

From the Pastor . . .

“Come, Lord Jesus”

Every year as family and friends get together for Thanksgiving and other holiday meals there is a brief time of uncertainty, who is going to say the prayer? More often than not, several sets of eyes begin to drift towards me, but I think my family has finally figured out they are more than capable. I can't help but think of those prayers we said before dinner when I was growing up. The ones that started “God is Great, God is Good” or more often “Come, Lord Jesus.” As we enter into this season of Advent, waiting for Christmas this is exactly what we're asking God to do. To come and be with us.

Actually, this phrase reminds us of the world we do live in. In one sense we celebrate Christmas as the story of God who 2000 years ago entered into the world as one of us, a vulnerable little baby born to some pretty ordinary people in the midst of a rather overwhelming world. We remember that God came into our lives and made all the difference by bringing us hope, peace, joy, and love. That's great, but we still live in a world where we need those foundations of faith. Things aren't all that perfect around us, our communities are broken, and our lives are filled with sorrow and struggle. We need more than a sweet little baby in a manger, but a savior who will conquer the brokenness in the world and continue to create us anew again and again. So we cry, “Come, Lord Jesus!”

This year, more than ever, I believe these are words that we need to embrace not just as individuals, but even more so as a community. It seems as though returning to the way things “have been” just isn't enough anymore, and as we continue to walk through a world pandemic and all that has been exposed with it, layers of false security continue to be peeled away. We need God's kingdom of grace and love to come. We need God's promises that the world and our very lives will be renewed. So we plead, “Come, Lord Jesus!”

And that's what God does, again and again, our incarnate savior enters into our lives and this world bringing us something that we can hold onto as we journey in the darkness, Hope. Fr. Richard Rohr says that “Hope is the patient and trustful willingness to live without closure, without resolution, and still be content and happy.” Hope allows us to trust that God will come again, just as God always has.

At the end of the bible, in the book of Revelation Jesus says “Surely I am coming soon”, and then the very last words are “Come, Lord Jesus”. Advent reminds us that we are able to trust that God will come again, into our personal struggles and struggling world, and “Come, Lord Jesus” no longer needs to be a cry of desperation, but a proclamation of Hope.

Hope and Peace,
Pastor Brent



Advent and Christmas

Advent Orchestra
Sunday, December 5th
9:30am

Woman's Advent Luncheon
Saturday, December 11th
11:30am

Holden Christmas
Sunday, December 12nd
9:30am

Community Christmas Pageant
Sunday, December 19th
9:30am

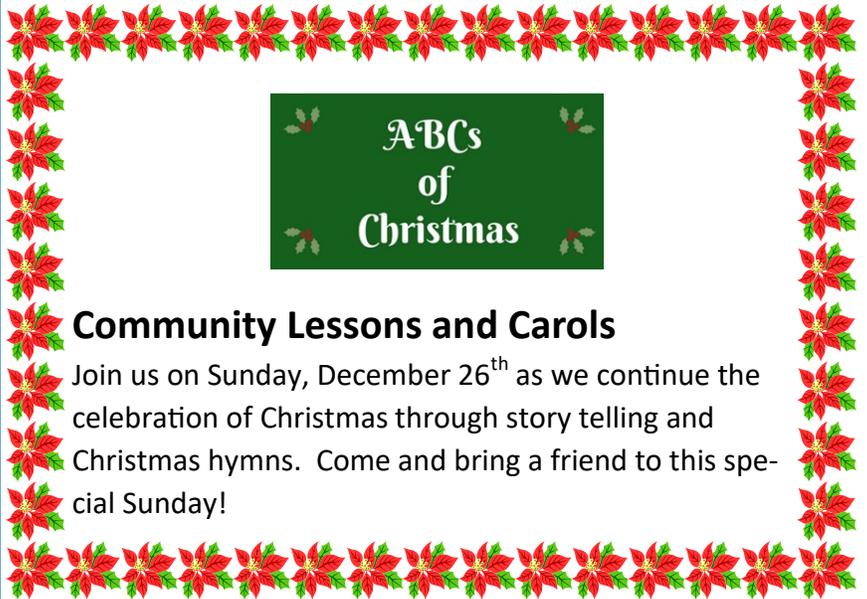
Christmas Eve Service
Friday, December 24th
4:30pm

ABC's of Christmas: Lessons and Carols
Sunday, December 26th
9:30am



CONNECTING ALL WITH THE
PEACE AND JOY OF GOD

**Christmas Eve at
Family of Christ**
Join us for a candlelight service at
4:30pm
Friday, December 24th



ABCs
of
Christmas

Community Lessons and Carols

Join us on Sunday, December 26th as we continue the celebration of Christmas through story telling and Christmas hymns. Come and bring a friend to this special Sunday!

