

A New Year of Hope

Every new year seems to bring new hope. The mantra for 2020 seemed to be “Next has to be better.” The entire world looks to the next twelve months as a time which will hopefully bring about the kind of changes which will make life more tolerable; and those extreme optimists might envision the dawning of an age of unbridled possibilities.

Gosh, I pray they are correct.

But I’ve got to tell you, I’m not convinced that’s possible. Coronavirus won’t magically disappear with the turning of a calendar page. Divisions between races, political parties and tribes won’t fade away into the night. Economic fortunes won’t be restored. We will continue to struggle with disease, loss, and personal tragedies.

Hope is so quickly dashed, yet hope is such a precious commodity. Then Paul laid out his Big Three when he wrote, **“Faith, hope and love abide; but the greatest of these is love.”** Who am I to argue with the revered apostle? Yet I wonder if hope gets the credit it deserves. I’ve seen people lacking in love, and I admit it’s not a pretty thing. I’ve witnessed folks without faith and I’m concerned on their behalf. However I don’t know of anything as horrific as an individual living without hope. Hope is the antidote to despair and the desolation of the soul. Hope is absolutely a most precious commodity.

Hope doesn’t come with the turning of a calendar page; we might as well toss pennies in a fountain as a panacea for our troubles. Hoping isn’t a synonym for wishing, despite what Dusty Springfield once said.

One of the most common Bible verses pastors give to young people at the rite of confirmation comes from Jeremiah: ***For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.*** In a sense, the author is saying hope is a solid; not a vapor; it is the assurance that it is God’s own self which carries us into a future. Furthermore we know this is the God who has already proven the power and enormity of divine love. God is the giver of hope, and hope is a promise.

As we traverse the untrodden road of the future, we do so in the hands of the God of promise and hope. There will be crushing days. There will be tears and fears even in the midst of laughter and joy. Yet no matter what unfolds, the God who demonstrated love in Jesus Christ, the God who unleashed hope and a future in the explosion of Easter, is the God who travels with you. In your dark valleys of shadows and in the midst of frightening headlines, this God leads us and carries us and most of all loves us.

Let’s begin this year with a benediction from the Apostle Paul: ***May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.***

I wish you a blessed and hopeful New Year.

Walt

Council President's Message

What a strange year we've had at ALC! We have made some significant progress with live streaming, administrative reviews and rewrites, keeping members safe, replacing the carpet in the fellowship hall, sponsoring another scout troop, to name a few, but think about this:

There are **no Committee Chairs filled as Fellowship, Youth, Outreach, President-Elect** or at large committee members for the **Finance , Preschool or Legacy Endowment committees**. On top of that, our constitution requires replacements for **Secretary, Nominating, Worship, and Personnel Chairs**. All of these volunteer positions comprise the Board of Directors for ALC, a non profit corporation in Washington.

Your Council & Transition Team have worked very hard to make all the preparations to form a Call Committee to search for a new Lead Pastor: Ministry Site Profile, Constitution Rewrite, Church Audit, and Membership Roster update. **PLEASE CONSIDER NOMINATING SOMEONE OR YOURSELF TO BE PART OF OUR CALL COMMITTEE**. Have a hand in selecting our next Lead Pastor. Maybe we can get back to looking for a Youth and Family associate pastor this coming year. (yup we have not forgotten last year's congregation vote.)

We are currently in an annual Stewardship drive, and I would ask you all to consider that our weekly giving average is under \$5600. We budgeted for 2020 at \$7200, and although we are shut down, maintenance items, insurance, repairs all continue. The fact that 85% of ALC's annual budget is personnel salaries, and those are now being recalculated to balance our 2021 budget, please give prayerful consideration, if you are able, to consider another \$10 or \$20 donation to keep ALC solvent as we weather COVID.

As we celebrate Advent and the birth of Our Savior, pray also for the health of your Church, its congregation and our Pastors.

Blessings to each and every one of you, and a Blessed Christmas and New Years.

Bill LeDuc

From the Treasurer... Lane Phelan

Year to end of November member offerings are averaging approximately \$5,600 weekly.

