

The Love Letter

Volume 49

DECEMBER 2019

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Worship Schedule

8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Mission Statement: Celebrating and sharing God's love in a welcoming community of faith, while serving others.

Looking Ahead

December 4: Midweek Advent services begin

December 11: Aged to Perfection luncheon

December 15: Caroling and Chili Potluck

January 8: Tai Chi for Balance begins



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PASTOR'S PAGE

“Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is valuable in every way because it promises life both for the present and for the future.”
-1 Timothy 4:8

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Dear friends in Christ,
We are headed into the “most wonderful time of the year.” The problem is that our preparations of looking and being like the perfect people ready to celebrate the perfect Christmas, while well-intentioned, completely miss the mark on what the season of Advent is really about: preparing our hearts to receive Christ anew.

With that said, it is my goal to spend more intentional time waiting in God’s presence and listening to God speaking life to my soul, rather than trying to fill it with all the unnecessary “extras”. And since this is my goal, I’ll be inviting you to join me in this endeavor during our midweek advent services, not as something more to do, but as a way to intentionally take time to be still in the presence of God and let God’s presence speak to your soul.

This might mean different things to each of you. For one friend, it meant getting up 15 minutes earlier to pray and drink a cup of coffee intentionally not rushing before getting to the tasks of the day. For others, that might mean journaling at the beginning and/or the end of the day, dwelling on where Christ was present and ways God’s blessings made themselves known either through Christ’s presence, or how we think God used our life to speak life and blessing into someone else’s. For some, it might mean carving out intentional time and space in one’s day to add Advent Devotions.



If this is something you are looking for, I recommend Luther Seminary’s free online devotions found at: <https://www.luthersem.edu/advent/> or this one for families: <http://relchurch.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Family-Advent-Devotional-2019.pdf>

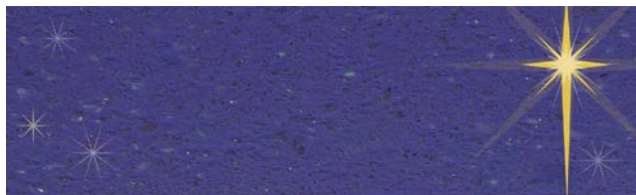
Recently at an educational event, Pastor Paula Lawhead shared a quote by Tao Te Ching proposing that perhaps doing less and making do with fewer and simpler plans can fill us in meaningful ways that adding more cannot. The quote from Tao Te Ching was:

*To attain knowledge,
Add things every day.
To attain wisdom,
Remove things every day.*

I know my “to-do” list is generally longer during the advent season and as Christmas approaches, as might be yours, but I hope that we can think about ways where we can perhaps cut things (continued, next)

PASTOR'S PAGE

(continued from previous) out that aren't necessary, to make room for listening and pondering the wonders of God like Mary did at Christ's birth, and finding the Spirit more than willing to dwell with us as we spend time contemplating the gracious gifts God



gives us of hope, peace, joy, and love. Not because we are worthy of such gifts, but because it is the "Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom" and speak life to our souls both now and in the future. And spending our time receiving and seeing these more fully, is always life-giving.

May the peace, presence and light of the world fill and guide your waiting during the advent season,

Pastor Becky <><

WORSHIP

Advent Services

Starting Dec. 4

We are told to wait for the Lord. We are urged to be quiet, wait, listen and take in the wonder of the season, living in hope for Christ's return even as we celebrate his coming at Christmas long ago. How do we wait and watch when our list of things to do is long? How can we live in hope in this troubled world?

Join us for midweek Advent services, **Wed. Dec. 4, 11, and 18 at 7 p.m.** We will use Holden's Evening Prayer service to quiet our minds and hearts and explore the themes of "Do Less," "Wonder" and "Hope" through the Word, story, prayer and poetry.



