

The Echo

December 2020



Hello all-

Grace and peace from our Lord Jesus, who promises to be with us until the end of time. I write to share an update regarding in-person worship and COVID-19. We are seeing an increase in transmission in our area, a high rate of infection and, of course, are keeping an eye on our health care system with tired health care workers and hospitals nearing capacity. None of these things are where we desire them to be. As leadership at Galchutt and Emmanuel churches, we have decided the faithful response, as a church, is to give our community a chance to catch up. **We have decided to stop in-person services for a time, effective immediately.** All congregational meetings are postponed for the time being.

We do not make this decision lightly. And we certainly hope this will be short-lived. However, we want to be faithful participants in our community by keeping people safer and encouraging our members to do their part too. Please, stay home when you can, wear a mask when you can't, and minimize the number of people you see outside your home. In scripture, **God promises us the end will be well. And so, if all is not well, it isn't the end.** I truly believe there will be a day when we can leave our home without a mask, when we can see our friends, when we can gather with family, and return to the things we enjoy. But today is not that day. **Please do your part to help our community and hospitals heal so we can move toward that hopeful future together.** You can find our services on:

- our Facebook pages, premiering at 9 AM;
- YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJiF1UkQz4v5sIFN6JMkebQ>; and
- Red River Communications, channel 3, at 9 AM and 6 PM.

Until we are able to meet again in person, take care, stay safe, and God bless.

Interim Pastor Meggie



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EVENTS and ANNOUNCEMENTS!



A VERY COVID CHRISTMAS

We live in tumultuous times, yes? Because of this, we have not yet determined if we will host in-person services on Christmas Eve. Stay tuned for more announcements about these services.

In the meantime, we are making preparations for digital services at home. Starting Sunday, December 13, we will have items available for pickup at each church to be used for Christmas Eve services. Come to the church to get a bulletin, candles, communion, and more to help you participate. Take as many as you need for however many people will be at your home celebration.

Advent Sermon Series

God desires to be with us and God is with us through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. We can rest assured.

God is with us. We are not alone!

Lessons begin Sundays Nov. 29

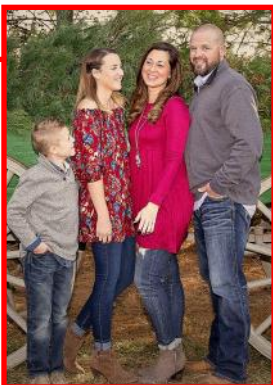
Advent-in-a-Box: take-home lessons for families with kids age 3-12.

Carol sing-a-longs available online



At-home lessons for Families!

- Each box has take-home lessons for families with kids age 3-12.
- Four weekly lessons follow our theme.
- Make your own advent calendar!
- Let us know if you or someone you know would like a box!



Send us your Christmas Photos!

We'd love to "see" you all for Christmas! While we aren't sure we can gather, we are planning to make a digital processional for Christmas Eve services featuring photos of members in their Christmas best! Take a photo of your family in festive Christmas wear and we'll get you included! All photos can be mailed to our office or sent to 701-205-6803 or mbjertness001@luthersem.edu. This will be shown to members of the church on Christmas Eve!

If you have an announcement for an event or photos from a baptism, wedding, or some other special event regarding a member or former member of our parish, we would love to include the information in an upcoming issue. Please email them to lalee@rrt.net.

God with Us

This Advent season we plan to be talking about the meaning of “Emmanuel,” which is “God with us.” I’d like to start with a Biblical story of Joseph. No, not the Christmas Joseph betrothed to Mary, but the other Joseph: the one with the coat of many colors! There are some important things to know about this Joseph.



