



Faith-Lilac Way Lutheran Church

December 2022 Banner

(763) 537 4523 | Faithlilacway.org
5530 42nd Ave N, Robbinsdale, MN 55422

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services
Saturday, December 24
4:30 PM and 10:30 PM

Christmas Day Worship
Sunday, December 25
9:30 AM



Pastoral Article

Light One Candle

In some traditions, the first candle in the Advent wreath is called the prophet candle. Often the prophets of the Old Testament stood alone as they prophesied against the darkness of our world and for the promise of hope. Notice how the light of a solitary candle can brighten up a dark room because the darkness cannot overpower even one candle. So light one candle in this first week of Advent. If you have an Advent wreath or Yule log, three or maybe four other candles are waiting for their turn. But for this first week, light only one candle. It is enough.



We light two candles the next week. They stand side by side in the Yule log my father made out of a birch tree limb many, many years ago. Together they can stamp out even more darkness – the kind that can creep up on you in these long nights and short days. With so little sun peeking through the clouds and with continued news of the warring madness in Ukraine and violence on the streets that are too close to home, sometimes it seems as if the darkness is winning. I light two candles against that kind of darkness. The two candles keep each other company just as Mary and Joseph did on their long journey to Bethlehem. Some traditions call the long journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem.

Lighting three candles the next week brings me both a gladness that we are more than half way through Advent – and also a sense of alarm. Christmas is coming and I’m not ready! But I’m never “ready” and yet... Christmas will come whether I get all of the “stuff” done on my ever-lengthening “to do” list... or not. This candle is often called “the Shepherd’s candle.” The word for this day is “Joy!” This week, as we light three candles, my goal will be to let joy – and not anxiety—prevail in my thinking and in my daily life.

When the fourth candle blazes, the wreath is full of light. This candle is sometimes called the Angel’s candle, reminding us of the shining light of hope, wonder, joy and peace that came with their proclamation of the Good News on that first Christmas night. This year, the fourth Sunday of Advent falls a full week before Christmas day. The light from the Advent wreath seems bright and yet outside, the world is increasingly dark. This year, the longest night is on December 21 and our Advent midweek will take time to remember and to sit with the darkness of pain and grief that so many feel at this time of year as we remember who isn’t with us this year to celebrate. We will light even more candles against the darkness, and let the peace that the angels proclaim be a balm against our pain.

Finally on Christmas eve, we will light the Christ candle – the candle for the one who IS the Light of the World. And then, from the Christ candle, we will light candle after another as we sing Silent Night. On this night, we remember that the light of Christ banishes all evil and replaces that kind of darkness with light and love. We also remember our role in lighting the candle of our neighbor, sharing the light of Christ with one another.

May the light of Christ be with you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Pastor Tom".



Vicar Article



Reflections on Advent

When I was a child I failed to understand the importance of Advent. In my mind Advent was simply the Church's "Christmas Countdown"--as if I wasn't already counting down the days until Christmas! The Advent season always felt slow to me as we talked week after week about baby Jesus who took four long weeks to be born. Why couldn't we just skip the waiting and the labor pains and jump ahead to the joy of Christmas morning?

Now that I am older I have come to appreciate the season of Advent. Advent marks the beginning of the new church year, and it helps us as Christians to slow down and reflect on the significance of Jesus entering into our lives. Going to church week after week we hear stories about Jesus and about God's love, and I think we can become so accustomed to the Good News that we lose the miracle and mystery of it all. Advent gives us the opportunity to rediscover and re-experience with awe God's love for each one of us.

Think about it...the impenetrable God of the universe who created the earth and everything in it, allowed God's Self to become human--and not only to be human but to be born in the most vulnerable form, a tiny baby who would be born in a dirty stable instead of a palace. God did this for no other reason than out of complete and absolute love. God wanted to be in relationship with humanity, with each and every one of us, and became human himself in order to make that relationship possible. Through this miraculous and unexpected act, the course was set for all of humanity to be saved through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. How can we not be in awe of this wonderful and freely given gift?

But before we can experience the joy of Jesus's birth, we must first wait and experience the labor pains of Advent. During Advent we remember that there is sin and brokenness in our world. There is a reason Jesus needed to save us and we are all in need of a Savior. During Advent we prepare our hearts and humble ourselves to receive God's gifts, and we wait with longing and hope that God will keep God's promises to finish the work that began with the birth of Jesus.

In Christ we place our hope. We give thanks for what God has already done, and we look forward to the day when Christ will return to reconcile all things. May you have a blessed Advent journey as you remember the true reason for Christmas--Emmanuel, God is with us!

Vicar Joanna Kathol



Announcements

Advent–Watch, Wait, Wonder and Hope.

