

Pastoral Ponderings...

What a year it has been!



There have been some highs, and there have been some lows. And as we approach the conclusion of the year it seems that many people don't expect things to get much better. But don't let the difficulties and worries of this life weigh so heavily upon you.

We are now in a season of preparation – the season of Advent. This is a time when we look forward with hope and anticipation; anxiously awaiting the celebration of the coming of our Savior, Jesus. On Christmas we will celebrate the first time he came, as we celebrate his birth in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago. But we are also preparing ourselves for the celebration of his second coming. We of course don't know when that day will arrive, but more and more we are saying, "Lord Jesus, quickly come!" And when that day does arrive it will be a most glorious day! But what do we do in the mean-time?

We prepare! We prepare ourselves and others so that we are not caught off guard. And above all – do not lose hope! For he is the very source of our hope and our life; both in the present, and for eternity. That is why Advent is called the season of hope.

Perhaps especially so today, as we look at all that is going on around us, we might ask – 'How much worse can things get?' And the answer to that question may lead us into a downward spiral of depression and despair. But the real question we should focus on is – 'How much better can things get?' Because when we realize how much better things can and will get when Jesus returns, we will be filled with hope, joy, happiness, and peace... all of which are signs and symbols of the Advent season.



Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled... I will come back and take you to be with me." So, no matter how bleak the world may seem, we light the candles of the Advent wreath and anxiously await and prepare for the celebration of the coming of Jesus, the Light of the World.

May your preparations be blessed as you focus on what is really important – at this time of year, and at all times ... focus on Jesus!

Pastor Mark

Coronavirus Pandemic News and The Effect on Our Church and You as it continues...

FROM 11/26/20 TO 11/29/20
By Sadie Koser

Some of our congregation are using the church library and I, for one, am doing a lot more reading during this coronavirus pandemic. Not knowing who do nates the books - I read both of the DEAREST DOROTHY books in our library, really enjoying them!



It's about an 87-year-old woman; perhaps that's why I was unable to put the books aside, they were in my age bracket! There are many excellent books in our library with many being donated by Vicki Larrick who enjoys the Amish novels just as I do. Check out our library located in the fellowship hall.

The Quilting Group started to work on the quilts in their homes, according to Phyllis Alban, coordinator. Eighteen quilts were blest during worship on September 6th. The following week Stacey McIntosh delivered them to the Cumberland Health Care & Rehab, Winifred Road, that was hit hard at the beginning of the coronavirus. To date a total of 629 quilts have been made and distributed! Our appreciation to the women and men on this worthwhile project!

After discussion and input from the congregation it was decided to cancel the September worship & picnic in the park. Our picnics are great, enjoyed and attended by so many. This picnic would have been quite different. It was felt it wasn't worth the park fee to hold it this year which is due to the virus pandemic. Let us continue to pray that 2021 will be a more normal year for all!

Sunday, September 6th held special meaning for Pastor Mark and Susan - it was their 40th wedding anniversary! At the worship service council president, Eleanor Stotler, presented pastor with a gift bag of cards from the congregation. Due to the coronavirus a surprise card shower was the best celebration our congregation could do at this time. Congratulations to Pastor Mark and Susan and may they have many more years together to celebrate!

Sunday, October 11th it was requested that the entire congregation wear masks due to the beginning of a covid-19 surge in our county and because of our becoming a bit lax regarding the 6 ft. distance rule and masks being worn less. Pastor Mark sent out an email the week prior and the congregation responded well. Perhaps this will be an incentive for those who wear masks all the time to return to our worship service.



On Sunday, October 18th, in the absence of our fill-in organist, Andi Liller (who was on a hunting trip in Ohio with husband, Scott) our Kim Henson did a good job at his first public appearance at the keyboard. I certainly didn't realize LWLC had so many organists in our congregation.

As a note on the Liller's hunting trip ...



Scott killed a 10-point buck so the venison is now in the freezer for their winter dinners!

