

Stories from our congregation
December 2016, January & February 2017

The Signal

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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.



A publication From Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

The new signal format is here

As we dwell in Advent and Christmas together, we begin the new church year with a new format for *The Signal* that focuses on sharing our stories: stories of ministry, stories of spirituality, stories from your hearts and the community. We hope to connect more deeply with one another and the community through these stories that we share together. If you have a story you would like to share send it to office@our-saviours.org! The next issue will come out at the beginning of March, so please have your articles submitted by February 5th, 2017.

Regular updates of announcements and 'what's happening' will continue through the e-news and the weekly announcement insert in worship. These are also posted to the website www.our-saviours.org. *The Signal* will come out via email and a few copies will be printed and available in the office. If you would like a copy mailed to you, please email office@our-saviours.org.

May you have a Merry Christmas and know God's love, Jesus' call, and the Holy Spirit surrounding you in the new year.

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2016

Weekly Worship
Saturdays 5:30pm
Sundays 8:30 & 11:00

December 3rd - Preschool Craft Fair
& Flea Market 9 am

December 11th - Christmas Program & Italian
Dinner Mission Trip Fundraiser 5:00 pm

December 16th - Kid's Night In/Parents Night
Out 5 pm

December 17th/18th - Cantata in Worship Services

December 18th - Happy Birthday Jesus

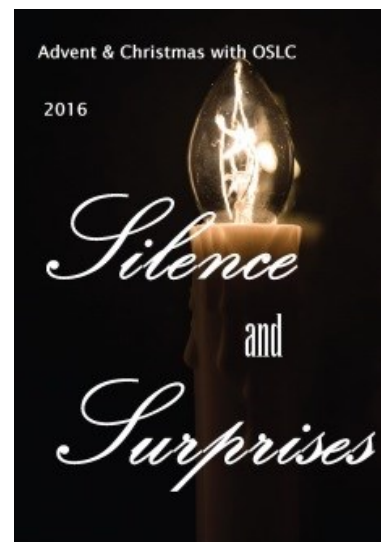
December 21st - Caroling 6:30-8:00 pm

December 24th - Christmas Eve Service
3 pm, 5 pm, 7 pm and 10 pm

December 25th - Christmas Day Worship 10 am

December 31st - Wine & Cheese party after worship 5:30 pm

January 1st - New Year's Day Worship 10 am



A note from our Pastors

My friend Pastor Brigitte Weier shared that her guilty pleasure is listening to Christmas tunes all throughout Advent.

Pastor Leta Behrens admits that she starts listening right after Halloween, and I gotta admit, I love to sing those Christmas tunes for as long as I can too.

The rest of the public laughs at our neurotic guilt over worrying about starting early, but our reasoning is based on a very real problem. You see we realize that the extension of the Christmas season can be a wonderful treat, but our neurosis comes from this being at the direct expense of the season of Advent.

The proliferation of Christmas tunes is not really the issue. It's a world that loves the culture of Christmas, but not the spiritual aspects of it. It may be a case of us getting what we want, and not what we need. After all, most of us will admit that we live in an "instant" society that never waits for anything. We are used to immediate results and instant gratification, and often when we need something we purchase it immediately. The only problem is that when it comes to the Spirit and how we experience God, Advent is more aligned with the reality of our experience in the world than Christmas. The Spirit doesn't flow through a billboard. It isn't lit-up in our trees. It often comes like the cold and broken Alleluia that the song writer Leonard Cohen writes about. It mostly comes when we least expect it.

Your leaders will admit they are hypocrites for not giving up Christmas tunes, but we do want to invite you into the season of Advent to experience all the riches this season has to offer. A period of waiting, of expectant hoping, of attentive listening and wondering is our wish for you.

The story of God's people has never been one of immediate rewards. It has been a story of a God who loves all of Creation and is here to redeem suffering, to walk with us in the valleys of life, and to empower us to reflect God's light and love to the rest of the world that is caught up in life's struggles.

On the day after Christmas the Christmas songs on the radio will end. At midnight December 26th the world begins to sing a different tune. What if this year you sought to celebrate the 12 Days of Christmas that come after? What if this year you made an effort to experience Advent as well as Christmas?

Pastor Michael

Spiritual Growth with Pastor Fred Castor

Discernment is the key to our acceptance of God's presence in our lives. It is a unique gift of the Spirit whose shadow is ever upon us.

One dimension of discernment is the discovery that God speaks to us endlessly, and in countless ways. Alas, we also hear evil messages within the din of the world's persistent noise. Discernment is the Spirit's operative tool for our identifying the source of the messages that come our way.