Thanksgiving Offering has totaled \$3,120 which will be paid to our benevolences.

Council is continuing to work on 2021 annual budget. The challenges are large as we try to predict the financial future and the ministry future of ALC.

I ask for continued prayers as council moves to finalize the budget, build a call committee and move Anacortes Lutheran Church forward in ministry.

May God bless you all in this New Year.
Lane Phelan

Annual Reports Due

Please turn in all Annual reports into the church office by **Monday, January 11th**

2021 Offering Envelopes are Here

2021 Offering Envelopes are ready for you in the office, if you usually have them.

If you have Not used offering envelopes before and would like a set, please let me know and I will prepare them for you to pick up.

I am at phone number 206 335-4295 or e-mail at Millo2@aol.com. I also have a box in the office lobby labeled "financial secretary."

Thank you, have a blessed Christmas!
Linda Millo, Financial Recorder

Community Christmas Dinner - Pandemic style drive thru

"I tell you, as you did it to the least of these, you did it unto me."
Matt 26: 40.

On Christmas Day, we were able to provide 350-370 meals and deliver a large dinner to the Fire Department. This included 70 meals that were delivered to our homebound neighbors. It was very different this year because of the pandemic, but we were aware of the need and were determined to do what we could to provide food and a bit of joy as this difficult year comes to an end. We are grateful to all those who came to volunteer, who donated funds, and those who came to be fed.

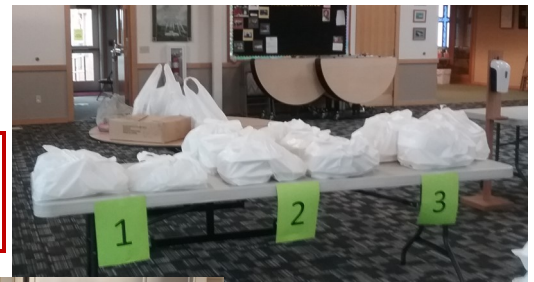
May God bless each of you now and in the coming year.

Anne Barry & Don Devine

Co-coordinators Community Christmas Dinner



Dinners are packed
& ready to go!



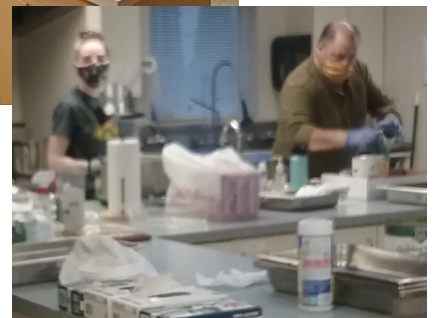
Turkey carving



Me oh my,
pie, pie, pie!



Gravy stirring
&
stuffing mixing



Prayer Time - The Power of Prayer!

Our Prayer Group meets every Tuesday at 1:30 pm

Join By calling:

1-518-351-9735

For a 'Party Line' style phone call connecting us together in prayer (voices only no visual).

In our Prayers:

For a current list of prayer concerns, go to:

<https://www.anacorteslutheran.org>

And look for the "Prayer Page" tab in the menu.

Call the office to add or update a prayer to the Prayer Page.

Prayer Chain:

The Prayer Chain is open for you from 9am to 9pm.

For personal and/or confidential prayer chain requests, call Peggy at:

360-299-1184

As always, our Pastors are available to pray with or for you. Please let them know if you are hospitalized, ill, or needing their prayers.

LWR Knitting News - Linda Anderson

We are taking a Covid – Holiday until March

Our church ships about 100-150 baby layette sets every 6 months to Lutheran World Relief. One sweater/hat goes in each layette set.

Our current Spring 2021 total is:

Sweater/hat sets - 7

Hats - 1

Sweaters - 2

We use a fun one piece sweater pattern. Beginners are welcome. Teaching is available.

If you need more yarn, please call me.

~ Linda Anderson 360-588-1730



ALC SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY PRIME TIMERS™

No events are scheduled for January.

