

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS LUTHERAN CHURCH



JANUARY 2021

Thoughts from Pastor John

About a year ago this time I vividly remember have a strong sense that 2020 was going to be a banner year. I don't know what it was, but I had this strange sense that it was going to be a year for the ages. Of course, it will go down in my history as one of the most strange and difficult years, but I will be honest it was not what I was expecting or hoping for. Most everything about 2020 has pushed each of us to reevaluate our priorities and stare directly into those things that matter most.

As it appeared 2020 was unraveling before our eyes. As we were adding new language like social distancing and mask up I came across this poem written by Leslie Dwight. As the reality of a global pandemic was unraveling before us I remember thinking wake me up when this nightmare is over, can't we just skip 2020. Or maybe better yet-CANCEL it! This is why these words spoke to me in June as much as they speak to me now as we wrap up 2020 and begin to look forward to 2021.

*What if 2020 isn't cancelled?
What if 2020 is the year we've been waiting
for
A year so uncomfortable, so painful, so
scary, so raw —
that it finally forces us to grow
A year that screams so loud, finally awak-
ening us
from our ignorant slumber
A year we finally accept the need for
change
Declare change. Work for change. Become
the change.
A year we finally band together, instead
of pushing each other further apart.
2020 isn't cancelled, but rather
the most important year of them all.*

--- Leslie Dwight

I am thankful for Leslie and her beautiful words. I am glad we didn't cancel 2020, because if we had, there would have been much we would have missed out on. Of course there is much that didn't happen the way we have come expect them to happen, however God still did amazing work through you and around you. Had we just cancelled, we would have missed it.

I admire your capacity to adapt to the new realities the pandemic forced upon us. Many of you joined us for drive-in worship services that happened in our parking lot. Who would have thought we would come to a point where we could worship together that way. In addition, your capacity of resilience is honorable as you, facing these difficult times, you continued to show up and support your church and your community members in ways you hadn't before.

I am grateful for the ways we have *banded together, instead of pushing each other further apart* as a church community. This path we have walked together in 2020 has prepared us to be even stronger in 2021 and when we can begin to imagine getting back to our regular activities. Until then, stay safe and healthy.

May God's greatest blessing bring you peace and joy. Happy New Year friends!



Your partner on the journey,
Pastor John

Join us live for worship Sunday mornings at
9:30 am! Here is the link:
vimeo.com/event/377275

Cover Photo courtesy of Bruce Nielson.

Thank you!

Thoughts from Pastor Amanda

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I miss worshipping in person with you in the sanctuary and Luther Hall. I am thankful for the ways we continue to be Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church together. And, I look forward to this new year and the hopefulness of gathering for small groups, fellowship, and worship within our facility as vaccinations become more available. You continue to be in my prayers during this pandemic and I hope that you are staying well and tending to your spiritual, mental, emotional and physical health during this time of increased social isolation. God has and will see us through this time in our lives and history, just as God sustained and abided with God's people in the past.

Normally I use this column in January to look forward to a new year together.

And I am looking forward to a new year with our congregation and wider community (please check out worship and faith formation activities). However, I write this article from a profound place of sadness and I must acknowledge it rather than moving too quickly to hopes, dreams and plans.

This winter has seen my family affected by Covid and grief. My mother and sister have been ill with Covid. Thankfully they are improving. My sister has even returned to work at her nursing home as she tends to the residents of her assigned unit. My mom continues to deal with ongoing symptoms from Covid yet has survived the initial, immediate threat. I'm grateful for all of that. And yet my heart is sad . . . sad for many griefs . . . my cousin Mark who is on a ventilator at the hospital and at death's door from acute liver failure due to unknown reasons (he was ill with Covid this fall and has been weak since then) . . . the death of another beloved member of our congregation, Barb Josephson, and the inability to gather with her family at her bedside in the

final moments of her life and to gather as a congregation to remember her and celebrate her life . . . the many members of our community who are alone this season, whether at home to stay safe from Covid or at a hospital or nursing home and not able to see loved ones . . . the little things, like the cancellation of the Holidazzle celebration or the closure of the museums which means no visit for my kids to the Swedish Institute's Santa Claus. . . the long lines of folks receiving boxes of food from Merrick Food Shelf, which is great because they're receiving food they need, and yet makes me sad because who are we as a society that so many people have this need in the first place . . . the list could go on and on.