Everyone is suffering in some way during this pandemic. Churches, as well as businesses, suffer too. Kim & Lora Henson have a daughter and family residing in Hawaii and they visit them twice a year. . . BUT not in 2020! When they visit they attend several Lutheran Churches, although they only remember being at this particular church once, several years ago. In October the Henson's received a letter from Kihei Lutheran Church, Kihei, Hawaii. This is just a

small excerpt from the lengthy letter from Pastor Joel Martyn:

"We thank you for the connection you have kept with Kihei Lutheran Church. One of the real difficulties of the pandemic is not enjoying visits from our mainland friends and ohana (which translates to family ... said Kim, who told us he speaks the Hawaiian language; but several believe he just knows a few words!) We miss you. This has been an unusual year in many ways...without our regular visitors, with some members choosing to move closer to mainland family, and with job loss on the island as across the country, we are now at a point where the gifts coming to KLC are smaller than the expenses we still have to pay. We are asking for your help if you are able to do so. Please consider making a donation to the continuing life of KLC. We look forward to the time when we can all be together again sharing worship and friendship."

Church budgets are suffering in Hawaii ... and in Cumberland it is no different with LWLC. Please consider mailing your envelopes to the church if you are not attending our worship hour or if you are not already mailing them in. It is greatly appreciated!

Congregational News

FROM 11/26/20 TO 11/29/20

By Sadie Koser

Our sympathy to the family of Betty Kroll who passed away Thursday, July 30th at her home in Mount Savage at the age of 71. Among the survivors is a sister, Marilyn Adam. A funeral service for the immediate family was held at the former St. John's United Church of Christ in Corriganville with the Rev. Dr. Tomislav Dosch officiating. Interment was in Rest Lawn Memorial Gardens.

The wedding of Jessica Squires and Alec Long took place at Brookdale Farms, a beautiful resort outside Fort Ashby, on Saturday, August 8th at 4 o'clock. The bride, daughter of Jim & Lori Squires, was attired in a beautiful gown. The groom, son of Greg & Marsha Long, Hagerstown, and the bride were each attended by six attendants including a ringbearer and flower girl. Being an outdoor wedding, it was a day of sunshine and an occasional breeze with the double

ring ceremony held beneath an arbor by Pastor Brad Nigh, friend of Alec. The reception was held in the Brookdale center. A delicious catered buffet dinner followed the introduction of the attendants and Mr. & Mrs. Alec Long! Jessica is employed by Washington County Board of Education, teaching second grade at Fountain Rock Elementary School in Hagerstown. Alec is employed by Urgent Care, Hagerstown, as an x-ray technician. The Long couple purchased a home near Hedgesville; although their mailing address is:



72 Beehe Drive
Martinsburg, West Virginia 25403

The couple planned a trip to Antigua, but due to the coronavirus they travelled to Virginia Beach with Antigua being in their future. Our congratulations ... Alec and Jessica!

Shirley 'Net' Nolan, a former resident at The Chateau, has moved to an assisted living residence in Alabama to be near her son and family. Shirley (or 'Net') is the surviving sibling of three brothers and two sisters. For those who would like to stay in touch with her, the address is:

East Chase Senior Living
175 Halcyon Boulevard Room 503
Montgomery, Alabama 36117

We extend our best regards to 'Net' in her new residence.

A person in our congregation donated money to purchase a new vinyl mat for under the desk chairs in Pastor Mark's and the financial offices. One was homemade of wood, so old it was splintering while the other had cracks in it from being so brittle from age. We appreciate Jim & Lori Squires for disposing of the mats as they were too big for the local collection!



Kay Chaney has brought the fall motif to the fellowship hall windows, narthex and planter with the pretty silk floral arrangements. Kay also decorated the heater at the entrance landing with beautiful ceramic figurines.

Sondra Cave has also decorated the two hall restrooms in the same autumn decor. We appreciate Kay and Sondra taking care of these church locations throughout the year with the seasonal decorations!

