
NORTHMINSTER NEWS

Awaiting the Coming Light



Pastor's Letter: Reflections & Renewals

Advent is a time of waiting and new beginnings. Last year at this time we began our journey through Dr. Wilda Gafney's Year W: A Woman's Lectionary for the Whole Church. Together we have explored texts seldom encountered, encountered places where women's stories have been hidden or limited, and made an effort to encounter even well-known texts through a feminine lens. One of the great blessings of these readings has been our encounters with the varied names for God we can use that either neutralize our gendered language for God or names that reflect female experience and agency, including female pronouns. On our last Sunday in this lectionary, I gave copies of this list and encourage you to continue to envision all the many names we have for God, including adding some of your own.

With the start of a new Liturgical Year, we return to the Revised Common Lectionary, Year B, where we will continue to challenge ourselves to encounter the story, beginning with the birth of Jesus, from different points of view. The joy of this season lies in the anticipation of God's Love made manifest in the personhood of Jesus. We will take time to reflect on the different kinds of waiting we experience in Advent as well as celebrate our renewed commitment to the love for God and one another we already give and receive in this community.

This coming year will bring us some very exciting opportunities! Our Thriving Congregations Team is continuing to learn ways to engage and connect with our own congregation and the broader community. The Session has approved bringing on a Temporary Associate Pastor of Development, who will lead a team that will examine our building and property needs, and how we can best utilize both to sustain our church and better connect with our community. And we are continuing to build relationships with the SHARE shelter, our manse and building renters, and other churches around northwest Seattle and the globe. It's a very exciting time to be part of this community and I am thrilled to see what God has in store for us over the next year!

Many blessings to all of you!

Jeny

From the Deacons:

The Deacons would like to THANK YOU for your generous contributions to the Deacon Fund this year. We have used these contributions for:

1. Three local organizations that address food insecurity and homelessness (Ballard Food Bank), provide a faith-based street ministry for people facing mental health challenges (Mental Health Chaplaincy), and money for supplies and enrichment activities for an elementary school that has with a high proportion of students for whom English is not their first language (James Baldwin Elementary)
2. Support for Friendship Group activities
3. The Upper Room devotional, free to congregation members and friends
4. Supplies such as stamps and cards for our caring ministry for people in the congregation.

If you would like to support these Deacon activities, you can send a contribution to the church marked "For Deacon Fund", either by mail or online.

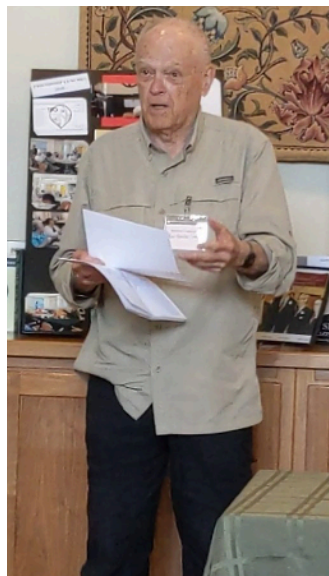
Friendship Gatherings

The Friendship group is hosting a Christmas Tea in the library on Saturday, Dec 2, at 1pm. Refreshments will include tea sandwiches, fruit, and homemade goodies. Tea and coffee will be served.

A highlight of the afternoon will be music provided by Beth Schmidt and Lori VanderBilt.

In June 2023 the Friendship group had its first in-person gathering since February 2020. It was an especially joyous occasion to greet old friends and enjoy church fellowship!

The luncheon included sliced ham, potato and broccoli salads, and a frozen fruit salad in a sweet cupcake holder! Dessert was ice cream with seasonal fruit and homemade cookies. There were some 15 wonderful volunteers setting up, greeting, cooking, creating individual flower arrangements, plating, serving, cleaning upall the jobs that need to be done!



Rev. Gordon Cramer gave us a surprise reading from his collection of moving poems.

Where We Come Together

Advent is filled with symbols, traditions, and special programming; we are invited to join in the creation of meaningful, worshipful community.