There is another dimension of discernment that is oblique to the above mentioned understanding. It is also a message from God, but specifically an answer to prayers requesting direction in decision-making, in which we are constantly engaged. "What should I do, Oh God? Where do I go from here? Which of these options would be better for me, my family, the church and/or the world? What would you have me do?"

Decision-making is not an easy assignment! Yet, our lives are filled with this demand. We are confronted by decisions daily—hourly. Decisions fill our minds, occupying its every nook and corner. We lose sleep wrestling with them. They create massive stress.

There is help—incredible help—available. It comes from the most reliable source—the Divine.

Recently I visited a church in another state that has capitalized on this spiritual resource in behalf of its members. In addition to listing in the bulletin the names of the people who need congregational prayers for healing and comfort, there was another separate category listing the names of people requesting the congregation to pray for them as they face difficult decisions. The heading of that list of names was *Discernment*. People ask for prayers of the people in their behalf as they are confronted by life's difficult choices.

This is a super idea and one we could incorporate into OSLC worship. It is not necessary to mention the dilemma, only the names of the persons for whom to pray.

It should go without saying that we ought personally to be practicing this highly beneficial and mysterious process in our own lives as we are confronted by difficult decisions. Divine help and direction can be forthcoming when we ask God to be involved in this important process that is a constant in our lives.

It is amazing how this works—but it does. Truly a mystery! Ask God to be intimately involved in your own decision-making as well as with others for whom you share concern.

Pastor Fred Castor, Spiritual Guide



The Stephen Ministry Story

George sat eagerly by the window, waiting for Charlie's car. This was to be their last time together. It had been a rough journey, especially at first, with the hills and valleys, the roadblocks ... and lately some horizons and a mountaintop or two.

He recalled the day of Charlie's first visit. He had sat in his chair letting the doorbell ring. He knew he should answer it but had neither the inclination nor energy to do so. Sharon had always answered the door but Sharon was gone ... had been gone for six weeks by then.

Charlie was George's Stephen Minister. The two of them had been spending time together each week for almost a year now. "I'll miss our bike rides and coffee times," thought George. Charlie's sense of humor these past few months had often given him a chuckle. When Charlie had hit the curb and fallen last week on the bike trail, he had picked himself up, dusted himself off and said, "Well, wasn't expecting that roadblock today." They had laughed, but George knew they both recalled the valleys of their last year's journey together.

George had finally answered the door that first day, opening it to Charlie and to a new experience of sharing grief, bike rides, coffee and, he realized, an understanding of God's Grace.

That first day, Charlie had brought Starbucks and they had talked about the CSU basketball game, riding bikes and George's obvious lack of food in the fridge.

How they had traveled from the game to George's inability to master the art of grocery shopping to how much he missed Sharon, George couldn't remember. He just was grateful for the time they had spent together. They had become friends and it felt good to know he could be himself with Charlie. Charlie had taught him so much about Grace.

Stephen Ministers are available to walk your journey with you on whatever path you may be on.
Please call a pastor or Sharon Petersen (970-206-0937).



The Stephen Ministry

The Preschool Bake Sale & Craft Fair annual Fundraiser

This will be the 18th year of the Bake Sale and Craft Fair fundraiser for the preschool.

The first year we held this event Lea and Bonnie Bowne introduced Barb Hinman and me to the wonderful world of Kraut Burgers. We made 80 of them. Now we have an assembly line of many more people and we make around 200 Kraut Burgers.

The main purpose for this fundraiser is to replenish our fund for children whose parents need help with tuition. My vision for this ministry in our church has been to offer an affordable, safe, loving preschool to all children. Their first experience of school is not only to be fun but to also be educational and give them a life-long love of learning.

The support our school receives from this congregation year after year is always amazing. Support takes the form of bake sale items from people who have absolutely nothing to do with our preschool, the wonderful people who work thousands of hours for the flea market, the marvelous volunteers at the front table who welcome people to our craft fair, the people who help run the kitchen, people who help us get the church cleaned up, and the church itself for letting us take it over for an entire day, along with countless other ways of support.

Many years I say this is the last year and someone from this congregation responds with, "Oh no — it is how I begin my Christmas shopping. Please do it one more year!" So we carry on and hold the Bake Sale and Craft Fair.

My family knows the sale is successful when I tell them a story of some random kindness someone from this congregation bestows on us and it brings tears to my eyes.

Your support of this front-door ministry of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church is so appreciated. The kindness that has been given to our preschool will be remembered forever. Thank you so much!

Bev Watson



Your Gifts at work

The Joy of Giving is the Essence of Living

Life has many shades of light, from dark to bright. Some days cast a deep dark shadow upon us that makes life difficult and complicated. Other days are far more joyful—things go extremely well.

