

A Service of Thanksgiving



20 November 2022 at 3:00 p.m. St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Offering to be collected for Laundry Love





Family Laundromat 20 Franklin St.

Nov. 19	8:30 - 11:30
Nov. 21	3:30 - 6:30
Dec.3	8:30 - 11:30
Dec. 5	3:30 - 6:30
Dec. 17	8:30 - 11:30
Dec. 19	3:30 - 6:30

Pastor's Pen

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

(1 Thess. 5:16-18)

After nearly 18 years of ordained ministry, I attended a retreat for clergy that is intended to provide opportunities for reflection, discernment, and consideration of the future. Most other clergy present with the same or greater number of years in service had attended one or more of these retreats. Other first-timers had fewer than ten years of service. Suffice to say, I had taken my time doing this, because I dislike *going* on retreat. That said, when I finally go, I do get something out of it, and I'd like to share some of what I got.

- 1. Every corner of the church has been touched by the pandemic. Indeed, the fatigue of congregations and those who serve them was a recurring theme. So if you find yourself tired and anxious, know you have lots of company.
- 2. Among even large churches, relevance is a concern. Leaders and congregations cannot take the classical ways of connecting with others for granted, but no single solution emerged.
- 3. The healthiest energy I encountered came from leaders of congregations that were engaged in outreach and service.

Linked to each of these was the theme of the week: everyone needs a *rule of life* to sustain them in a Christian life of service, especially in frustrating times. You have probably heard this term before. A rule of life is the method by which someone prioritizes their needs and duties to God and others. Oftentimes we associate them with religious orders like monks and nuns, but *everyone benefits from a rule of life!* Unfortunately, most people - including most Christians - do not have one. So we are caught in perpetual reaction - survival mode! - rather than thriving.

I encourage everyone to develop a rule of life. Nobody is obligated to replicate anyone else's rule of life, but I believe we all stand to benefit from considering certain categories from which we might develop rules. I will be preaching about this between now and the end of the calendar year, but I want to offer some thought s now, sharing some - but not all - of the rule I'm sorting out for myself.

- * Thanks. Begin with gratitude. We all exist because God created us and restored us through Christ. On our worst day, we are beloved and redeemed. Let gratitude for that inform how we see the rest of our lives.
- * Pray. Take at least one time a day to pray. There are no rules as to what to pray for, but if you struggle with what to say consider starting with the Lord's prayer. There are also plenty of guides for individual prayer and devotion from which you can draw.
- * Learn. Read from the Bible, or a devotional book. It can be just a chapter a day. It will create space in your mind for discernment, and expose you to fresh thinking. This is a big help if you find yourself in a rut.
- * Peace. Practice kindness and curiosity. Err on the side of mercy over judgment. Try to find some quiet every day.
- * Imagine. We exist because God dreamed of something instead of nothing. We have hope because of the resurrection and the inbreaking Kingdom of God. Even as the world despairs, we are called to a holy optimism. So imagine the possibilities of the Kingdom of God on earth, and what role you might have as the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in this beloved world.

My rules need not be yours. Today's rules need not be tomorrows if they are not serving you. Yet they can be a source of strength as we together navigate this taxing time. And together we will continue the rule of hearing and responding to the Word of God proclaimed, and sharing in the Lord's Supper.

Gifts of Comfort & Joy

Advent is a season of hope; *hope* that comes from God's promises to us; *hope* that comes from God choosing to be one of us; *hope* that calls us to execute "justice for the oppressed" and "Give food to the Hungry". God's promise to us today is a renewed future of justice and security. God invites us to participate in building that future in big and small ways.

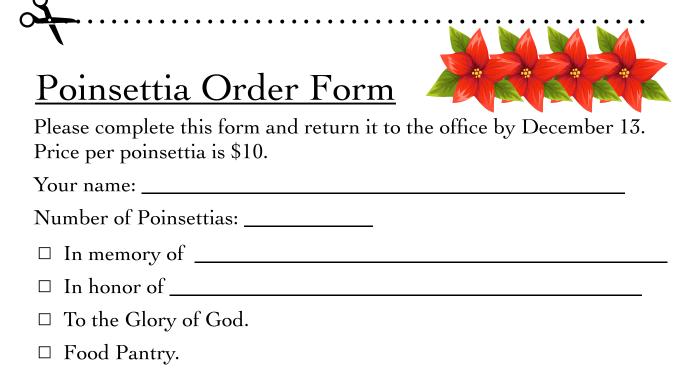
The Synod's Hunger Justice Team is offering congregations an opportunity to help build that future by raising \$400 or more during the Advent season to be used for Disaster Relief and Campus Ministry Feeding Ministries.

The disasters worldwide, resulting from wars and natural disasters, have left millions homeless, without water, power and access to food. Communities of poverty are particularly hard hit.

Locally our Synod's five campus ministry programs provide food, spiritual and physical for students. Students come from many different backgrounds, some have limited resources and don't always eat well. Most hunger for a community, a place to belong, a place where they know they are accepted for who they are. Campus Ministries provide that place.

Your congregation is invited to use the ELCA Advent Hunger resources and to raise \$400 for Hunger during the Advent Season. Send your gift, whatever it might be, to the Synod. Fifty percent of all gifts received will go directly to ELCA World Hunger/Disaster relief; and 50% will be divided among the Synod's campus feeding ministries in Buffalo, Rochester, Ithaca, Syracuse and Albany.

Checks can be made out to St. Paul's, with "Hunger Justice Team" in the memorandum line.



In Our Prayers

Judy Babcock Michelle Mackey William Maher Lindsey Backus **Bob Minemier** Carolyn Baker Jan Blum Barb Mitchell Ginger Buck Iim Rex Dick Sahrle Maya Buckley Rodney Button Mary Sahrle Bill Caton Chris **June Collier** Bill Shaver Don & Madge Cuddeback David Smith Kim Greene Chris Michael Jim Thompson **Jeannie** Jim Wagner Kay Howe Peter Vogt + Betty Minemier Dick & Marilyn Lemen **Iim Lewis** + Jan Hawk

November & December Birthdays

Jim Wagner Nov 1
June Collier Nov 24
Wilma Traxler Nov 29
Carolynn Baker Dec 6
Ann Myers Dec 20

SERVING IN THE MILITARY

- ★ Andrew M. Mountzouros
 United States Navy
- ★ Jordan C. Camacho
 United States Navy





Saint Paul's Lutheran Church

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