The double ring wedding ceremony between Caitlin Squires and Ryan Diehl was solemnized in Living Word Lutheran Church on Saturday, October 3rd, at 3 o'clock, officiated by Pastor Mark. The bride, daughter of Jim & Lori Squires, wore a lovely gown with a short train. Their attendants were Alec & Jessica Long, sister and brother-in-law of the bride. Ryan's parents are Dewayne Diehl and Vicki & Rick Glass, Mount Savage. It was a beautiful autumn day with the reception held at The Turkey Flight Event Center (formerly Mason's Barn) with the introduction of the parents, grandparents, the attendants and the happy couple ... Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Diehl! The guests enjoyed a variety of drinks, finger food and cookies. After the arrival of the bridal party everyone went through a buffet line of original and familiar pizzas, catered by Puccini's with the wedding cake served at the tables. Their reception was the first event to be held at the center. Caitlin is employed as Communications Manager for the City of Winchester, Virginia. Ryan travels to Bedford, Pennsylvania where he is employed at the Rockland Manufacturing. The couple recently purchased a home at 611 St. Mary's Avenue, just several blocks from our church! The Diehl's also postponed a wedding trip due to the coronavirus. Our congratulations Ryan and Caitlin!



Andi Liller made the wedding paraments and banner for the Squires/Diehl wedding. They are white with a silver cross entwined with a pair of gold wedding rings. The banner has the verse from Song of Solomon 3:4 "I have found the one whom my soul loves" printed on the white background. Our thanks to Andi as we now have appropriate altar paraments and banner for future weddings!

Susan and Pastor Mark have been donating items for the parking lot sale with many of the items being from his late parent's home. Included were two push carpet and floor sweepers (one Bissell and one 3M) that were like new. They are now in use at LWLC, the larger one in the sacristy and the smaller model is



downstairs for those small cleanups. We appreciated the donations and are glad the cleaners could be used in the church!

Our Food Pantry donation has suffered lately due to our church schedule. If you would like to contribute items during this crisis, a volunteer will take the donations to the Cumberland Street Food Pantry,



November 23rd 34 items were taken to the pantry. The most needed items are cereals, peanut butter, macaroni, spaghetti and all types of canned products.

Information on LWLC's Christmas congregation projects will also be different this season. The Red Bag Children's Gifts for the Salvation Army (we filled 30 bags in previous years) has been changed. It is requested that you bring (or mail) the amount you would normally spend on gifts for the red bag to the church by SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13th. Then a check in the total amount received will be taken to the Salvation Army in lieu of filling the bags. Your monetary gift is appreciated!

The other Christmas project is the hat, gloves, mittens and scarves placed on a tree in the narthex. This outreach ministry will be the same as in previous years ... the children's apparel must be at the church by December 20th, and will be taken to John Humbird Elementary School as soon after as possible, depending on when onsite classes are in session. We realize that this project may not be as successful this year with our church attendance being down, but we encourage you to participate in this worthwhile project for the children.



On the happy side of our newsletter we congratulate Andrew Troutman and Cassie Bible on the birth of their son at Ruby Memorial Hospital on October 11th. The baby's name is Elias James, and he tipped the scales at 6 pounds 3 ounces. The couple are already parents to their 3-year-old daughter, Avery. Our best regards to all the Bible and Troutman families!

We sincerely thank Stacey McIntosh for undertaking a BIG project several weeks ago that has taken much of her time with the money maker which is to be

divided between two important projects related to the church. Since we were unable to have our 2020 indoor sale and probably won't be having it in 2021 either, Stacey took the sale donation items (including a huge donation of leftover items from another church's bazaar sale) to her home for separating and marking. She was assisted with this task by Paula McIntosh. As each donation is completed the items are taken to the Queen City Flea Market where they are placed on a table shared with her friend, Misty King. Misty is donating part of her space to LWLC. As items are sold more will take up the space. This will continue until donations cease to be brought to the church.

The two individual benefactors of our church will be revealed at a later date.

