

December 2023

Splash!

Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.
John 4:14

Living Water
Lutheran Church



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Mark Rossman

PASTOR
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9201 E Happy Valley Road / Scottsdale, AZ 85255

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- Nelly Booty (Friend of Susan and Steve Johnson)—Cancer
- Barbara Brooks—Health Concerns
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- Family & Friends of Joe Franch (Brother of Kathie Roenigk)
- Family & Friends of Emily Mascola (Great Aunt of Beth and Steve McCarthy)

Send your prayer requests to prayer@lwlcaz.org or fill one out at lwlcaz.org



A Message from Pastor Mark

Forty years ago the best you would get was maybe a blinking light, some dry ice smoke and some recorded moaning when it came to home decorating for Halloween. Now, there are people that really go all out to decorate their homes for Halloween. And there are even pop up stores that specialize in such things. In New Jersey there is a family that lived close to me that had over 40 of those inflatable Halloween themed decorative devices on their front yard. Some people love to decorate. There are people who decorate for the Fourth of July. There are people who decorate for Saint Patrick's Day. There are some people so enamored with decorating whenever they can I wouldn't be surprised to find that they decorate their houses for Millard Fillmore's Birthday. And then there is me.

Perhaps it has to do with the workload surrounding the holidays but I have a certain amount of difficulty getting myself excited enough to go and decorate a tree for Christmas – the greatest of all of our décor related holidays. But to be clear, the holiday is not about me and so we decorate. We will have a tree, we will have lights, a crèche, holiday bows and a wreath on the door. We decorate, we bake cookies, we make lists, we buy gifts, we wrap presents, we do all the things required to make our household a reflection of the upcoming celebration. It is in the preparation, it is in the gearing up that we find ourselves getting more excited, more into the Christmas spirit. But the retail world has taken advantage of the Christmas spirit.

For years I have long had a problem with the blatant commercialization of the holiday. It is not an exaggeration to say – and who would I be to ever exaggerate - that once the back to school and end of summer sales have ceased, the Christmas stuff begins. The retail world has gotten so bad that now there are stores open on Thanksgiving Day. There are now stores open on the day our country has set aside to offer thanks to God for all our blessings. By the time we actually reach Christmas Day many folks have been so over inundated with the commercial junk that is shoved down our gullet that the whole celebration of the day seems watered down. We find ourselves literally exhausted by the barrage of "Christmas stuff" that is sent our way.

It is rather ironic that when I find myself feeling that way – feeling overwhelmed by the Christmas that is anything but a Christian celebration – it is something that seems very non-Christian that brings me back to where I need to be. For when I find myself being swept away from the gift of the Christ-child and the gift of love and life that comes to us from God, I simply need to view the holiday celebration of Christmas through the eyes of none other than the Grinch. For, as my mother has reminded me on occasion, I am the Grinch.

Within the story of the Grinch Who Stole Christmas we are reminded that the story of the Nativity of Our Lord is not found in the wrapping, the gifts, and the bows, but it is found in the love that is shared, within families and communities. It is the love that we share with one another, which is a reflection of the love of God shares with us in the babe in the manger.

Christmas is not about what we receive from others, but it is about what we give to others. As we share gifts with others this season, what we are truly sharing is the gift of love which we have first discovered in the waters of baptism – when we too were made children of God. It was in that gift, that we were given the opportunity to understand what the gift of Christ and Christmas is all about.

As we continue through this month and prepare for the celebration of the Christ Child, let us all seek out ways to share our gift of life with the world around us. Let us all find ways to make this a season not special for us as much as one that is special for someone who would benefit a bit from a little shot of Christian love and compassion. Christmas is that special time of year when we are reminded of the love God has shared with us. Wouldn't this time be best used to also remind others of God's love, through the love we can share with them. May your days be filled with the joy and love of Christ,

Pastor Mark



Ask Zeke



December

Living Water's 24/7 office fish shares a surefire source of 60 unique gifts for people who already have everything

Q. Several people on my Christmas gift list seem to already have everything. I need a whole new shopping strategy. Do you have any advice?