Christmas Eve Services

Tuesday, Dec. 24:

4:30 p.m. Family worship w/Holy Communion

10:30 p.m. Musical prelude

11 p.m. Candlelight service w/ Holy Communion



Note that there will be only **one worship service on Dec. 29 at 9 a.m.** (with no Sunday School).

Caroling and Chili Potluck

All are welcome to join the choir for a chili lunch on **Sunday, Dec. 15 at 11:30 a.m.** Bring some chili by early that Sunday morning to add to the pot—or bring something to go with chili.

We'll get organized and head out to go caroling no later than 12:30 p.m., and be back to the church by 2:30-3 p.m.

Tai Chi Begins

Joan Witt and Paula Foster are now certified Tai Chi for Balance instructors. Lord of Love will have two classes per week in the Fellowship Hall, **starting Jan. 8, 2020.**

Classes will be held **Wednesdays from 4:30 until 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays 9 to 10 a.m.** All adults, men and women, are welcome to attend. If you want to invite friends from the community, that would be great. There is no charge for the sessions. Joan and Paula would like to know who plans to attend, so we can plan for space. It would be great if you can attend both classes each week, but if not, please attend when you are available.

A pre- and post-assessment will be conducted on each participant for research purposes. Research is a cornerstone for outcome measures and is used as a connection for funding and support. The data (last names are not used) is sent to Tai Chi for Balance, sponsored by Friendship Program, Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging and CHI Health. Each individual will complete a health history and two balance measures. The post assessment will be at the completion of the 12-week session.

10 Benefits of Tai Chi:

Studies from the National Safety Council show improvement in:

1. Balance: Tai Chi movements are steady and slow, shifting from one side to the other with coordinating upper body movements. These movements help the "core" regain balance and reduces the risk of falling.

2. Strength and Endurance: Research shows that individuals who practiced Tai Chi at least 2-3 times a week on a regular basis, have had higher strength and performance levels.



3. Flexibility: In Tai Chi, the range of movements helps improve flexibility.

4. Posture: Tai Chi helps maintain good posture.

5. Chronic Illness Prevention: Tai Chi helps with holistic treatment of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, blood pressure control, arthritis, digestive disorders, depression and others.

6. Coordination: Tai Chi helps with eye/hand coordination as well as upper and lower body coordination.

7. Regulation of the Respiratory System: Breathing is one of the three parts of Tai Chi. The deep breathing helps treat respiratory ailments such as asthma, bronchitis and emphysema.

8. Aerobic Capacity: Tai Chi helps improve aerobic capacity; researchers report that it is a form of aerobic exercise as well.

9. Stress Reduction: The mellow rhythmic movements and breathing helps distract from a hectic lives style. The breathing coordination along with the eye/hand movement is proven to promote a sense of being calm.

10. Confidence: The power of the mind has immense potential. By practicing Tai Chi, a person becomes mentally focused and serene. The person will have more confidence while walking. It also helps a person focus on their surroundings.

It is a great honor to provide this instruction; Joan and Paula look forward to having you join the Tai Chi for balance classes!

NURTURE AND MEMBER CARE

Aged to Perfection Luncheon

Dec. 11 at noon

At this month's luncheon, there will be a gift exchange for those who want to participate. Limit your wrapped gift to \$5 and join in the fun. Sign up in the narthex.

Thank you to Susan Lueders and Jackie Combes for providing this wonderful ministry at Lord of Love! Each month, on the second Wednesday they host the "Aged to Perfection" luncheon with a delicious meal they have prepared, decorated tables and lively conversation. The proceeds from the free-will offering go to the Deacon's Fund. We are so grateful for your efforts and that you both are so willing to share your love! Thank you!!!

January Fellowship Activity

Coming soon: Game night in January! Watch for further announcements and details soon.