As we prepare for the birth of Jesus we reflect on what it means for us as Christians to Watch, Wait, Wonder and Hope. We rejoice in awe and wonder at Christ's birth as well as watch and wait in hope for Christ to come again and bring restoration upon all the earth. O Come, O Come Emmanuel–God with us!



Wednesday Midweek Advent Services

Nov 30th, Dec 7, 14th and 21st*

Wednesday Afternoon Service at RobbinsWay at 2 PM

Evening Service in FLW Sanctuary from 6:30-7 PM

A Blue Christmas

*On December 21st, the Advent Service will be a “Blue Christmas” acknowledging that Christmas can be a difficult time for many. All are invited to bring their honest selves, their grief and their hurts and lay them at the manger. Christ is with us even in our pain, and we are not alone.

December 4: A Christmas Story for Children of All Ages

Join the children for a special Sunday worship in which they help tell the Christmas story. Something's coming - maybe it's a miracle!

December 11: Advent and Christmas Special Music Worship Service

The Chancel Choir and the Ladies Ensemble at Faith Lilac Way have been busy practicing some wonderful music to share with us as we celebrate the Advent season and await the birth of Jesus. Join us for worship on December 11th to hear the choir and enjoy some beautiful music. A special thank you to our music director, Ann Marie, and all of our amazing choir members for sharing the gift of music with us this Christmas season!

Thank you to our choir members!

Janis Anderson*

Clint Hughes

Chris Ipsen

Heather Lane

Anne Ng*

Dave Peloquin

Brenda Thompson

Sue Ferkingstad

Jessica Hughes*

Ruth Kuder*

Marty Moores

Ann Nowak*

Mary Peloquin*

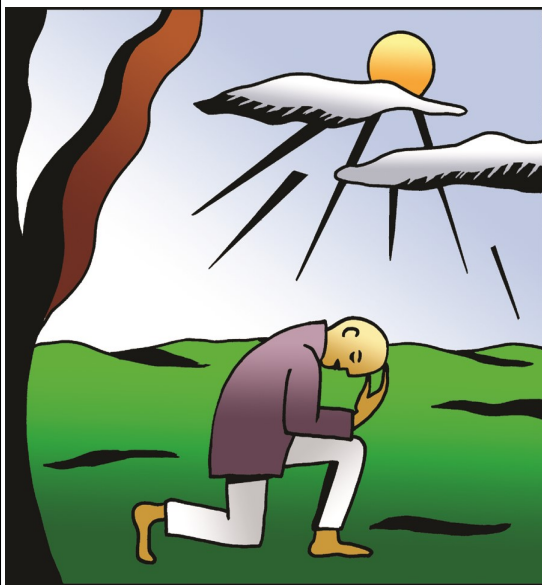
* Ladies Ensemble Members



Events in December!

Blood Drive on December 29th!

The American Red Cross has been critically low on blood donations, but you can help by scheduling an appointment to donate blood on Thursday, December 29th at Faith Lilac Way. To sign up, contact the American Red Cross: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive>



Just Mercy

Thursday, December 8th 6- 8:30 PM

Join us for Dinner and a Movie!

Take a break from the hustle and bustle of the season and gather for some good food and a movie! The movie is: Just Mercy.

Just Mercy is a 2019 biographical legal drama film co-written and directed by Destin Daniel Cretton. It explores the work of young defense attorney Bryan Stevenson who represents poor people on death row in the South. It tells the story of Walter McMillian, who had been wrongfully convicted of the murder of a young woman. The film is based on Stevenson's 2014 memoir, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*.

We're ordering Chinese food from Keng's restaurant on 42nd Avenue N. Please let Pastor Pam or the office know you are coming so we have plenty of yummy food! Hope to see you there!

Join Us for Treats and Talk on Sunday Mornings!

All are invited to join us Sundays after worship in the library as we enjoy treats and conversation. We treasure this time to continue growing in relationship and enjoy being community together. There are also community activities available such as a jigsaw puzzle, a community coloring project and spiritual growth opportunities. Come and see!

December 4th: Informational Meeting for Holden Village Generational Trip;
Tying blankets for Camp Noah

December 11th, 18th, & 25th: Treats and Conversations

Prayers of the People.

God of hope and healing: Be with Lois Anderson, David Bjorkquist, Helen Brandon, Carol Brown, Jacqueline Butkowski, Larry Geer, Carolyn Lageson, Beverly Maas, Joyce Merkel, Edith Theilmann, Jackie Woolgar, and Vic Woolgar. Bless these people and all who need your love and care. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**



Mission of the Month:

Supporting and Celebrating the Faith-Lilac Way Mission and Ministries!