A. I've got a perfect solution for you and anyone else who's fishing for a wonderful way to shop for family and friends: ELCA Good Gifts.

This ingenious option allows armchair shopping in the comfort of your home as you leaf through the Good Gifts catalog. It features many sure-to-please options for hard-to-buy-for people. You needn't worry about sizes, and I guarantee these unique gifts will not be re-gifted. Catalogs are available after Sunday worship throughout Advent on the patio and in the narthex. You can also shop online (ELCA.org/goodgifts) or order gifts by phone (800-638-3522).

As you've probably figured out, the Good Gifts "store" isn't your average shopping experience. Its unique gifts help to "grow the church, fight hunger, and transform lives." Shopping is a breeze. You'll have fun choosing from dozens of gifts, including the ever-popular chicks (\$10) and piglets (\$30). Let's say, for instance, you want to purchase a rooster (\$15) for your parents. When ordering through the catalog, you can request a free printed card to let your folks know you've made a donation in their honor (allow up to 4 weeks for delivery). When ordering online, you can personalize whimsical cards that you can email to recipients. You can also print the cards on your computer and pop them in the mail.

So, forget about crowds and trying to find a parking place. Simply grab your credit card or checkbook, put your feet up, and order these "gifts that make a difference." Your tax-deductible donations will be used as needed for ELCA-supported projects worldwide. Last year LWLC worshippers gave and received over \$5,800. Let's make 2023 another banner year. Please let Cindy and Ron Ophaug know about your gifts – both given and received – so they can track this year's total.

As a fish, I definitely won't order a fish farm. But I am I'm kinda hooked on honeybees and a vegetable garden....

Do you have a question for Zeke? E-mail it to him at AskZeke@cox.net or contact his writing partner, Jill Wehr, at 480-710-4506.

Church Council Highlights November 2023

Church Council met in Fellowship Hall on Monday, November 20 and welcomed Denny Dumler to give an update on his team's work on "Stewardship for All Seasons," which culminated on Sunday, November 19 with Giving Sunday. The Council thanked Denny and the team members – Rich Cote, Diane Klumpp and Dave and Ellen Schoenbeck – for a first-rate job of sharing Living Water's vision for our future and highlighting the work we do for the larger community. And – a huge thank you to all of you who pledged your financial support for Living Water. YOU are the reason we are a vibrant and healthy congregation able to make a positive impact on our neighbors and world community.

Our issue with Cox has been resolved! By raising our download and upload speeds, we have ensured that our streaming will work as we want it to.

Pastor Shari reported that the Volunteer Appreciation Lunch was a hit and will be repeated next year. Twelve people participated in All Saints Sunday on Sunday, November 5; the displays were poignant for so many of us. Family Sunday School is looking forward to its Advent Fair on December 3, and the Confirmation class, and parents, will meet at Julie Ann Walker's home on December 10. Additionally, Pastor Shari is working with Pastor Lowell at Christ the Lord on a joint healing service for Thursday, January 11 at 6:30pm at Christ the Lord, Carefree.

Jim King and Sharon Westergreen have been instrumental in identifying and purchasing the medical equipment Living Water needs to be able to meet medical emergencies. We will be looking for additional volunteers to undergo training to ensure we have people on hand to respond to any unforeseen circumstances.

Steve Umland and Ron Ophaug met with City of Scottsdale representatives to check our water usage both inside and outside. When the city completes its report, we will decide how to proceed to ensure responsible water usage.

We will celebrate Pastor Mark Rossman's ten-year anniversary as pastor at Living Water in March 2024. More information to follow!





Christmas Eve Services

Sunday December 24th

4:00pm:

children & family-friendly

6:00pm:

traditional



La Sagrada Familia Lutheran Food Shelf Needs Our Help!



