

THE SIGNAL

December/January

Volume 47, Issue 1

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT OSLC

MESSIAH COME

Mission Statement

"Our Saviour's Lutheran Church welcomes all to the love of Christ through Worshipping, Learning, and Serving."

Welcome Statement

We are a Christian community committed to ministry in Fort Collins and the world. We rejoice in the manner in which diversity has enriched, nurtured and challenged our lives and the ministry we share in Christ, and we invite all to participate in Word and Sacrament without discrimination due to race, creed, sexual orientation, or financial status.



Advent Festival-Nov. 30, 9:45

Preschool Craft Fair-Dec. 6, 9am-3pm

Christmas Program & Italian Dinner-

Dec 14th 4pm

Christmas Cantata-Dec 20 & 21,

all worship services

Happy Birthday Jesus Party & Service

Dec 21-9:45

Caroling-Dec 21, 3pm

Christmas Eve Worship: 3, 5, 7, 11pm

Christmas Day: 10am at Our Saviour's

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- Full schedule for Christmas services, page 4.
- Catholic Charities ministry to the homeless, page 8.
- A member shares a touching mystery, page 12.

LETTERS FROM THE PASTORS

THE GIFT OF ADVENT:

Grace and Peace to you in Christ Jesus,

Fifty Years ago there was a sense of excitement and fear as a small group of people felt called to a common mission here in Northern Colorado. They felt compelled to create a new ministry that would ultimately become Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. It must have been a little like walking in the dark. They had a hope and dream of what it would look like, but they didn't know where it would be or what it would look like, and the journey itself offered little clarity on the milestones and rewards ahead of them. They rested their promise on the light of hope in the Holy Spirit and the calling of Christ to share that light.

As we ponder our church 50

years later we are still journeying trusting in the Holy Spirit to guide. The season of Advent reminds us that in many ways we are still in the dark too. We journey onward with sure and certain hope in the resurrection, but the element of darkness around us reminds that there is still uncertainty and change. The danger for any church is thinking that they have arrived; That they have it all together. The gift of Advent is a reminder that Christ's coming is complete, and yet still we have much to do because darkness is still here.

Thank You for being a part of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. A place where we don't have it all together, but we are willing to accept the unknown as a challenge and opportunity instead of something to fear; A

church that confronts desires to confront tough issues even when it doesn't have easy answers. A church trusts that knowing whose we are is more important.

In the coming year we will celebrate our 50th anniversary. We will remember where we've been. We will consider who we are now and we will continue together as Gods' people seeking new ways to bless God's world tomorrow. We hope that you will join us in these festivities. We also hope that you will find joy in the journey that we share together.

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Leta Behrens and

Pastor Michael Stadtmueller

A WORD FROM THE PASTORAL INTERN:

As I near the end of my third month of internship at Our Saviour's I continue to be grateful for the warm welcome that you have extended to me and my family, as well as for this opportunity to learn and grow among you.

As some of know, my journey towards ordination has been long and winding. Although I've sensed this call since I was in high school, there was a long period of time when I didn't think I would be able to be ordained as a minister in the ELCA. And

although I am not there quite yet, it is truly a joy to be on this journey again, stretching my pastoral wings through preaching, teaching, leading worship, and building relationships with you. It is a gift to be reminded of how much I love this sacred work, and also to do this work with the realistic hope that I may truly live into my calling as a pastor.

I am so grateful to Our Saviour's for being willing to live into your mission of "Welcoming All to the

Love of Christ through Worshiping, Learning and Serving" and making space for me and my family in your midst for this year. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to experience your gifts and wisdom, and to learn and grow with you for this time. Thank you.

Grace and Peace,

Diana Linden-Johnson

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

EQUIPPED FOR . . .

Fishing is my hobby, my favorite sport. The fishing equipment that I have acquired over the years leaves little to be desired. Having fished for many years, I have encountered many obstacles and difficult situations. It becomes second nature to think ahead and prepare for whatever might occur. There is a learning curve.

