



# THE NUGGET

December, 2017

Grace and peace to you, my family in Christ! I moved here to Soldotna after serving a congregation in northeastern Oklahoma, where they'd cancel school for a week for less than an inch of snow. To their credit, nobody has plows, sand or salt ready for the roads, or even snow shovels. You just don't need it. And, on top of being spoiled by warm, Oklahoma weather, I had a garage attached to the parsonage where I lived. Even on our cold, 20 degree days, I had a warm vehicle, ready and waiting for me to jump in and drive off with no planning.

## **And then I moved to Alaska.**

With each day of dropping temperatures, many of you have offered me your insight on the best vehicle practices for the winter. Yes, *I did purchase studded tires for my car* and had a pan heater installed, whatever that is. I still feel like I'm living in alternative reality every time I see the plug dangling out of the front of my bumper! Some of you have even asked me if I'm ready to leave town yet with these cold days ahead. I will confess to you that on the mornings where I'm hanging onto the handle of my car door, hoping to pull it hard enough to get the frozen door open, but not so hard that I actually break the handle off...well, I don't care for these freezing temperatures on *those* days. On the contrary, I've found myself actually enjoying the meditative practice of heating my car up.

After a long day working at the church building or even being somewhere else across town, I slide into my seat, turn the key and wait. I wait for the car to heat up, its poor little mechanics chugging away like a steamboat crossing the Atlantic Ocean, enabling me to drive home. I could choose to be irritated at the waste of time it is to wait. I could choose to go back inside and work a little more, making every minute count. Instead, I sit quietly in my freezing car and breathe in the bitter air. I watch my breath slowly escape like wisps of smoke, dancing out of my nostrils and my mouth. I study the ice crystal formation on my windshield, remembering that each snowflake is unique and wondering if this is true of frozen windshields.

While it would be much warmer to sit inside, I've used this time to still my mind, calm my heart and just be. I focus in on my breath, on the frozen stars across my windshield, and ponder what it means to move from my daily work to my home. I study the day in my mind, remembering the things that people said that hurt, then try to let them melt away with the frost. I envision the things that brought me joy, and let them warm my heart for the days ahead.

This season of Advent, much like Lent, is the period of preparation that anticipates the day of celebration ahead. I cannot fully live into the joy of Christmas, if I haven't taken the time to quiet my heart and mind in preparation for Christ's birth into the world. And not just a historical birth of some random baby, but to prepare myself to receive the Christ-child born into *my world*, in 2017. I know that I will get to the Christmas glory of angels singing, beautiful poinsettias and candles illuminating our faces during "Silent Night." But first, I need Advent. I want to sit quietly in the cold, darkness of the season, centering my thoughts on the uniqueness of each frozen star and the gift of life in this world.

Perhaps you are wiser than I am and have a remote starter or a garage, but I invite you to find your moments of cold, car sitting, whether actually or proverbially, in these weeks of Advent ahead. Take some time to breathe, to study, to be. We will get to the sequined party dresses and Christmas carols soon enough. Let us be attentive to this time of waiting, this season of preparation, not only of our homes, but of our hearts. I invite you to find some daily meditation, somehow, somewhere, to prepare for the Christ-child's birth into *your* world.

**Breathe. Study. Be.**

## COUNCIL MINUTES—November 13, 2017

Present at Meeting: Kate Veh, Casey Olson, Jeff Belluomini, Kathy Gensel, Jim Delker, Rye Cross

### OLD BUSINESS

- **Technology Update:** Casey Olson will manage the CLC website with guidance from Pastor Meredith.
- **Youth Ministry:** Thanks to Katie Olson for everything she's done.
- **Thrivent:**
- **Church Council:** We need to post pictures and names on the bulletin board.
- **Annual Meeting:** 62 people attended.

