

Christ Lutheran Church

The People of Christ Sharing the Love of Christ

January 2023



Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! As we begin this new year of 2023, I also begin my 24th year of serving as your pastor. My family and I left our congregation and home in San Francisco on January 3, 2000 to come to Texas to be a part of Christ Lutheran and to make our home in Austin. I was installed as your pastor on January 15, 2000. What a joy and privilege it has been to serve and minister with you and to you. I thank you for your prayers and support through the years. By God's grace I hope to be here for many more years to come. There is still so much for us to do in being a light to our community. Though our numbers have shrunk through the years, God's Holy Spirit is still moving mightily among us and through us. And thus, as we enter this new year, we do so with the expectation that God will continue to use us to connect people to Jesus, and that through our Gospel witness and service they may know, and grow in, God's love. May God be with us and bless us in our future as He has in our past. To God be the glory.

Have a blessed new year,

Pastor John

Thank You - A big "thank you" to all the members and friends of the Christ Lutheran family who contributed to the Christmas gift for myself and the other staff workers here at Christ also. I am humbled by your love and generosity. I think of the words of Paul to the church in Philippi when I think about my years of serving here as your pastor: "I thank my God every time I remember you." In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now."

May God continue to bless you, and us, as we live and love and serve each other, and others, as the people of Christ.

In Christ's love, Pastor John

**PASTOR
JOHN
STENNFELD**



WHAT'S INSIDE

2-3 Around the Church

Special Prayers in December Worship Services for Our sick family members and friends

Pastor John – recovery from vocal cord surgery

Phil and Sue Etter, and Sue's mom, Carole - tested positive for Covid.

Russ Grim (nephew of MaryLou Moore) - heart attack

John Mitchell –neurological issues

Freddie Richter - Alzheimer's

Mary Karotkin – surgery for tumor in her spine and possible cancer

Salem Escamilla (infant son of friend of the Werchans) – pneumonia & respiratory syncytial virus

Johnny (MaryLou's brother) - surgery on a brain covering tumor known as a meningioma.

Dino (Sue Etter's mom's husband) - not feeling well and has been admitted to the hospital to run tests.

Protection

Nori Vail (Justin Vail's wife) – pregnancy with baby due in April

Travel

Betty Joyce Stephens - The Holy Land December 27, 2022 to January 5, 2023

Loss of Loved Ones

Micka Ziehr at the passing of her father

Stewardship Verse

For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

Psalm 95:3-5



Letter from the President

Happy New Year! As we reflect on 2022, what an amazing year celebrating the church's 75th anniversary. Thanks again to those that were on the committee to make the yearlong celebration a success. On behalf of the congregation, I would like to say thank you to Pastor John, Jordan, Phyllis, Gary, and all our musicians for their dedication to bringing us the services through the year.

We held our final voters' assembly of 2022 on December 11th. At that meeting, the 2023 budget and officers were approved. I am honored to continue to serve as president for another year. I would like to thank those who have served in 2022 and those who have agreed to serve in 2023. I was also named as a lay representative to vote on behalf of our congregation along with Pastor John in the 2023 Synodical presidential election.

Please continue to keep Christ Lutheran Church in your prayers as well as Pastor John and Jordan as they continue to bring the word of God to us every Sunday.

I am confident that Christ Lutheran will continue connecting people to Jesus through inspirational worship, loving service, and relevant education. Thanks to each of you for the continuing part you play.

David Schaare
President



Mission Statement

*The mission of
Christ Lutheran Church
is to connect people to Jesus
through:*

- ✚ *Inspirational Worship*
- ✚ *Loving Service*
- ✚ *Caring Fellowship*
- ✚ *Relevant Education*

*So that they may know, and
grow in, his love.*

Creative Communication and Community



Just a reminder that we often take photos, and at times, video, of ministry events to put up around Church on the screen on Sundays and to post to the web that publicizes the worship, service, fellowship, and education life of Christ Lutheran.

2023 Church Pictorial Directory- Starting on Sunday, January 22nd, through March 5th, we will be taking photos for a new Christ Lutheran Church Pictorial Directory. Schedule an appointment to have your photo taken after Worship, or contact Jordan and set up a time during weekly Church Office hours. To have your photos taken, please meet with Jordan in the Narthex after Worship on your scheduled Sunday. Photos will be taken on the Church porch, or in the Sanctuary, depending on the weather.

In addition, please complete an Information Card to help us make sure that your information for the directory, as well as the information for our office records (including birthday, baptismal, confirmation, wedding dates) are all correct. The printed directories will be available, one copy per family, additional copies for a nominal cost, sometime in May. We will also be updating wedding anniversary and birthday photos (for our announcement slide shows) during these photo sessions as well.