In my boat, which is propelled by an electric motor (no gas motors allowed where I fish), I carry two batteries. There are life jackets, rain gear, a landing net for large fish (used recently for a 19 lb. cat fish), extra line with rigs and jigs, and of course oars (used once) in case the batteries become weak or dead. There are boots, a straw hat for the sun, sun screen and extra fuses for the live well pump-on and on. The boat is well equipped.

People I take fishing are always amazed and occasionally grateful for the thoughtful preparation that has been made. Little or nothing has been left to chance.

My daily living is not left to chance either. I take care of my body, watch what I eat, exercise regularly and take a daily nap. Furthermore, the absolute best physicians available have my medical records. My physical health is an invaluable gift from God and one that needs constant attention.

Then there is my spiritual life-my inner life-my *mysterious companionship with God*. It is not left to chance either. Daily prayer, quiet

time and sharing my faith all enhance and enrich my life and equip me for difficult times of which I have had my share-divorce, cancer, untimely deaths of two sons. Thank God for being equipped! *Spiritual health is perhaps our most valuable treasure.*

Maintaining *spiritual health* often gets side tracked by daily pressures of *busyness*. Our society sadly and subtly places high value on busyness, and obliquely scorns taking time to step back to gain perspective and rest. Sometimes what we need more than anything is simply to *stop, take a couple deep breaths and thank God for the gift of life and all that make it worth living*. That takes about 30 seconds.

Alas, we run so close to full throttle so much of the time that when tragedy, difficult times or bad news muscle their way into our lives, we have no reserve available that would enable us to remain engaged in healthy living. We are unnecessarily vulnerable and inevitably crash.

Spiritual health is not only our ticket to living fully and joyfully, but is also our buffer and support in times of trouble. It doesn't take many years of living to experience life's troubles at some level.

Spiritual health is God's answer to our crises in life. Be prepared-be equipped!

It is only foolishness to say there is no time to pray, to be quiet and regain perspective. There is no

more excuse for being ill prepared for whatever comes in life than there is excuse for me not to take time to put life jackets in my boat and charge the batteries before launching.

Before you launch into each new day, prepare your equipment. Take time to pray. Check in with God who is your life partner and keep that conversation going throughout the day. You will be blessed and grateful if you do.

This exercise in preparedness might be new to you. Let it be said, however, that *spiritual mindfulness* is a creative option for living an abundant life, especially when life's road gets rough.

Pastor Fred Castor
Spiritual Guide



*"Spiritual health is God's answer
to our crises in life."*

WELCOMING ALL THROUGH WORSHIP

DECEMBER/JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE:



December, 2014

Sat, Dec 6

Holden

Sun, Dec 7

He is our Peace

Praise Band

Sat, Dec 13

Holden

Sun, Dec 14

With One Voice

Windstrings

Dec 20-21

All Services

Christmas Cantata

Chancel Choir &

Musicians

Sun, Dec 28

Christmas Liturgy with

Communion

Special Music

December 24, 2014

3pm: Family Celebration with

Communion

Cherub Choir

5pm & 7pm: Festive Worship with

Communion

5pm : Brass & Bells

7pm : Chancel Choir & Jubilate

11pm: Candlelight Reflections

with Communion

Special Music

Christmas Day Worship

December 25, 2014

10am: Our Saviour's, Carols &

Communion

January, 2015

Sat, January 3

Holden

Sun January 4

Elw 4

Special Music

Sat, January 10

Holden

Sun, January 11

He is our peace

Praise Band

Sat January 17

Joyous light

Sun, January 18

Now the feast

Brass, Youth Choirs &

Chancel Choir

Sat, January 24

Holden

Sun, January 25

With One Voice

Windstrings

Lutheran Men of Song

Sat, January 31

Holden

FLOWER SCHEDULE & PRAYERS:

December 7:

December 14: Kathy & Larry Roesner

December 21: Poinsettias

December 28: Poinsettias

Long Term Prayers:

Jack & Margaret Means; Dorothy Pederson
(Matt;s mother); Johanna Carpine (friend of Ann
& Steve Story;); all service men & women.