Your support of non-perishable food items for our neighbors at La Sagrada Familia in northern Phoenix is appreciated, and there is a continuing need. Items needed most frequently are noted on the "shopping list" in the grocery cart that is set out each Sunday morning. For the safety of our

friends at La Sagrada, please do not donate expired or "close-to" date items. Please continue to be generous in remembering our neighbors in need.





ADULT FORUM DURING DECEMBER

Sunday mornings at 9 AM in the Education Building/Choir Room

Pastor Dennis Nelson will lead a three-week study on December 17, 24, and 31

DECEMBER 17 – ARE YOU READY FOR CHRISTMAS? – LUKE 1

Zechariah was not ready for Christmas because he believed that he and his wife were too old to have a child. Mary was ready for Christmas because she believed when the angel told her that she, though a virgin, would conceive. If you believe that God can intervene in your life in a mighty and unexpected way, then you are ready for Christmas.

DECEMBER 24 – THE THINGS IN MARY’S HEART – MATTHEW 1 and LUKE 2

The Gospel writer Luke concludes his account of the birth of Jesus by saying, “Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.” What will you treasure and ponder in your heart from this Christmas season?

DECEMBER 31 – NEW BEGINNINGS

A New Year is an opportunity for all of us to experience a new beginning. Where do you need a new beginning? We will be looking at Elijah, who needed a new beginning because of burnout; Peter, who needed a new beginning because of failure; David, who needed a new beginning because of sin; and the Prodigal Son, who needed a new beginning because of bad decisions.

Bible Studies & Retreats

Dennis Nelson Bible Study

Published via our YouTube Channel

Wednesdays at NOON

Bible Study Outlines also available on our website:
lwlcaz.org.

Men's Bible Breakfast

We meet on Thursdays at 8:00am

Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center

7415 East Elbow Bend Rd.

Carefree, AZ 85377

\$7 for breakfast

Please contact Wayne Burrus if you would like to carpool.



Tuesday Women's Bible Study in December

Join us on Dec. 5, 12, and 19 for some conversation and reflection on Advent devotionals focused on the Magnificat, Mary's song of praise. The title is ***God's topsy-turvy kingdom***. God is turning a world torn apart by conflict, right-side-up. Study material will be provided. We meet at 10 am MST in the Fellowship Hall or by Zoom. Coffee and hot water for hot chocolate or tea is provided. If you aren't on the email communications for Tuesday Women, please contact myrna.ulland@gmail.com



Piecemakers Quilters in December

Want to help us tie quilts destined for Lutheran World Relief ministries? Join us on December 6th at 9 am in the Education Building. We will only meet once during December, on the first Wednesday.

If you can hold a needle, we can teach you to tie! If you're a winter visitor and interested in quilting, please join us. If you like to sew, we can provide pre-cut material to sew quilt tops.

We now convene in the Education Building in Matthew/Mark. Many hands make light work! Questions? Ask Lynda Cales, Cindy Ophaug, Kay Bonar, Mary Nyberg, or Myrna Ulland. You can also learn more about this ministry at www.lwr.org/quilts-and-kits

Café

boldcafe.org

Café is an online magazine and podcast for and with **young adult women** who identify as Lutheran or not.

Café shares stories written by bold young women who write about faith, relationships, advocacy and more. Readers and writers of Café include pastors, seminary and college students, and other young adult women who use Café as a Bible study resource individually or with a group. Although many women in their 20s and 30s contribute in every issue, Café can be used and shared by women of all ages.

It's free from Women of the ELCA, and available monthly to your email. You can access it anytime. Just go to boldcafe.org to sign up. Share this resource with your women friends, including daughters, granddaughters, nieces, college students!



Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission Christian School

Here is another AZ Tax credit opportunity. This is through the Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization (ACSTO). One of the schools helped by this tax credit is the **Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission Christian** school in Rock Point. This school needs financial help. You donate right to ACSTO and specifically designate the Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission Christian school. Donors can give up to \$1245/\$623 (married/single) towards the original tax credit. Any donation above this amount will then go towards the Overflow Tax Credit, up to a maximum of an additional \$1238/\$620. It is clearly explained at the ACSTO website which is <http://acsto.org>. They walk you through the donation process right there on the website. The website also provides the tax reporting instructions and documents needed if you participate in this unique tax credit opportunity.