Thursday Morning Bible Study - We will begin on Thursday, January 12th at 10 am in Room 7 & 8. This class will meet each Thursday morning from 10-11 am from January 12th - March 9th, with the exception of February 2nd. The class will be studying Hebrews chapter 11 (and 12:1-13) under the theme of CPH's "The Messiah: Revealing Jesus in the Old Testament" book. Our study will draw upon illustrations of the Biblical narrative from various artwork and murals. Due to a generous donation from one of our people, the workbooks for this study will be provided at no cost to the participants, but we do ask that those participating in this study sign up by Tuesday, January 3rd (by contacting Jordan at the church office via phone or email jordan@christaustin.org) so that we might order the appropriate number of books.

Christmas Decorations - We will be taking down the decorations from Christmas in the Sanctuary on Saturday, January 7 at 9 am. We will take down the outdoor Christmas crèche that same morning. Please contact Jordan if you are able to help on 01/07.

Fellowship after Worship - We have a Fellowship after our worship service each Sunday. A signup sheet is posted in the narthex that has a list of Sundays available for you to choose from to bring some type of snack. Fellowship committee will provide coffee and juice and paper products. Please consider hosting one of our Sunday Fellowships.

Braille is planning to meet on the third Tuesday, January 14, at 9:00 a.m. at Hope Lutheran Church. Car pool from Christ @8:30. Let Mildred Westfall (512) 385-6609 know if you plan to go.

75th Anniversary T-shirts—We have some 75th anniversary t-shirts still available. For more information, please see David or Kimberly Schaare, or contact via email schaarehome@gmail.com



“I will meditate”

**“I will meditate on Your wonderful works. Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise!”
Psalm 145:5, 3**

Meditation —

Knowing Where to Look

I miss it. The smell of cinnamon and fir trees; the taste of roasted turkey and molasses crinkles; the feel of a cozy blanket while watching “White Christmas;” seeing blow-up Santa’s, pretty lights, and Nativity creches; and the music - Oh! the music, singalong songs like *Winter Wonderland* and *Away in a Manger* – it makes me happy! As believers, we celebrate our Savior’s birth every day, but I always feel a bit letdown, even sad, on December 26th. Oh well. Yes, the holidays make me happy. But there are those who cannot find holiday happiness. I’ve known a few. Some, like the Grinch or the Scrooge, can be true sour-pusses during the holidays and even work hard to bring others down. They seemed so uncomfortable around merriment. Some folks struggle with memories of loved ones who died around the holidays, and with a hurting heart, they simply can find little or no reason to be happy. I suppose I could feel the same. My husband’s death occurred 2 weeks before Thanksgiving, my father-in-law’s the day before, my grandmother’s the Sunday after . . . yeah, it hurts. All three of them had a special way of making me happy, and when they died, that special happy died. And I think it’s okay to feel some sadness - as long as we don’t allow it to take away our Joy. One of Pastor John’s Advent sermons this past season was about “Joy.” He explained that happy is an emotion brought on by outer influences, whereas joy is a state of being when we are filled from the inside with peace and delight. Thinking about that, I can understand my December 26th letdown. When the things that made me happy are taken down and put away, my “happy’s” go with them. But joy, lasting peaceful Joy? Well, for that, I think we need to know where to look. I had a sweet friend, a divorced woman with two rebellious daughters. She spoke often of finding a church where she could be happy. One day she said she had found a church with exuberant worship that made her “feel good again.” A few weeks later she did not show up for work, and I was told my friend had committed suicide. A relative I love, told me she had died momentarily during a medical procedure and experienced only “a scary blackness.” There was no welcoming bright light, no happy feeling, and as a result, she said she was terrified of dying. I told her as kindly as I could, not to be afraid. Death is simply going to sleep in Jesus arms. Her harsh rebuttal was, “That’s easy for you to say. You have faith!” Both women looked for happy to find a peaceful joy. But, it’s not in the pretty, the exuberant nor the brightly lit. True Joy is found only in Jesus, and to find Him, you must look to the “not-so-pretty and nice.” Jesus was not born in a porcelain creche, but rather a soiled animal pen, noticed only by shepherds. That’s where we need look. We find Him on dusty roads relying on others for food and a place to sleep. We find Him with lepers, the blind and lame, the dead. The prophet Isaiah in Chapter 53 paints a portrait of Jesus that can be hard to look at. He says of Jesus: “He had no beauty or majesty,” “He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows,” “He was oppressed and afflicted,” “like a lamb to the slaughter” – because of our sins. We must look in a garden where He sweat blood, and into His wounds and His dying horrors on a cross with criminals – because of our sins. And finally, we must look into His borrowed tomb, empty except for a folded burial cloth – because of His great love for us! This is where we find Jesus our Savior, our faith, our everlasting peace-filled JOY! This is what I will, I must cling to in 2023 and beyond. This is my JOY forever!

A blessed and truly JOY-FILLED 2023, Duannah

Enchilada Casserole – Revisited

Preheat oven to 350°.

Stir into 1 ½ to 2 lbs. browned and drained ground beef:

1 can cream of mushroom soup

1 can cream of chicken soup

1 can enchilada sauce (10 oz.)