May God hear our prayers..

January 4, 2015:

January 11:

January 18:

January 25:

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

CELEBRATING JESUS' BIRTH WITH POINSETTIAS

The Altar Guild is ordering poinsettias again this year to decorate the church on Christmas Eve. If you would like to order a plant in memory or in honor of a loved one, please sign below and return to the church office with a check for \$14.00 payable to OSLC with "Poinsettias" in the memo line. Please fill out a separate form for each poinsettia ordered.

Orders are due by Sunday, December 14.

Your Name:

In Memory Of:

In Honor Of:

WELCOMING ALL THROUGH LEARNING

OSLC PRESCHOOL

November was a busy month for the Preschool. Our first week we talked all about how to live Healthy. We painted with lettuce leaves, made noodle necklaces, of course the very favorite was painting with chocolate pudding, (eating it wasn't so bad either). The second week we learned all about shapes. We started our week with a field trip to The Garlic Knot. They were so wonderful with our kids. They each got to make their own pizza, they saw how they made the pizzas, got to make their own Garlic knots, and ended the trip with Ice-Cream. If you get the chance take your family there for a great pizza meal, you won't be disappointed. We made Kite shapes, sequenced shapes and made our own Domino shape game. Our last two weeks we celebrated Thanksgiving. We made votive candles for our holiday ta-

bles, a thankful wreath and a lot of different Turkeys. On Friday of that week we made our parents a thankful lunch of vegetable soup, homemade bread, and pumpkin bars.

December we will deck our halls the first week. We are going on a field trip to Ft. Collins Nursery to make our on Christmas Bough. We will study how other places in the world celebrate Christmas and finally have our own Christmas celebration in our classroom.

The Bake sale and Craft fair will be held on December 6th from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm. It is a great way to start your Christmas shopping and buy some great Christmas treats. Of course you need to come and have a wonderful Kraut Burger, just come early they sell out very

fast. We also have a Flea Market where you can get a great bargain on something wonderful. Thank you so much in advance to everyone who helps us with this Preschool fund raiser. After 16 years it is still a great fund raiser and every time I tell someone that I think we should be done I always hear "but that is how I start my Christmas season, please don't stop". We wish all of you a very blessed season and again we thank you for your support of our ministry at Our Saviour's.

Preschool Bake & Craft Sale

December 6th from 9am-3pm

ADULT BIBLE STUDIES DECEMBER - JANUARY

We will conclude this year in December with our study of I, II, and III John and perhaps Titus as well. With the conclusion of these books, we will have studied 21 of the 27 books in the New Testament. Beginning on January 6, we will take a breather from the N.T. to study the prophet Jeremiah and the book that bears his name.

You are strongly invited to come and join with your brothers and sisters for Bible Study on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. or Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Please come; all are invited even if your attendance is infrequent.

Perhaps this could even be a New Year Resolution!

Please come; all are invited even if your attendance is infrequent.

NEW IN THE LIBRARY

Following new book available soon in the OSLC Library --

I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban

by Malala Yousafzai
Young Reader's Edition

I Am Malala is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons. *I Am Malala* will make you believe in the power of one person's voice to inspire change in the world.



Annual Meeting

Pre-Annual Budget Review Forums

January 18th & 25th, 2015

9:45 am - Room 11E

Saturday, January 24th @ 6:30 PM

Annual Meeting

January 25, 2015

Noon - Sanctuary

WELCOMING ALL THROUGH SERVING

CATHOLIC CHARITIES MINISTRY TO THE HOMELESS

OSLC has been involved at Catholic Charities, in a ministry of food service to the homeless for some time. This is a wonderful ministry to the poor, however, we need to refresh our list of volunteers.

