designed as a supplement to the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal (2006), was released about this time last year and includes both newly composed and older hymns from a variety of sources. The intention behind this supplement was to fill some of the gaps that our more familiar hymnody left. We now have wedding hymns with gender neutral and expansive language, hymns that lift up the voices of composers and poets of color, and hymns from a wider number of countries, languages, and cultures than we have had in the past. Hymn 998, quoted above, is a simple repetitive refrain for the advent season, reminding us that silence and darkness are not negative things but rather space into which God's powerful Spirit moves.

The Advent season is one that finds us in the Church at stark odds against the busy-ness of our society: instead of the bustling around, the sparkly lights, and the incessant pace of the Christmas shopping season, we get silence, darkness, and waiting. It's one of the reasons that I love the Advent season: by taking time to remember that we are waiting not just for the celebration of Christmas but for Christ's promised return, we have a whole season to remember that this is part of the core of who we are as Christians: we are Advent people.

And as Advent people, we do not wait passively, but wait with active breath: tending to the needs of others, caring for ourselves, and spending time with God in whatever way best works for each of us. Whether you light the candles in the wreath, work your way through a devotional book, or join in the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, how you spend your Advent will be right for you. Even though the Church's Advent season is often opposite the world's holiday season, both are delightful and meaningful ways to spend December, and including both in your life (or one or the other) is appropriate. There is no one "right" way to spend the weeks leading up to Christmas, just as there is no one "right" way to celebrate Christmas itself.

As we continue through the Advent season, I invite you to make sure you are taking care of yourself and not letting the expectations of others overly dictate how you experience, celebrate, and mark this season of waiting.

In hopeful expectation of Christ's coming,  
Pastor Amanda

## ***Joseph's Storehouse—Food Pantry @ Gloria Dei***

### **God's Promise**

**“I didn't promise you skies painted blue  
Not all colored flowers all your days through  
I didn't promise you, sun with no rain  
Joys without sorrows, peace without pain**

**I never did promise you crowns without trials,  
Food with no hard sweat, your tears without smiles,  
Hot sunny days without cold wintry snows,  
No vict'ry without fightin', no laughs without woes.**

**I sure didn't say I'd give you heaven on earth,  
A life with no labor no struggles no deaths,  
No earthquakes no dryspells, no fire flames no droughts,  
No slaving no hungers, no blizzards no blights.**

**All that I promise is strength for this day,  
Rest for my worker, my light on your way,  
I give you truth when you need it, my help from above,  
Undying friendship, my unfailing love.”**

- Excerpts from *God's Promise* by Woody Guthrie

As another year comes to an end - another year of hardship and great loss, another year of violence and unrest, another year of what seems like an unending pandemic - we are left to wonder what to make of it all. We are even left to wonder where God is in all of this.

Again this year, the pantry has suffered the loss of one of our dear friends and co-laborers - Ellie Viglass. Ellie was one of a kind. She had a passion for our Lord and such great love in her heart. She was beloved at the pantry. Our hearts are shattered. We find comfort knowing that she is in the arms of her Savior right now! I miss her and write this through a stream of tears, but I will see her again one day in paradise! This is not the way I wanted to start a Christmas message, but it is the very reason that we need Christmas.

At the time of the first Christmas the world was a mess, filled with violence and social injustice. There was a huge divide between the “haves” and “have-not's.” About 90% of the population was counted among the latter. Political and religious leaders were mostly out for their own gain, and religion itself was dry and powerless. Not very different from today. The world desperately needed a Savior, and while we were still sinners, God sent His Son. Do we need to be reminded that this is what Christmas is all about? Jesus brought us the greatest gift ever given - the hope of salvation and more!

*When Jesus came to the front to read the Scriptures, he was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found where it is written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and he has anointed me to be hope for the poor, healing for the brokenhearted, and new eyes for the blind, and to preach to prisoners, ‘You are set free!’ I have come to share the message of Jubilee, for the time of God's great acceptance has begun.” After he read this he rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. Everyone stared at Jesus, wondering what he was about to say. Then he added, “Today, these Scriptures came true in front of you.” (Luke 4) (Passion Translation)*

Continued→

When we accept Jesus into our lives as Savior we are not promised an easy life without problems. Quite the opposite! Jesus tells us that the narrow path we choose is hard. He tells us that we will receive blessing AND persecutions, or troubles. Because of the fall of man, all creation groans and death entered the world. In Romans 8 the Apostle Paul teaches us that our life in Jesus Christ is founded on God's promises and plans for His children. The first promise Paul touches on is that of future glory: *"I consider our present sufferings insignificant compared to the glory that will soon be revealed to us"* (verse 18). We may suffer now through our journey here on earth, but we can find comfort in God's promises.

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.* (Psalm 23:4-6)

*"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").* (Matthew 1:23)

Where is God in all of this? There's your answer - He is with us! He is not a far away God. He comforts us. He takes care of us. In Exodus 15, it says that He makes the bitter sweet. He doesn't leave us to navigate this broken world alone. We may not always understand everything that we are going through, but we know that He will never forsake us. The Parable of the Wise and the Foolish Builders from the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew illustrates the importance of building your life on obedience to the teachings and example of Jesus. *"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock."*

Take note that Jesus tells us here that the storms will come. The floods will come. The winds will beat against us. But we will not fall, because just when we needed it most, God sent us the greatest gift - that rock which is Jesus!

