



The Servant's Voice

Welcoming Others to Experience God's Grace

The newsletter of Christ the Servant Lutheran



**2 Preacher
Feature**

4 Book Club

**5 Reconciling in
Christ**

**7 Annual Mtg.
Scheduled**



Holiday Traditions are Back

December fourth marks the return of our annual Christmas traditions. At 9 AM join us as we put up the Christmon Tree and greenery in the church sanctuary.

Bake Your Thanks has been a beloved tradition of Christ the Servant for many years. We get together to bake tons of cookies to deliver to first responders in our community. Last year, we didn't get to do this. While we're still not back to normal and we are still waiting to hear back about regulations from our intended recipients, the Outreach Team is happy to announce we are hosting a modified version this year. And we need your help.

Instead of gathering to bake, we will be collecting cookies, blessing them, and delivering them. Our hope is to deliver treats to the police and fire stations and possibly to various emergency room staff if we are able to get permission to do so. This will take four sets of volunteers:

1. Children to decorate the boxes (if you have crafty kids who want to be a part of the project, let us know so that we can be sure to include you in the details)
2. Bakers to make cookies at home or shoppers to purchase their favorite pre-packaged snacks
3. A team to pack boxes on Saturday, December 4 (12p-2p dropoff, 2p-4p assembly)
4. Volunteers to distribute boxes to recipients on Sunday, December 5, after church



CTSLC Office #: 940-387-1984

CTSLC Office Hours

Monday—Friday

9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

Ministry Team

Staff

Pastor..... John Bell
Office Administrator..... Cindy Bellefeuille
Childcare Tracey Oberbacher
Choir Director Elizabeth Moose
Organist Ruusamari Teppo

Council

President..... Jean Schaake
Vice-President..... Harriet Powell
Secretary..... Suzanne Terry
Treasurer..... Lois Plato
Member Janna Callahan
Member Randy Cox

Coordinators (partial list)

Altar Guild..... Lori Shelton,
& Deborah Dossett
Childcare TBA
Christian Ed... Heidi Thiele, Hannah Tarver
Synette Payne, Janna Callahan
Communications Committee .. Greg Thiele
Empty Bowls Ministry Synette Payne
Finance..... Lois Plato
Home Communion Lee Lacy
Lutheran Campus Min. Pr. Jim Rowe
Memorial Committee Yvonne Poppe
Men in Mission..... Andy Waite
Outreach Committee..... Beth Willoughby
Property Committee TBA
Quilters Group Yvonne Poppe
Reconciling In Christ..... Nathan Graham
Worship & Music Committee John Bell
Worship Leaders..... Beth Willoughby
Writers Group Suzanne Terry

Our Mission

***Saved by God's grace,
energized by the Holy Spirit,
and growing spiritually
in Jesus Christ,
we welcome and serve all.***



PREACHER FEATURE

LIGHTEN UP!

Rev. John E. Bell—Pastor

In the Northern Hemisphere, December is the darkest month of the year. The winter solstice occurs on the 21st and marks the point at which we are tilted furthest away from the sun. But the darkness we experience involves more than solar cycles. Political divisions are as sharp as ever. Inflation and supply chain issues have us financially on edge. Just as the pandemic seemed to be finishing its course, the omicron variant poses a new threat. At times the darkness seems a bit overwhelming.

The season of Advent reminds us that dark days are not new. It was a dark night for both Mary and Joseph as they contemplated the ramifications of an untimely pregnancy. Yet, that darkness was illuminated by the arrival of angels who soothed their fears and announce a great work of God in their lives. Throughout the biblical narrative, dark times have given way to the hope of God's grace. The focus of the season is not the darkness, but the hope that arrives to displace it. Dispelling our darkness is the arrival of the true light, God in the flesh.

In these days of darkness, it is time to lighten up. Too often this advice is a flippant call to not take things so seriously. The problems we face are serious. Social cohesion, democracy and even the sustainability of life on this planet are at risk. This is not a time for escapism, but for hope. The light and grace that broke into this world at the birth of a child, continue to break forth today. The love of God that came in the Christ child can come through us as well. For us, the call to, "lighten up," is a call to become agents of God's grace and hope.

