

Gethsemane Gazette

Gethsemane Lutheran
Church
Virginia, Minnesota
www.gelc.info

December, 2023

Volume 45, Issue 12

Join us for December Worship and Events!

Mission Statement

To draw all people
to Christ,
nurture faith, and
fulfill our calling to serve

Vision for Gethsemane

A vibrant place of
worship, learning and
service, where every
person is passionate
about their belonging and
their ministry

Marks of Discipleship

Pray daily
Study Scriptures diligently
Worship weekly
Encourage Faith in Others
Serve for the sake
of others
Give freely

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A Mid-Week Advent Experience, Wednesdays from 5:30 – 7 pm Our Savior's Fellowship Hall, December 6, 13, 20 Led by Pastor Liz and Kristi Ongalo

You are invited to be a part of this Advent experience to help you become more deeply aware of waiting time and help you express for yourself (or publicly) what you are longing for (waiting for) in your spiritual life.

Each Wednesday will begin with dinner and fellowship together. Soup and bread will be served each week and will be provided to all participants at no charge as it is part of the "experience". There will be time to explore scripture, reflect on questions, and dig deeper each evening with an intentional experience around art, poetry, music or other media as well. Bring a friend. Bring a neighbor. Bring yourself!

Week Two (12/6): We find joy in connection.

Week Three (12/13): We allow ourselves to be amazed.

Week Four (12/20): We sing stories of hope.

An Advent Devotional will be provided to each participant as well as additional resources as used for Visio and Lectio Divina. "How does a weary world rejoice" is a resource purchased for use from sanctifiedart.org

LUTEFISK & MEATBALL DINNER

Everyone is invited to a LUTEFISK & MEATBALL DINNER on **Tuesday, December 5, 2023, from 3:00 – 7:00 pm** at Gethsemane Lutheran Church.

Come and enjoy a delicious dinner of Lutefisk with drawn butter and cream sauce, handcrafted meatballs with potatoes and gravy, vegetables and beet pickles, lefse and bread, and cupcakes with coffee and milk.

Take outs are available. Pre-orders are encouraged. Tickets are on sale at the door: Adults \$20.00, Children 6-12 \$8.00, and Children 5 and under free!

For more information, call Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Virginia at 218-741-4961.

Please Join Us for Our Christmas Eve Services at Gethsemane on Sunday, December 24th

3:30 pm

5:30 pm

10:00 pm

There will be No 9:00 am Morning Service on Christmas Eve



November Angels

Thank you so very much to everyone who has helped our church during the month of November. It is sometimes a challenge to find others to lend a hand for reading, ushering and coffee an', but November seemed like a breeze this year.

We now have our National Youth Gathering youth helping during the first Sunday of each month. In addition, we had Bruce & Ethie Kniivila, Dan & Andrea Alto, Steve Carlson, the Reid Family, Sue Swanson, and the Zeidler Family. Thank you to everyone!

Sheila Davidson, November Angel Coordinator

Merry Christmas from the Altar Guild!

The altar guild will be decorating the altar for Christmas Eve service's on Saturday, December 23rd. We are looking for donations of poinsettia/Christmas plants to help decorate. If you would be willing to donate your poinsettia/Christmas plant to be placed in the Sanctuary, please bring it to the church the week of the 17th. Be sure to include your name to save it.



All Women of Gethsemane

Thursday, December 28th, at 5:30 pm in the youth room. We are having a casual get together just to "hang out" with other gals, enjoy visiting, relax, and have some laughs.

We meet on the 4th Thursday of each month. No commitments, just bring yourself and your own beverage. Please come. - we'll have a fun time!

Decorating for Christmas

A huge thank you to Pastor Amy, Aubree, Abigale, and Zachary Schiller, Deb Poderzay, Tom and Cindy Lee, Tom and Wendy Krause, Mandy Brunfelt, Mayme Barber, Richard Vandervort and Bunny Varani for the awesome job they did preparing our church for Christmas. YOU ARE AWESOME!!