### NEW BUSINESS

- **Kitchen Purchasing:** Andy Veh will be purchasing and stocking hospitality supplies.
- **Christmas Bags for Kids:** Rye will spearhead the Christmas Bags for Kids project. She will be given a budget to accommodate 60 or 70 kids at the Christmas services.
- **New Council Members:** The new council members are Hannah Delker, Levi Benner, Ryan Stuive, Jeff Belluomini, and Emily Pieh. Their terms will start in January and go for two years.
- **Lutefisk & Lefse Dinner Report:** Rye felt like it went really well with approximately 125-150 people attending, many of those not CLC members. It was a lot of work and a lot of planning with many people helping however a goal for next year would be to have more new people involved.
- **AED's:** An email received from Denise Harro, past president, summarized points from a previously held discussion on AEDs. This email will be discussed and summarized points evaluated
- **Active Shooter Training:** Discussion was held regarding this program.
- **Maintenance Items:** Smoke alarms, CO2 alarms, outside lighting, window behind the alter, and security of entry doors and keys were all discussed.

**Next meeting Monday, December 11th, 2017.**

## ADVENT

This Sunday marks the first of four Sundays of Advent in our church year. Advent is a time when we can take in a deep breath and pause to ponder what the birth of the Christ-child means for the world today. Our worship space will look different, beginning first with the Advent wreath and then gradually increasing in our decorations. The Advent wreath, according to Gertrud Mueller Nelson, referenced in Sundays and Seasons, "...can be traced to the Roman's ancient rite of waiting in the darkness for the return of the sun, and for the Feast of the Sun on December 25. The ancients...took a wheel off their wagons and fastened torches to it to see them through the darkness. The only thing alive in the winter, evergreen, was brought inside and fastened to the wheel. To those huddled in darkness, it was a sign of vegetation and springtime. More than three hundred years ago, German Christians fashioned the same elements into the Advent wreath—the greens a sign of hope and eternity. What was once a Feast of the Sun has become for us the Feast of the Son."

## ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

**December 3rd** - Advent Fair at 12:30 PM

**December 6th** - Advent Services at 12:00 PM and 6:00 PM

**December 13th** - Advent Services at 12:00 PM and 6:00 PM

**December 20th** - Advent Services at 12:00 PM and 6:00 PM

**December 24th** - Sunday Worship Service at 11:00 AM - 4th Sunday of Advent

**December 24th** - Christmas Eve Candlelight Services at 5:00 PM and 7:30 PM with Communion

## CHRISTMAS EVE CARESHARE

Looking for someone to coordinate the cookies, coffee, and juice set up. serve and clean up on Christmas Eve between the two services. We are sending around a list during church for a cookie sign up and all other items will be in the kitchen. If you can help in this ministry, please contact the church office at 262-4757.



## POINSETTAS

We will be purchasing poinsettias for the church to use on Christmas Eve. If you would like to purchase one, please fill out the form in Sunday's bulletin and place in the offering plate or give it to Brad Nyquist along with payment of \$10.00. Poinsettias can be picked up and taken home following the worship service. Please make checks out to Christ Lutheran Church.

## COMMUNION DATES

During the season of Advent, we will have communion during every Sunday worship. You've probably noticed that we've done communion a lot lately and that's because in addition to the 1st and 3rd Sundays in the morning and 2nd and 4th in the evenings, we have celebrated the Lord's Supper on the "high holy days" of the church year, or the extra special Sundays, like Reformation and All Saints' Day. The story is told that on his death bed, Martin Luther scribbled words on a piece of paper that translated to read, "We are all beggars; this is true." He also said once, "We are all mere beggars showing other beggars where to find bread." In conjunction with the Advent Conspiracy, where we strive to worship more fully, our beggars' hands will be outstretched alongside of our fellow beggars.

11:00 AM Service, Communion every Sunday in December  
6:00 PM Service, 2nd Sunday, December 10th

## YOUTH CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE

We would love all the youth and anyone else that wants to participate to bring a **new unwrapped** toy to donate for a toy drive this year. It doesn't need to be anything extravagant, just a little something to put a smile on the face of a child in need this year. Toys will be distributed locally. Boxes will be set up near the front doors in the entry of the church starting December 5th. The last date for donations will be December 17th. If you have any questions, please contact Jeannie Young 208-596-1648.