2021 Women's Advent Luncheon and Basket Raffle December 11th at 11:30am



All women and girls are invited. (Grandmas, cousins, friends too.)
Come one and all!
To help us reconnect, we will do some fun get-to-know-you activities and end with singing a few carols.
Potluck with a \$5.00 donation (girls are free!)
Look online for the Sign-up Genius link for food sign up.
Sign up on the clipboard
Raffle tickets are on sale after service on December 5th and the day of the luncheon
Profits will go to 360 Communities

Advent Band December 5th

Currently play an instrument? Played one many years ago and want to dust it off and see if you still have it? Then join us as we celebrate the Advent and Christmas season with a Sunday filled with instrumental music. All abilities welcome to join us as we hope to celebrate the coming of our savior. Contact the church office or Jeremy Mann.



TRINITY CARE CENTER GIFT TREE and OUTDOOR CAROLING

GIFT TREE: Join us as we support the residence at Trinity Care Nursing Home. Pick a stocking from the gift tree in the narthex, take the name out, write your name next to the resident's name on the sign-up sheet, then buy and wrap a gift/s for that person.

Please bring the wrapped gift/s to church by December 12th.

CAROLING: Join in on helping the residents celebrate the season by **singing carols outside their windows on Sunday, December 19th at 1:30pm.** Come dressed warm and festive. Bring Merry Christmas signs, wear a Santa or Elf hat or wrap yourself in battery operated Christmas lights. Outdoor hot chocolate and cookies afterwards. Please sign up on the clipboard so we can know how many to expect caroling.



Men's Tuesday Bible Study In Person and Online

The Men's Tuesday morning Bible study will again meet in person while continuing to reach out to others online. Join us in the conference room next to the office or on Zoom beginning at 6:30 AM. Start your day off right and join us. Contact Pastor Brent or the office for the zoom link.

Men's Thursdays Bible Study will remain Online at 9:00am

Women's Bible Study

Monday, December 6th at 10:00am

The Women's Bible study will meet monthly at 10am on the first Monday of the month.

The Bible study from the Gather Magazine will be used again this year.

The fall session will study The Gift of the Spirit.

All women are welcome



**Book Club will not be meeting in December.
Watch for information for the January 27, 2022 meeting.**

Contact the church office or Sandy Soukup for additional information

Ways to Engage this Advent as Community

Want to connect with your family, friends and community? Then include some ways to serve others in your holiday plans. Try one of the ways below or come up with your own holiday traditions.

- *Make Tie blankets for Camp Noah- Blankets should be 60" x 72"
- *Invite family and friends to bring socks and underwear to holiday gatherings and celebrations to donate to The Drawer
- *Buy gifts for the Christmas party at Trinity Care Nursing Home residents. Take a tag off the tree and find gifts for our friends
- *Send Cards to our active military members. See the bulletin board for those names and addresses
- *Schedule a time at Feed My Starving Children and serve together as family or friends

Bring in Cub or Target gift cards to support our community fund



Season of Giving

As you buy your Christmas gifts for families and friends we invite you to join us at Family of Christ with gifts that will make an impact in our congregation and in the world around us.

Trinity Care Gifts

Family of Christ will again be providing gifts for the residents of Trinity Care Center in Farmington. Please pick a name(s) on the Giving Tree, located in the Narthex and bring your gifts, with a clearly marked label on Dec 12th. All are encouraged to participate in this annual event. If you aren't in the spirit by then, you will leave feeling blessed.

Community Fund

We have historically reached out to offer financial assistance to a member(s) of our Family of Christ Family and others in our community during the Holiday Season and throughout the year who need our prayers and help due to hardship, illness or family emergency. Please consider purchasing a gift card or make a donation to the community fund to share with our friends and family around us. Cards and donations can be made after worship in the narthex.

Family of Christ

As your end of the year generosity is being spread around, please consider an additional financial gift to the ministries of Family of Christ. We continue to look for ways to build up our financial strength as we enter a new year of ministry in God's kingdom.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

Christmas Week:

Open Monday, December 20th through Wednesday, December 22nd only.

New Years Week:

Open Tuesday, December 28th through Thursday, December 30th.



Christmas Pageant
Ugly Christmas Sweater
December 19th at 9:30am



It's time for Family of Christ's Christmas Pageant. Please let us know if you or your children would like an active role this year. Whether that's through acting, singing, helping with props and costumes, or anything else, we can use your help. We also need some adults to act and to support the practices and events. Contact Pastor Brent if you're interested in helping or participating.

Below is the schedule for this year's Christmas Program:

- Sunday, Dec. 5:** Practice 10:30-11:30am
- Sunday, Dec. 12:** Practice 10:30-11:30am
- Saturday, Dec. 18:** Dress Rehearsal 9:30 am-11:00am
- Sunday, Dec. 19:** Christmas Pageant 9:30am

Youth Schedule:

- December 1:** Confirmation and Youth Group
- December 5:** 1-3 and 3-5 Mission trip fundraiser
bagging groceries at Cub
- December 8:** Confirmation and Youth Group
- December 15:** Confirmation and Youth Group
- December 22:** No Class – Holiday Break
- December 29:** No Class – Holiday Break
- January 2:** 1-3 and 3-5 Mission trip fundraiser
bagging groceries at Cub
- January 5:** Confirmation and Youth Group



LSS Refugee Kits

Thanks to all who donated items for Lutheran Social Services Refugee Services. We also collected over \$1100 to purchase more items. What a blessing for new families coming to Minnesota.