Catholic Charities is requesting 3 to 5 volunteers to prepare and serve dinner from 5:30 to 8 pm on the third Thurs of the month, 2 volunteers to serve coffee from 8:30 to 10:30 and 4 people

to serve lunch from 12 to 1:30 pm on the second Saturday of the month. They ask for a commitment of a three month period.

Dana Sebastian, is the director of volunteers for Catholic Charities located at 460 Linden Street, Fort Collins. (Phone 970 -484-5010) (email is dsebastian@ccdenver.org) Kent Sorenson is our contact at O S L C , kensorenson555@comcast.net .

Either Dana or Kent will be most happy to answer any questions you may have.

Homelessness is a growing problem in Fort Collins and a number of agencies are trying to address this issue. Jerry Her-ships, a recent visitor to OSLC, from AfterHours Church, Denver said, "There are 400 references to helping the poor in the Bible." Thanks for your consideration to this important ministry to the homeless.

HOUSING HOMELESS FAMILIES AT OUR CHURCH:

Our congregation has chosen to be part of Faith Family Hospitality....helping the homeless. As a faith group, we have said, yes, we care. We give families a warm place to sleep, nurture them with meals, show love, concern and say their names. These families are struggling to get jobs and housing. This program is helping. Fifteen families are currently waiting to get into the FFH program.

We hosted 5 adults and 11 children during the week of Novem-

ber 2nd to the 9th. Several adult family members commented on how much they appreciated the welcome and stay at OSLC. In the play room, one of the families had written, "Thank you for your kindness." Most of the children signed it.

OSLC will be hosting families again during the week of February 1st to the 8th. Thank you to the volunteers who help out each time we host and to the new faces we have seen. However, we need more new people to volunteer. Please

help. To sign up go to OSLC website, click on serve, under the FFH information is a link to the Sign Up Genius. Volunteer job descriptions are described there. You are welcome to contact the coordinators with any questions: Jodi Loecke at jsloecke@comcast.net, Kim Nichols at kk1nichol@gmail.com or Rosie Goetz at keroja@comcast.net.

Have a blessed holiday season.

OSLC BELL CHOIR

Six members of the OSLC Handbell Choir will be ringing Christmas carols as part of the Avery House Christmas Open House from 5-7 p.m. on Tues. Dec. 9th. This house museum is located at 328 W. Mountain Ave. and admission is free. Please join us!

FAITH COMMUNITY NURSES

Hopefully you have noticed our bottles of hand sanitizer in the church pews. We have them available because the majority of infectious diseases can be spread by touch. If you touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with a contaminated hand, a virus can easily enter your body.

To avoid getting sick during this cold and flu season, keep your immune system strong by eating right, exercising, and getting enough sleep.

Wash your hands often, especially before eating. A good scrub with warm water and

soap should take about 20 seconds. Alcohol based sanitizer is a good substitute when a sink is not available.

If someone in your family does become sick, have them stay home during the first part of their illness when they are most contagious. It's not fair to be exposing your friends and co-workers to your illness.

Sneeze and cough into tissues or use the crook of your arm if one is not available. Using disinfectant wipes on frequently touched surfaces like door knobs, faucet handles, telephones, and remotes will help

keep viruses from spreading.

Don't share hand towels or food and beverages either.

If you haven't yet gotten your flu vaccine, it's not too late! It could spare you from a serious illness.

P.S. We have purchased some CPR/First Aid textbooks that can be checked out if you need to take a class. Please contact Peg Hoover to do so.