Sheila Vandervort

From the Pastor.

*Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord, Jesus, lay down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky look down where he lay,
the little Lord, Jesus, asleep on the hay.*

ELW 277

You can hear the tune in your head, can't you? I know I can. What do you think of when you hear it? Perhaps standing in a church holding a hymnal open with a neighbor, or dressed up like a sheep singing in the Nativity play, Music is a great memory-holder. This time of year, we hear a lot of familiar songs that can bring back emotional memories. Hans Christian Anderson famously said, "Where words fail, music speaks". That's why characters break out in song in Broadway musicals – because their feelings are so big that simple dialogue just won't do. Music has an emotional power where spoken words fall short.

Saint Augustine is often credited with saying, "to sing is to pray twice," which is why it's unsurprising that in the Bible, people sing all the time. Most of the poems in the book of Psalms are songs God's people sang in worship or prayer, in desperation, anger, triumph, or praise. Hannah sings a song of thanksgiving when God answers her prayers and gives her a son, Samuel. Miriam sang a song of triumph and joy when the Hebrews escaped captivity by crossing the Red Sea. And Mary sang a song, The Magnificat, when her cousin Elizabeth rejoices with her for their miraculous pregnancies. It echoes Hannah's song:

- ^{46b} "My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name;
⁵⁰ indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.
⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."



From the Pastor

- continued-

As we sing and listen to hymns and holly jolly songs this season, may the gift of music help us express the joy, grief, peace, expectation, and gratitude we feel so deeply. May the Holy Spirit speak through it to touch our souls once again with the wonder of God's gift to us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

Your sister in Christ,
Pastor Amy



Musical Opportunities this Season:

Choralaires choir – Dec. 1, 7 pm @ GELC & Dec. 3, 2 pm @ Our Savior's (free will offering)

Range of Voices choir – Dec. 8, 7 pm @ Chisolm Baptist & Dec. 10, 2 pm @ GELC (\$5)

Sing Around the Tree at Our Savior's Lutheran – Dec. 10 @ 5pm (potluck dinner)

Christmas Music all the time – Life 97.3 (KDNW)

Blue Christmas service at Messiah Lutheran - Dec. 20, 6:30 pm

Advent & Christmas hymns in the red ELW hymnal #239-300

Faith Builders

(Preschool - grade 5)

The Children's Christmas program will take place on December 10th during the church service. They will be sharing the Christmas message and singing. They can't wait to spread some Christmas cheer for you! We hope to see you all at worship. There will be practice for the program on Saturday, December 9th at 10:00 am.

Sunday School will resume on January 8, 2024.



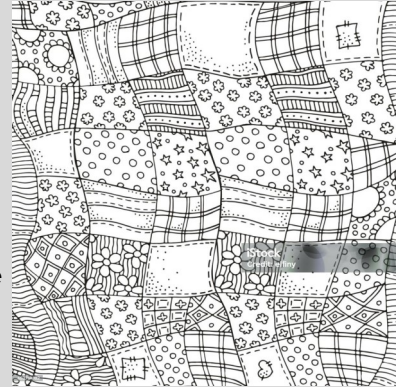
Have a Blessed Christmas, Pam & Cindy

Confirmation

Youth Quilt Silent Auction

Our teens going to the ELCA Youth Gathering are auctioning off a beautiful, handmade silk quilt (70x90) to raise money for their trip! Bidding starts on Sunday, December 3. Stop by and make a bid anytime before December 17, when the winner will be notified.

Thank you to Eleanor Anshus for donating the quilt!



NEMN Synod All Youth Gathering Cragun's Resort, Brainerd



Gethsemane Angel Coordinators

The Gethsemane Angel program is a way that we, as a congregation, are organizing ourselves in service to the Lord. We ask every person to volunteer to serve during one month of the year with a "Team of Angels". Each month the Angel Coordinator schedules the Angels with what is needed to be done for the month. **We are looking for 2 more Angel Coordinators for the months of April and October.** Please consider helping out for this position. The Angel Coordinator is not responsible for arranging funeral luncheons. If you would like to sign-up as an Angel Coordinator, please call the church office at: 218-741-4961. Thank You.