Sunday School Christmas Program

There will be Sunday School Christmas program practice from **9-11 a.m. on Sat., Dec. 14.**



PROGRAM REHEARSAL

Member Care Resources

Please check out the information from Member Care on the pillar in the Narthex. Feel free to take a sheet to read at your leisure. Our plan is to put out a new information sheet each month. This month we have information about Healthy (Nutrition) Tips for the Holidays.

Later this month, we will have a limited number of new devotion books available. They are six weeks of devotion for body and spirit. One is entitled "Walking with Abraham and Sarah" and the other is "Walking with Paul." The new year is a great time to begin a new devotion book and routine. There is no charge for the books (we got a good deal!), but please consider giving to the Deacon's Fund or contributing a food item or two to the Project Hope container.

Turkey Outreach with Holy Cross

On Nov. 21 at their food pantry, Holy Cross distributed Thanksgiving turkeys and fixings to 61 participants who had registered earlier for them. In addition, they had purchased enough for 20 more families. Each family got a turkey, a 5-lb. bag of potatoes, and a bag with stuffing mix, turkey gravy, cranberry sauce and ingredients for green bean casserole. As the lobby kept filling up, members went to the store to purchase additional turkeys.

Everyone got a turkey (just not necessarily the fixings) and an opportunity to choose food from the pantry. Lord of Love members and friends contributed about \$600. Thank you once again for your very generous support of this need in our community.

YOUTH

Youth Christmas Party

The Youth Christmas party will be held **Sunday, Dec. 15 from 6-8 p.m.** There will be dinner, games, and a white elephant gift exchange. The men's group has volunteered to sponsor this while Lynette is on maternity leave. Fun, fun, fun!! See you there!



MISSION

Mission Possible Update

Remember that our special offerings for the Thanksgiving service, Wednesday night Advent services, and Christmas are designated for the ELCA AMMPARO program. The Noisy November offerings are also going to support AMMPARO.

AMMPARO stands for Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities. It is a commitment by the ELCA, as a church in the world, to accompany vulnerable children today and in the future. Not only does the program provide resources and staff to assist with unaccompanied minors through the immigration court processes and related social services, work is done with local organizations in the troubled Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

One of the ELCA AMMPARO strategies encouraged by the Nebraska Synod is the Guardian Angel Program, whereby volunteers attend immigration court hearings for unaccompanied minors. Several Lord of Love members are Guardian Angels. They are a visible

presence of spiritual support, and they monitor proceedings to be sure judges are acting according to international immigration laws.



The ELCA website provides lots of background material and resources about AMMPARO. Here are some great examples:

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/AMMPARO_BriefingPoints.pdf

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU8IEsZZSd8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSQOuxevJ9A>

Thanks so much for all you do to be Christ to others!

CHURCH COUNCIL

From Council President Brian Lund

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
—Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)

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The season of Advent is here! We wait. We prepare to celebrate God's amazing gift to us, Jesus Christ. What a marvelous gift that fills us with great joy: God's son sent to us to demonstrate his love for us and show us how to love one another.

We can look back on this past year and see how we have been a blessing to members of our congregation and others in our local community. We lift up each other in love through prayer and many tangible acts to provide support through difficult times. We give of ourselves to provide food, laundry products, personal products, quilts, and more to those in need. Thank you for your continued faithfulness and participation in our ministry together! Lord of Love is truly blessed to be a blessing to others.

In November, we asked members to help make up the financial deficit that we experienced throughout the year. What a response! We have received **over \$15,000**, and \$5,000 in matching Thrivent Choice Dollar funds will supplement the final total. Your continued faithful giving will allow us to close this year on a very positive note. Thank you for your generous giving.



"[The Lord had said to Abram] I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."
—Genesis 12:2-3 (NIV)

Please continue to pray for the ELCA, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, our Nebraska Synod Bishop Brian Maas, Pastor Becky, our staff, our members, our ministry, and for all of those who are in need.