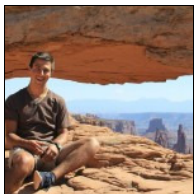
YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM

Lauren Bender: My name is Lauren Bender, currently a sophomore at Colorado State University studying communication studies and criminal justice. I have lived



in Colorado my whole life and grew up in Greenwood Village. Currently involved with a sorority, Young Life and love to ski! My contact info is: lebender@rams.colostate.edu 303-968-0973

SOJ-Prescott Delaware is a junior at Colorado State University studying geology. He is originally from Louisville, Colorado and he has worked at Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp for the last four summers, both as a counselor and as a high ropes coordinator. Some of his hobbies include skiing, mountain biking,



playing guitar, rock climbing, scuba diving, hiking, and pretty much anything outside. He is also an avid traveler. He is also a resident assistant in Newsom Hall. If you have any questions for him please contact him at prescottchase@comcast.net or 303-903-1883.

SOTH-Katie Briley: I am currently finishing in my senior year working towards a double major in Sociology and Human Development & Family Studies.



When I am not busy with school I love to do all things outdoors, but especially hiking and running. This past summer I was a backpacking guide at Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp, and I had an absolute blast! I feel so blessed to have this position as a Youth Leader, and am looking forward to getting to know all of you! Contact: katiebriley8@gmail.com

Trinity-Megan Sawyer: Hello!



I'm Megan and I grew up in Fort Collins and attended Our Saviors Lutheran church. After graduating in May from Luther College in Decorah, IA, I came back to the home I love. My favorite color is yellow and if I could have any pet I would probably want a dragon named toothless, or a pigmy goat. In my free time I like to create all types of art, play my guitar or ukulele, or make sweet chocolate treats for fun. I am super excited to be apart of the new FOCOLU team, and I look forward to working with the youth community!

WELCOMING ALL THROUGH SMALL GROUPS

OSLC Book Club:

All are welcome at the OSLC Book Club. Read some new books, make connections with interesting people, and enjoy lively discussions. We meet the first Monday of each month, 7-8:30 pm. If you have a good book to recommend, would like to host a meeting, or have any questions please contact Diana Hutchinson.



Upcoming Schedule:

Date	Book - Author	Hostess
Dec 1	All that is Solid Melts into Air - Darragh McKeon	Sally Withers
Jan 5	The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics - Daniel James Brown	Diana Hutchinson
Feb 2	Caleb's Crossing - Geraldine Brooks	

WELCOME MINISTRY NEWS:

Welcome to our New Members!

- Rob & Debi, William & Jimmy Arone
- Rev. Don & Margretha Bentz
- Mark, Christine & Cara Butler
- Brian & Teresa Nugent
- Rob Umbaugh, Jana Schwartz, Cooper & Beckett
- Eric, Kara Straumanis, August & Iyla Straumanis
- David Triebe
- Jeanne Clark Whetstone

View their pictures on the Welcome Table in the Narthex, make sure to introduce yourselves and help them get connected at OSLC!

Thank You! – Thanks to Welcome Ministry team members for winterizing the new benches – they look great and provide a perfect spot to rest and connect with friends.

Greeting and Welcoming Guests to OSLC

– We would love to have some new volunteers to help host the Welcome Table on a regular, rotating basis for our three services. Please stop by the table and learn more about this fun and easy way to serve.

Faith Groups - Fall is a great time to begin a Faith Group – all it takes is to invite a few friends or acquaintances to your home for a “planning session”. Enjoy a time of fellowship, snacks and discuss ideas for beginning a regular time of study. Stop by the Welcome Table to get more information on a format for your group. Sharing the hosting and leadership of your meetings can make this an enjoyable way to grow in faith and build friendships to walk with you through the joys and challenges of life.

Coffee and Connect for

Newcomers



An opportunity to visit, learn more about OSLC and ask questions. A great time for Visitors, Newcomers to OSLC and newer members to share their thoughts or get more information. **Watch for the next scheduled date!** **Newcomer Classes** will be offered twice a year in room 11 E – four sessions will be followed by a Sunday brunch with sponsors and a new member reception. Watch for dates in 2015!

OTHER OSLC ACTIVITIES

February 20-22, 2015

YMCA of the Rockies

\$270/family

Join us for family fun in the beautiful Rocky Mountains!