The work of Empty Bowls, and Bake your Thanks are ways in which we corporately share God's message of hope and grace. Each of us has our own sphere of influence in which we can bring light to the world. Perhaps it is being present with an acquaintance who is sick or depressed. Perhaps it is an expression of concern or praise for the harried cashier encountered in our holiday shopping. It can be as simple as wearing a mask as a simple expression of concern for the wellbeing of others.

This Advent I invite you to not only experience the hope of Advent, but to be that light that brings hope to a suffering world.

LuMin Denton presents...

2021 LuMin Denton Online Trivia and Auction
Benefitting the NTNL Campus Ministry Mission Fund
Saturday, December 4, 7-9 pm

Join us for an evening of fun and supporting the ministry of Lutheran Campus Ministry in Denton!

December 4, 7-8 pm on Zoom: Join us for a fun, free Trivia challenge. Trivia questions will be wide ranging, including Lutheranism, Denton, UNT, TWU, pop culture, and topics within LuMin students' areas of study. You can join us on Zoom here: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/7635000884>

December 4-5 on BidPal: Purchase Christmas gifts and support the NTNL Campus Ministry Mission Fund through our online auction all weekend. You can access the auction here: <https://one.bidpal.net/lumindenton/welcome> or text "lumindenton" to 243-725.

Evening Book Club

In November, we had a hybrid meeting. Lois Plato hosted the in-person group, and others joined us on Zoom. We discussed Carol Edgarian's *Rise the Euphrates*, and enjoyed talking about the complicated family dynamics therein.

This month, we're changing things up a bit. Since the third Tuesday of the month falls so close to Christmas, we are meeting on the second Tuesday (December 14) at Armadillo Ale Works at 6:30. We will be discussing our favorite books that we've read this year and completing our list to read together in 2022. Since we're meeting in a public location, we won't need to bring treats to share, but there are beverages and usually a food truck at Armadillo Ale. If you've been thinking about joining the book club, this is a great place to start!

For those who like to plan/read ahead:

December 14 – Christmas party at Armadillo Ale at 6:30

January 18 – [The Night Watchman](#) by Louise Erdrich

February 15 – [The Personal Librarian](#) by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray

Email if you want to be added to the evening book club email list – coffeesnob@gmail.com. We'd love to have you join us!



Church Council Request for Staff Gifts

The Church Council invites you to make a contribution for gifts for the church staff. Please have them to the church office no later than Friday, December 19th.

Please mark your payment "Staff Gifts".



The Reconciling in Christ Team is a group of members (Suzanne Terry, Celene Welch, Nathan Graham, Chris Clarkson, and Pastor John Bell) tasked by the Congregation Council to explore whether it is time for Christ The Servant to be formally recognized as a 'Reconciling in Christ' (RIC) church. An RIC church is one that proclaims itself to be welcoming and inclusive to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities (LGBTQIA+ people).

Welcoming. In the small group discussions the RIC team hosted in November, we asked people what they thought Christ the Servant's core values were. That word—"welcoming"—was always one of the first that gets mentioned, and it's something that has stood out to many of us upon coming to CTS, and to our friends and families when they visit. I remember my grandmother saying she could tell what a warm, loving church I'd joined just from being in the building, and she was so taken with our welcome statement that she took a bulletin home and made a point of showing it to guests.

The point of the RIC designation is not that we become a "gay church" but that we make a commitment to be *the Church* more fully, to and for all people.

While some of the language has evolved, that welcome statement has included LGBTQ+ people since Pastor Bell scribbled out the idea of it during lunch. And for us, it isn't a theoretical welcome. We have LGBTQ+ members who play important roles in the life of the church; you can find them serving on ministry teams, in choir, as ushers and assisting ministers.

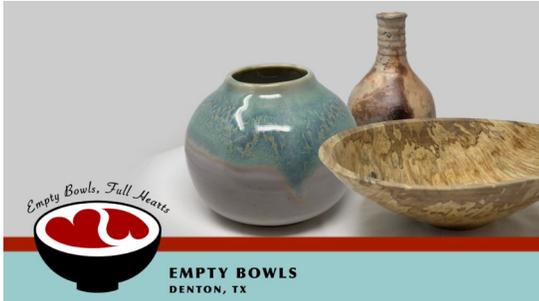
This means that the proposition of becoming Reconciling in Christ does not represent a radical change of direction for CTS. Instead, it's an opportunity to build on our strengths, clarifying and further extending the welcome we already give (see our October and November articles for more on why this is needed). The point of the RIC designation is not that we become a "gay church" but that we make a commitment to be *the Church* more fully, to and for all people.

