

The "AGAPE" #45

(The last days of the time after PENTECOST)

A "BLOG-LIKE" NEWSLETTER FROM PASTOR ZEUCH

ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH, CALGARY AB

November 17, 2022



When Jesus Returns

Will He Find Faith
Upon The Earth?

If He Came Right
Now,
How Would He
Find You?

Faithful
Or Faithless.

I hope you are doing fine with God's grace. This is the LAST Agape edition of the church year! Next one will be in the upcoming Advent season, which is the start of a new year in the liturgical calendar. Please enjoy the devotional reading from the Lutheran Hour Ministries below:

Malachi 3:13-17 - Your words have been hard

against Me, says the LORD. But you say, 'How have we spoken against You?' You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping His charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts? And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.'" Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before Him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed His Name. "They shall be Mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up My treasured possession."

It's not how most people think about God in my experience. But you can hear the note of sadness in God's voice—"Your words have been hard against Me, says the Lord." And immediately I think: Wait a minute. You heard that? You care about that? Why? After all, You're God and I'm just a human being on a small planet in an incredibly huge universe. How can You even pay attention to our world, let alone the things I say?



But God does. He is the Maker of the universe and all its endless galaxies, yes. He keeps track of all the stars. But He also keeps track of all the atoms—every cell in your body, every word you speak. And these things matter to Him. He cares.

Well, that's a bit awkward, isn't it? Suddenly I have the urge to revisit all the careless things I've been saying. "Um, I didn't really mean that, Lord. Or maybe I did, but the mood has passed and I feel different now. I mean, I wasn't thinking things through. I didn't think You were listening."

It's time to give up justifying myself. Better to say just "I'm sorry, Lord," and throw myself on His mercy. Because at the back of that hurt there is everlasting love—it's the reason our words matter to Him, isn't it?

If He didn't love us, He could just squash us and be done with it. But He won't. He loves us intensely and calls us back to Him. He will go to any lengths to bring us back to Himself—even taking our guilt upon Himself as a human being, even suffering and dying on a cross. Even rising from the dead and promising to make us alive with Him forever as His children. We matter that much to Him. Jesus is the proof that God cares—and that He is calling us back to Himself, whatever we have done or said. He wants you, and He loves you. Won't you answer His call?

WE PRAY: Dear Lord, I'm sorry. Bring me back. Amen.
Written by Dr. Kari Vo.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:

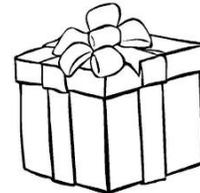
BIBLE STUDY: We have now finished studying the book of Hosea. We are now studying the life of Joseph, the "carpenter of steel" in four sessions. You may want to check it out! This topic will be appropriate for the upcoming Advent & Christmas season. Please note that in December we have only one Bible study (Dec 14). Then in January we will study the lectionary: the readings of the upcoming Sundays. Our online meetings last one hour (from 7 to 8 p.m.) weekly on zoom and YOU are invited to participate! If it's your first time, be welcome to our little group...if you have been in the past, welcome back! May God bless our time together.

YOUTH MINISTRY: There is a social gathering (a "fun activity") every first and third Friday of the month. There is also **online Bible study** for them every second and fourth Tuesday of the month led by me, your pastor. Check out our calendar below. We ask you to encourage your children / grandchildren to be part of this.



DONATIONS :

Our big thank you goes to Judy Rublesky for donating a new Advent wreath with the purple candles that we will be using this year!



Our other big thank you goes to Debora Klaus for donating the rocks for the shuffleboard in the basement! We can now teach the younger generations how to play this iconic and historic game!



THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR / HOLY COMMUNION / THE LORD'S SUPPER / THE EUCHARIST / THE LORD'S TABLE



Good news: At our last board of elders meeting on November 10th, we have decided to offer Holy Communion every Sunday again, as we used to do in the time pre-Covid!

If you are a baptized and confirmed Lutheran, you may come to the altar and receive the sacrament every time we gather for worship (with a few exceptions, like Christmas Eve etc.).