A FEW THOUGHTS FOR 2021

- Thank God every morning for the love in your heart and a smile on your face.
- Snuggle up with a new book.
- Start a new hobby.
- Vegetables are your friends.
- Ease stress with kindness.
- Hug yourself.
- Dream a new dream.
- It's your life - make it great.

Have a great winter, stay safe, and be happy.

We look forward to seeing you some day.

We miss y'all.

Sending you a virtual hug.



WELCA - Women of the ELCA

We wish each of you a merry Christmas & new year filled with many blessings. We are hoping for a New Year filled with health, peace, joy, and lots of love.

Our **Bible Study Circles** will not be meeting until COVID-19 is under control.

Starting our **Sewing Group** will be reevaluated in January and we will let everyone know when it is safe to start.

Pillowcases

We would like to thank everyone who sewed pillow cases. We are able to give 99 to Friendship House in Mt. Vernon and have 75 for Lighthouse Mission in Bellingham.

Angel Tree

Also we thank you for supporting our Angel Tree Christmas family again this year. All of the angels were taken from the tree and gifts were bought. We had a family of 5 and had gifts for all of them, plus some food and extra food gift cards.

Thank you for supporting our activities.
Happy new years to everyone.

Thank You Dave!

When I first joined the ALC staff, Dave had been in the position of Children's Ministry Director for some years. It was clear that Dave took his job very seriously because he truly loves and cares about our children and their spiritual growth.

That first VBS was an experience! Dave spent countless hours securing and organizing them, getting supplies—a whole host of details to be attended to. And, it was a great success. Since then our VBS has grown and grown and grown because families in our town have come to know that our VBS is so much fun—and kids learn about God's unconditional love for them.

Sunday School attendance isn't what it used to be, but Dave made sure the children who come to our Sunday School enjoy an excellent learning experience.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside Dave. Dave may no longer be on staff (sorry you will miss all those staff meetings Dave), but the people of ALC will continue to be blessed by his ministry among us.

I know the whole congregation joins me in thanking you for your faithful service as the Children's Ministry Director of Anacortes Lutheran Church.

Pastor Deborah

Thank You Dave!

The Personal committee would like to let everyone know that we have had to layoff Dave White because of budget concerns.

We would like to thank him for a job well done. He has been a support for the children and teachers of our Sunday School. He has been able to keep the program alive and adults to teach. He has worked hard (a lot of hours) in planning and leading the summer Vacation Bible School week.

We are grateful for the past few years that he has been the Director of Education.

Thank you Dave!!!

Sunday School's News

As you are undoubtedly aware, there has been almost no Sunday school this first quarter. We did have three Sundays in which we conducted a Sunday school session. Our classes were quite small, but they were very enjoyable. I would like to thank Ginny Connelly, Stacey Pestar, Janey Dent and Les Olsen for their work as our teaching staff. I would also like to thank the kids for participating in our program.

By the time you read this article, We will have already celebrated our Children's Christmas program. Kendra Kennedy put together a beautiful video that is very much like a great big wonderful Christmas Card to the Congregation. I sincerely hope that you all had an opportunity to watch it. It was presented on YouTube, so if you didn't see it, you might be able to look it up on your computer.

For January, it is our hope that Sunday school will open up again. In the meantime, please be safe.

Because of the Covid-19 virus, the Church has needed to make some financial decisions. One of those is the elimination of the Children's Ministry Director position. I would personally like to thank the Congregation for all the support they gave the Sunday school program over my term as Director. I would also like to thank the Sunday school teaching staff for their dedication to the children. I would, most of all, like to thank the parents for sending their kids to Sunday school so that I could enjoy them too.

As Bob Hope would say:

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES!

Dave White



Worship with Us near & afar






In-person services have been suspended until further notice.

ALC will be following the Anacortes School District's metrics for K-3rd grade for re-opening.

Please check your emails and the ALC website for most recent updates.