That is not something we can do without transparency, without unity, or without conversation. In the end, yes, becoming a Reconciling in Christ community requires a vote, but we as a team are not interested in pushing for one before the church is ready. We want to listen and gauge where we all are, to engage as much of our membership as possible, including those who are uncertain, those who have questions, those who are holding back because they are uncomfortable with talking about sexuality, or hold a differing view. We affirm that the process we've set up is for everyone and that every voice is important.

Please share your voice, whether by participating in a group event or speaking to one of the team individually. We want to know how to meet each member where they are. We are all learning together.

Save the Date

Souper Bowl of Caring
Sunday, February 6, 2022
Details to be decided soon



Poinsettia Ordering

We will need:

Your Name

Quantity

In Honor of _____ or

In Memory of _____



The cost is \$16.50. Please mark your payment
 "Poinsettia"

Last Day to order is December 12th.

Jackson Churchill – getting acquainted with Christ the Servant

The Christ the Servant church council, with the help of the CTS Writers' Group, is taking on a mission to interview friends and members of the church for inclusion in the monthly newsletter. This is an opportunity to become acquainted with Jackson Churchill.

1. Where have you lived before? Where was your favorite home? What brought you to Denton? What do you appreciate about Denton?

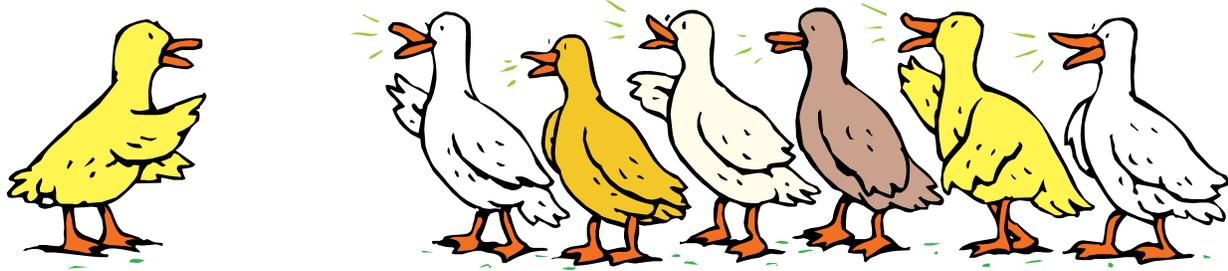
I was born and raised in Duluth, Minnesota, a mid-sized city on the tip of Lake Superior two and a half hours north of Minneapolis. Before coming to Texas, I lived and studied for four years as a music education student at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, located in the picturesque Oneota Valley in northeastern Iowa (I like to say that it was basically in Minnesota). I arrived in Denton in the fall of 2020 as a master's student in jazz studies at the University of North Texas, where I study jazz trombone and play in the One O'Clock Lab Band. I also direct the Five O'Clock Lab Band. I enjoy being in Denton and the DFW area because of all the fantastic musicians I get to learn from and work with every day. Although I haven't yet gotten used to the heat of summer, I love that true fall and spring weather remain in Texas for longer than 3 weeks!

2. Tell about your church experiences. What brought you to Christ the Servant? Tell something about your activities at CTS.

I grew up in the Lutheran church, and I attended an ELCA college for my undergrad, being active in music ministry and youth leadership boards. Thus, it was natural for me to seek out a welcoming congregation in Denton! I've enjoyed worshipping with everyone at CTS, and I've felt the prayerful support of the community uplift me after a long week as a student. Sunday morning church has always been a great way to bring closure to a week while starting off a new one on the right foot!

