

Nov/Dec 2024

# CROSSROADS

Cross of Christ Lutheran Church  
Newsletter

God's  
= GRACE =





In our family we have a pre-Christmas tradition that started the first Christmas season when Matthew and I were dating and Elle was seven years old. It was a December evening and we had just picked out a freshly cut Christmas tree and brought it to my little apartment. Elle was taking a shower while Matthew and I set the tree in the stand and arranged the skirt around it. I took out the strands of lights and Matthew took them from my hands. He connected the strands of lights together and laid them out on the floor in a path from the bathroom door to the Christmas Tree three rooms away. He turned off all the room lights and when Elle emerged from the bathroom in her fuzzy Christmas pajamas, all was dark except for the glowing path of lights. Matthew played the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy on his ipad as she followed the lights to the tree. This was eight years ago and she still requests that he set up the lights and music for her before we decorate the tree.

As we enter this Advent season we notice the days growing shorter, the nights growing longer and the darkness beginning to envelop us. We busy ourselves with preparations, we reenact traditions that bind us to our loved ones, we turn our attention to the coming of Jesus, both as a baby born in a manger and as our Lord and savior who will come again at the end of the age. The love of Jesus is the light that shines through the darkness of our lives, leading us on the path we are to go. We open ourselves to the wonder of his presence and allow ourselves to be transformed by his love.

*Light four candles to watch for Messiah*

*Let the light banish darkness*

*He is coming, tell the glad tidings*

*Let your lights be shining!*

Peace and blessings as you wait with hope and expectation,

Pastor Sam

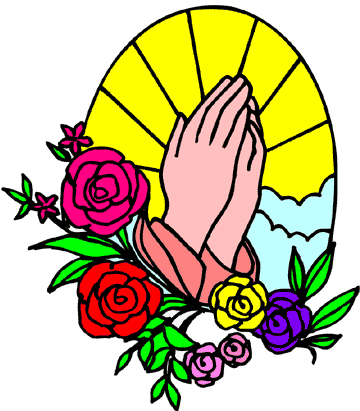


## NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Melia Armington, Gene Salcito, Priscilla Bock, Lynn Arnajallum, Lois Horky, Romveana Ghafur, Bill Villano, Michael Rapisarda, Safia Mohamed, Sr. Carol Weaver, Soraya Ghafur, Tish Hunter, Kay LaRosa and Amar Jagsaran.



### PRAYERS



We pray especially for all those on our prayer list below, all whom we send cards through our Care Card Ministry, on our prayer tree and those we now name in our hearts or with our voices... [Current prayer list: the family of Roosevelt Vann, Kathy M, Joshua, Luna, Myra S, Elaine W, Jim C, Arlene & William S, Judy J, Arthur F and family, Jacky A, Eva B, Shawn Y, Candie L, The LeClair family, Mark B, Phyllis K, Nadia & Gary M, Glenn & Ann, Betsy C, Adam K, Don M, Lori, Susan A, Randy and Priscilla B, Randolph K, Jeff S.



## **JESUS IS COMING!**

**In the tender compassion of our God,  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

**(Luke 1:68-79)**

After so many personal “laments” from this past year, my faith moments urged me (actually pushed me) to seek the light of love and peace from our God in new and wondrous ways! In previous years I frequently highlighted Advent as my favorite liturgical season, regardless of what is happening around me! Why can I say this with even more confidence and conviction this year? Because after many laments and prayer journeys, I came to the humble conclusion that perfection and total spiritual fulfillment are not ours to claim in this life—we are both sinners and saints and our world follows the same trajectory. But we do not stop moving toward the finish line of eternal life! God is always with us, whether we are aware of it or not! This is the paradox of faith and despair—pushing us—urging us—with love and forgiveness.....

Sometimes the darkness protects the light—seemingly testing our faith but always ready to embrace us no matter what—that’s why my motto is “Grace happens,” no matter what! I need that assurance after many laments, and yes, always remembering that the psalms may start out that way but they end with hope and forgiveness! We can then see the light of opportunity and love that enables us to restart one’s compassion for all humanity and this incredible world!

So—don’t be afraid of the darkness—Christ is still with us! Let us come together at our Live Nativity, Sunday worship, Bible study, and acts of service and enter the darkness! The light is there! Do you see it? Let the dawn from on high (Jesus) shine brightly! And let us help each other to share that beauty by doing justice, acts of kindness, and walking humbly with our God. AMEN.

Love, faith, and justice always,

Sister Carol Weaver and the angel dogs of Abby, Charlie, and Gracie

## **GRACE HAPPENS.....no matter what**





**Care Card Ministry:** *First Thessalonians 5:11: "Therefore encourage one another and build up each other..."* Cards sent: September: 18; October: 10. For updates and requests (including Thanksgiving and December mailings), contact Sharon. Thanks to our dedicated volunteers 😊.