Watch our Live Stream Worship Service at - <https://www.anacorteslutheran.org>

January - Worship Readings, Psalm & Gospel

	3	Readings: Psalm: Gospel:	Jeremiah 31:7-14 / Ephesians 1:3-14 147:12-20 John 1:1-18	Reader: Persephone & Joey Pestar
	10	Readings: Psalm: Gospel:	Genesis 1:1-5 / Acts 19:1-7 Psalm 29 Mark 1:4-11	Reader: Lois Cassidy
	17	Readings: Psalm: Gospel:	1 Samuel 3:1-20 ? 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 John 1:43-51	Reader: Tom Paul
	24	Readings: Psalm: Gospel:	Jonah 3:1-5, 10 / 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 Psalm 62:5-12 Mark 1:14-20	Reader: Beverly Landgraf
	31	Readings: Psalm: Gospel:	Deuteronomy 18:15-20 / 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 Psalm 111 Mark 1:21-28	Reader: Donald Devine

Join Pastor Walt's Thursday ZOOM Bible Study - Starting again Thursday, January 7th

Thursdays at 12:00 pm you can join Pastor Walt in an examination of the coming Sunday's scripture lessons. Our hope is to discover a little background about the original context of each passage and then to share thoughts about how those particular verses might speak to us today.

If you wish to join, contact the church office and Pastor Walt will send you the ZOOM link for the study. If you have any questions about logging on to Zoom on your computer, we will attempt to help you do so.

Welcome to the study.

Christ in Our Home devotional - shipment is delayed

The shipment of devotionals has been delayed by the post office. Until it arrive please use sign-up for a temporary daily email delivery of the devotional for Quarter 1 (Jan- Mar), to use until your print copies arrive. Christ in Our Home: <https://go.augsburgfortress.org/temporary-christ-in-our-home-email>

January- Birthday Blessings to You!

1	Tsana Leen	19	Alex Nibarger
1	Richard Rice	20	Elsa Geffe
3	Al Littlefield	21	Julie Harstad
3	Kai Frerichs	21	Mira Knowles
3	Hannah Pierce	21	Arthur Phelan
4	Pat Carrie Smith	22	Sarah Atterberry
5	Erica Prentice	22	Kristen Downs
5	Jerry Knutsen	22	Takara Tornga
7	Persephone Pestar	23	Millicent Swietzer
9	Barry Harter	24	Diane Brosten
11	Danielle Long	26	Dave White
11	Donald Devine	27	Donna Anderson
12	Renie Hofferth	27	Jean Rogers
13	Kristen Hoffbuhr	28	Madelyn Case
14	Leah Ott	28	Jeanie Arneson
14	Carleen Oldham	28	Sharon Fisher
14	Kenny Holzemer	28	Taylor Phelan
16	Joseph Pestar III	28	Caroline Spehar
17	Billie Jean Melton	30	Regan Franulovich
17	Paula Olson		

January - Anniversaries!

5	Chris and Heidi Parker
9	Carol And Les Olsen
12	Diane and Warner Burglund

December - Online Worship

www.anacorteslutheran.org/online-ministry

Date	Events	Live Stream
2	Advent Wednesday	88
6		115
9	Advent Wednesday	66
13		90
16	Advent Wednesday	17
20		58
23	Advent Wednesday	18
24	Christmas Eve	115
27		54

Happy New Year 2021!

*May the faith of God be with you this year.
May the peace of God surround you.
May the light of God guide your path.*

Thank you from the Heart

Dear Members of Anacortes Lutheran Church,

Today (December 11) I picked up 50 separate bags loaded with Christmas gifts for residents of Josephine, from Anacortes Lutheran Church members! !! This was, is, an amazing response that does not even include checks that total well over \$100.. My original request from Josephine was to provide three or more presents; that the Covid virus might make it hard to get more than that from a congregation!

Josephine has been hit hard by the virus, for residents, staff, and families. Thanks so much for all who have responded. I am overwhelmed and proud of your generosity, your compassion, your willingness to help your neighbors in need.

On behalf of the staff and residents of Josephine, Thank You, THANK YOU!

Jerry Bongard; Representative to Josephine from Anacortes Lutheran

Missing Church Roaster

We were short one roaster for Christmas dinner. If you borrowed an older white church roaster with insert, please return it. Thank you!