Normally I abide in the light of hope. I am a very optimistic person. If you look up optimist in the dictionary my picture may even be there. I am also aware that I have a tendency to move forward without naming grief. In my very Scandinavian ancestral way, I put aside grief for what needs to be done and remind myself of the good I know. Yet grief and darkness is part of who we are as Christians. As Ecclesiastes reminds us there is a time to mourn and a time to rejoice. We cannot have the light without the darkness. Most importantly, God dwells in the darkness and the light, reaching us where we are.

So, dear friends in Christ, what have you been grieving this winter? What is the darkness you are abiding or walking among? How is God dwelling with you in the muck?

The gifts of Christmas are plentiful. For me, this Christmas season, the most precious gift is the reminder that Emmanuel God shows up in the muck and mess of human living and fragility with our tender hopes and raw grief. May God be with you. and, merry Christmas.



Pastor Amanda

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY MINISTRY

DECEMBER 2020 SUNDAY SCHOOL PACKET

Watch for a weekly email with a video link with a special children's message. Use this packet to explore the story further with leaflet activities, family page, craft, game or service project. A special thank you to Cindy Olson Crayne, Cyndi Blume and Stephanie Surine for planning and preparing these activities! Please let me know if you do not have a Spark Story Bible (Pre-K through Grade 2) or a Spark Bible (Gr. 3-5) in your home so we can get a copy to you!

SUNDAY SCHOOL @ HOME

Jan. 3 (Christmas 2) - Jesus the Word (John 1:10-18)

God became human and lived among us as Jesus.

Spark Story Bible pages 240-241, Spark Bible pages 1171

Jan. 10 (Baptism of Our Lord) - Jesus' Baptism (Mark 1:4-11)

Through baptism, we remember that we are beloved children of God!

Spark Story Bible pages 242-245, Spark Bible pages 1100

Jan. 17 (Epiphany 2) - God Calls Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-20)

People of all ages help God.

Spark Story Bible pages 122-125, Spark Bible pages 299-300

Jan. 24 (Epiphany 3) - Jonah and the Big Fish (Jonah 1-4)

Jonah runs away from God, and a fish swallows him.

Spark Story Bible pages 190-193, Spark Bible pages 1008-1010

Jan. 31 (Epiphany 4) - Teaching and Healing (Mark 1:21-28)

The Holy Spirit is alive in all of us.

Spark Story Bible pages 254-255, Spark Bible pages 1101



Wednesdays at GA

Online Gatherings for

Confirmation Meetings for youth in grades 6-8

High School Youth Group

For more information about Sunday School and Confirmation programs, contact Sherrie Nordquist by calling the Church office 651.289.9882 (direct line) or sherrie@gachurch.org

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Tune in to Table Talk on Sundays in January

The link to the sessions will be provided each week on Sunday mornings. We will begin at 11:00 am, following Coffee Hour in the same Zoom group. The following are the topics for each Sunday. There will be a presentation each Sunday, followed by discussion on Zoom.

January 3 - *No Table Talk*

January 10 - *Local Mission, Mission Where We Live*, led by
The Rev. Justin, Saint Paul Area Synod