If you are interested, please contact Christie Reimer or call 970-225-0532. \$100 deposit due to reserve your room.

Small Groups

BIBLE STUDY SERIES-Tuesdays, 7PM-8:30PM or Thursdays 9:30-11:00AM

LEAH CIRCLE— Leah Circle will meet on December 11. 6pm for a Christmas gathering & January 22 at 6:45 p.m. at the home of Barb Slattenow.

MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP Wednesdays, 6:45am @ OSLC. Suggested donation for breakfast is \$10.

DECEMBER 21st:: Everyone Welcome!

Happy Birthday Jesus Party, 9:45am;

Caroling Party, 3pm

UPCOMING FOCOLU & YOUTH ACTIVITIES

OSLC DECEMBER PARENT'S NIGHT OUT/KIDS FUN NIGHT

The nursery staff and other volunteers will be hosting a kid's night at the church on: **December 12th from 5:00-9:00pm.**

Parents--you get the evening to shop, wrap gifts, or just relax! You are also welcome to join the activities.

Kids (ages 0-12)--you get to experience some Christmas fun, eat pizza and other snacks, and have some play and movie time!

Youth (ages 13+)--You can come volunteer!

Free will monetary donations and coats will be collected to support Homeless Gear. RSVP to leslie@our-saviours.org with your name, your child's name(s), age(s), and a contact number. Questions, contact Leslie or Pastor Leta (leta@our-saviours.org)

IF YOU PLAN TO BRING YOUR CHILDREN TO THE OSLC KID'S NIGHT OUT PLEASE BE SURE TO RSVP SO THAT THE STAFF CAN PLAN APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES AND HAVE ENOUGH SUPPLIES. THE NURSERY STAFF THANKS YOU.

COME JOIN US FOR A SENIOR HIGH AND JUNIOR HIGH CHRISTMAS EVENT! This will be hosted at Spirit of Joy, December 7th from 7-8:30! This is will be White Elephant gift exchange with a limit of 5-10\$. Try to make it creative and hope to see all of you there!

MIDDLE SCHOOL GATHERING(MSYG) in Colorado Springs **January 16-18, 2014.** The theme of the gathering this year is Here We Go!: A Journey Through the Book of Acts. you

can see more details at www.rmselca.org

ATTENTION SENIOR HIGH KIDS! January 25th we will be meeting at Trinity from 6:30-8:00. This will include pizza at the church and afterwards we will head to Chippers Lane for some Bowling! We are also looking for adults to help drive to the bowling lane so email Lauren if you are available: lebender@rams.colostate.edu Can't wait to see you all there!

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH TRIP! We are going to Chicago and are looking at June 2nd -June 9th as our planned trip. Our hope is that each person's out of pocket expenses will be between \$300 and \$400 dollars. Email Pastor Michael ASAP if you would like to go.

michael@our-saviours.org

STEWARDSHIP

LEARNING FINANCE: DESIGNATED FUNDS— (WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW TO USE THEM)

Every month on the finance bulletin board in the fellowship hall, there are two long sheets; the Budget/General Funds and the Designated Funds. Many people are unsure of the difference. Designated funds are exactly what they sound like. They are contributions that have been donated (or designated) to specific purposes outside of the budget.

Designated funds may be used only for the purpose stated by the person who donated the money and must be accounted

for separately from the general budget. For instance, if someone gives OSLC a donation and on the memo line of their check specifies that the money must be used for a new piano, the only way that the church can use that donation is for a new piano.

If a designated fund for a new piano already exists, the contribution is added to that fund. If, however, a designated fund does not exist, a new fund is created (e.g. New Piano design-

nated fund) and the money is tracked through that fund until a new piano is purchased.

Your finance team greatly appreciates it when you use existing designated funds unless it is your purpose to create a new one for something important to you. If in doubt, please check with any member of the finance team.