ALC Council Minutes – December 11, 2020

Attended: Via Zoom, Bill LeDuc, Lane Phelan, Pastor Walt, Melanie Sahnnow, Dave Bjornson, Jeaneen Brogan, Kendra Kennedy, Les Olsen, Steve Richards & Anne Barry

Meeting to order at 6:30 pm and Dave Bjornson said a prayer.
November 12th mtg notes approved as written.

Guest Report: Anne Barry gave an update on the Christmas Dinner. This year it will all be served out the back door, drive up style. Permits are in order, we have a \$250 Thrivent Action Team a \$450 donation and the budgeted \$250. Advertising out, flyers going up. Deadline to order food delivery is Dec 23rd. We will plan for 400 meals with a smaller meal plan. This will all be Covid 19 compliant. The advertisement for the Christmas Eve Service will be in the free community section in the Anacortes American and Clam Digger.

Treasurers Report: Nov member offering \$33,656 adjusted, Nov revenue to expense \$13,729 adjusted. Year to date member offering is \$245,880, averaging \$5,558 weekly YTD. Year to date revenue to expense is \$7,888 Benevolence paid YTD is \$18,113 and bill are current. The Christmas Benevolence is to Lutherwood, Anacortes Family Center and Food Banks. A **Motion** was made to add Our Community Christmas Dinner to the Benevolence letter. **MSP** Accepted report as given.

Pastors Report: Pastor requested to utilize his hours better, to stop working in the office on Tuesday for the time being, to start back at the first need. Council approved. What is the policy for Fund Raisers? Must get Council approval.

Presidents Report: No Report

Old Business: Reopening Committee is following the Anacortes School District guidelines and the church will not open till sometime after January 1, 2021. Nomination Committee is working on Council positions, Council Secretary, Personnel, Worship and President Elect. If anyone is interested, please call Bill Gusa. Council has approved the Constitution Modification and is ready to be reviewed by the Congregation.

Motion was made to send letters out to the Congregation for Constitution Modification approval, **MSP** We now need 5-6 people to make up a Call Committee for calling a new Pastor. When the Synod has candidates for our review, the Call Committee has the responsibility to review the needs of the Congregation, choose applications, interview candidates and ultimately bring one candidate to the Congregation for election. Please prayerfully consider this position as it is essential to calling a New Pastor for Our Congregation. Member roster is under review. The Stewardship letter has been well received and please be sure to view the Stewardship video on Facebook, YouTube or the church website. Thank you, Barbara Atterberry & Mason Bakke. In the New Year look for pledge cards/estimate of giving cards. Our church needs our help so prayerfully consider how you can help.

New Business: The Church office door has been rekeyed. **Motion** was made to request Legacy Endowment fund the replacement of the carpet in conference room #1, after discussion. **MSP**
The annual Congregational meeting was set for February 14, 2020 but a **Motion** was made to delay to February 21, 2020 at 1pm via Zoom. **MSP**

Personnel Report: The budget as presented to the Council is \$312,000, that is \$6000 a week of Member Giving and we are at \$5558 now. Still work on cutting expenses but this is a slim budget. We have changed the nursery assistant be a volunteer. Pastor Deborah's hours have gone from ½ time to ¼ time and the organist will be only 1 service.

Continued on next page...

WELCA Report: Angel Tree from the Salvation Army is up and ready for you.

Outreach: No Report

Property Report: Fellowship Hall furnace is working well, thermostats in the Nursery, Fellowship Hall and Kitchen replaced. Evergreen Fire has us in compliance. Church is decorated and a new TV monitor has been installed on the face of the choir loft. Legacy Endowment is willing to fund the replacement of carpet in conference room #1 with Council approval.

Education: We met for in person services on November 8th, 15th & 22nd with more volunteers than kids. With a new plan we will continue creating video to be the service on Dec 20th. In the video Pastor will read the Nativity Story then ask the kids questions. Laurie will splice in music.

Multimedia: Kevin is working on outdated Windows program. We are registered with Texsoup.org as a non-profit and can get better pricing. We are waiting for the City internet to change over from Comcast, then we will need to update the phones to reduce the phone bill. Live stream need one last piece of software.