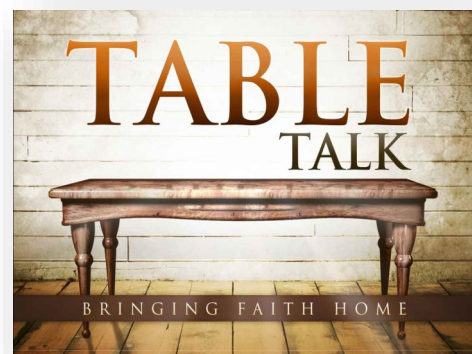
January 17 - *Global Mission*

The Rev. Peter Harrits, Saint Paul Area Synod

January 27 - *Annual Meeting*

2021 Annual Meeting of the Congregation of
Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church

January 3 - TBA

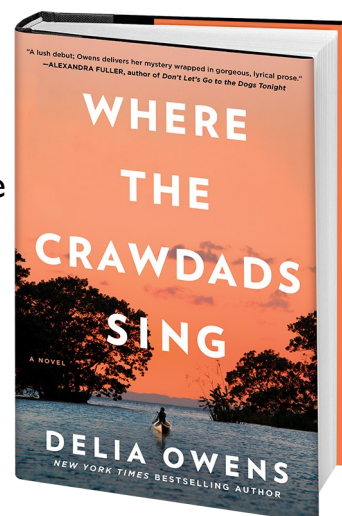


Women's Book Club

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 25, 2021 at 1pm. We will meet on a Zoom call. Contact Sherrie if you would like to receive the Zoom link. The book club selection for January is *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens. We will not be ordering books from the library for everyone for the time being.



The book is available on Amazon or possibly at your neighborhood public library or bookstore. Please contact Carol Sandberg for more information.



OUR LIFE TOGETHER

VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR EACH SUNDAY MORNING AT 10:45 AM

Join us for our weekly coffee hour on Zoom.com!

If you don't have a computer, you can call in!

Hope To See You!

Call 312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 91801847094

Password: 405261



OUR LIFE TOGETHER

A Christmas Letter from Camp Onomia

Warm wishes from the Shores of Shakopee!

It is winter at the end of a simply crazy year. In the darkness we raise our candle high to light the way. Did you know that even in the darkest night, a candle lit across the lake from camp can be seen clearly? Imagine what would happen when that flame is multiplied 10 fold, a hundred fold. The tiny lamp becomes a brilliant light illuminating the beauty of creation around us. Christ's love for us is like that. It is shown to us at Christmas by a star over a stable, and by a baby in a manger who is our hope and our salvation.

We have deeply missed being able to share that flame with you this year at camp. Life-changing experiences have been put aside so that all might remain safe, waiting for the day that we may again gather to sing around the campfire, play some gaga ball, and hear again about the immense love that our God has for each one of us. The significance of the camp experience lies not in the games and curriculum and spiffy accommodations but through the experience of Christ in the flesh of the relationships and the community here. Camp will be back next summer with all of the good things you've come to expect at Camp Onomia. Look for a delayed roll-out of our summer schedule in the next few months. We will be here for you. We can't wait to gather again before sunset at the big stone cross on the shores of Shakopee!

We are grateful for the outstanding financial support many have provided this year to sustain us through these challenging times. You can continue your offerings either through the links on our home page or by sending a check to us by year's end if you are able.

May your Christmas season be filled with wonder, hope, and joy!

"Come thou long expected Jesus"

Jim Schmidt, Executive Director

God's Global Barnyard - December Global Hunger Special Concerns Offering

There is still time to bring in your Global Barnyards December special concerns donations. January 8 is the last day to contribute online or to bring in cash or checks or coins saved up during Advent in the Barn Banks. An animal can make a world of difference for a family in need. Animals provide food to eat, fertilizer to grow crops and offspring to sell at the market. Our gifts can help a family escape the cycle of hunger and poverty for good. Sunday School kiddos will be choosing the animals we will sponsor over a Zoom meeting this month. Watch for details coming soon!

EPIPHANY 2021: JOURNEYING WITH CHRIST

Like the Magi, we follow the stars and marvel at the grandeur of God's creation and incarnation. During this liturgical season of Epiphany, meaning "manifestation", we journey with Christ from infancy to adulthood, from his baptism to the transfiguration. As we journey, we are reminded that God shows up in surprising ways. We are called to notice the ways and wonder: How? When? Where? What? Whom? Why? Ultimately asking ourselves: What does it mean for us to be the incarnation of Christ in the world?

January 6 Epiphany Wednesday 6 pm live-stream from the chapel

We conclude the 12 days of Christmas season with the story of Epiphany and marvel at the ways in which God continues to manifest God's self in our world.

January 10 Baptism of Jesus

We celebrate the baptism of Jesus and hear God's words: You are my Son, the Beloved. God's words for Jesus echo in the waters of delight at our own baptisms.

Rev. Justin Grimm, Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Evangelical Mission, will be our guest preacher and bring a word of the ministry of local mission within our synod.

January 17 Come and See

Jesus calls Philip to follow him. Philip invites his friend Nathaniel to "come and see." And their journey of discipleship begins.