3. Please add anything (work, hobbies, pets, and so forth) you would like for the people of CTS to know about you.

As a musician whose craft is also their livelihood and main hobby, I try to get outside as much as I can. Up until this year, I was a pretty serious runner; I ran on the cross country and track teams at Luther, and frequently ran around Denton last year in terribly short running shorts. However, with a few nagging injuries that I don't want to aggravate, I've taken up swimming and road biking as more serious workouts, and I've enjoyed the challenge of gaining new types of fitness. I'm an avid Minnesota sports fan, which is tough given the selections to choose from, but I try to stay loyal. You may also find me on the frisbee golf course or trying to hit real golf balls in a straight line at the driving range!



ANNUAL MEETING

The Church Council has set the Annual Congregational meeting for Sunday, December 12th at 10:00 am. We are asking Team Leaders to start preparing your annual report and submit them to the church office no later than November 30th.

At this meeting we will discuss and vote on the 2022 budget.

Many thanks to President Jean Schaake and Vice President Harriet Powell for serving 2 consecutive 3 year terms on the Council.

We will vote on electing 2 people to serve on Council. The Nominating Committee presents the names of Amanda Norvelle and Otto Peters as candidates for three year terms.

New Adult Christian Education Class

Adult Sunday studies will resume on January 9th in the new year. "What will we be studying?" you may ask. Here's a pop-quiz that will help you answer that question.

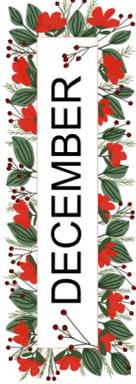
1. What is the longest letter in the New Testament?
2. What book did St. Augustine read from when he had his conversion experience in the garden?
3. What was Martin Luther's favorite book of the Bible?
4. Karl Barth wrote a famous commentary at the beginning of the 20th century. What book was it about?
5. What book will we study this winter?

Perhaps you know the answer now, so get ready for a dive into Paul's letter to the Romans. Hope to see you January 9th.

Rev. Dennis Schurter

TAIZE WORSHIP

The Denton Taize Community invites you to a Taize service of contemplation, prayers, scripture and song in preparation for the miracle of Christmas, or the birth of Jesus Christ. The service will be held **Sunday, December 19 at 7:00 p.m. at Trinity Presbyterian Church**. Our service will be in the tradition of "Blue Christmas", or "The Longest Night", a modern western tradition held around the winter solstice that acknowledges those who are stressed, lonely, or grieving. This year it seems particularly appropriate to have a time of hope and comfort not only for those of us who have lost a loved one, but perhaps for all of us. If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth Moose, a representative of Christ the Servant Lutheran Church on the Denton Taize planning committee.



November 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

January 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <p>Saturday December 4th CTS Activities: 9:00 am Greening the Sanctuary 12:00 pm—2:00 pm Drop off Cookies 2:00 pm—4:00 pm Box Assembly 7:00 pm LuMin Fund Raising Event</p>			1 6:15 pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Advent Service	2 10:00 am Pastor's Text Study	3	4 Sanctuary Greening 10:00 am CoDA Bake Your Thanks Day LuMin Event
5 Food Sunday 9:30 am Christian Ed 11:00 am Hybrid Worship 	6 7:30 pm Evening Bible Study	7 9:00 am Kaffee Klatsch	8 6:15 pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Advent Service	9 10:00 am Pastor's Text Study 7:00 pm Church Council	10	11 10:00 am CoDA
12 10:00 am Annual Congregational Meeting 11:00 am Hybrid Worship 3:00 pm RIC Meeting	13 9:30 am Quilters Evening Bible Study 7:30 pm Evening Bible Study	14 9:00 am Kaffee Klatsch 15 9:30 am Quilters Evening Bible Study 7:00 pm Evening Book Club- Armadillo Ale Works	15 4:15 pm Caroling 6:15 pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Advent Service 8:00 pm W & M Mtg.	16 10:00 am Pastor's Text Study	17	18 10:00 am CoDA
19 9:30 am Christian Ed 11:00 am Hybrid Worship	20 7:30 pm Evening Bible Study	21 9:00 am Kaffee Klatsch	22 7:00 pm Advent Service	23 10:00 am Pastor's Text Study	24 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Service	25
26 11:00 am Hybrid Worship	27 Church Office Closed In Observance of Christmas 7:30 pm Evening Bible Study	28	29	30 10:00 am Pastor's Text Study	31	