



Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church

Tidings

Volume 18

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December 2018

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Special congregational meeting: Dec. 9

All Mt. Carmel members are asked to attend our special congregational meeting during fellowship time on Sunday, Dec. 9 to elect members to the Congregational Council. This vote will be the only item on the agenda.

Christmas smorgasbord

The Christmas Smorgasbord will be served on Sunday, Dec. 16 immediately following worship which will include the Children's Christmas Program. Once again member Ralph Matthes will supply his Swedish/Italian meatballs and mashed potatoes. Members are asked to bring a side dish, a salad or a dessert to supplement the main course. We are inviting Casa to share this meal with us. You are encouraged to invite people from Casa to sit at your table so both of our communities get to know one another a little better. You are invited for this time of food and fellowship as we celebrate the Christmas season together.

Reflect

Beginning Sunday, Dec. 2 there will be another option offered for adults during Faith Formation hour after service called "Reflect." Reflect exists to provide a space for casual conversation, sharing and listening in community (fellowship) while we reflect on the scriptures and message of each week's sermon. Reflect will take place in the Fireside Room. Snacks will be provided (bring your coffee or drink from downstairs).

The schedule will be as follows: 10:45-11 a.m.: snacks and casual conversation; 11-11:15 a.m.: highs and lows, checking in; and 1:15-11:45 a.m.: An open reflection and discussion of the scripture/message of that Sunday's sermon. This discussion will be facilitated by the faith formation director or a willing member of the group appointed by the director. The last Sunday of each month will simply be a group game following highs and lows. Plan to join in for as much or as little as you are able! We hope to see you there. For more information, contact Faith Formation Director Nick Ralston.

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Learn, Live and Share God's Word

PASTOR'S PEN

Emmanuel

Recently in our GPS class, we did an exercise in our small groups where we affirmed each other. We had been talking that night about each of our unique and God-given personalities. At the end of our session, each person took turns hearing from the others in his/her group about what they admired about his/her personality. Afterwards, some of the members of GPS were sharing how meaningful that exercise was. They heard affirmation of themselves that they maybe didn't see themselves without people sharing. It turned out to be a lovely experience in what Christian fellowship is all about: loving each other.

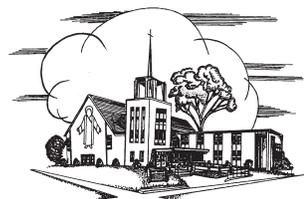
As we approach Christmas, we often sing the Advent hymn "O Come, O Come Emmanuel." Emmanuel means "God with us," and that is what we celebrate at Christmas. God entered God's own creation in a more intimate and complete way than ever before: as one of us. Considering that we get the flu and can get awfully depressed at time about things, why on earth would God ever choose to become one of us? I think it has something to do why the affirmation group was so noteworthy to some. "For God so loved the world (us!) that he sent his only son." You know these words well from John 3:16. It's about love. First and foremost at Christmas, we are reminded that God has taken up residence right next to us, as one of us, because God loves us. And the first thing God says to us is, "Do you have any idea how much I love you? Do you have any idea how valuable, unique and special you are?" If not, would God have made that journey into human existence and frail flesh? No.

This truth does not automatically make everything in this world and in our lives "hunky dory." We know that. In fact, this world is quite a mess, a fact that can be seriously discouraging on any given day. God may love us, but as we watch fires burning in California, families getting separated at the border, families we know falling apart, racism thriving, substance abuse raging, mass shootings occurring with alarming regularity, we may be led to ask, "And where is God now?" Deep down we fear, perhaps, that we're not really on God's radar when push comes to shove. Maybe God has more important things to do than to worry about us—and me.

Back to love. Because God love us, God has chosen in Christ to not abandon us in this broken world. And so, just as God bore the weight of human sin in Jesus long ago, so God does today through the living Christ. For all the lives that suffer terrible damage in this world, those lives are not alone, but God has declared that God through Jesus is with them in the midst of their broken world and pain. The weight they bear they do not bear alone. In fact—even though we usually don't see this very well—God is actually bearing all the weight, and because of that, we will not be crushed by sin, hardship and death. Because of love.

So this Christmas, remember every day the truth of Emmanuel. God is with you because you are loved, and because of that, somebody bears the weight of this broken life with you and for you. That, by the way, is what Christian fellowship is all about: God showing up in our midst to affirm and support one another. Thanks be to God!