**GWIM:** *Deuteronomy 15:11: "I, therefore, command you, 'Open your hand to the poor & needy neighbor in our land.'"* **Statistics-- September 2024:** Soup Kitchen—22,974 & Food Pantry—22,820; **October 2024:** Soup Kitchen—23,298 & Food Pantry—24,414.—We thank God for GWIM's ability to care for those in need.



**Donations to Food Pantry:** August & September 2024—31 items. October & November (as of 11/17): 60 items. **Food Pantry needs**—canned sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, turkeys, boxed stuffing mix. Turkey Giveaway 11/26 8:00 am-1:00 pm. Thanksgiving Dinner: 11/28, Elks Club (283 W. Main St) 11:00 a.m.-1:00 pm. December—Board meets. Thanks to GWIM!

**Pollinator Garden:** *"One is nearer God's heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth."* (Dorothy Gurney). Thanks for donations of flags and a flag holder—you have paved the way for flags for every season! Thanks for design suggestions and assistance creating our Remembrance Cross area 😊 It is now complete. 😊 The left side of the cross is for the remember rocks, and the right side rocks with faith words. Members may add rocks to either side at any time. See Sharon for supplies. Wow--some of our flowers are still blooming! Send us photos to share through Crossroads. In prayer—God, we thank you for the messages you give us here of beauty, inspiration, joy, peace, hope through the seasons of life. Thank you for this garden growing and the story of life it gives. Thank you for the opportunity to be stewards of your creation. Amen.



**Learning Committee--For Children:** A Christmas craft will be provided. Advent materials will be ready late in November. Thanks to our children for painting rocks for our garden Remember-Faith Cross.



**Social Advocacy:** *"We are called to be a voice and spirit for the voiceless."* **NE Synod: Green Team: EcoSpirituality:** Meeting monthly 7 pm the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday--focus on our relationship with creation. **Monthly planning meeting --11/28 1:00 pm. Camp Calumet: Rejoice weekend 12/06-12/08. 12/01-12/24 a gift from Lutheran Summer Music's fourth annual Musical Advent Calendar on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube & archived at [LSMacademy.org/acal](https://LSMacademy.org/acal), daily video sign up [forms.gle/6Jw7DoDApTAqW4Uf6](https://forms.gle/6Jw7DoDApTAqW4Uf6)./**

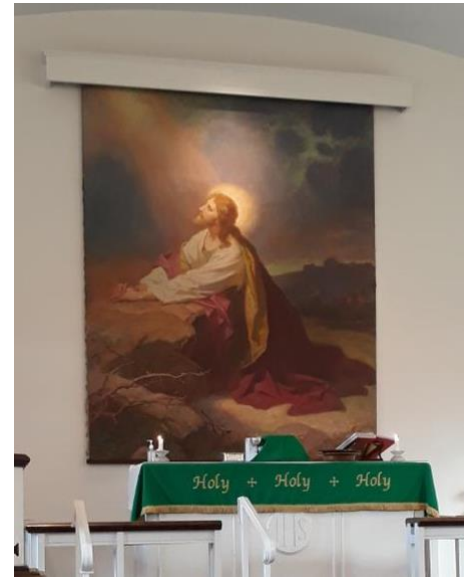
**ELCA:** *Lutherans Restoring Creation: Connections Call—11/19 8:00 pm, topic "Our Kairos Moment I: Finding Our Place in Creation" continuing this topic at Connections Call—12/17. This is a four-part program over the next four meetings. Note--Grants up to \$750 are available for programs relating to the Earth Charter. ELCA Advocacy from their website: "We are a publicly engaged church that rolls up our sleeves and gets to work..."*. *God's Work Our Hands at Home: Thanks to our members for making meals to help a member. We thank you God, for the skills you give us. God calls and shows us the way. Waterbury Environmental Commission (WECC): Don't hesitate to contact us with concerns*

Submitted by Sharon Samoska

## THE PATH OF THANKSGIVING AT CROSS OF CHRIST 2024

*As we walk the path of thanksgiving:  
Dear God... We give you thanks for:  
Memories of all our yesterdays,  
Opportunities of each new today,  
Visions and dreams of the future.*

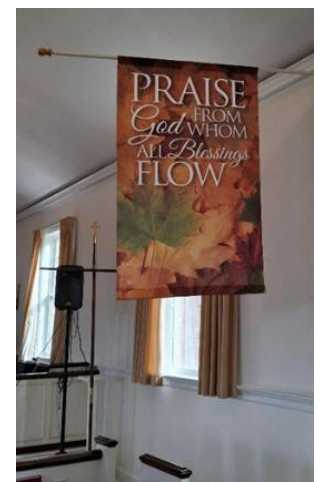
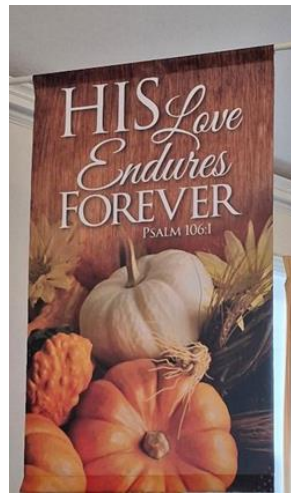
*For the joy of each new morning,  
For the calm of each evening.  
For the gentle falling snow.  
For the refreshing rain.*