Have a Blessed Christmas.  
Dennis Hood, Director

Merry Christmas

## ***Church Council News***

Council meeting highlights from November 17, 2021 meeting:



1. Office door approved to be replaced by Sammy's construction for \$2800.
2. OHall boiler needs repair. Working on a fix before the start of Respite.
3. Parsonage heat has been repaired.
4. Our cleaning staff will cover the cleaning of the Chapel 2X/month.
5. Annual Congregational Meeting scheduled for January 23, 2022
6. Love of Christ & NA will hold their meetings/services in the church building during the next 4 months while OHall is occupied by Respite.
7. Finance Committee says we are currently operating close to budget.
8. Next meeting scheduled for Monday, 12/20 @ 7pm via Zoom.



## ***Scriptures for December 2021***

### **Sunday Nov 28—1 Advent**

Jeremiah 33:14-16      Psalm 25:1-10      1 Thessalonians 3:9-13      Luke 21:25-36

### **Sunday Dec 5—2 Advent**

Malachi 3:1-4      Luke 1:68-79      Philippians 1:3-11      Luke 3:1-6

### **Sunday Dec 12—3 Advent**

Zephaniah 3:14-20      Isaiah 12:2-6      Philippians 4:4-7      Luke 3:7-18

### **Sunday Dec 19—4 Advent**

Micah 5:2-5a      Luke 1:46b-55      Hebrews 10:5-10      Luke 1:39-45

### **Sunday Dec 26—1 Christmas**

1 Samuel 2:18-20,26      Psalm 148      Colossians 3:12-17      Luke 2:41-52

### **Sunday Jan 2, 2022—2 Christmas**

Jeremiah 31:7-14      Psalm 147:12-20      Ephesians 1:3-14      John 1:10-18

## *Poinsettias*

Flowers for the Glory of God in the Chancel at Christmas may be given in honor or in memory of loved ones. To order poinsettias, please complete this form. Place page in the offering plate along with your check made payable to "Gloria Dei Lutheran Church" annotated "Poinsettias". The cost for each plant is \$15.

**Deadline for your order is Sunday, December 19.**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Envelope Number \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

How many plants: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Poinsettias are given:**

\_\_\_ To the Glory of God

\_\_\_ In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ In Thanksgiving for \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I will pick up plant(s) after Christmas

OR

\_\_\_ Please deliver plant(s) to a homebound person

**Amount attached:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ check \_\_\_\_\_ cash \_\_\_\_\_

## *Advent Blessings*

### Wednesdays:

- ◆ Bible Study— Zoom at 1:00pm
- ◆ Holden Evening Prayer— at 7:30pm  
December 8—St. Peter's  
December 15—Gloria Dei



## *Looking forward to Christmas*

- ◆ Christmas Eve Worship, 12/24  
5pm—Festival Worship with Choir @ Gloria Dei  
7pm—Worship @ King of Kings  
10:00pm—Candlelight Worship @ Gloria Dei
- ◆ Christmas Day Worship, 12/25—Joint Worship @ Gloria Dei — 10:00am
- ◆ 1 Christmas Worship, 12/26, Joint Worship @ King of Kings — 10:00 am
- ◆ 2 Christmas Worship, 1/2/22, Joint Worship @ Gloria Dei— 10:00am

## **MUSICA SCHMOOZICA**

A vocal ensemble directed by Stephen Goldstein presents:

### “WHAT SWEETER MUSIC”

Concert of Sacred and popular Christmas music



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2021 @ 3:00 pm**

**GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH  
22 E. 18TH STREET \* HUNTINGTON STATION**

**FREE WILL DONATION TO BENEFIT GLORIA DEI  
PROOF OF VACCINATION AND MASKS REQUIRED**



# *Lutheran Counseling Center—Update for December*

## IN SEARCH OF THE MASCULINE SELF

by Rev. Dr. David Elseroad, LMFT, Pastoral Psychotherapist

*“You are the man.”—2 Samuel 12:7*

November is Men’s Health Awareness month. Although often seen as strong, invincible, and able to handle whatever life ‘throws at them’, a closer look at men in our lives can reveal a painful portrait of isolation, anxiety, depression and rage. Many men are hurting, and as a consequence, so are their relationships.

It’s never been easy being a man, navigating the development of a strong and healthy male identity, and even less so today. Skills in which women excel such as open communication and social orientation put men at a disadvantage. It’s no longer a “man’s world,” and values typically seen as male are no longer as prized by society. The culture has undergone dramatic shifts, leaving men confused, anxious and frustrated about their place and role in the world. All the while, man’s anxiety about proving his masculinity shows up in risky behaviors and higher rates of alcoholism, suicide and early death. No wonder a Atlantic Monthly cover story could trumpet “The End of Men.”