Ways to Worship

In the Sanctuary - 9 am, Sundays

We are worshipping in-person in our sanctuary. Please assess your own health as you consider attending worship in person. We are now receiving communion at the altar using bread and wine/grape juice. Gluten free is also available. We practice an open table, meaning all believers are welcome to partake.

Facebook Livestream

We will continue to livestream our worship on our Facebook page at 9 am on Sundays. The video will be available throughout the rest of the week as well.

Local Public Access TV (one week behind)

Worship is still available on TV, on Channel 5 (Mediacom).

The schedule is:

Mondays – 7:30 pm

Tuesdays – 4:00 pm

Wednesdays – 10:00 am

Fridays – 10:00 am

Sundays – 7:45 am



Buddy Backpacks United Way Northeastern MN

Help us pack Buddy Backpacks on **Wednesday, January 3, starting at 4:15** at United Way in Chisom, (608 East Drive). Ages 12+ are invited!

Call or stop by the church office at 218-741-4961 to sign up!



Generosity Team

Welcome to our edition of "**Gethsemane Gifts!**" Each month we will recognize the gifts of generosity that we have experienced from our very own Gethsemane Family. We will focus on one member of our church who has experienced a time of support, love, and/or generosity from other members of our church.

This month please welcome – Tom and Cindy Lee

We were blessed with three children and eight Grandchildren. Our 2 daughters live in Cook, MN with their families! Our son lives in Fairport, N.Y. with his family.

We joined Gethsemane church in 1989. We were welcomed with open arms. Everyone made us feel so comfortable. We have met and made so many friends and have been blessed by many Pastor's that have touched our lives.

Gethsemane has been a huge part of our lives, from Confirmations to Weddings, to Baptisms.

Thru the years we have been part of many activities, both bible studies and several committees.

Over 33 years we have seen a lot of changes and some tough times, but thru this our church family has stayed together!

Cindy and I are now retired from our careers. We look forward to our next journey with God's Blessing at Gethsemane.



Bell Ringing

The Generosity Team is organizing a Gethsemane Bell Ringing Day, & we need your help! We need volunteers for one-hour shifts (so easy!) at the Super One South location (inside!) on Monday, December 18th. Please sign up in the church office, show up for your shift, & ring that bell - it's that easy! You can do this by yourself or with a small group of 2-4 people (the exit area at Super One South isn't that large!)

One hour time slots are available from 9:00 am - 9:00 pm. Please sign up sooner than later - we need to fill the day! Thank you, Gethsemane!

Tis the Season to Give Back Christmas Giving

HAT AND MITTEN TREE

Bring your gently used or new hats & mittens to the tree in the narthex to donate towards Range Transitional Housing.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR RTH

Pick a person or family & purchase Christmas Gifts for a local family.

ELCA GOOD GIFTS

Choose a gift to give to someone, get a card to mail or email and make a difference! Check out the gifts at: <https://goodgifts.elca.org>.

December Events in the Area

Messiah Lutheran Church, Mt. Iron MN

Advent Spiral Service:

Wednesday, December 13th at 6:30 pm

Blue Christmas Service:

Wednesday, December 20th at 6:30 pm

Christmas Eve Services:

Sunday, December 24th at 10 am and 4:30 pm

Our Saviors Lutheran Church, Virginia MN

Christmas Eve Services:

Sunday, December 24th, 9:30 am morning and a candlelight worship at 4:30 pm



Choralaires Christmas Concert

Two Concerts:

Friday, December

1st, 7:00 pm

Gethsemane Lutheran Church Virginia, MN

Sunday, December

3rd, 2:00 pm

Our Saviors Lutheran Church Virginia, MN



Our 25 + member concert choir will be performing a variety of songs with full choir/small groups and solos.

