



Voices of the Valley

The Monthly Newsletter of Lord of the Valley Lutheran Church

"That We May Know, Live, and Share the Love of Christ."

December 2018

Volume 22, Number 12

ALL ARE WELCOME

As a community of the people of God, the people of Lord of the Valley Lutheran Church are called to welcome all people, regardless of age, economic status, ethnic background, gender, physical or mental ability, race or sexual orientation. We affirm that in Christ *"there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female."* - Galatians 3:28

Lord of the Valley Lutheran Church

PO Box 843 Granby, CO 80446 (970) 887-9252

Email: lotvoffice@lordofthevalley.org website: lordofthevalley.org

Church Office Hours – Monday – Thursday 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Rev. Brian Bergum – Pastor (970-531-4312)

pastorb@lordofthevalley.org

Kris Kuhnel - Newsletter Editor / Office Administrator

Church Council Members:

John Price 970-409-9200

Susan Odneal 816-210-4792

Chris Tinkum 725-3440

Pat Edwards 970-406-8108

Jane Fisher 970-302-9067

Tom Mark 303-949-7214

Raymond Covington 970-846-9187

Suzanne Gerhart

Greg Orzech 720-810-4966

Alicia Scott 303-946-2180

The church council meets the second Monday of each month. All church council meetings throughout the year are open to anyone. If you have something that you would like to present in front of the church council, or an item of concern please contact one of the church council members listed above.

The next Church Council Meeting is on Sunday, December 10th at 6:30 pm.



Advent and Christmas Season Worship Schedule

Sunday Worship

December 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd

9:30 am

Christmas Eve Worship

Sunday, December 24th

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Christmas Day Worship

Tuesday, December 25th

10:00 am



Advent is upon us once again. This strange season of the church year asks us to wait and watch with expectation. It is a difficult season for us to observe in a world that wants nothing to do with waiting. Perhaps part of this disconnect is that in our time we think of waiting as time passing while doing nothing. A waste of time. But Advent is not a season of inactivity.

Of course the waiting of Advent is related to the waiting for birth. We know that such waiting is preparatory time. The mother’s body is changing and preparing. The expectant household is likewise changing and preparing. There are items we purchase to help with the care of an infant. Choosing a space for the expected child to sleep; maybe decorating a special room, if such a space is available. Changing table and crib and diapers (will they be “real” or disposable?) and receiving blankets, and clothing, and a baby monitor, car seats and travel bags and more, so much more! However did people survive having a child without all these essentials?

There are friends and relatives who likewise help with preparations, hosting baby showers, preparing meals to be pulled from the freezer, offers to care for the dog. Parents soon to be new grandparents extend an invitation to come and help once the baby comes home. And of course there are the classes to complete and the hospital tour, so you know where you are going when the time comes.

Is this all that Advent is? A nostalgic look back at our own experience with childbirth? Advent is not simply looking back but is also forward looking. We look back just enough to remember God’s promises kept in time past so that we can anticipate God’s promises kept in time to come. As the birth of our children is not the end goal, but rather life together growing forward within our changed household, so our life with God in Christ Jesus is about life growing forward. And not simply for our own sake.

Jesus’ birth was not just a momentous event in the life of the household of Mary and Joseph. It was part of the pivot point of God’s interaction with humanity. It was not an event that ended with swaddling clothes and hay in the manger. A cross would one day come into this life. And Jesus’ life taken as a whole is a life through which God speaks love to the world. Love spoken in the language of human experience so all would know that God is acting on behalf of the world.

May this Advent and Christmas time include remembering our experiences of Christmases past. May they also move us to look forward to a time when the promise of Christ’s birth is more real than ever: Peace to all whom God loves. And while we wait, let us live out of this promise of God’s love for the sake of the world. Let our neighbors see how real this promise is in our life, and their life too.

A blessed Advent to you all,

Pastor Brian Bergum

Looking For a Way to Deepen Your Worship Experience?

For many people, looking at the Bible readings before Sunday helps put the message in context of their lives. As you read the lessons, ask yourself: Is there anything in the readings that relate to your life right now? Is there anything that surprises you in the readings? Disturbs you? Try doing this for a couple of weeks, see if following this on a weekly basis strengthens your personal faith life, and deepens your worship experience.

The Lessons for Worship in December

These are the Bible readings that we will hear during our worship services this month. They are provided that you might use them for personal devotion and meditation.