Friendship Tea

Stay connected with old friends!

December 2 in the Library at 1:00pm

Monday Morning Bible Study

Join in an exploration of the lectionary texts we will be encountering in worship. Bring coffee, your bible, and together we will unpack the text!

All meetings will be in the Library at 10am

December 4, 11, & 18

Mosaic

Join in a deeper exploration into popular culture and how it informs our faith formation and the church overall.

December 6 on ZOOM at 7pm

Advent Art Class

Come together in the Spirit of Creativity to pour the energy of your creativity into our worship space in a safe and supportive environment.

December 9 in the Library, 10:00-Noon

Community Dinners

Join in an evening of Community Building and Fellowship over monthly Community Dinners.

December 13 in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30pm

Fiber & Craft Arts Gathering

Join in a small group of artists to connect over coffee, conversation, and crochet (or knitting, needlepoint, friendship bracelets, even scrapbooks, and more). All skill levels welcome and help is available to those working on ambitious projects.

December 16 in the Library at 10:30am

Christmas Pageant

Participate in or enjoy the story of the Birth of Jesus through a No-Rehearsal Pageant.

December 17 in the Sanctuary at 10:30am

Longest Night

Gather in community embracing the darkness and anticipating the light-to-come.

December 21 in the Sanctuary at 7:00pm

Christmas Eve

A traditional evening Christmas Eve Service with carols and candles.

December 24 in the Sanctuary at 7:00pm

Beyond Our Walls Team Update

The Beyond Our Walls (BOW) Team is pleased to report that we are making progress learning about opportunities to support refugees and immigrants from Central America (mainly Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua), who experience great need as they flee from violence and extreme poverty in their own countries. After researching local groups that help Central American refugees and immigrants, we recommended to Session that we support the Safe Route Immigration Program offered by Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW), Refugee and Immigrant Services. This program provides accessible legal services to refugees and immigrants in Portland, Beaverton, McMinnville, and Salem, Oregon, along with Vancouver, Tacoma, and Seattle, in Washington. It has eight offices in Oregon and Washington including offices in downtown Seattle and SeaTac. LCSNW plans to open an office in Tacoma soon. Session approved this partnership and designating Northminster's share of the PC-USA's annual Peace and Global Witness Offering to this Program.

Thanks to your generosity, as of November 13, 2023, the church collected \$951 for the Peace and Global Witness Offering, the discretionary share of which 25% (\$237.75) will go to the Safe Route Immigration Program. At the

BOW Team's recommendation, Northminster's share will be rounded off to a total contribution of \$500. Beyond this gift, we are exploring other ways in which we can support LCSNW's Refugee and Immigrant Services programs in the future, including possible opportunities for volunteering. Earlier this month, Antonio Rufin met by phone with Heather Brandt, Director for Refugee and Immigrant Services for LCSNW in the Greater Seattle area. Ms. Brandt expressed her gratitude for our considering funding the immigrant program and provided guidance on how to make certain that our contribution is properly designated. The needs for Central American families and individuals in our area are so great that LCSNW should have no problem directing our funds as requested. LCSNW seems to be a good match for what we aspire to do on BOW and perhaps with involvement from our Deacons as well. This is a great opportunity for us to connect with a faith-based organization that is already experienced and very effective in helping the immigrant and refugee communities in our midst. They now know who we are and of our desire to support them so, hopefully, the seeds have been planted!

We will keep you posted as we learn more and develop what we hope will become a long-lasting partnership. In the meantime, here are some links if you want to learn more:

- <https://lcsnw.org/safe-route/>
- <https://lcsnw.org/safe-route/#immigration-services>
- <https://lcsnw.org/our-impact/refugee-and-immigrant-services/>

We also continue to explore other exciting possibilities, including programs in Central and South America and Puerto Rico. Stay tuned!

Liz Tennant and Antonio Rufin on behalf of the Beyond the Walls Team (Jonna Reeder, Szu-yu Huang, and Dawn Thornhill, with Saskia de Vries as Session liaison).