1 pkg. Taco Bell original taco seasoning mix

1 or 2 Tbsp. Taco Bell Fire sauce

1/2 - 1 tsp. garlic powder

1/2 tsp. cumin

1/2 tsp. black pepper

1/2 cup milk

1 cup water

3/4 cup diced onion & 3/4 cup diced bell pepper (softened in 1 Tbsp. butter)

In a 3- or 4-quart casserole dish, layer crispy tortilla chips, 1/3 meat mixture, and shredded cheese (your favorite). Repeat layers. Top with a third layer tortilla chips and last 1/3 meat mixture. Bake covered for 45 minutes. Top with another layer of cheese and bake an additional 15 minutes uncovered. Serve topped with sour cream, sliced green onion, avocado and/or sliced jalapenos.



Christ Lutheran Church

January 2023

Birthdays

Lauren Chapman	1/1
Samuel Chapman	1/1
Bill Martin	1/1
Tommie Craig	1/3
John Dunn	1/4
Phyllis Trautner	1/6
Phyllis Mitchell	1/8
Brody Richter	1/9
Chloe Calvo	1/13
David Hamil	1/14
Emily Richter	1/17
Donald Kirby	1/20
Conner Mitchell	1/24
Dorothy Richter	1/26
Geneva Mensing	1/29
Thomas Craig	1/30
Louise Alexander	1/31

Anniversaries

Felix & Louise Alexander	01/06/1963
Mitchell & Taylor Teeters	01/25/2020
John & Linda Mitchell	01/27/2000

Lectors

1/01/2023	Taylor Teeters
1/08/2023	Clayton Pillack
1/15/2023	MaryLou Moore
1/22/2023	Gary Lippe
1/29/2023	Micah Stennfeld

Flower Chart Given by...

January 1

Felix & Louise Alexander
60th Wedding Anniversary

January 8

Vacant

January 15

Vacant

January 22

Eric & Debbie Harrison
Taylor & Mitch's Anniversary

January 29

Fred Herber
Fred & Myrna's Anniversary

Online Giving -- A word of thanks to all of you for your continued support of our ministry here at Christ Lutheran Church, and a special note of thanks to all of you who have chosen to give online through our website with the Vanco portal. In a time of less volunteerism due to Covid-19 and such, the online giving is less cumbersome and more streamlined for our Financial Secretary to manage. That being said, we would ask those of you giving through this online way to consider giving through your bank accounts (savings or checking) as opposed to using a credit/debit card. We are charged a 2.75% transaction fee whenever a credit/debit card is used, and while that may not seem like a lot for a \$25 offering (\$0.69 fee), for a \$500 offering (\$13.75 fee) those fees become quite significant. Again, we are grateful for any and all offerings and gifts to Christ Lutheran, but in order to be the best stewards of what God has entrusted to us we do kindly ask all of you credit debit card givers to consider using one of your bank accounts instead. Thank you.

Thank you note from Ronald McDonald House Charities -You made our day! Your in-kind gift of **snack kits from the Thrivent Action Team Project** will directly support our families and provide much-needed care and comfort while they focus on their critically-ill or injured child. **Thank you for giving hope to these families.**
With deep gratitude, Caroly Schwarz, Chief Executive Officer

Dear Jordan, Donn and Christ Lutheran Church,

Thank you for inviting us to be a part of the "THAT" art show. We had so much fun and sold a lot of our things. We hope to be back next year!

Your friends, Ashley and the Adventurers.

Dear Pastor Stennfeld and Friends at Christ Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your \$ 2,054.50 contribution made on 11/18/2022. Your generous donation will transform lives through the gift of clean, safe water. Families in rural Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania are avoiding illness and early death. Women have time to care for their homes. Children are gaining the opportunity to attend school. You have invested in the change of community that has the potential to break the cycle of poverty.

Thank you again and God bless you. Your gift is making a difference in so many lives.

With Gratitude,
Susanne M. Wilson
Executive Director

Dear Christ Lutheran Church,

Thank you so much for your generous contribution of \$1,1330.00 on November 14, 2022. Your contribution has been a blessing to CWEFT-USA and is very much appreciated. Your generous gift will be used on projects that are highest on the list of needs. More specifically, it is to support the Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation Thailand, a non-profit organization legally registered in Thailand that serves people in need.

Thank you for your generous support of gospel outreach in Thailand.

Sincerely

David Karkan
Executive Director
CWEFT-USA

2023 Flower Chart - The flower chart for the 2023 calendar year is now posted in the narthex. Sign up early to get your preferred dates. If you sign up for a particular date, please remember to send/turn in your payment for your flowers (in advance of that Sunday). The cost is \$45 per flower arrangement.

What is Lutheran Hour Ministries?

A Christian outreach ministry supporting churches worldwide in its mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations—and the Nations to the Church.*

For more information, visit www.lhm.org or call 1-800-876-9880.

Men's Discipleship Study - Meets on the First Tuesday of each month through May 2023. We'll continue on January 3 at 7:30 pm in-person in the Christ's Workshop. Our topic is the Armor of God. Please contact Jordan for details, and to sign up.

Christ Lutheran Web Site & Social Media

www.christaustin.org | Facebook | Twitter | You Tube