- He was the 11th of 12 brothers (Genesis 30:22).
- His dad loved him more than all the others (Genesis 36:3).
- As such, he was spoiled compared to his brothers (Genesis 36:3-4).
- One day out of jealousy, his brothers threw him into a pit (Genesis 37:23-24).
- They decided not to kill him – instead they sold him into slavery (Genesis 37:26-28).
- He was purchased by a man named Potiphar, who eventually put him in charge of his household (Genesis 39:1-4).
- Potiphar’s wife really liked Joseph, but out of respect for God and Potiphar, Joseph ignored her advances (Genesis 39:7).
- Potiphar’s wife was not used to being ignored. She falsely accused Joseph of assaulting her (Genesis 39:13-18).
- Joseph was sent to prison where he met two people who worked for the Pharaoh (Genesis 39:20-40:4).
- He interpreted their dreams and was eventually asked to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams (Genesis 40:5-23, 41:1-36).
- Seeing that Joseph was filled with the spirit of God, Pharaoh put him in charge to help save Egypt from famine (Genesis 41:37-40).

Poor Joseph! It seemed that no matter where he turned, misfortune befell him. He’s thrown in a pit, he’s sold into slavery, and he’s thrown in prison. And yet, scripture tells that, “the Lord was with him and caused everything he did to succeed” (Genesis 39:23b). And certainly, his brothers didn’t let him die, he proved a trustworthy servant in a rich man’s household, and he eventually worked for the pharaoh.

I wonder if there was a point at which Joseph felt abandoned by God. When things don’t go my way, I get discouraged. I rage, “If God loved me this wouldn’t have happened!” And yet, it seemed despite the difficulties and evil intentions of others, God remained faithful to Joseph.

As we await the coming of Christ this advent, Joseph’s story is a reminder that we don’t always see the end picture, but God does. Trusting God does not mean everything will go our way, but it does prove God can transform any situation. Even the greatest evil can be used for good. Why? *Because God is with us.*

This is what we wait for in advent. Unlike Joseph on his journey, we know how the Christmas story will end. With the birth of Jesus Christ we experience the birth of hope. And, like Joseph, we can trust that God will provide for us and can transform even the worst situation to bring about a greater good.

Dear Jesus, you are the hope in our messy world. This Advent, help us slow down, listen to your voice, and anticipate your transforming power. We place our hope in you as we prepare our hearts to celebrate your birth on Christmas. Amen.

Peace, Meggie

For many, Christmas is a season filled with worry and stress even in a normal year, so it comes as no surprise that this year may be even more taxing. The pressures of purchasing gifts, baking Christmas treats, and being bombarded with endless ads on television to buy this or buy that, leaves a person is exhausted...exhausted almost to the breaking point. This year, however, to add to our anxiety, we may also be agonizing over how to connect with friends and family over the holidays, even if it can't be in person. While it's easy to tell ourselves not to worry so much about these things, it really doesn't solve the problem. Hard as it may be, we should turn our attention toward Christmas as a time of joy and thankfulness. Focus on the fact that this holiday celebrates the greatest event and greatest gift ever - the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. Even 2,000 years later, Christmas still reminds us that God is with us. He is with us to give us hope, forgive our sins, and heal our sadness of isolation.



The hope of the Echo staff and church leadership is that all of you can have a healthy holiday season. A wish that 2021 brings the blessing of, once again, gathering with family and friends. Have a very blessed Christmas season recalling the good news, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Lou Ann Lee