Most of the year we use our “Mission of the Month” to support our ministry partners. But on this last month of the year, we ask for additional support for the mission and ministries of Faith-Lilac Way Lutheran Church.

Your Support of Faith Lilac Way makes a Difference! Because of your financial support we are able to:

- + Praise God every week in our sanctuary, online and in our parking lot
Yes - we still have people worshipping in the parking lot. For one of our members who lives in a group home, this is the safest way to worship.
- + Mentor an intern every year for the past 14 years! These interns are now pastors and are serving congregations and non-profits in Minneapolis Area Synod; St. Paul Area Synod, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania and in England! Your reach has spread across the ocean! (Rev. Dr. Adam Morton is teaching at a seminary in Nottingham, England).
- + Teach children, and adults, and seniors about the love of God in our church and in our neighborhood.

A few weeks ago we asked people to tell how the ministry of Faith-Lilac Way affects their life. One member, Grace Lawson wrote, “Faith-Lilac Way Lutheran Church does indeed matter to me. My husband George and I were married in 1953 and purchased a home in Crystal. We started visiting Lutheran churches. We felt most comfortable at Faith-Lilac Way so we joined. It has been a privilege to be a member of this church all these years.”

Whether you have been a member for a few months or many years, or whether you have chosen to simply be a supportive neighbor, the ministry of Faith-Lilac Way is made possible by each one doing their part to praise God and share God’s Good News of love with our neighbors. Thank you for doing your part!

December Birthdays

Nancy Goodwin 1st

Pamela Stalheim Lane 5th

Kim Ipsen 8th

Noah Olson 10th

Ann Marie Skoglund Anderson 10th

Bryce Tiber 10th

Joshua Vallis 13th

Evan Blackman 16th

Benjamin Stalheim Lane 18th

Steven Ferkingstad 19th

Carol Flom 24th

Jack Ng 24th

Nicole Rambow 29th

Christopher Ipsen 30th

Korah Overman 31st

Grayson Overman 31st

COVID Update: We are now in a green zone - community level is low. People may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask.



Opportunities to Support the Community:

NEAR FoodShelf

The NEAR FoodShelf is always in need of donations, especially around the holidays. You can help by donating non-perishable food and hygiene items into the NEAR donation box in the entryway at church. You can also make a financial contribution by visiting <http://www.nearfoodshelf.org>, or by writing a check to the church office with “NEAR FoodShelf” written in the memo line.

ELCA Good Gifts

ELCA Good Gifts supports families around the world through a variety of gifts that can be purchased and sent to where they are needed. A few examples of gifts you can purchase are livestock, food, clean water, hygiene kits, school supplies/tuition and more. Gifts such as these can help individuals and families rise out of poverty and improve their overall health and quality of life. To purchase a gift or to learn more you can visit <https://goodgifts.elca.org> or look for a copy of the ELCA Good Gifts catalog at church.



Thank you!

Thank you to all who helped with the Robbinsdale Halloween Event!

Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers who bought candy, helped us assemble candy bags, or helped to hand out candy at the Robbinsdale trick or treating event at the end of October. We had a blast and it was a great way to get out into the community and to meet more of our neighbors and families!

Thank you to our EveryMeal Packing Volunteers!

In November a group of volunteers from our Wildfire churches went to a packing event at EveryMeal in Roseville. EveryMeal helps to feed thousands of school children in the metro area, and during our packing event over 2,500 bags of food were packed! Stay tuned for more food packing opportunities in the future, but in the meantime you can support EveryMeal by visiting www.everymeal.org.

Thank you for coming to our Potluck with Greater St. John's!

The Faith Practices Neighboring Practices team appreciates everyone who attended or brought food to our Potluck with Greater St. John's Missionary Baptist on November 13th. Our potluck was a success with lots of good food and good conversations! We hope to have more events with Greater St. John's in the near future, so stay tuned!

Thank you to Deanna StandingCloud!

Thank you to Deanna StandingCloud for coming to speak with us in November and teaching us more about Native culture and language! We are thankful for our Native and Indigenous neighbors, friends and community members and all that we can learn from one another.





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Wildfire All-Generational Trip to Holden Village!

Informational Meeting on Sunday, December 4 after Worship.



Holden Village is a Lutheran retreat center nestled in the mountains of the beautiful Glacier Peak Wilderness in the Cascade Mountains. Holden Village welcomes all people into the wilderness to form and renew their relationships with God, the earth, and each other.

Holden Village is one of my personal favorite places in the world. Whether you like hiking, arts and crafts, bible study, an old fashioned

pool hall, giant ice cream sundaes or reading a book on porch swing there is something for everyone. I would love to take a group of people from Faith-Lilac Way and other Wildfire churches. Check it out! - Pastor Pam

<https://www.holdenvillage.org/visit/>