*Merry Christmas!
Pastor John*



Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church

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Fax: 612-781-1621

Office Hours

8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. M
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Pastor

John Strommen
pastorjohn@mountcarmelmpls.org

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Mt. Carmel Child Care

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www.mtcarmel.net

**The mission of Mt. Carmel
Lutheran Church and its
members is to Learn, Live and
Share God's Word.**

Ministry Affiliates:

Minneapolis Area Synod/ELCA; Northeast Senior Services, Inc.; Little Kitchen Food Shelf; The Sheridan Story; Eastside Meals on Wheels; Plymouth Christian Youth Center; Mission Northeast and Casa de Oracion a las Naciones.

The Mt. Carmel facility is shared with the following community groups: Boy Scout Troop 132, Venture Crew, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts and Alcoholics Anonymous.



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

CHILD CARE NEWS

We have had a very busy couple of months at Mt. Carmel Child Care: we welcomed 12 new families that have enrolled, 10 children have already started and two are starting in December. We have also had several tours with children adding to our waiting list!

We are also excited to have modified our program in a way that the preschoolers and toddlers are having more concentrated learning times in the separate classrooms. We have posted separate lesson plans on each door.

The children have been learning about our body systems, senses, thanksgiving, foods and a lot of holiday talk in the coming month.

The child care is excited to have a Christmas program on Thursday, Dec. 20 . A simple meal will be served (arrival 5:30 p.m., meal at 6 p.m.) with a short singing program to follow in the sanctuary. All are welcome! If you would like to attend please let Steve Robertson in the church office know.

Brenda Wetzel, Director

Foundation scholarship applications

The Mt. Carmel Church in Minneapolis Foundation is very pleased to sponsor a scholarship program to support church members who are seeking post-secondary education opportunities. If you are interested in pursuing this, you may get an application from either Karen Moeller, scholarship chair, or the church office. The deadline to submit your application is February 28, 2019. Current recipients must reapply. Scholarships are not carried over year to year. If you have any questions, please contact Karen Moeller at 612-619-3743. There will be further announcements in future Tidings and bulletins.

DEATHS

John Kwiecien—Oct. 28

Norma Nelson—Nov. 12

WITH SYMPATHY

Pastor John and Heidi Strommen on the death of Heidi's father, Rev. Paul Almquist who died Nov. 7.

GIFTS RECEIVED

UNDESIGNATED

MEMORIALS

In memory of John Kwiecien:
Wayne and Mary Hamilton,
Bethel Fikke, Marianne Hanna,
Dick and Margot Jacobson, Rick
and Cheryl Sundly, Jim Evans,
Karen Moeller, Michael and
Maryjo Wigger, Ray Carlson

GROUP OF JOY FUND

In memory of John Kwiecien:
Carol Panning

MINIBUS FUND

In memory of John Kwiecien:
Joyce Perfetti

LUTHERAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

In memory of John Kwiecien:
Lory Dubbels, Lynette Dubbels

STAY UP-TO-DATE

Watch for updates in the Candle, our weekly e-newsletter. Not receiving the Candle and would like to? Email office@mountcarmelmpls.org to add yourself to the mailing list.

A FRIENDLY REMINDER

Please kindly turn off all lights in the building if you use the building in the evening and are the last person to leave. And be sure to lock all the outside doors. Thanks!

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sign up to provide altar flowers in worship for the rest of 2018 and the first half of 2019 on the sign-up sheets on the bulletin board in the Narthex by the elevator. The cost is \$25 per bouquet (two bouquets per week) for the remainder of 2018. The cost increases to \$27 per bouquet for 2019. Flowers can be given in memory of loved ones or in honor of birthdays, anniversaries or special events and milestones.

Brenda Wetzel named executive director of the Child Care Center

The Board of Directors of the Mt. Carmel Child Care Center is excited to announce the immediate appointment of Brenda Wetzel as the third executive director of the center. Brenda succeeds Jeanette Burmeister, who led the center for twenty-seven of its now twenty-nine years.

Brenda has been at the center since 2004, working first as a toddler and pre-school teacher. In 2008, she was promoted to lead teacher and in 2017 was named assistant director. Upon Jeanette's retirement, Brenda served the center as the interim director.

Prior to coming to Mt. Carmel, Brenda worked in a variety of both for-profit and non-profit child care settings. She has a liberal arts degree from North Hennepin Community College. When not at Mt. Carmel, she is at home in Fridley with her husband Shawn and their three boys Nicholas, Joshua and Oliver. All three boys attend the Spring Lake Park school district and stay busy playing football and soccer.