A free will offering will be taken for Local Churches, Community Projects, and Music Needs.

Range of Voices Concerts

RANGE OF VOICES

Sing Alleluia!

Director, Jonathan Peterson
Accompanist, Dawn Johnson

Friday, December 8, 2023
7:00 P.M.
Chisholm Baptist Church
Chisholm, MN

Sunday, December 10, 2023
2:00 P.M.
Gethsemane Lutheran Church
Virginia, MN

Admission \$5 at the door (5 & under free)
Coffee an' after the concert



Blessings to all who have a Birthday this Month:

- 2: Debbie Poderzay
- 3: Rollie Seppala
- 6: Eila Ivonon, Nicholas Richards
- 7: Lillian Rosandich
- 9: Rahmy Johnson
- 10: Linda Friedlieb, Genevieve Zeidler
- 12: Jesse Bennet, Kathy Seppala
- 13: Beth Collins, Sawyer Leslie
- 14: Natalie Lamppa
- 16: Richard Rude
- 17: Chris Ismil, Troy Ness
- 20: Madison Krause
- 21: Brady Peterson
- 22: Melanie Peterson
- 24: Gail Erickson, Jeff Peterson
- 26: Gail Waldron, Makayla Waldron
- 27: Jeffrey Lind, Geoffrey McNeil II, Nancy Rosewall
- 28: Mikko Meinzer
- 29: Debra Dall, Tyler Emery, Eric Krenz, Jennifer Krenz
- 31: Ray Erickson, Sheila Vandervort

Memorial Gifts received during the month of November

In Memory of:

Timothy Dahl
Timothy Dahl

From:

Sharlyn Dahl
Mr. & Mrs. G.S. Sweet Jr.
Debbie & John Sweet Jr.

Look who's celebrating their Anniversary for December, enjoy your Special Day!

- 12/5 Marcie Speer and Donald Walker
- 12/12 Dale and Gail Erickson
- 12/14 Chad and Kathy Seppala
- 12/19 Gary and Linda Friedlieb
- 12/24 Debra and Steve Manninen



Celebrating the Anniversary of your Baptism:

- 12/4: Leslie Gustafson
- 12/5: Steven Starkovich
- 12/6: Linda Friedlieb
- 12/10: Deron Davidson, Haidyn Seppi
- 12/11: Bruce Nevala, Mindy Lind-Rumpl
- 12/12: Kaleb Dickinson
- 12/14: Sharlyn Dahl, Tomina Koop, Faye Roche
- 12/15: Wendy Krause
- 12/18: Roger Scott
- 12/24: Madison Walters
- 12/26: Tyler Krenz
- 12/28: Debbie Poderzay, Kathy Seppala
- 12/29: Debbie McCormick
- 12/30: Sawyer Leslie, Hallie Pauling
- 12/??: Sam Davidson-Teff

****If we have left you out, we need your help to know!
Call the office to update your information****

Prayer Wall

In your daily prayers, pray God's blessings for:

- ♦ The innocents suffering in the war in the Holy Land, Amanda Rosandich, Dale Pepelnjak, Mary Jo Ralston, and Mark Olson.

We continue to pray for;

- ♦ Fannie Andres, Judy Bennick, Ruth Koski, Mark Andres, Kristy McCarty, and Fran Shimmin.
- ♦ All members who are homebound, in nursing homes, or assisted living.

Noisy Offering

We have 5 Sundays in December which means once again we will be having our loose offering. On Sunday, December 31st, we invite everyone to bring any loose change you have to the church to support Schokolade - the Chocolate Buffet in February 2024.

Thank you for your continued support for all these worthy causes.



Council Highlights

Hope everyone had a lovely and Blessed Thanksgiving with family/friends. We are now entering December with the celebrations of Christ's birth remembering with awe and gratitude of this miracle!

For Advent, Pastor Amy has made the theme "Pause, Prepare, Praise, Ponder" for each Sunday service focusing on one of these theme words.