Our Younger Generation

FROM 11/26/20 TO 11/29/20
By Sadie Koser

This has been a tumultuous school year for our youth due to the coronavirus and having to be taught by virtual classroom, with not too many days in the actual classroom. They have missed proms, graduation, all sports events, and the fellowship of their school friends. We pray that by the late spring it will be back to near normal with children being in their classrooms.

Since we didn't have news to report on the honor roll students or sports activities, I thought you would like to know ... all our youth were promoted!



ANNABETH HUGHES is a member of the 9th grade at Mountain Ridge High School, CAROLYN HUGHES is in the 7th grade at Mount Savage Middle School, and

ADALINE LARUE is in the 1st grade at Mount Savage Elementary School.

WILLIAM HUGHES is a member of the 5th grade while PATRICK HUGHES was promoted to the 3rd grade at Frost Elementary School.

GRACIE ROSENBERGER is now in the 3rd grade and REESE TABB is a member of the 5th grade at Cresaptown Elementary School.

CAITIE ROSENBERGER is a senior at Allegany High School (and the Career Center).

HUNTER PALMER entered the 1st grade at Grantsville Elementary School.

COHEN HARDMAN entered the 6th grade at Calvary Christian Academy.

LIAM ROBB is a member of the 7th grade at Braddock Middle School.

Attending West Side Elementary School is HANDLEY ROBB, who is in the 4th grade while BECKETT ROBB was promoted to the 2nd grade.

BRYSON TROUTMAN is in the 3rd grade class at Flintstone Elementary School.

BRANSON TROUTMAN is a member of the 1st grade and MASON BITTINGER was promoted to the 2nd grade at Bishop Walsh Elementary School.

Our two pre-schoolers are AVERLY TROUTMAN, 3 years old and her baby brother, ELIAS TROUTMAN is 2 months of age.

When the time comes that our church schedule is back to normal, we will see a BIG difference as our youth return to Sunday School and Worship. By this time it could be well over a year since we have seen any of the children. We want to let them know we have REALLY missed them and we're anxiously waiting for that time to be sooner than expected. AGAPE to each of you from your church family!



Thank You Notes

To All:

Thank you very much for the kind gesture of thank you and gift cards. They will be very much appreciated by the troops.

Respectfully, Sheriff Rob

Note: Sheriff Robert Corley from the Garrett County Sheriff's Office

With Special Thanks ...

This extra-special thank you note sent to you today holds more appreciation than any words can say for you're among the nicest people I have ever known, and you will never be forgotten for the thoughtfulness you've shown.

Thanks for everything, especially the comfort quilt with hand written messages from my church family and friends at Living Word. Thank you all for your prayers and thoughtfulness. God's Blessings to you all.

Love, Carol Lantz

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your gift to the ministry of Samaritan's Purse. Your August 2020 check was placed in the disaster response to hurricane Laura victims in Louisiana. Your support for Samaritan's Purse equips us to respond quickly when crises strike, bringing practical help and sharing "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" with families that have been shaken by catastrophe. Thank you for your partnership in ministry and your continued prayers. God bless you.

Sincerely, Franklin Graham, President

Hello there!

The best kind of sleep beneath heaven above is under a quilt made with love. Dear Friends at Living Word, "You can't see me but I'm smiling right now. How very thoughtful of everyone to think of me and send me one of the children's comfort quilts. One square stands out as it shows a flaming candle with

the words "Don't let Satan blow out your candle." This square reminds you that God is always there to give you hope. (Thanks, Karl) I am thankful that we have finally received a diagnosis about what is going on with my vision. Although we had hoped for something better and that there is no treatment or cure, we take comfort in knowing that we finally have some answers. Thank you for thinking of me and may God bless you all.

Peace & Prayers, Bob (and Becky) McIntyre
Note : Becky, your handmade card is beautiful!

Dear Members,
Thank you very much for your generous donation to our activity fund. We really can use it and appreciate all that you do for our nursing home.

God's Blessing, Egle Nursing Home
Note : Egle Nursing Home (Lonaconing) provides our Quilters Group with their unused blankets which are used as liners for the quilt ministry.