In announcing the appointment, Jeremy Wendt, president of the board, says, "Brenda brings all the energy, skills and commitment to offering safe, affordable, quality child care to the Mt. Carmel Child Care Center that we were looking for in our next executive director. She is ready to build on the long, rich history and outstanding reputation of the center cultivated by Jeanette Burmeister for so many years, and to take the center into new and exciting directions for the future."

Pastor John Strommen says of Brenda, "I believe she is ready for the challenge and is already leading with eyes wide open. Brenda is experienced, qualified, talented, proactive and humble enough to be a learner. Therefore, I endorse the recommendation of Brenda for the permanent director position."

The Mt. Carmel Child Care Center is one of the largest and longest-running outreach ministries of the Mt. Carmel congregation, serving 30-35 families at a time, with spaces for 21 children in both toddler and pre-school care. The child care center is one of the important ways that the church's gifts are unleashed through porous boundaries to link the church to God's work in the world.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Looking Forward

2019 is nearly here, and like you probably do, I'm taking stock of many parts of my life, including my role and life here with Mt. Carmel.

This year will be my sixth and last on council. I joined council because I felt I could contribute ideas and help lead the church for a few years. It didn't even dawn on me that in my first three-year term, our senior pastor would retire and another would resign to take a call at another church. I didn't anticipate that I would become council president and have a primary role in leading the church and council in finding a new pastor. Nor did I anticipate any of the changes that came with just those personnel moves such as the long-imagined church administrator position.

My six years on council have been filled with a lot of change. It has, at times, been frustrating, maddening, exciting, challenging, fun, sad and fulfilling. But it's always been great to be a leader at Mt. Carmel and I've jumped in and done things or helped with events that I hadn't imagined before: playing with the bell choir, writing this column, cooking brats for Caramelfest.

Nearly two years ago, the Strategic Plan was released. It takes our mission statement—Learn, Live and Share God's Word—and seeks to have us focus on it as a church and think about how it directs us to act inside and outside our church walls. One of the key elements of the plan is to stress leadership—both using existing leaders, but also develop and empower new leaders. That will be one area of focus for the coming year.

Being a leader isn't simply about organizing or directing people. Nor is it all about charting a course for others to follow. It can be as simple as setting an example to others, talking to people, sharing ideas and being willing to step up to serve in almost any capacity. Leaders are leaders because they choose to do the things that others don't volunteer for. Leaders are leaders because they give of themselves to a cause or purpose they believe in. And leaders are leaders because they believe serving their community—both in the church and outside of the church—is valuable and worth their time and effort.

Pastor John's been talking about this both in the GPS course and in his sermons lately. And we'll take it on too on council: we need to help develop leaders and help those leaders and others in the church find their calling. The future of Mt. Carmel doesn't sit with who is on council or who our pastor is or what staff we have working in the church—though they're valuable, no doubt—but the future rests on all of us to fulfill the Strategic Plan and mission.

If you want to find your calling and find your place or leadership voice in the church, talk to myself, Pastor John or anyone on council and we will help. We are all one community who ultimately have been called to serve those around us to make the world a better place.

Merry Christmas, everyone!
Paul Lathrop

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Youth in sixth grade through college are invited to join the Youth and Young Adult group for our regular monthly events.

Second Sunday Serving. On the second Sunday of every month the youth and young adults share in Mt. Carmel's hospitality by serving coffee.

Third Thursday dinner and a movie. Join us at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month for dinner, conversation and a movie. **NOTE: December's dinner and a movie will be on Dec. 27!**

Sunday morning YAYA. Every Sunday morning during the education hour (10:45-11:45 a.m. when Sunday school meets) we will meet in the youth room for conversation, Bible study and games.

FRIENDS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME. You don't have to be a member of Mt. Carmel to join us for any of these activities, especially movie night.

Join our Facebook group to know what's going on, www.facebook.com/groups/MtCarmelYAYA/. Questions about YAYA? Contact Jenni Lathrop at jennifer.lathrop@gmail.com or 612-205-6007.

FORGET-ME-NOT

Birthday greetings to each of the members listed below who will reach or surpass the 80th milestone in this month. We pray that God bless you on your special day and in the year to come.

Dec. 8—Dick Anderson

Dec. 12—June Belawski

Dec. 23—Wilma Anderson

Dec. 23—Gloria Anderson

Dec. 25—Carrol Rignell

It is the policy of Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church to not publish the phone numbers and addresses of members. If you wish to call or send a card to these individuals, please refer to your church directory or call the office.