OUR CHAIRMAN

As you know, we have been blessed to have Peter Graumann as our chairman for a long time. He has served our congregation faithfully for about twelve years now! Peter felt it was time to step down. At our last congregational meeting on November 13th, we have prayerfully accepted his resignation as the Chair. Since we have no Vice-Chair or Chair, the voters' assembly has decided that the PPC (Parish Planning Council) will fulfill the duties of the Chair for the time being. We are trying out a new format of church governance, hoping that this decision will also be blessed by the Lord. We also hope and pray that, down the road, someone will step up to take this position again. We can't thank Peter enough for all he's done in our church. When you see him at church, please take the time to thank him! And may God continue to bless us as He has done so far!

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IF YOU MISSED OUR VOTERS MEETING ON NOV 13, HERE IS A SUMMARY:

- Attendance: we had 23 members at zoom meeting
 - communion will go back to weekly starting in Advent
 - Coffee Hour offered once a month (normally the third Sunday)
 - Soup & Sandwich supper and Lessons & Carols service December 7, starting at 6 p.m.
 - Church picnic planned for spring 2023!
 - Properties: Parish Hall floors and downstairs floors will be done 22nd and 23rd.
 - CHAIR: Peter Graumann resigned his position as chair and was released from his duties effective Dec 31, 2022. The PPC will prayerfully take over his position until it can be filled.
 - MISSION PROJECTS - \$1000 going to Ukraine. Any monies coming in at Tannenbaum will go to the Lutheran Church in Ukraine
 - We will try to go caroling at Bethany Riverview senior home. If you are interested, please call the office and let us know!
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OH CHRISTMAS TREE! St. Matthew Lutheran Church Calgary is hosting the **Tannenbaum Lighting Festival** for the third time this year. It will take place on Saturday, November 26th at 5 p.m. Additional parking is available at the parking lot of Riverside school (formerly Langevin), on 1st



Avenue. We suggest you come early!

This event is brought to you by the German organizations and agencies of Calgary. The idea is to start the Advent & Christmas season with a German-style celebration of the birth of Christ. We will have the presence of the honorary consul of Germany, Mr. Hubertus Liebrecht, as well as three choirs bringing the joy of beautiful German Christmas songs: The German Ladies Choir, the Singgemeindschaft and the Canadian German Men's Choir. There will be carol singing and the talented Hannah Pagenkopf as the soloist. Children will have a little surprise as well! The event will wrap up with wonderful German Christmas baking (Kaffee, Kuchen & Weihnachtsplätzchen). The event is free for all and a free will donation will be accepted. The proceeds will go to the Canadian Lutheran World Relief (for Ukraine) and the Ukrainian Aid Fund of the Lutheran Church-Canada. Come join us, bring your family for a beautiful evening!

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ORGAN FUND: Our lovely organ has been repaired, but it sometimes has malfunctions. The organ is very sensitive to temperature and humidity, so it will be temperamental during certain times of the year. We were very blessed that Mr. Hooper had such a strong connection with the organ and knew just the right way to take care of her. He also had the ability to make adjustments quickly so there were minimal problems detectable to our ears. With the passing of Mr. Hooper, we lost that. Our repairman graciously comes in and makes adjustments for no charge, but it can take a few weeks. It's just the reality of working with an older instrument. There is currently \$18,500.00 in the account to cover any upcoming repairs, so we no longer need any funds towards this initiative. We are grateful for all the support and donations towards the organ the past few years. If you want to support special projects, please consider directing your funds towards the Carpet Fund or Building Fund which is currently supporting replacement of the parking lot stairs. These are both 2023 capital project initiatives. If you have any questions, please contact the church office and the secretary will direct you to the Properties Board

MARK IT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

NOV 18 (Fri): Youth fun activity: Games night @ 7 p.m. (church basement)

NOV 20 (Sun): Last Sunday of the Church Year. Worship services: In German at 9:30 a.m. In English at 11 a.m. There is coffee hour after each service!

NOV 22 (Tues): Youth Bible study (online) 7-8 p.m.

NOV 23 (Wed): Pastor attends Calgary Circuit winkel. Online Bible Study at 7 p.m.

NOV 24 (Thurs): Online confirmation class on zoom. PPC online meeting at 7 p.m.

NOV 26 (Sat): Tannenbaum Lighting Festival at 5 p.m.

NOV 27 (Sun): First Sunday in Advent. Worship services: In German at 9:30 a.m. In English at 11 a.m.