Hello All,
I've sure missed seeing all of your smiling faces each Sunday - then I wake up with either swollen feet and legs, or my hip won't work to walk, or my allergies! Anyway, I will be back as soon as this is all over with. I hope everyone is in great health.
Love to All, Pat Counihan

Announcements

Annual Congregational Meeting
– Sunday, December 13th after worship

Because our Christmas Eve Worship Service will be our final worship service of 2020, it will also mark the close of the financial books for the year. If you want your contributions credited to your 2020 Giving Statement they must be received by December 24th!

Christmas Eve Worship – 7 PM

No worship services will be held on December 27th or January 3rd



At the beginning of the year we had begun working to put together a new church directory which will include photos and contact information of our members and friends. Most people had checked and updated their information, but only a few families had opportunity to have new pictures taken before covid-19 brought it all to a stop.

We would still like to put together an updated directory, so ...

If you did not have a new picture taken - please mail or email a photo of yourself or your family to the church.

Also, if any personal information has changed (address, phone number, email address) please let us know that as well.

LCMC Three Days of Prayer

Every congregation, member and pastor is being invited to set aside some time each day of January 5, 6, and 7, 2021 for prayer.

Our attitude toward prayer has often been characterized by saying, "well, all we can do now is pray!". Prayer is not the hopeless act of desperation. Prayer is a gift that God has given to us as a means to approach the throne of grace with confidence—like that of a child coming to her parents sharing concerns, victories, defeats and every part of life. It is an opportunity to express the deepest heartache and the greatest joy. Prayer is a conversation between the Creator and the created...and the conversation began with God, for us, in Christ Jesus.

No matter how you structure this time of prayer, let's come together as an association of congregations across the U.S. and around the world to pray! I believe that the church will never rise up until we first get down on our knees!

Day One: January 5

This is a day focused on confession. We have made our lives, our relationships—and even the church—in our own image. We confess that the church belongs to Jesus and not to us. We gather to lay down our pride, our sin and our agenda and ask the Lord of the church for forgiveness, which He gives freely and with mercy.

Day Two: January 6

This is a day of petition. Pray for your congregation, for the pastor, for the leaders, for those who carry out ministries, for the Sunday School teachers, for the Confirmation leaders, for those leading adult Bible studies and for those leading small groups. Pray for those in hospital and nursing home ministries. Pray for all those connected to your church that they might know God's redeeming love for all in Christ.

Day Three: January 7

This is a day for vision. Pray that the Holy Spirit will again move through the hearts and minds of leaders and pastors that God's vision for His church might be revealed and fulfilled. This is a time of prayer for renewal, revival and encouragement. Pray for God's vision.



DECEMBER

- 5 Kayla Chaney
- 6 Tim Martin
- 11 Wanda Lewis
- 12 Don Lawrence
- 14 Andrew Troutman
- 15 Pat Counihan
- 15 Susan Weems
- 20 Gene Cave
- 23 Dante Dill
- 25 Wayne Smith
- 25 Lynn Zeller
- 27 David Larrick

- 30 Mike Alban
- 31 Jane Arthur
- 31 Enpei Lui

JANUARY

- 9 Jim Squires
- 9 Carol Lantz
- 13 Joyce Smith
- 14 Reese Tabb
- 15 Amy Keller
- 18 Christopher Keller
- 22 Mark Jackson
- 22 Bonnie Keller
- 24 Louise Gilpin
- 24 William Hughes

FEBRUARY

- 3 Kay Chaney
- 10 Sadie Koser
- 10 Lori Squires
- 15 Karl Eriksson
- 19 Paula McIntosh
- 20 Mike McIntosh
- 24 Marilyn Adam
- 26 Clint Larrick
- 29 Susan Lewis



DECEMBER

- 16 David & Sharon Snyder
- 21 Rosie & Kathy Rosenberger
- 23 Don & Shirley Lawrence

JANUARY

- 1 Mike & Stacey McIntosh

FEBRUARY

- 4 Gerald & Jane Arthur
- 25 Matthew & Amanda Frankenberry