Fellowship Report: No Report

Youth Report: No Report

Preschool Report: No Report

Stewardship Report: No Report

Worship Report: No Report

The next Council meeting is January 14th at 6:30 pm via Zoom

Kendra shared the Lord's Prayer and closed at 8:20 pm

Blessings, Melanie

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- Do You Need to talk to the Pastors?
Pastor Walt Rice: walicoli@comcast.net / Pastor Deborah Butler: revdeb.48@gmail.com
 - Pastors Office hours: Thursday 10:00 am - 2:00 pm (By Appointment Only - call the church office)
 - "LIKE" our FaceBook & YouTube pages: Anacortes Lutheran Church
 - Worship Services, Updates & News: Visit our website - www.anacorteslutheran.org
 - Do we have your address & email ? Are you receiving emails from church? If not, call the office!
 - If your email or mailing address has changed, call the office.
 - Do you need help? Groceries, a mask, a friend? Call the church office - maybe we can help.
 - Newsletter Deadline: The Third Monday of every month.
 - Church Office Hours: Monday - Friday / 9:00 am – 2:00 pm,
 - Church Office email & phone #: 360-293-9586 / info@anacorteslutheran.org

You can find ALL these in the basket right outside the church office door -

- CD Recordings: If you would like them delivered directly to you, call the church office, 360-293-9586, and ask to be put onto the delivery schedule.
- Devotionals and more: Christ in Our Homes devotionals, Living Lutheran Magazines & Communion cups for home communion (*Take for yourself and a friend.*)

Bishops Message – *The Spirit* January 2020

Dear Beloveds,

For this new year, the synod staff has adopted a working statement. We are excited to share it with you and we hope that you may use it and adapt it in your context and community:

“Trusting in the Spirit, we are walking together as God’s people so that all may discover and participate in what God is doing among us through Jesus.”

“Trusting in the Spirit...”

Martin Luther writes in the Small Catechism regarding the third article of the Apostles’ Creed, “I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel ...” As people of God, we know that doubts, concerns, worry, frustration and so many other things get in the way of following Jesus. But even when we do not have the strength or even the faith to carry on, God still calls us through the Spirit. As we hear and live into the good news that God comes to us – daily – hourly – every minute of every day, we are carried through the Spirit.

...we are walking together as God’s people ...

As I have said before, the word “synod” comes from two Greek words: sun- ‘together’ + hodos ‘way’. I love the image of walking together – of helping someone up when they stumble, of holding hands when it is difficult to see the way forward, of cheering on those who are in the front and encouraging those who are in the back – one huge Jesus-following gathering. This, of course, does not mean that we always agree. And it does not mean that we won’t have hard conversations. All of this is part of being in relationship (if you don’t have conversation anymore, you don’t have much of a relationship). But together, we, as the people of God, walk together, knowing that we are on a journey with Christ, knowing that we are Holy Community together.

...so that all may discover and participate in what God is doing among us through Jesus.”

Have you ever seen a baby discover their hands for the first time? Suddenly they are moving them around and laughing, curling their fingers, inspecting their palms, sticking them in their mouths. The gift of hands was something they never even comprehended before and suddenly – there they are. Right in front of their eyes.

Have you ever heard someone who recently heard the good news of Jesus express their wonder and amazement at who God is and who they are in God’s eyes? They suddenly see the world, themselves, each other, and God in a totally new way.

Sometimes those of us who have been around for a while, we forget. We forget the wonder, the beauty, the sheer joy of experiencing and participating in what God through Jesus is doing in this world of ours. As people of God, we are called to open our hearts, open our very beings, to see and hear and feel and experience and participate in what God is doing among us through Jesus. We are called to laugh, to inspect, to taste what God is doing in this amazing world we have been given. And we are called to share the good news of what we see God is up to among us and the communities that surround us so that all may discover and participate. Dear Beloveds, all of us on the synod staff are thankful for you as we live and dance in the Spirit, walk with you, and continue to live into the amazing grace of God through Jesus Christ our Savior.

In the Amazement of Epiphany,
Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