Rev. Peter Harrits, Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Bega Kwa Bega, will be our guest preacher and bring a word of the ministry of global mission partnerships with our synod.

January 24 Follow Me

Jesus calls his first disciples, saying "Follow me." How is Jesus calling us to follow him now?

January 31 Jesus heals the man with an unclean spirit

Jesus begins his public ministry with healing and casting out of unclean spirits. How should our discipleship imitate his public ministry?

February 7 Jesus heals Simon's mother

Jesus heals those he loves too, including his friend Simon's mother. How are we actively loving those we do not know and those whom we know the best?

February 14 Transfiguration

At the mountaintop God again claims Jesus as his beloved child. When and how do you hear God's claim of you as God's beloved one?

All services will be available online via livestream at 9:30 am on Sunday mornings, unless otherwise noted. During the season of Epiphany there will be no Wednesday drive-in services. These services will resume for Lent.



OUR LIFE TOGETHER

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANNUAL MEETING

Our annual congregation meeting is held the last Sunday of January and convenes for the ongoing business of our congregation, including the election of council members and delegates and the approval of the budget for 2021's shared mission and ministry. Hopefully we will also vote to ratify the revised constitution that has been sent to the synod for review. If not, the ratification vote will occur at next year's annual meeting.

This year's annual meeting will be held on Sunday, January 31st at 11 am. Due to the pandemic this meeting will be held via Zoom which allows for online and call-in participation from voting members. Please join at the link or phone number provided below. This information will also be conveyed by the weekly Wednesday emails leading up to the annual meeting.

As this year's annual meeting will be held in a different "location" than Luther Hall, we ask that you participate in a Zoom training on Thursday, January 21 at 7 pm or Sunday, January 24. Those links and numbers will be provided in upcoming emails also (and posted below). A copy of the annual report will be provided to you ahead of the annual meeting via email. If you'd like to receive a hard copy of the annual report mailed to you, please contact Judy Hitchcock at judy@gachurch.org or 651-774-5954 and request one.

For Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 31st:

Link: <https://zoom.us/j/96586411195?pwd=TIRWN25wZlJTdS9hWVVMbMmN6L0R6Zz09>

Meeting ID: 965 8641 1195 Passcode: 565103

Dial-in phone number: +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

For Zoom Training on Thursday, January 21st:

Link: <https://zoom.us/j/96921022049?pwd=dWZ3NmFVYzJJVFYrWEU4aIRDUkROU09>

Meeting ID: 969 2102 2049 Passcode: 650276

Dial in phone number: +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

For Zoom Training on Sunday, January 24th at noon:

Link: <https://zoom.us/j/98217064999?pwd=T0lPM3ExYzJ6OUtNTDd5MUtrbUpTZz09>

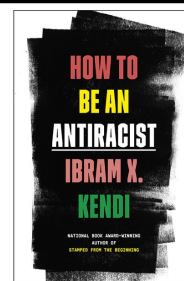
Meeting ID: 982 1706 4999 Passcode: 416037

Dial-in phone number: +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

You will be receiving these links in upcoming emails, as well, that will feature a clickable link. You won't need to type anything in.

How To Be An Anti-Racist Book Group

This winter you are invited to a six-week small group book conversation about the book "How to Be an Anti-Racist" by Ibram Kendi. This online small group conversation will be led by Pastors John and Amanda, beginning the week of January 10th and concluding the week of ebruary 14th. We will meet online on a weekday evening or at a weekend time depending on the majority of the participants' availability. We will read 3 chapters per week for conversation and utilize an Advocates for Racial Equity approved discussion guide for this book and important conversation about racism and our own discipleship role for racial equity work. We're hopeful to have enough members interested in this conversation that we can 2-3 small groups. If you're interested in participating in this book group and conversation please contact Pr. Amanda at a.simons@gachurch.org.