Cal Selig
OSLC Treasurer

GENERAL FUND BUDGET UPDATE

GENERAL FUND BUDGET UPDATE

	2014			
	OCT		YEAR TO DATE	
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	ACTUAL	BUDGET
TOTAL GIVING	39,288	55,756	489,847	557,557
LESS EXPENSES	<u>52,525</u>	55,756	<u>526,381</u>	557,557
CASH SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	-13,259		-56,533	

IN THE COMMUNITY

PUT BETHLEHEM ON YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFT LIST THIS YEAR

Help put a smile on the face of a student at Dar al-Kalima University in Bethlehem, the only Lutheran college in the Middle East! Your gift, large or small, will provide scholarship assistance for a student in the fields of music, fine arts, culinary arts

and tour guiding. Bright Stars of Bethlehem Colorado Chapter is raising funds for scholarships through the Wheat Ridge Ministries crowdfunding site at www.WeRaise.US. Look for the project called “**Hope in the Holy Land**” and watch the vid-

eo. Make your tax-deductible donation online. Give the gift of an education—give the gift of hope!

LUTHERAN FAMILY SERVICES ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lutheran Family Services (LFS) is proud of its Lutheran heritage in community service. We have been extending a healing hand to people for 66 years. We believe that all people, from the newborn infant to the most elderly person, deserve to be valued in our community. If you are interested in learning more about LFS or would like to have an LFS staff member share the LFS story with your congregation, please contact Becca Sager at [303.217.5841](tel:303.217.5841) or at becca.sager@lfsrm.org.

Thank you for your continued support! Enjoy the rest of your day and the week ahead!

Becca Sager

Executive Assistant and Church Relations
Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains
[303.217.5841](tel:303.217.5841)

www.lfsrm.org

Plastic totes needed: We are looking for ten 50 gallon plastic totes to use for our Angel Tree collection. If you are willing to donate one, or more, 50 gallon plastic totes please contact Becca Sager at becca.sager@lfsrm.org or at [303.217.5841](tel:303.217.5841).

WE ARE ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

A MEMBER SHARES A TOUCHING STORY

A LIFE IN A SUITCASE: A SAD THOUGHTPROVOKING MYSTERY

written by Rosie Goetz

Several months ago, I had a profound experience while sorting through donated items at the Homeless Gear warehouse. I felt moved to share it with you.

On my usual Thursday afternoon of volunteering as a sorter, I grabbed a rather heavy suitcase from a large pile of donated items. After opening the suitcase, I first noticed several used bus tickets originating in a southern state. The tickets had been paid for by a homeless shelter in Oklahoma. The name on the ticket, "Esther."

Three sets of clothes inside revealed that Esther was likely a middle aged woman. Her

shoes were well worn. She had health problems. A zip lock bag was filled with an insulin bottle along with syringes and alcohol wipes.

Documents in the suitcase held clues that indicated Esther was trying to get things right in her life. She had been trying to get housing and health insurance in Oklahoma. The court system was involved for an unknown reason.

Esther was a woman of faith. A well used Bible was among her possessions. Pages of the Bible were dog-eared and verses underlined.

I felt incredibly humbled while looking at the items in the suitcase. I called other people over to also witness this. I didn't want to do this alone. What I was look-

ing at was so personal, so intrusivea homeless woman's life in such a small space.

I haven't been able to get Esther out of my mind. What had her life been like? What happened to her? Why did she come to Fort Collins? How did the suitcase get to Homeless Gear? No addresses or phone numbers were listed anywhere in her belongings. Did she have family? Did she die? Did she have anyone around to show her love or speak her name? Did anyone care?

"I haven't been able to get Esther out of my mind."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY WALTER SCHULTHEISS!