Thank you for your generosity.



Mission of the Month
FAMILY OF CHRIST COMMUNITY FUND

Helping and encouraging people of Family of Christ and those around us is an important part of family of Christ. Each year we collect donations for this fund so we can help those in need and encourage one another in faith. Please consider making a donation to this fund or buy some Target gift cards and send them to church.

Stewardship! Thanks

Thank you for making your financial commitment to Family of Christ for 2022. We are blessed by your generosity and thank you for the many blessing you continue to share. You haven't filled out an estimate of giving card we invite you to make your estimated pledge for the next year. These commitments help us make decisions for the next year of ministry. Cards can be requested from the church office or you can make your pledge online.

FoCus Newsletter Mailing:

This will be the last of our FoCus Newsletter to be mailed. If you would like to continue to receive a newsletter mailed to you please notify the church office before December 29th. We will continue to send the newsletter through our email vendor Constant Contact.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Linda at linda@familyofchrist.com.

DEADLINE FOR 2021 GIVING:

Please note all gifts for 2021 need to be received in the office by **Wednesday, December 29th**.
Online gifts need to be in the system by **Monday, December 27th**.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Linda before December 23rd.

Thank you for all your gifts to Family of Christ.

Financial Update October 2021

Although we are still financially stable and thank you all for your blessings, we are still running behind for the year.

Here are the numbers for January through October:

Year to Date Given	\$ 344,911
Year to Date Expenses	\$ 304,836
Year to Date Budgeted	\$ 368,552

*Please help us end the year strong by increasing your financial gifts this year.

Email received from Pastor Paskali Fyataga of FOC's companion Tanzania church:

Greetings from Usokami Parish to Family of Christ Lutheran Church

Hello Brethrens

We greet you in the name of Jesus Christ. Here at Usokami we are doing well and so many things are happening here at Usokami. We would like to send our sorry greetings for the pandemic of COVID 19, May God protect you from the covid effects which are directly and indirectly.



Here at Usokami we had the seminar for the teachings of the word of God, it was from 15-18/07/2021. We have confirmation class students who are 40 in number.

We would like to thank you very much for the support you are giving to us. We have 16 students who are getting school fees through the scholarship fund you are offering to us, 2 of them have performed well on the form four National Examinations and have selected to join Form five, also 3 completed form six and have passed and they have been selected to join University for the bachelor degrees.

Thank you also for the support you are giving on building projects; The Pastor's house is finished now we continue to collect fund for the benches for the two churches which are Mitanzini and Mgwao Preaching point.

May God bless you
Pastor Paskali Fyataga

Thank you for your generosity!

Last month we were able to lift up \$6,326 for Tanzania scholarships and \$1,645 to Iringa Hope Microfinancing. This will go a long way!

RED CROSS BLOODMOBILE

Tuesday, December 7

11:30am to 5:30 pm

To donate blood, go to www.redcrossblood.org. Contact Glenda Lind at 952-239-1420 for more information.



Year End Giving Statements

Family of Christ will be sending out end of the year Giving Statements by email for all members that have an email address. If there is a particular email address that you would like us to use or if you would prefer to receive paper statements, please contact Linda at linda@familyofchrist.com or by calling church office.

"FoCus" is a monthly publication of Family of Christ Lutheran Church. Please contact the church office to submit items for publication in our newsletter.

Family of Christ Staff Ministry Team:

Lead Pastor: Pastor Brent Erler
Pastor Intern: Amy Vigesaa
Children, Family Outreach Coordinator: Dana Sahlin
Musicians: Mary Wescott, Morgan Jones, Laura Porter-Jones, Rebecca Nystuen, Ann Mikiska
Administrative Admin: Linda Bauer
Custodian: Kelly Kritsberg

Family of Christ Lutheran Church
is a member of the **ELCA**

Email us at: office@familyofchrist.com
Visit us at: www.familyofchrist.com
Telephone: 952-435-5757



December

Dates to Remember

- Wed. Dec 1: Confirmation/Youth Gr**
- Sun. Dec 5: Sunday Worship with
Advent Orchestra
Pageant Practice**
- Wed. Dec 8: Confirmation/Youth Gr**
- Sat. Dec 11: Ladies Advent Luncheon**
- Sun. Dec 12: Sunday Worship with
Holden Christmas
Pageant Practice**
- Wed. Dec 15: Confirmation/Youth Gr**
- Sun. Dec 19: Christmas Pageant
Trinity Care Ctr Caroling**
- Wed. Dec 22: NO Confirmation/Youth**
- Fri. Dec 24: Christmas Eve Worship**
- Sun. Dec 26: ABCs of Christmas**
- Wed. Dec 29: NO Confirmation/Youth**

Vision Statement

Family of Christ seeks to be a Grace filled family of God, living the Gospel through faith, love and compassion.



Our Core Values F-A-M-I-L-Y:

- Fait**
- Acc**
- Meaningful relationships**
- Impact**
- Love**
- Youth**