HOSPITALIZATIONS

Did you know that because of privacy laws, hospitals and nursing homes do not call us to report if a parishioner has been admitted, or if a person's condition has worsened?

That means we rely on family members and friends to keep us informed. Please call the church office, 612-781-2796, if you or someone you know of is hospitalized.

December Adult Forum

Dec. 2: "The Magnificat's Impact on Lutheran Theology" The Magnificat, also known as Mary's song, had a tremendous impact on Martin Luther and his theology. As we begin Advent, it is a very good time to examine the effect of this song on Luther and reflect on how it is relevant for us today. A short video featuring Darrell Jodock, professor emeritus at Gustavus Adolphus College, will help to stimulate our conversation on this topic. You are invited to join in the conversation, so we can learn, live and share the Word together.

Dec. 9: Church Council election. No Adult Forum.

Dec. 16: The Christmas Smorgasbord will replace the forum for the day. See separate article for details on the Smorgasbord. Come to enjoy food and fellowship with us and our guests from Casa.

Dec. 23: No session as Adult Forum takes a break for the holidays. The forum will resume after the holidays.

May all of you have a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!

Group of JOY Christmas luncheon

(If possible please bring a pair of children's gloves, mittens or hat)

Get your Christmas sweaters ready for our Group of JOY (Just Older Youth) Christmas luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 18 at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. There may even be a prize for the best sweater! A catered lunch will be provided by Ralph Matthes. The tradition of singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" will once again be a highlight along with the opportunity to sing other carols. But don't think that's all. There will be one more Christmas surprise. Also, we will be collecting children's glove/mittens/hats to be given to Waite Park School. Kids often don't have them or forget them so the school likes to have some on hand during the winter months. Sign up with Karen Moeller by Dec. 14 either at church or call 612-619-3743. There is no charge for this event. Just come and enjoy the Christmas spirit!

Annual Plymouth Christian Youth Center gift sale

Mt. Carmel is collecting donated Christmas gifts through Dec. 3 for the Plymouth Christian Youth Center (PCYC) Gift Sale. Donated items will be sorted by men/boy, women/girl and children (ages 3-12). North Minneapolis children served by PCYC can purchase their family members a Christmas gifts from any of the gifts displayed for less than a dollar. If you would like to donate, consider purchasing multiples of an item that are \$5 to \$10 each. Remove or black out all price tags. Place in the box near the church office. Helpful gift shopping list is located in the narthex sign up table or by visiting PCYC's gift ideas list at <https://pcyc-mpls.org/christmas-gift-sale-shopping-list-draft-b/>. If you would like to volunteer to bring the items to PCYC, sort items for the sale or work during the sale hours please contact Lynette Dubbels at 612-802-5343.



Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church
1701 St. Anthony Parkway NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418

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Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church

612-781-2796
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Pastor

John Strommen

Office Hours

M 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
T-F 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
office@mountcarmelmpls.org

Sunday Worship & Nursery

9:30 a.m.—Holy Communion
(nursery provided)
10:30 a.m.—Coffee Fellowship
10:45 a.m.—Faith Formation

Mini-bus Transportation

Call 612-781-2796 to be added
to Sunday's list.

Mt. Carmel Child Care

Brenda Wetzels, Director
612-781-2798

www.mtcarmel.net

Advent & Christmas

Sunday, Dec. 2

9:30 a.m.—Worship

Wednesday, Dec. 5

5:30 p.m.—Advent Pause for Prayer

Sunday, Dec. 9

9:30 a.m.—Worship

Wednesday, Dec. 12

5:30 p.m.—Advent Pause for Prayer

Sunday, Dec. 16

9:30 a.m.—Worship (Children's
Christmas pageant)

10:30 a.m.—Christmas
smorgasbord

Wednesday, Dec. 19

5:30 p.m.—Advent Pause for Prayer

Sunday, Dec. 23

9:30 a.m.—Worship

Tuesday, Dec. 24

3:00 p.m.—Christmas Eve worship

Sunday, Dec. 30

9:30 a.m.—Worship

ADVENT PAUSE FOR

PRAYER—In the midst of the busy Advent season, you are invited to come to the Mt. Carmel sanctuary on Wednesdays, Dec. 5, 12 and 19 to Pause for Prayer. The sanctuary will be open for prayer from 5:30–6:30 p.m., with meditative music and candles. Contemplative coloring will be available as well for the child in all of us.