Blessings in faith and service,
Brian Lund

CHURCH COUNCIL

Giving Status

General Fund financial information for October 2019:

Actual Income - \$31,825.00

Actual Expense - \$26,637.21

Financial Information Year-To-Date as of the end of October:

Actual Income - \$274,358.02

Actual Expense - \$271,704.37

As of the end of October, the available cash balance is negative \$8,203.67. Debt reduction offerings of \$3,990 were received in October. Weekly offerings of \$6,912 are needed to meet budgeted expenses. The weekly offering average at the end of October was \$6,262. Thank you for your continued support.

2019 Lord of Love Church Council

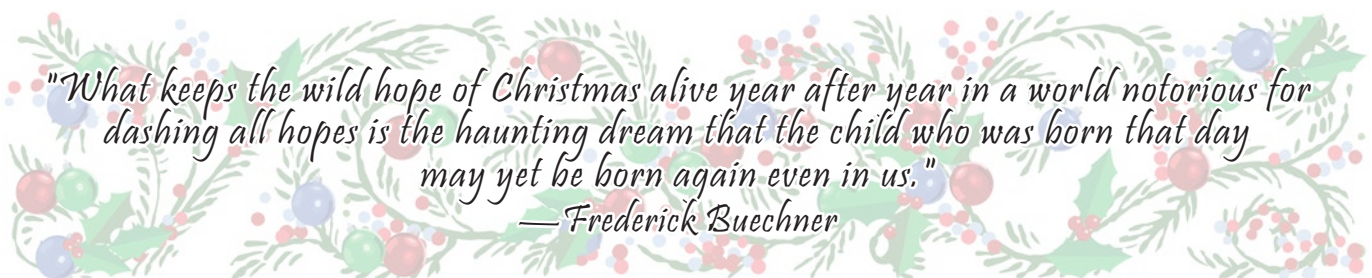
Vision and Coordination: Brian Lund, President; Paul Murphy, Vice-President; Kathy Christiansen, Secretary; Rett Messerschmidt, Treasurer

Nurture: Rosie Avalos and Joan Witt

Outreach: Paula Foster and Charise Adams

Resources: Brandon Zalesky and Paul Christenson

Worship: Rex Quadhamer and Shawn Lorenzen



WOMEN OF LOVE

Coffee Fellowship Update

Because of the purchase of Crane Coffe by Scooters, the Crane at 77th and Cass will be closed for a couple of days for remodeling, beginning December 11. Therefore, LOL's coffee group will meet at Panera, 7825 Dodge, on **Friday, Dec. 13 at 9 a.m.**



WOMEN OF LOVE

Cookie Tins and Project Linus

Sat. Dec. 14, 9 a.m.

Join us to fill cookie tins for those who need some extra love this season. Bring two dozen cookies to help fill the tins. We will of course have coffee and treats to enjoy while we work.



We will also be tying fleece blankets for Project Linus. A Thrivent Action Team grant will make it possible for us to have lots of fleece ready to go. If you would like to bring some too, bring two pieces of coordinating fleece for each blanket, each two yards by 60 inches.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

For nearly 13 years, LOL women have been making prayer shawls for a variety of occasions including baptisms, receiving new members, confirmation, and for those who are ill or have other special needs.

It's now time to re-energize this ministry and build up our inventory of prayer shawls. A newly-revised Prayer Shawl Ministry brochure is available at the information desk in the narthex. It includes suggested patterns for knitted and crocheted prayer shawls, but you are welcome to use other patterns. Yarn is available for your use in between the Mary and the Joseph room.

A special thanks to Carolyn Jorgenson who has coordinated this ministry in recent years, but she has now moved out of Omaha. Susan Senff is our new coordinator and she can be reached at 402-571-4344.



Lutheran Women of Omaha

Lutheran Women of Omaha will meet at **noon on Tuesday, Dec. 10** at St. Timothy Lutheran Church, 510 N. 93rd St. The program is "The Three Amigos," a singing group. Free-will offering will go to the Salvation Army Heat Fund. Reservations are due by 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 8 to Ruth Manning, 402-451-0221.