IN YOUR HOME	IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD	IN YOUR COMMUNITY
<input type="checkbox"/> Make your sister's bed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk your neighbor's dog.	<input type="checkbox"/> Beach or park clean up.
<input type="checkbox"/> Help your brother with his homework.	<input type="checkbox"/> Shovel someone's driveway or sidewalk.	<input type="checkbox"/> Invite a new friend to play at recess.
<input type="checkbox"/> Play with a younger brother or sister, and let them choose the game.	<input type="checkbox"/> Deliver a treat. Ring the doorbell. Run!!	<input type="checkbox"/> Write the principal a "thank you" note.
<input type="checkbox"/> Give your mom a kiss.	<input type="checkbox"/> Help rake leaves.	<input type="checkbox"/> Smile at someone who seems sad.
<input type="checkbox"/> Put your brother's shoes away for him.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask an elderly neighbor to tell you one of their favorite memories.	<input type="checkbox"/> Make a treat for your teacher.
<input type="checkbox"/> Pack a lunch for dad.	<input type="checkbox"/> Organize a neighborhood canned food drive.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sit by someone new at lunch.
<input type="checkbox"/> Let someone else pick the movie for movie night.	<input type="checkbox"/> Drop off a surprise dinner.	<input type="checkbox"/> Help clean up the classroom.
<input type="checkbox"/> Compliment the chef.	<input type="checkbox"/> Handwrite Christmas cards, and put them on every neighbor's doorstep.	<input type="checkbox"/> Be kind to everyone you meet.
<input type="checkbox"/> Draw a picture for your sister.	<input type="checkbox"/> Hold a free hot cocoa stand!	<input type="checkbox"/> Drop off a fruit basket to the hospital for the doctors and nurses working on Christmas Eve.
<input type="checkbox"/> Set the table.	<input type="checkbox"/> Meet a new neighbor.	<input type="checkbox"/> Head to the local Christmas tree lot, and pay for the tree of the person behind you in line.
<input type="checkbox"/> Help clean up the table after dinner.	<input type="checkbox"/> Head out and sing Christmas Carols.	<input type="checkbox"/> Deliver a treat and "thank you" cards to the local fire station.
<input type="checkbox"/> Share your favorite toy for a day.	<input type="checkbox"/> Drop off a Christmas wreath.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wake up early, and do your sibling's chores.	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass out candy canes to neighborhood friends.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Help fold the laundry.		

The Giving Manger
 Calling all kids: Happy Advent! Last year, a member of Richland/ Our Saviors made nativities for every family. All through Advent, we prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming by caring for others. Use these service ideas to help prepare for Jesus. Each time you do something good, add a piece of hay to your manger. On Christmas Eve, we'll add baby Jesus! Giving managers were included in your Advent boxes.



Gifts & Memories

As I write, I am preparing for the holidays during this most unusual year and many memories flood my mind of 70 plus years of celebrations. Recently, I heard a mother talking about her 7-year-old daughter's obsession with Christmas plans, though not the ones we might think of as fitting for the Advent season. Her daughter had become quite familiar with shopping on an iPad and she began making her Christmas Wish List. When it was complete, she gave it to her mother saying that she knew she wouldn't get everything on the list. Her mother did some mental computations and was shocked to find the list totaled nearly \$2,000! The mother decided that it was time to hide the iPad and to shift the focus from the "Wish List" to other preparations for Christmas.

Expensive Christmas lists aren't what I remembered of my Christmas past. How about you? During those early years, the focus was on school concerts, Sunday school programs, and telling the Christmas story. Later, as a young parent, the focus was much the same in our family but I noticed the advertising hype beginning earlier and earlier every year. The house decorations and Christmas baking also began earlier. Instead of baking the last days before Christmas, pretty soon it was the last days before Thanksgiving. With the pandemic this year, the celebrating may be different than in the past. Will that encourage more focus on the "reason for the season"? For those whose families are scattered, will you find new ways to safely share the good news? Perhaps we'll find that the virtual broadcasts of music and worship services will be ways that we can gather in our own homes with friends and family in distant places to share the good news of Christ's birth.

Hallelujah!

Ellen Rittenhouse



HOPE
OF PARDON
HOPE
OF PEACE WITH GOD
HOPE
OF GLORY

The Christmas message is that there is hope for a ruined humanity — hope of pardon, hope of peace with God, hope of glory — because at the Father's will Jesus Christ became poor, and was born in a stable so that 30 years later he might hang on a cross.

—J.I. Packer

Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is a symbol of watchfulness and increasing joy as we anticipate Jesus' birth. The wreath's circular shape symbolizes eternity, or life without end. The candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World — he brought light and life to a dark world (see John 1:4-5). On each of the four Sundays of Advent, we light a new candle. As the light grows, so do our hope and joy.