Nov 27 (Sun): Online Bible study in Portuguese

Nov 30 (Wed): Online Bible study @ 7 p.m.

Dec 1 (Thurs): Online confirmation class on zoom. Board of Elders meeting @ 7 p.m.

Dec 2 (Fri): Youth sleepover (church basement)

Dec 4 (Sun): Second Sunday in Advent. Worship services: In German at 9:30 a.m. In English at 11 a.m.

Dec 6 (Tues): Youth Bible study on zoom @ 7 p.m. / Nicholas of Myra, Pastor

Dec 7 (Wed): Soup & Sandwich supper @ 6 p.m. followed by Lessons & Carols service @ 7 p.m.

Dec 8 (Thurs): Online confirmation class

Dec 11 (Sun): Third Sunday in Advent. Worship services: In German at 9:30 a.m. In English at 11 a.m.

Dec 13 (Tues): To be confirmed: Christmas caroling at Bethany Riverview senior Home @ 6:30 p.m. Address: 200, 2915 – 26th Avenue SE

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WORSHIP TERMINOLOGY: Pre-Service Music

Pieces of music to help the congregation prepare for worship and introduce some of the themes in the service. As you come to church on Sunday mornings, take your time to be in silence. Prepare your heart for the worship, pray that God blesses your hearing of the Gospel and taking part of the Lord's Supper offered to you on that day. Pray for the pastor and worship assistants. Pray that the message will touch the hearts of others as well.

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DIE DEUTSCHE ECKE

WER WAR NIKOLAUS UND WARUM FEIERN WIR IHN?

Der Nikolaustag steht kurz bevor. Besonders Kinder freuen sich in der kalten Jahreszeit auf den Geschenkeüberbringer. Doch woher kommt eigentlich der Brauch und wer war dieser Nikolaus überhaupt?

Der Nikolaus belohnt jedes Jahr die braven Kinder. Er kommt in der Nacht, wenn alle schlafen, steckt seine Geschenke heimlich in die leeren Stiefel und verschwindet genauso heimlich wieder über den Kamin. Dieses Bild haben wohl viele im Kopf, wenn sie an den Nikolaus denken. Dass es sich bei der Legende des Nikolaus jedoch um eine reale Person handelte, wissen meist nur wenige. Wer war er nun, dieser Nikolaus? Und was hat es mit den Stiefeln und dem Kamin auf sich?

Der Nikolaustag und die Verehrung des Heiligen ist der Kirche nach mit dem Leben des Nikolaus von Myra verbunden. Im dritten Jahrhundert in Lykien - einer Region südwestlich von Antalya - geboren, wurde Nikolaus mit gerade einmal 19 Jahren zum Priester geweiht. Als Glaubensmann trieb es ihn in die große Stadt Myra (heute: Demre), in der er 325 n. Chr. zum Bischof geweiht wurde. Nikolaus von Myra habe zu dieser Zeit viele Wunder vollbracht und wurde als Bischof besonders für seine Barmherzigkeit bekannt. In der orthodoxen Kirche wird er deshalb, ähnlich wie Sankt Martin, als Helfer in der Not gepriesen.

Der Nikolaustag geht auf den Sterbetag des Bischofs von Myra zurück und wird entsprechend am 6. Dezember gefeiert. So weit ist sich die Christenheit einig. Doch wann der Nikolaus nun zu den Kindern kommt, ist gar nicht so einfach zu beantworten. Selbst in Deutschland ist das Brauchtum von Region zu Region und innerhalb der Familien unterschiedlich. Zwar werden überall am Abend des 5. Dezember die Schuhe vor die Türe gestellt, die bei braven Kindern am nächsten Morgen auch gefüllt sind, über den Zeitpunkt des Besuchs des Nikolaus mit seinem goldenen Buch lässt sich jedoch streiten.

Aus: Ideal Versicherung Magazin





Thank you for taking your time to read the last edition of Agape for this church year. God has blessed us thus far and we thank Him for that! May God's peace fill your days with His presence as you prepare for the holy Advent/Christmas season!

In His service,

Rev. Markus Zeuch

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Visit our website: www.stmatthewlutheranalgary.com

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"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Phil 4:7