11th Triennial Gathering/Convention

July 16-19, 2020, Phoenix, Arizona

The Gathering will offer speakers, workshops, worship, service opportunities, and much more! Registration is now open.

Early-bird registration through January 6, 2020, is \$325. After that, registration is \$375. Day registration is \$200. A link to the registration form and other information is available at <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page>



WOMEN OF LOVE

Dates to Remember

Jan. 12: 9:15 a.m. Reveal of "secret angels" reception

Jan. 18: NSWOW Winter Retreat in Grand Island

April 18: Lord of Love Women host Metro East Spring Gathering

IN OUR PRAYERS

Janet Baker

Jackie Barnett

Jackie Combes

Jason Combes

Connie Bennett (cousin of Karen Armitage)

*Kate Boarts (mother of David,
grandmother of Chris Boarts)*

Kathy Campina (cousin of Rose Roberts)

Gloria Chalkley (friend of Ann Kroll)

Jackie Combes

Larry Czapl

Mardi Fiske

Babette Garder (mother of Kenn Garder)

Olivia Griffin (daughter of Scott and Dana Griffin)

Ed & Janet Guthrie

Pr. Joe Hernandez, Missionary in the Middle East (cousin of David & Chris Boarts)

David Hojnacke (neighbor of the Armitage family)

Janet Jensen (mother of Dawn Burton)

Juanita Kiesel (friend of Mary Lou)

Lucy Klos (sister-in-law of Mike & Christie Klos)

Lester (friend of Paul Barnett)

Ken Lineweaver (step-dad of Gwen Edwards)

Don Lueders (brother of Dave Lueders)

Lisa Lueders (sister-in-law of Dave Lueders)

Deb Lund

Tillie Mathiasen (grandmother of Todd

Meyer)

Cindy Moos (friend of Tom and Beth Olson)

Eileen Nagle (mother-in-law of Tara Novak)

Vern Nemitz (uncle of Paula Foster)

Bill Pickens

Otto & Leona Piehl (parents of Deb Lund)

Sarge Schuchard

Peggy Seck (cousin of Ann Kroll)

Nancy Shinrock

Ron & Brenda Thom

Roslynn Thom (sister of Ron Thom)

Bill Todd (husband of Pam Todd)

Stephanie Ulrich (relative of Paula Foster)

Diane Wiener (former LoL youth sponsor & friend of the Armitages')

Steve Wiitala (friend of Karen Mullen)

Pat Wineinger

Caregivers and those who suffer with addictions and depression, those seeking employment, those dealing with infertility or seeking to adopt.

Those Who Mourn

Family and friends of Sydney Weinman (uncle of Pr. James Sells)

Those Who Are Deployed

Abel Avalos, son of Miguel & Rosie Avalos
Brian Kroeger, friend of the Lueders family

To add a name to the "In Our Prayers" section, email marylou@lord-of-love.org, contact the office at 402.493.2946, or fill out a prayer request note available in the narthex and place it in the basket.

