

HILLTOP HERALD

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

LINGLESTOWN, PA

Website: www.churchonthehilltop.org Facebook: [@Church.on.the.Hilltop.Linglestown](https://www.facebook.com/Church.on.the.Hilltop.Linglestown)

JANUARY 2021

Annual Meeting - Pt. 1 A Summary

At Part 1 of our Annual meeting, held via ZOOM on December 6, the 2021 Budget was approved as presented, and elections were held with the following results.

Elected to Congregation Council: Dan Cassell, Michael Elser, Kathy Romanko and Jeff Wadsworth.

Elected to the Nominating Committee: Sandy Boltz, Kathy Elser, Karen Holmes, Andy Rehbogen, and Leslie Wadsworth.

Our congratulations to all and our sincere thanks to the following Council members who have concluded their terms: Karen Holmes, Alexa Sharrar, Brian Williams, and Tony Wright.

Also, our thanks to this year's Nominating Committee: Linda Weller (chair), Karen Economopoulos, Mar-Lee Kertulis and Sarah Wadsworth.

We look forward to a full and challenging year of ministry in service to our Lord.

Annual Meeting - Pt. 2 Sunday, February 7

Our Annual Meeting - Part 2 will be held on *Sunday, February 7, following worship*. We will receive reports from our committees and organizations, review our ministry, programs and finances for the year 2020 and look ahead to what is in store for 2021.

NOTE: Committee & Organization annual reports are due to Sherry in the church office by Thursday, *January 14*. Thank you!

A Heartfelt "Thank You"

A special "Thank You" from the Pastor and staff here at Christ Church for the generous congregational Christmas gift. Your thought-

fulness and support is heartwarming, and a source of continuing inspiration to us all.

and, a Special Thanks ...


to everyone who was so generous with their time to make our Advent/Christmas seasons especially meaningful again this year: our Staff; our Vocal and Handbell Choirs; our Worship and Music Committee; our decorators. To all of you, our sincere thanks.

After-Five Group

The After Five Group is planning a book club meeting January 20 (snow date, January 27) at 7p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Dr. Donald Koonen will be our guest book club discussion leader. The title this year is Nancy Horan's book, *Loving Frank*. There is a copy on the church library book truck. Please contact Sherry if you would like to enter the church library and sign out materials. The church library has a vast array of titles for you to read during our limited access to other entertainment and educational opportunities.

Please be aware that we may not be meeting due to covid-19 restrictions, etc. I will send out emails regarding this as we approach January 20. If you have any questions, please contact me, Bev Stickley 717-545-3611.

Bulletins & Flowers

 The new Bulletin and Altar Flower Chart for 2021 is posted in the Great Room. The cost to sponsor remains the same, \$15 for bulletins and \$25 for flowers. Sponsoring these items is a wonderful way to memorialize a loved one, to honor someone, or to remember a special event. There is space allotted for, but not limited to, *two* sponsors per week. Dates tend to go quickly, so sign up for your special dates, now!



HOMEBOUND MEMBERS

ELCA Good Gifts is a way to give for Christmas for your friends and family or neighbors. It helps people that Lutheran World Relief supports all around the world by gifting animals or fish or clean water wells to name a few. The Church and Community Committee has used the Good Gifts program to remember our home bound members. *The Committee is again donating to ELCA Good Gifts in honor of all of our homebound members.*

SIMPLY GIVING

Please consider enrolling in "*Simply Giving*", our electronic funds transfer program to join the families in our congregation who currently participate. You can request a form by emailing Sherry, secretary@churchonthehilltop.org or call the office 717-545-4211 and request a form be mailed to you. If you have any questions, please contact the church office. Thank you.

Snow Closings

 Check for closings on TV Channels 15, 21 or 27, or the  web sites cbs21.com, cw15.com, or abc27.com. In addition, you may call the church office. We will do our best to leave a message on the answering machine when there are cancellations.

NOTE! *The 2021 Church Envelopes are Here!*

Please contact the church office to arrange for pick up.

We are grateful for your continued support of the church through your offerings and hope you continue to send in your offerings as you are able to do so. Thank you.

From the Pastor...

A year ago at this time, it would have been inconceivable that we would not be gathering for Christmas Eve worship. We would have heard the Christmas Story from Saint Luke's Gospel and would have sung Silent Night at the end of our late service. We would have celebrated God's promise in the birth of Jesus to be Emmanuel, "God with us." A year later that thought is especially difficult knowing that we will not be gathering for our Christmas Eve services. The Corona Virus is raging right now and we are not having in person worship at this time. This has changed what we will even conceive of how to worship for Christmas Eve.

We will record a service and post it on the Facebook Page as we have done our worship services since back in March. We will continue mailing and emailing as we have but this has changed our whole outlook on worshipping in 2020. It looks like we will continue to worship as we are able into the first part of 2021 hoping that we can get back to in person worship as soon as we can. You are encouraged to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child in your homes. (Luke 2:1-20)

The decision to close was a very difficult one to make and was not taken lightly. There was some support of continuing as we have been but then the virus numbers really spiked and local hospitals' ICU beds began to fill up. The Bishop of our Synod highly recommended that we stop all in person worship to protect our members. This was not an easy decision by any means but it was done to protect everyone from gatherings that can be the highest source of spreading the virus.

So while our celebrations of Christmas will be different than we had imagined or hoped for this year, we believe they are in keeping with the Christian Church's insistence to put the needs of others before our own. More importantly, we believe the decision not to gather inside our sanctuaries this Christmas Eve out of regard for health and safety of our neighbors is in keeping with the spirit of the One whose birth we celebrate, the One who declared that he "came not to be served, but to serve" (Mt. 20:28) and instructed his disciples to "love one another, just as I have loved you" (Jn. 13:34). If we can do that, then the strange silence of that night will be holy indeed. (This last paragraph came from a letter entitled "Keeping Christmas." It was written by several ELCA pastors in the Midwest and I found it to be appropriate to add to my note.)

May the peace of Christ be with you all,
Pastor Kerns

THE STORY OF THE EPIPHANY: The church celebrates the day of Epiphany on January 6, twelve days after Christmas. The church recalls the story (found only in Matthew 2:1-10) of the wise men who came from the East searching for a king born under a star. They met with King Herod in Jerusalem and ascertained that a king was to be born in Bethlehem. Herod directed them to continue their search for this new king.

"When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road." (Matthew 2:10-12 NRSV)

The wise men risked much and traveled far to pay homage to the king born under a star in Bethlehem. They came offering their gifts, only to be overcome with joy, not grasping that it was Jesus who provides the greater gift to the world. Aha! God was revealed to the wise men!

THANK YOU!!!

- ◆ "We appreciate your continued support for the Nutripacks program. A special thanks for donating all the hats, gloves, mittens and scarves. They will be distributed in the Christmas pack for the families. A special thank you to Pat Huth & Karen Holtzman for all of the beautiful hand knitted items. Mary Ann Albert, Nutripacks Volunteer"

CONFIRMATION CLASS PARENTS AND STUDENTS

...with the church suspending in-person worship for the time being, it has been decided that we will suspend Confirmation Classes until sometime in the new year. We are not sure of the means of teaching again and it may be via Zoom when we start back if in-person is still a risk as it is right now. We will be in touch and we hope you all have a very Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year. Pastor Kerns

Rest Eternal Grant Her, O Lord

Doris Wright, a long-time member of our church family, died on December 8, 2020. Pastor Kerns officiated at her graveside service on December 14, 2020, at Mt. Olivette cemetery in New Cumberland. Please remember her family in your prayers and all those who mourn.