Annual Tamale Sale

***Today! This Sunday, December 3rd, is the last day to order your tamales.**

Our amigas at La Sagrada Familia are offering their fabulous homemade tamales for sale again this year, to be delivered in December.

Orders will be available for pick-up on Sunday December 17th.

This year the choices will include red chili with meat, green chili with chicken, and tamales with cheese. They will be priced at \$25/dozen or \$13/half dozen.

A sign up sheet will be available at church on Sundays beginning today through the end of November, or you may email your order with the quantity of each variety that you want to Kristin Smith at kaos_52@me.com.



ONE STOP SHOPPING



Good Gifts! Gifts that make a difference.

Through the **ELCA Good Gifts** program you have an opportunity to purchase gifts that make a difference. Gifts for your children, grandchildren, friends or even yourself!

Stop by the display on the patio every Sunday during Advent. There are catalogs and gift cards available.



JOIN US TO MAKE LEFSE IN DECEMBER

Joan Sprinkle has again graciously offered her home in NE Scottsdale, and Myrna and Bob Ulland will lead two sessions to try your hand at making Lefse (lef'-suh), a Norwegian flatbread made from potatoes, butter & cream, traditionally made during the holidays. We can accommodate 10 persons per session so everyone can have a "hands-on" experience. **We still have room on Friday, December 8 at 2 pm.** Reserve your spot by contacting the Ullands: (myrna.ulland@gmail.com) or Joan Sprinkle: (joansprinkle@cox.net) today!

Christmas Bible Verses about the Birth of Jesus

Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Isaiah 9:6: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Micah 5:2: "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days."

Luke 1:35: "And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."

Luke 2:7: "And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."



Luke 2:11: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

LWLC Weekly Bulletin Announcement

Safety and Security and Medical Response Teams

Over the last year, we have had several potential security and medical incidents during our weekly services. As a result your Church Council has reinforced the Safety and Security Team (SST) and it's general procedures as well as forming a new Medical Response Team (MRT) to deal with medical incidence or emergencies during services.

We believe it's important for all church members to be aware of who are the SST and MRT teams members should there be a security or medical event where instructions need to be given.

Safety and Security Team Members – Phil Pounds (leader), Jim King, Jeff Munck, Dave Shoenbeck, and Jay Hoenig

I'm sure you have noticed that we have locked all doors during the services and have made security sweeps prior to services. We ask all members to be alert and make sure you know where the nearest exits are.

Medical Response Team Members – Dr. Jim King (Leader), Dr. Doug Yock, Sharon Westergreen (RN), Steve Johnson, Bob Frost, Don Pick, and Jay Hoenig.

The Team has purchased additional medical equipment to include slider board, Ambu bag with masks for adult and children, complete first aid kit, disposable O2 masks as well as the exiting CPR and oxygen tank.

We are also scheduling CPR training for all members of LWLC scheduled for December.

Security and medical incidences are rare and we gather in a generally safe community but it's always important to be vigilant.

December Birthdays

Henri	Breault	12/6
Stephen	Page	12/7
Doris	Yock	12/9
Sue	Brash	12/11
Bill	Laudenschlager	12/12
Jay	Hoening	12/13
Maren	Titmas	12/14

Dennis	Nelson	12/18
Vincent	Sabato	12/18
Annelise	Sabato	12/18
Vince	Augenstein	12/19
Joan	Sprinkle	12/20
Rich	Cote	12/23
Marilyn	Goesling	12/23
Yvonne	Weber	12/30



Happy Birthday!



Please call the office if your birthday is not listed and we will make sure to enter it into our database.

Publication DEADLINES:
Connections Newsletter - Every Tuesday by noon
SPLASH! Newsletter - The 20th of each month by noon



9201 E. Happy Valley Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85255
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 Living Water is a Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Grand Canyon Synod.