*For each blooming flower.  
For each precious butterfly.*

*For songs of praise and peace that fill our hearts:  
"My shepherd will supply my needs..."  
"Praise God from whom all blessings flow..."  
"Come, Ye Thankful People, Come."*

*Dear God... We give you thanks for:  
Your Creation of which you made us a part.  
For your support and guiding lights over the years.  
For all the gifts you give us, every one...*



*Poem by Sharon Samoska  
Pictures by Linda Nido*





**TRUNK OR TREAT**  
**Wendell Cross School**

*It was a great turnout! Thank you to all who participated!*



## POINSETTIA ORDER FORM 2024

Orders will be taken starting on 12/1 and must be submitted no later than 12/15.

Delivery will be 12/22. Please talk to Nadia with any questions.

(All plants are \$10.00 each) ... **Please print clearly.** Thank you!



Your

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

In memory

of \_\_\_\_\_

In honor

of \_\_\_\_\_

Number of plants \_\_\_\_\_



Please submit your articles and pictures for the Jan/Feb 2025 newsletter by Tuesday, February 4. Thank you!!



### *...Reflections of Christmas...*



The candle's shining light... I remember my father decorating the tree-- precisely placing the lights, each treasured ornament, each icicle. The tree with its scent of pine, the star at the top—pretty yes, yet it is over years at each Christmas I find new meanings. Reflections on the ceiling of that star —relating back to the star guiding the shepherds. In the cherub choir singing “Silent Night,” holding my first candle. Tall green pine trees at either side of the altar dressed in only silver icicles—so simple, yet so meaningful. Marga singing “The Christmas Rose.” I had begun voice lessons-- could I sing with such strength and emotion? Gram's favorite flower was the rose. She could grow them even in the sand. Jesus is our rose—of hope, joy, life, walking miles and miles, spreading God's word. The Christmas pageant--reliving the birth of Jesus-- that moment, transcending time. I studied writing—it was God's plan. I wrote my first poem to God when I was 10, and years later

a Christmas pageant. God plants seeds and nurtures growth in us. “I Wonder as I Wander” wakes my spirit for it comforts, it speaks of Jesus' sacrifice for all to come and glory to God. Blanketing snow so white and pure in the moon's light keeps the message Jesus brings peace to this conflicted, lost and lonely world. We are waiting with Mom for my grandparents to arrive by bus, it is snowing. It is cold, but the hugs of Gram and Gramps overpower the cold. Christmas Eve--the old house is different, it is warm and safe, there is much joy as we share together. I feel for those without a home, enough food, family; anxious, frightened, lost in a harsh world. In the midst of hardship, “Silent Night” is still sung, and questions of “I Wonder as I Wander” are still asked. Christmas is the gift of love from God. God sent Jesus to feel all we feel--joy and hope, despair and pain--the so many reflections in our lives. God guides from uncertainty to certainty. We all have Moses moments—am I ready, can I, how can I, why God? We feel the burden of a world sad, lost. We feel the weight lifted by hope and light shining on the baby Jesus' face, the light of life given by God. The Christmas story-- God sending Jesus his son calms aching hearts and awakens hope. I ask God why this world does not remember Christmas every day, and then God whispers, but the world does remember through my children, and you are my child, come unto me--your tears speak to me. I have given you the memory of the hope of Jesus as you look at the light of the candle this night.

*“,,,high from God's Heaven a star's light did fall, and the promise of the ages it then did recall...”*

*Sharon L. Samoska --December 2024*



**FROM THE SMITHS**

Dear Pastor Sam and Lainey,

.....I just want to send you a short e-mail to let you know how much I appreciate your e-mails and newsletters you forward to me. It means soooo much to me. Thank you so very much and God bless both of you and the congregation, many of them I remember so well.

Missing all of you, Hannelore and Richard



AMERICAN LEGION



CALLUM, HANNE AND RICHARD



THE COUNTRYSIDE



You are missed!



MEMORIAL DAY SALUTE

# *Happy Thanksgiving Blessings*

*Giving thanks  
always for all  
things unto God.*

*Ephesians 5:20  
(KJV)*

*God Bless*

*Judiann*

*Wishing You and Your  
Family a Beautiful  
and Blessed Day!*





***BLESSINGS OF THE SEASON AND ALWAYS!***