Gender may have a biological basis, but the construction of the masculine self is a lifelong project, constantly revised. From infancy on, males take on two quite different ways of being: the Alpha male’s proudly assertive, autonomous, aggressive nature; and the more reflective, sensitive nature intent on attachment and connection. Throughout life, the male will oscillate between these two “positions,” with the task of realizing his male ego ideal through their integration. That may take many shapes and forms, for there is no one set pathway to male identity and a wide spectrum of masculinities—the artist as much as the athlete, the “life of the party” as much as the strong, silent “Marlboro Man.”

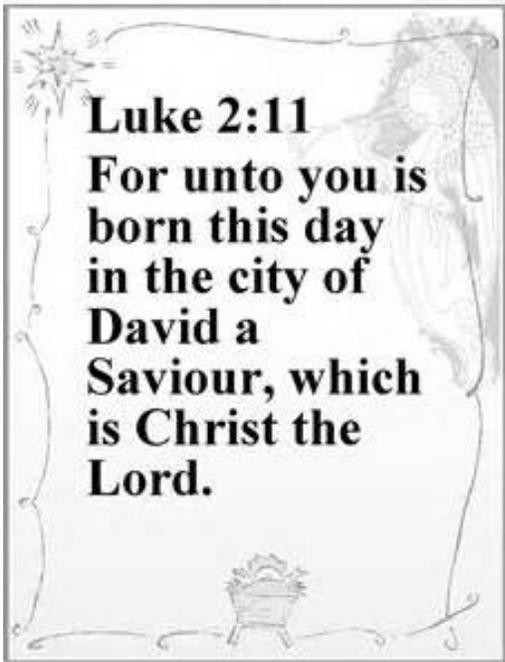
Life experiences, culture and faith all have their impact. Often boys are not allowed to *be* boys, resulting in guilt and hidden shame. Developing later than girls, they experience more early failures. Moving from attachment to the mother and longing for the father and his blessing mark their journey of individuation-separation. Today, many young men isolate in a fantasy world of video games, with yet more shame; the male slacker, in a rut, without viable prospects of career, marriage or family, seething with anger. The married/partnered male encounters other challenges, the pressures of work and home and holding at bay dashed dreams and creeping disillusionment. And the man advancing in age must again define his masculine self, with emerging inner potentialities of integrity and gratitude, as life nears its end.

Men are hurting, both in self and in relationship. Yet they do not ordinarily seek out help; two-thirds of psychotherapy clients are women. But my experience with male clients and in facilitating men’s groups has convinced me that contrary to the stereotypes, men soon welcome the opportunity to express themselves, to tell their story and examine it, and in so doing come to know self and one another in a deeper, affirming way. The life of faith can be of great benefit in this process-- the Gospel’s declaration of divine love, in the gift of the created, redeemed and Spirit-endowed self powerfully anchoring and liberating the male identity. Women can reach out to the man in their life by recognizing and affirming his uniqueness as a male; by listening with care when he wants to talk; by supporting participation in a men’s group or individual therapy; and by just being with him in his “search of the masculine self.”

*The Rev. Dr. David Elseroad LMFT, is pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Hawthorne, NY. Dr. Elseroad, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, is fluent in French and Spanish. His professional background includes work in multicultural ministries and experiences as pastor, hospital chaplain, missionary and teacher. He counsels teens, couples, adults and families. Please visit our website at: [www.lccny.org](http://www.lccny.org) for more information. For a counseling appointment, call LCC at 1-800-317-1173. All sessions are virtual at this time.*

# BIRTHDAYS!

Alexa Dikeakos	12/2
Rudolf Sobina	12/2
Elizabeth Bushey	12/6
Janice Colonna	12/6
Joseph Calderone II	12/10
Keil Thomas	12/13
Demetrios Pantazis	12/14
Barbara Jones	12/15
Justin Brochhausen	12/18
Katherine Readinger	12/19
Edward Boos	12/23
Joseph Calderone	12/24
Christine Powers	12/24
Nancy Danielo	12/25



## STAYING CONNECTED

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**The Rev Amanda Nesvold, Pastor**  
 631-709-2523  
 Email: revnesvold.ny@gmail.com

**Karen DeMotta, Parish Administrator**  
 office@gloriadeihuntington.

**Kurt Sobina, Sexton**  
 (631) 241-9641  
 Email: kurtsobina@gmail.com

**Kevin Smuss, Church Council President (as of 2/1/21)**  
 Cell: (631) 484-5534  
 Email: kevinsmuss@gmail.com

**Stephen Goldstein, Organist & Adult Choir Director**  
 Email: inspanctus@gmail.com

**Joseph's Storehouse Food Pantry, Olson Hall**  
**Dennis Hood, Director**  
 (631) 974-2918



*The church office is open Tuesday,  
 Thursday and Friday  
 from 9am to 1:30pm.*



**Gloria Dei Evangelical  
Lutheran Church**

22 East 18th Street  
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631-271-2466  
[www.gloriadeihuntington.org](http://www.gloriadeihuntington.org)

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**DECEMBER 2021**



*For unto  
us a  
Child  
is born*