## CHRISTMAS BOOK FAIR

'Tis the Season for Good Books! CLC is hosting a book fair with Christmas-related children's books from Sparkhouse publishing (an ELCA partner company). We'll have sample books on site for you to peruse starting November 11th. We'll place orders throughout the month with the last orders going in on December 5th. In addition to getting great Christian children's books for the young ones on your Christmas shopping list, 20% of the sales will come back to CLC's youth leaders who are headed to the ELCA National Youth Gathering in 2018.



## FREEDOM HOUSE

Freedom House is a faith-based sober living house for women here in Soldotna. Most staying at Freedom House are coming from prison or rehab and seeking support to remain sober. They learn life skills for their future, while being immersed in scripture and the reminder that God loves them. Freedom House is currently providing a home for six women.

Per requests, they have come up with a Christmas wish list for the House: sectional couch (has to wrap around a corner), a computer, a printer, Microsoft Word package, women's underwear (all sizes) and socks.

The "Freedom House" food pantry is also running low. They could use: granola bars, instant oatmeal, single serving cold cereal, canned soups and vegetables, macaroni, bottled water, etc.

## ADVENT CONSPIRACY

The story of Christ's birth is a story of promise, hope, and revolutionary love. So what happened? What was once a time to celebrate the birth of a Savior has somehow turned into a season of stress, traffic jams, and shopping lists. And when it is all over, many of us are left with presents to return, looming debt that will take months to pay off, and this empty feeling of missed purpose.

### **What if Christmas were to become a life changing event?**

Welcome to the Advent Conspiracy. The four main concepts of the Advent Conspiracy are:

**worship fully,**

**spend less,**

**give more**

**and love all.**

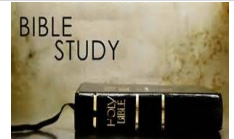
This year, as in the previous three years, we don't want to change the whole world, but we do want to change one village. More than a billion people worldwide lack access to clean water. A woman or child in sub-Saharan Africa will walk an average of 3.7 miles every day to get water, not all of it clean. Helping a community construct and maintain a well opens a world of opportunity. This year we would like to collect enough money to furnish one village with a well and change their world. The cost is \$2,500. If you want to see what difference a well can make in the life of a village and what some of the conditions are in sub-Saharan Africa read *A long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park. It is a quick read, but one certainly that will touch your heart. There are also copies of *The Advent Conspiracy* in the entryway. Take one, read it, share it, and try some of the ideas to make your Advent and Christmas more meaningful. Learn more at <http://www.adventconspiracy.org>

## FACEBOOK

*Christ Lutheran Church Soldotna* is our public page for events and general information, so "like" it! *Christ Lutheran Fellowship* is a private page for internal scheduling, prayer requests and sharing, that a current member of the group has to invite you to.

## WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Please join us the first Tuesday of the month, December 5th, at 10:00 AM in the Senior High room with a potluck lunch to follow.  
We are studying prayer and breath. Contact Kate Veh for information 260-4669.



## PODCAST



Christ Lutheran Soldotna podcasts are available on iTunes!  
On your mobile device open your podcasting app  
(IOS would use iTunes Store) and search  
Christ Lutheran Soldotna or go to [www.christlutheralsoldotna.org](http://www.christlutheralsoldotna.org)  
and subscribe by going to the top menu:  
Listen-Subscribe to iTunes!  
Now you won't have to miss a single message.

## LUNCH BUNCH - CALLING ALL LADIES!!!

Ladies: The Lunch Bunch will meet Tuesday, December 14th,  
at 11:30 AM at Gingers in the Peninsula Center Mall.