**WALTER'S 96TH BIRTHDAY
WAS OCTOBER 29TH.**

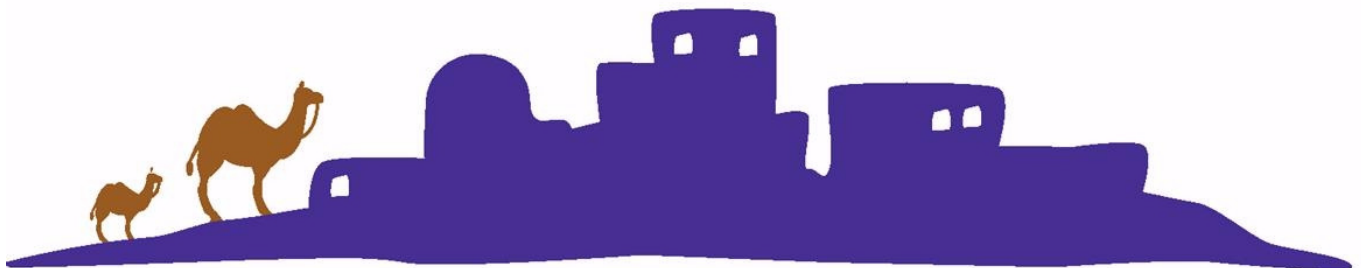
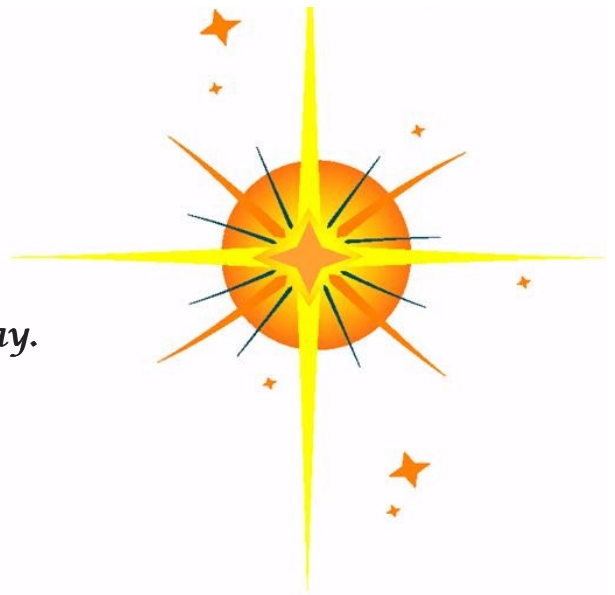
Send Walter belated birthday cards and wishes:

Walter Schultheiss
900 Centre Avenue
Fort Collins, CO 80526



A PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

*Dear Father,
It's Christmas and
We humbly kneel close to the stable,
Listening to the low rustling of hooves in hay.
Our breath is snatched up
By the sight of the Christ child
Lying in a manger.
Basking in the light of the glorious star,
We stand in awe and wonder.
No room?
How could it be!
Yet while we try to understand
The inn with no space for God's Son,
The rooms of our very souls are overcrowded
And even the closets of our minds are outsourced.
Will You forgive us, Jesus,
for making no room
in the inns of our hearts?
May we focus this day on the ultimate gift-
Your love.
In the precious name of Jesus,
Amen.*





OUR SAVIOUR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

2000 South Lemay
Fort Collins, CO 80525

Office: (970) 484-3133

Preschool: 484-7412

Fax: 866-611-6550

www.our-saviours.org

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Pastors

Michael Stadtmueller
michael@our-saviours.org
Leta Behrens
leta@our-saviours.org
Intern Pastor Diana Linden-
Johnson
Diana@our-saviours.org

Parish Secretaries

Mary Wright
mary@our-saviours.org
Mary Jane Cooley
maryjane@our-saviours.org

Signal Editor

Counselor, Spiritual Guide

Leader, Adult Studies

Music Staff

Mary Jane Cooley
Rev. Fred Castor
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Carol Bisbee
Crystal Kerr
Sheri McKelfresh
Marlys Oetken
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Tom Sullwold
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