Galchutt Lutheran Council Highlights—November 18, 2020



Galchutt Lutheran Church council met on November 18th at 6:30 PM over Zoom conference call. Members present were Pamela Krump, Alex Paczkowski, Marissa Moxness, Doug Johnson, Jeff Miller, Daniel Dockter, and Pastor Meggie. Pamela called the meeting to order. Pastor Meggie started with a devotion and a prayer. Alex read last month secretary’s report, Jeff accepted, and Doug seconded the secretary’s report. Pamela presented the treasurer’s report from Kendra. Alex made a motion to accept and Marissa seconded the treasurer’s report.

Pastors Report: Pastor Meggie is trying to visit as many home bound members as possible. Confirmation was put on hold for the past few weeks and will resume in December virtually. A new bishop was installed. Pastor Meggie is doing a sermon series over the advent season. She put together advent in a box which are take home lessons for kids ages 3-12.

Old Business: The bat house has been installed and council believes it is working. Please report any bat sightings to the council if you see anything suspicious. Pulpit light has been fixed.

New Business: Gods acre potluck was cancelled due to the increase in Covid cases in Richland County. Pastor Meggie was approached by a few different members if we should stop doing in person services, Pastor Meggie gave her input. The council decided to stop in person services for a few weeks until the case numbers go down again. Pastor Meggie will continue to provide services online in some sort, (live Facebook, TV, etc). Watch Facebook announcements and emails for service announcements. Kari Kleingartner is more than happy to help Meggie with the services. Gods acre service will not be in person, instead it will be on Facebook and a more permanent decision going forward on where to find the services will be made at a later time. Christmas services will be announced at a later date if in person will be occurring, but some sort of recorded/Facebook service will be provided along with a service packet similar to Easter. The nomination committee is Katie Nordick, Scott Fixen, and Doug Kuruc. Jeff Miller is the outgoing council member for this coming election. In the future the parish agreement between Galchutt and Emmanuel should be looked at. Meeting was adjourned with the Lords Prayer. Next meeting is scheduled for December 8th at 6:30 PM.

Alex Paczkowski, Secretary

Thank you to the following for your recent donations:

Galchutt Lutheran Church Building Fund

- **In memory of Paul Gorder**
Lynn & Vicki Syvertsen
- **In memory of Jeff Kuruc**
Lynn & Vicki Syvertsen



Thank you to those who have helped with the Echo newsletter during this past year by submitting articles, proofreading, or publishing and disseminating the newsletter to our members and friends. The Echo is a publication for our members and friends and we welcome any submissions. Some of us regulars start to “dry up” on ideas at times:) So, thanks to anyone who can help in any way!!!

Lou Ann Lee, Editor

Emmanuel Lutheran Council Highlights— November 3, 2020



The Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council met on November 3, 2020. In attendance were Sharon Tschakert, Kevin Paczkowski, Jessica Kappes, Lesley Hulne, Pastor Meggie, and Austin Heyen. Pastor Meggie gave devotions.

The Secretary's report was given by Lesley and approved in a motion by Sharon and second by Jessica. There was no Treasurer's Report.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Meggie will continue visitations by phone. New member Sunday was held in October. Christmas plans will be discussed. Pastor Meggie submitted her mileage report. Tessa Moon -Leiseth was installed as Bishop of the ELCA Eastern ND on October 31st.

Old Business: The Raffle will be held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting on January 31, 2021. Austin Heyen from Aurora Group Inc gave us options for an update of the church heating and air conditioning system and answered questions. Sharon moved to accept the proposal from Aurora for new furnace and air conditioning systems and revisions to the duct work. Jessica seconded the motion and it carried.