We have had a wonderful couple months of turnout of worshippers at Sunday services which is always invigorating to see our fellow saints in church.

Let us continue in the spirit of worship and unity by attending the Mid-week Advent services, Wednesday nights at Our Savior's Lutheran Church to further strengthen bonds between our congregations.

The council and congregation continue to be fiscally responsible with donations for God's services to our community and church and without would be challenging to aid those in need around us. Let's give a big thank you to Bruce Kniivila, our treasurer who helps keep us informed of our approaching 2023 year-end finances. We will continue to be wise and grateful as we plan our 2024 budget.

Molly Pemmaraju, Council President

Vanco GivePlus Mobile App. Members

THE NEW VANCO APP: Vanco updated their phone and tablet APP. It is no longer "Give Plus" but is now called "Vanco Mobile." If you used it before on your phone you will need to go to your app store to download the new app and log-in with the info you used before to set up electronic giving.

Please call Vanco at: 800-675-7430 or visit us at www.vanco.com/vm to learn more about what steps you need to take.

Thank you for using Vanco. We hope this new timeline offers you the flexibility needed to inform your members and launch Vanco Mobile.

QR Code for Giving at Gethsemane:

When you are reading our monthly newsletter or the Sunday morning bulletin, you will see our QR giving code.

Simply take out your phone, scan the code, put in your password, select how much you want to give for the month, and press done. It's as easy as that and takes less than a minute!

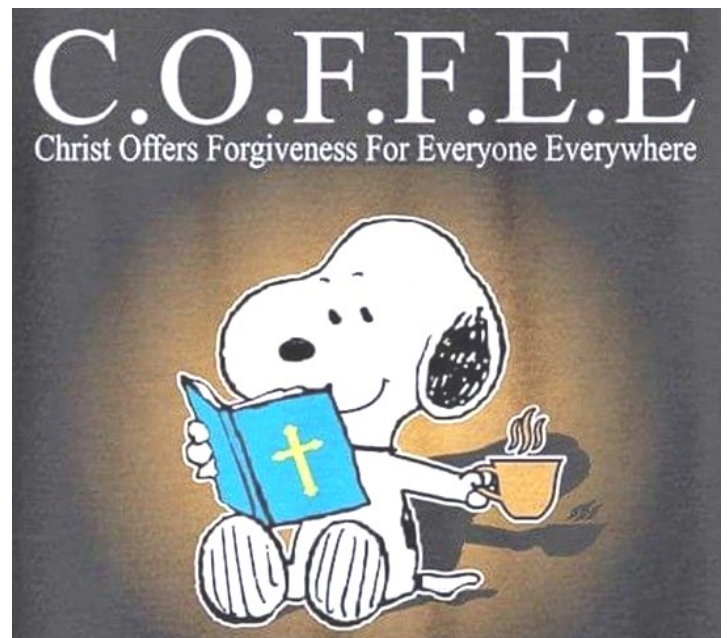


Weekly Giving

November giving has averaged \$3,515 per week. This falls short of what is needed to meet budgeted expenditures by \$283 per week.

Stay well, and enjoy the Christmas season.

Bruce Kniivila, Treasurer





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Gethsemane Lutheran Church

901 Fourth Street South
Virginia, MN 55792
Phone: 218-741-4961
Email: gelc@gelc.info
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 am to noon

Rev. Amy Janssen
Pastor
Brenda Varani
Parish Secretary

Come and see us on the web!
www.gelc.info

**Many blessings to our
2023 Confirmands who
affirmed their baptisms
on October 29th.**

Pictured are:

Pastor Amy

Front Row:

Lennon Hilde, Brenna
Tiedeman, Seija Copeland,
Sophia Lamppa, Emma
Lintula, Cally Anderson, Miia
Johnson

Back Row:

Brady Peterson, Hallie
Pauling, Ethan Boe, Connor
Saxhaug, Eli Wedge