SUNDAY SERVANTS

8:00 a.m. Service

10:30 a.m. Service

December 1		
Greeters	Peg Murphy	Doug and Karen Armitage
Liturgist	Shawn Lorenzen	Tom Olson
Communion Servers	Peg Murphy	Beth Olson
	Heather Christensen	Gwen Edwards
	Shari Garder	Doug and Karen Armitage
	Mike Klos	
Altar Care	Connie Walther, Lisa Meyer	Rosie Avalos
CD Recording		Pat Brewer
December 8		
Greeters	Woody and Mardi Fiske	Charise Adams, Kathy Christiansen
Liturgist	Judy Egr	Lori Vandeventer
Communion Servers	Dave Egr	Ashley Hamik
	Bill Baker	Kathy Christiansen
	Paul Concannon	Charise and Maykala Adams
	Kelly Duffy	
Altar Care	Mardi Fiske	Pat Wineinger, Shelby Lamoureux
CD Recording		Paul Christenson
December 15		
Greeters	Sarge and Shirley Schuchard	Miguel and Rosie Avalos
Liturgist	Dave Hild	Rex Quadhamer
Communion Servers	Todd and Lisa Meyer	Miguel and Rosie Avalos
	Brian and Connie Walther	Hansen family
Altar Care	Joan Witt	Deb Quadhamer, Judy Messerschmidt
CD Recording		Dave Lueders
December 22		
Greeters	Jesse and Pat Brewer	Gary Ramsay, Ron Salak
Liturgist	Jesse Brewer	Don Rowen
Communion Servers	Brandon and Heather Hansen	Claudia Rowen
	Kayci and Brayden Hansen	Judy Messerschmidt
		Karen Mullen
		Joan Witt
Altar Care	Angie Meyers	Diana Haye, Marcia Roads
CD Recording		Paul Murphy
December 29 9:00 a.m. Service		
Greeters	Jim and Jeri Morgan	
Liturgist	Doug Aden	
Communion Servers	Cathy Aden	
	Shawn Lorenzen	
	Jim and Jeri Morgan	
Altar Care	Doug & Rose Roberts, Karen & Dale Finck	
CD Recording		
Ushers		
	8:00 Kenn Garder, Craig Pennell, Paul Christenson	
	10:30 Rett Messerschmidt, Rob Anderson, Paul Barnett, John Edwards	

MONTHLY CALENDAR

December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am God's Work, Our Hands 10:30am Worship & Communion 5:00pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Youth Group 7:00pm Piano Recital	2 6:00pm Gather Bible Study 8:00pm AA & Al Anon	3 6:15pm Nurture Mtg.	4 6:00pm Gather Bible Study 6:00pm Brass Rehearsal 7:00pm Advent Worship 7:45pm Choir Rehearsal	5 7:00pm Boy Scouts	6 9:00am Crane Coffee Fellowship 9:30am Al Anon 7:30pm AA Mtg.	7 7:00am Men's Ministry 10:30am Suzuki Strings rehearsal 6:00pm New Member Dinner
8 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion 1:00pm District 18 AA Mtg. 5:00pm Bell Choir	9 6:00pm Escalante Hills Assoc. Mtg. 8:00pm AA & Al Anon	10 7:00pm Vision & Coordination Mtg.	11 12:00pm Aged to Perfection/White Elephant Lunch 6:00pm Brass Rehearsal 7:00pm Advent Worship 7:45pm Choir Rehearsal	12 7:00pm Boy Scouts	13 9:00am Crane Coffee Fellowship 9:30am Al Anon 7:30pm AA Mtg.	14 7:00am Men's Ministry 9:00am Cookie Tin & Project Linus 9:00am Christmas Program Rehearsal
15 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion/Christmas Program 11:45am Chili Lunch & Caroling 5:00pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Youth Ugly Christmas Sweater Party	16 8:00pm AA & Al Anon	17 7:00pm Church Council	18 6:00pm Brass Rehearsal 7:00pm Advent Worship 7:45pm Choir Rehearsal	19 7:00pm Boy Scouts	20 9:00am Crane Coffee Fellowship 9:30am Al Anon 7:30pm AA Mtg.	21 7:00am Men's Ministry
22 8:00am Worship & Communion 10:30am Worship & Communion 5:00pm Bell Choir	23 8:00pm AA & Al Anon	24 4:30pm Christmas Eve Worship 10:30pm Prelude Music 11:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship	25	26 7:00pm Boy Scouts	27 9:00am Crane Coffee Fellowship 9:30am Al Anon 7:30pm AA Mtg.	28 7:00am Men's Ministry
29 9:00am Worship & Communion 5:00pm Bell Choir	30 8:00pm AA & Al Anon	31				