If you stop and analyze one of those joyful days, there is a hundred to one chance that you have given something meaningful to someone—perhaps your time, attention, care and concern, or something they desperately needed. Deep joy comes from giving because we are made and meant to give. Whenever we do it, profound satisfaction surges within us.

We are born into families wherein giving is a necessity, and where we learn to give. There is also the larger group of friends we acquire, wherein we learn another level of giving. There is the church—another level of community where we learn the nature and joy of giving.

Giving is an absolute necessity for life to function. When it is resisted, life loses some of its purpose. Life is about giving. Life itself is a gift. We did not acquire it, but received it as a gift from others. Giving is what makes life work. Without it, life dies—with it, life blossoms.



The Joy of Giving Is the Essence of Living
Pastor Fred Castor

Using your
spiritual
Gifts

Meet Our Newest Members

Introducing...

Gillespie, Frank & Kay
Higgs, Beth & son Tyler Charles Bage
Higgs, Charles & Ann
Meadows, Richard & Susie
Means, Jeff & Leslie
Mistr, Tom & Melody
Thelen, Marilyn
Vanore, Matthew, Erin & son Michael

Beth Higgs — Beth is originally from Wisconsin and moved to Colorado in 1992. She has a 14-year-old son, Tyler. Beth is a RN and works in cardiology. She enjoys fly fishing, camping and outdoor activities. She is interested in helping with the youth programs.

Charles & Ann Higgs — The Higgs are high school sweethearts. They have been married for 57 years, and have three adult daughters and four grandchildren. They lived and worked for 47 years in Wisconsin. Ann loves flowers and gardening, and is interested in the altar guild. Charlie is retired from Forestry and enjoys reading; he has an interest in couple's group activities and religious study groups.

Richard & Susie Meadows — They were both raised in Virginia, and lived in Iowa for 40 years. In May 2016, they moved to Fort Collins, where their youngest son and family live. Their oldest son and granddaughter live in Virginia. Richard was a District Court judge, and Susie was the curriculum director for Ottumwa Community School District. Interests include golf for Richard, and biking, skiing and reading for both.

Jeff & Leslie Means — Leslie was born in Indiana. Their family members are Jack (Margaret) Means, Jennifer Means, and Kathy, Martha, Sarah, Paul, Barb and Paul Tatre. Hobbies are sleeping, quilting and mental health. They have two cats.

Tom & Melody Mistr — Tom and Melody moved here from Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity, Kona, Hawaii. They are retired and came here to be closer to their children and grandchildren. The Mistrs love to travel, especially on road trips.

Marilyn Thelen — Marilyn hails from Minnesota and has lived in the Fort Collins area for nine years. She and husband Marv have three children and seven grandchildren. Crafting, sewing and spending time with family richly fill Marilyn's days. She is interested in serving the elderly and in fundraising.

Matthew & Erin Vanore — Matt has lived in Oakland, New Jersey; and Florida (Jupiter, Tampa, Fort Lauderdale and Orlando, where he attended CUCF College). His work is managing a recruiting agency. Matt enjoys poker, racquetball, cycling and craft beer. He is a new dad to Michael Robert. Erin has lived in Ada, Oklahoma; and Fort Lauderdale and Tampa, Florida. She is an occupational therapist. Erin's hobbies are crocheting, biking, being active and enjoying her family.

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

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**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

The Signal

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leta@our-saviours.org michael@our-saviours.org

FoCoLu Youth Minister - Kevin Dragseth
kevin@focolu.org

Office Assistant - Leslie Olsen
leslie@our-saviours.org

Spiritual Guide - Pastor Fred Castor

Music Staff:

Crystal Kerr - Organist & windstrings director

Carol Bisbee - Accompany pianist

Marlys Oetken - Bell choir director

Carrie Stadtmueller - Praise band director & youth choir director

Charles Spillman - Consensus brass director

Sheri McKelfresh - Chancel choir director

Nursery Coordinator - Leslie Olsen

FoCoLu Intern - Ally Williams

Preschool Director - Bev Watson
bev.watson@oslpc.com

Preschool Teacher - Nancy Bajcsi

Finance Team:

Marie Johnson, Ann Story, Ann Seitzinger

Custodian - Bev Watson

Join us for worship:

Saturday Night 5:30pm
Sunday Morning 8:30 & 11:00am
Education Hour 9:45—10:45 am

Special Christmas Eve Services
3:00pm, 5:00pm, 7:00pm, & 10:00 pm

Christmas Morning Service
10:00am

Special New Years Eve Service
Wine & Cheese Party after 5:30 worship
Saturday, December 31

New Year's Day Worship
10:00 am