New Business: We looked at options for Christmas Eve services, taking into account the current guidelines for Coronavirus risk levels. We will plan to hold Christmas Eve services with the current guidelines and made alternative plans for a virtual service if the risk factors elevate and it is warranted. Pastor Meggie will put together an Advent Box to send home with families to celebrate Sunday School lessons at home through December. Pastor Meggie's mileage was approved in a motion by Jessica and second by Sharon. The Church Council reviewed and recommends the proposed changes to the Constitution. Lesley made a motion and Sharon seconded to accept the recommended changes and to present them to the congregation at a special meeting on December 13, 2020, following worship. The motion carried. While discussing the proposed constitution changes, we noted that we do not have a current Parish Agreement with Galchutt Lutheran Church. Pastor Meggie shared that formal agreements like these are to help two or more groups define how they do and don't collaborate. A Parish Agreement would not take away or change Emmanuel's identity, rather would help spell out which parts of ministry are shared and not shared with Galchutt. The council agreed this might be helpful and gave Pastor Meggie verbal permission to put together a committee to look into the creation of a Parish Agreement with Galchutt, if Galchutt is willing.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 1, at 6:30 PM.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Secretary, Lesley Hulne

We pray for:

- The friends & family of Paul & Jan Gorder, who both recently passed away;
- Mary Krueger, as she recovers from a recent hospitalization;
- All those who have dealt with health issues for the past many months, including any who are suffering from health issues related to COVID;
- Our call committee as they continue to search for our future pastoral leader;
- Pastor Meggie as she embarks on her journey in the ministry; and
- All members of our congregations, particularly those who deal with loneliness due to the isolation required during this pandemic.



UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER SUNDAY!



SUNDAY, December 20, 2020

You are invited (O.K., highly encouraged) to wear your Ugly Christmas Sweater on Sunday Dec. 20!
Maybe even accessorize with a Christmas mask?!?!

Even if you are worshipping at home - join us for the ZOOM party at 10 AM.

Maybe you have a fun Christmas mug to show off as well! Let us show off our craziest Christmas sweater, laugh, support one another, and come together as the family of Christ.

We can still have fun this Christmas!

Richland 44 Confirmation

2020-2021

Confirmation includes grades 7-9, comprised of students from the following churches: Galchutt Lutheran Church, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Our Saviors' Lutheran Church, and Richland Lutheran Church. If you have a friend who would also like to join confirmation, they are welcome to join! All are welcome to learn about the abundance of God's grace and love! During the month of December we will switch to an hour using a Zoom online format as shown below.

Schedule:

- ◆ Dec 2 Luke
- ◆ Dec 9 John
- ◆ Dec 16 Christmas Party!
- ◆ Dec 23-Jan 6 No Confirmation

Tentative Nightly Regular Schedule:

- * 5:00 – 5:35 PM Lesson
- * 5:35 – 5:55 PM Small Groups on Zoom
- * 5:55 pm Closing Blessing

Growing through gratitude

Thankfulness, studies show, has multiple physical, mental and emotional benefits. Psychologist Robert Emmons calls gratitude "fertilizer for the mind" because of its powerful effects.

He admits gratitude isn't always easy — especially when life throws us curveballs (see the year 2020) — but says it can be most helpful during and after difficulties. Emmons suggests reframing challenges using thankfulness-based language. Ask, for example: Though I wasn't grateful for the experience at the time, how can I be now? What lessons did I learn, and how did I grow as a person?

Throughout his letters, the apostle Paul reframes his extensive sufferings and urges us to do the same. "Give thanks in all circumstances," he writes, "for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV).





December 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Emmanuel Council Mtg 6:30 PM	2 Virtual Confirmation 5-6 PM	3	4	5
6 See page 1 and church announcements during those services	7	8 Galchutt Council Mtg 6:30 PM	9 Virtual Confirmation 5-6 PM	10	11	12
13 See page 1 and church announcements during those services	14	15	16 Virtual Confirmation 5-6 PM	17	18	19 Echo Articles Due Today
20 See page 1 and church announcements during those services	21	22	23	24	25 Christmas Day! A Savior is Born!!	26
27 See page 1 and church announcements during those services	28	29	30	31		

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The Echo

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Just for Laughs.....