OUR LIFE TOGETHER

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1	Marianne Anderson Virginia King	19	Victoria Drake Jack Lipetzky Dan Shogren
2	Arline Carlson Maiv Cib Lis Her Ryan Pfalz	20	Albert Hayne Joseph Lynch Karl Pearson
3	Yong Kay Moua Andrea Travis	21	Sara Cromey Jean Schwartz
8	Jimmy Claypool	22	Mary Butler
9	Barbara Hawkins	23	Steven Garbe Craig Hawkins Stephanie Hayne
11	Tiffany Goepfort	24	Mary Anderson
12	Scott Wegscheider	25	Lori Schmidt
13	Noah Holthaus Mary Konicek Kevin Zenk	27	Nancy Selander
14	Brittany Hawkins	28	Emily Harrison
16	Kelly Pfalz	29	Richard Gustafson
17	Audrey Elmquist Patricia Swanson Gary Vietor	30	Quinn Thompson
18	Donald Bjorkman Nicholas King Strong	31	Deana Madison Harris Viker

Gustavus Adolphus Office Hours

Monday — Thursday 9:00 am — 12:00 pm

By Appointment Only, Please

Schedule Your Visit with Individual Staff Members

**The Sanctuary Is Available for Prayer by Request,
email Pastor Amanda for a time at a.simons@gachurch.org**

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Worship Schedule

JANUARY 2021

- Sunday, January 3 9:30 am Virtual Worship (also available later)
Second Sunday in Christmas
Gospel Lesson: John 1:1-18

- Wednesday, January 6 5:30 pm Virtual Worship (also available later)
Epiphany

- Sunday, January 10 9:30 am Virtual Worship (also available later)
Baptism of Our Lord and Epiphany Sunday
Gospel Lesson: Mark 1:4-11
Our Guest Preacher is The Rev. Justin Grimm

- Sunday, January 17 9:30 am Virtual Worship (also available later)
Second Sunday of Epiphany
Gospel Lesson: John 1:43-51
Our Guest Preacher is The Rev. Peter Harrits

- Sunday, January 24 9:30 am Virtual Worship (also available later)
Third Sunday of Epiphany
Gospel Lesson: Mark 1:14-20
Budget Information Meeting (Virtual) : 11:00 am on Zoom

- Sunday, January 31 9:30 am Virtual Worship (also available later)
Fourth Sunday of Epiphany
Gospel Lesson: Mark 1:21-28
Annual Congregational Meeting (Virtual): 11:00 am on Zoom



INTRODUCING A NEW WAY TO JOIN SUNDAY WORSHIP AT GA — ANY PHONE! CALL 833-452-0202. IT'S A FREE CALL...YOU CAN LISTEN TO THE MOST RECENT SERVICE OR YOU CAN LISTEN LIVE ON SUNDAYS!



GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS LUTHERAN CHURCH

1669 Arcade Street North
St. Paul, MN 55106
651.774.5954 - www.gachurch.org



Gustavus Adolphus is a member of the Saint Paul Area Synod (SPAS · www.spas-elca.org), of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA · www.elca.org)



Church Staff & Contact Information

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Sherrie Nordquist, Director of Christian Education	sherrie@gachurch.org 651.289.9882
Andrew Parr, Director of Worship and Music	andrewp@gachurch.org 651.289.9885
Maggie Kidnie, Interim Business Administrator	maggie@gachurch.org 651.289.9885
Rob Sebo Lubke, Office Administrator/Communication Specialist	rob@gachurch.org 651.289.9884
Judy Hitchcock, Administrative Assistant	judy@gachurch.org 651.289.9883
Kevin Berglund, Jerry Martin, Andy Pahl Custodians	custodians@gachurch.org 651.289.9889

We are inspired by the Spirit to:
GROW in spiritual vitality
WORSHIP creatively and faithfully together
EMBRACE our wonder
BUILD authentic Christian relationships



Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church is financed entirely by the generous, direct financial gifts of its members and friends.

There are several ways you can bless this mission of Jesus with your gifts:

- Place your **check or cash** in the offering plate during the service. Envelopes are in the pews.
- **Electronic Funds Transfer** from our website, gachurch.org (upper right corner). You can set up a one-time or recurring donation. You can also give electronically from your phone by texting the numeric value of your desired gift to 651-204-1921, then follow the prompts.
- **Bill Pay.** Follow the directions for your bank or credit union to create GA as a Payee at 1669 Arcade St. N, St. Paul, MN 55106, and choose to make a regular weekly or monthly offering.
- **Stock Transfer to the church.** Maggie Kidnie in the business office at 651.289.9885.