## BOOKLESS BOOK CLUB

This is CLC's new young adult ministry happening out in the community. We're meeting at different restaurants, breweries, etc, around town, so come join us! This is aimed at people ages 21-40, but we'll only ID you if you order a drink. We are meeting on the 2nd and 4th Fridays at 6:30 pm, which are December 8th and December 22nd.  
Talk to Pastor Meredith if you're interested in joining.

## FIRST THURSDAY BLUE GRASS JAM

We invite you to join us at the "1st Thursday Blue Grass Jam" to be held at Christ Lutheran Church on Thursday, December 7th At 6:30 - 9:30 PM.

This evening is for those wanting to "jam" or for those wanting to listen to great music.

Please join us, you will love it!



## GOT AIRLINE MILES TO SPARE

If you have spare airline miles, please donate them to the youth group to attend the ELCA National Youth Gathering in June, 2018. Please let Pastor Meredith or Katie Olson know how many you're willing to donate. We would like to purchase tickets before January 1st.  
Thanks for supporting our youth!



## BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

Keziah Simons	12/1
Herman & Jan Stenga ♡	12/1
Elio Stuive	12/1
Brooke Belluomini	12/2
Scott & Rachel Thomas ♡	12/3
Jenna Jensen	12/7
Carol Clonan	12/8
Corina Stone	12/9
Hans Rinke	12/10
Katie Ford	12/12
Benjamin Veh	12/13
Brad Carver	12/15
Peter Micciche	12/17
Steve & Aleja DeVito ♡	12/19
Sue Stein	12/21
Aleja DeVito	12/23
Clyde Johnson	12/23
Drysta Schneider	12/23
Janet Brewer	12/24
Scott Thomas	12/26
Sam Janorschke	12/28
Tom & Joyce Duwe	12/29
HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY!	

## CROCHETING THEIR WAY MINISTRY

We are collecting yarn for the women at Wildwood Prison who are crocheting articles for people in the community.



There is a tote on the donation station for any donations of yarn.

*Merry Christmas*

## FOOD PANTRY



The Food Pantry is a joint project of Soldotna United Methodist Church and Christ Lutheran Church. Additional support comes from generous individuals, organizations, local businesses, as well as help from the Kenai Peninsula Food Bank. We are collecting items for the Soldotna Community Food Pantry. November's totals are listed below. Watch for upcoming events to help this much needed cause in our community.

If you wish to help with the staffing you can any Wednesday (10:00 AM–2:00 PM), please call Cosette at 262-7610.

*Red and green are the colors of the season so Soldotna Food Pantry is collecting:*

Spaghetti Sauce	Green Beans
Tomato Sauce (large and small)	Peas
Kidney Beans	Peas and Carrots
Dried Red Beans	Dried Split Peas

# November



## Soldotna Food Pantry Statistics

as of 11/22/17



**221 Adults**

**73 Disabled**

**110 Families**



**14 Veterans**

**100 Children**

**49 Seniors**



## CLOTHING DRIVE

Winter is here. When you are homeless life on the street can be harsh, and the colder it gets the more harsh it can become. New, clean and lightly used winter gear and clothing including shoes, boots, hats, scarves, socks, etc. continue to be collected. Handmade items are appreciated. Drop off items at the church and they will be delivered to one of the homeless outreach agencies.

Contact Sandy 262-7460 or  
sandyalaska@gmail.com for more information.





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## **Christ Lutheran Mission Statement:**

**Knowing Christ**

**Empowering His Followers**

**Making Him Known To Others**

### **Please contact us ...**

Phone: 262-4757, Web: [www.christlutheransoldotna.org](http://www.christlutheransoldotna.org) or Email: [clchurch@alaska.net](mailto:clchurch@alaska.net)

We want to include you in our prayers, arrange for pastoral visits, and announce information to the congregation, when appropriate. Please notify the church office as soon as possible when:

- A member of your family or someone you know dies.
- You or someone you know is ill or grieving.
- You or someone you know is in the hospital.
- You or someone you know wants to plan a baptism, wedding or celebration.
- You move or change telephone numbers.