December 2nd – First Sunday of Advent Jeremiah 33: 14-16 1 Thessalonians 3: 9-13 Luke 21: 25-36	December 9th–Second Sunday of Advent Malachi 3: 1-4 Philippians 1: 3-11 Luke 3: 1-6
December 16th – Third Sunday of Advent Zephaniah 3: 14-20 Philippians 4: 4-7 Luke 3: 7-18	December 23rd – Fourth Sunday of Advent Micah 5: 2-5a Hebrews 10: 5-10 Luke 1: 39-45 [46-55]
December 30th – First Sunday of Christmas 1 Samuel 2: 18-20, 26 Colossians 3: 12-17 Luke 2: 41-52	

Ministers of Worship in December

<u>December 2</u> Greeters – Jerry and Edna Anderson Ushers –John Price, Bill Tetlow Readers –Edna Anderson, Bill Tetlow Communion Assistant –Kris K., Jerry A., Susan P. Acolyte –Mackenzie Moyer	<u>December 9</u> G –Greg and Lori Orzech U –Greg Orzech, Bob Means R – Ben Kuhnel, Kathy Means CA – Kris Kuhnel, Charlene Heins, Kathy Means A – Joey Gagnon
<u>December 16</u> G - Raymond and Carmen Covington U – Steve Peters, Raymond Covington R –Carmen Covington, Chris Tinkum CA –Chris Tinkum, Susan Price, Carmen Covington A – Gunnar Bjerken	<u>December 23</u> G – Jerry and Edna Anderson U – Steve Gall, Paul Gerhart R –Marla Gall, Jerry Anderson CA – Suzanne Gerhart, Marla Gall, Jerry Anderson A –Josie Nance

<u>December 30</u> G - Greg and Lori Orzech U – Greg Orzech, Bill Tetlow R –Pat Edwards, Bill Tetlow CA –Pat Edwards, Lori Orzech, Charlene Heins A – Auggie Roehrs
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If you are unable to help be a worship minister on the particular day, please try and find a replacement to take your place or to switch days with you. Thank you for sharing in the ministry of Lord of the Valley.

It's Better to Give Safely

We've all heard it's important when choosing toys for infants or small children to avoid small parts that might prove to be a choking hazard. Here are some additional gift-related safety tips:

- Select gifts for older adults that are not heavy or awkward to handle
- Be aware of dangers associated with coin lithium batteries; of particular concern is the ingestion of button batteries

Watch Out for Those Fire-starters

Candles and Fireplaces - Thousands of deaths are caused by fires, burns and other fire-related injuries every year, and 12% of home candle fires occur in December, the National Fire Protection Association reports. Increased use of candles and fireplaces, combined with an increase in the amount of combustible, seasonal decorations present in many homes means more risk for fire.

- Never leave burning candles unattended or sleep in a room with a lit candle
- Keep candles out of reach of children
- Make sure candles are on stable surfaces
- Don't burn candles near trees, curtains or any other flammable items
- Don't burn trees, wreaths or wrapping paper in the fireplace
- Check and clean the chimney and fireplace area at least once a year

Don't Give the Gift of Food Poisoning

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides some holiday food safety tips. Here are a few:

- Do not rinse raw meat and poultry before cooking
- Use a food thermometer to make sure meat is cooked to a safe temperature
- Refrigerate food within two hours
- Thanksgiving leftovers are safe for four days in the refrigerator
- Bring sauces, soups and gravies to a rolling boil when reheating
- When storing turkey, cut the leftovers in small pieces so they will chill quickly
- Wash your hands frequently when handling food

Monthly Blood Pressure Checks

Don't forget that we offer free blood pressure checks following our worship service once a month. The next free blood pressure check will be on Sunday, December 2nd.



Christmas Day Dinner

Let us know if you are interested in having a Congregational Dinner on Christmas Day. If there is enough interest and someone is willing to coordinate the event, we will schedule it and be in touch. Please see the signup sheet at the back of the sanctuary.

Christmas Program

Our Christmas Program will be presented during worship on Sunday, December 16. Our Sunday School children have been working with Pat Edward and Shana Roehrs on a song that they will sing. The past few years our Christmas Program has been an impromptu presentation of the Christmas story. It has been an inter-generational presentation rather than a traditional children's Christmas Program. Continuing the emphasis of an intergenerational presentation, this year Pastor Brian is looking for people who would like to be part of this year's version of the Christmas Program. While it will still be somewhat impromptu (no rehearsal), it would be helpful to know who might wish to read a part. There will still be some parts to be played by last minute casting. If you would like to take part in this year's program, please let Pastor Brian know. You can send him an email or add your name to the sign-up sheet in the back of the sanctuary by Sunday, December 9th.

Congregation Holiday Gifts for LCJV Staff

Tis that time again...when the congregation joins together to provide gifts for Pastor Brian, Kris and our Music Ministry team. Please consider sharing some of your holiday spirit with them. Checks or cash (in envelopes) marked as 'holiday gifts' will be earmarked to our wonderful church staff. There is no gift too large or small, all are equally appreciated. You may denote how your gift should be allocated or it will be shared among the staff. If you can provide it to the church (mail or drop in the offering plate) before December 29th, we plan to give the gifts before year-end. Thank you for considering this heartfelt gesture this holiday season.

Your Church Council

Second Sunday Special Offering

With the help of our children we invite members and friends to bring nonperishable food items to church on the Second Sunday each month to support the food pantry at Mountain Family Center. We will have our green wagon in the back of the sanctuary and our children will be invited to bring these items forward when the ushers present our financial offering during worship.



Long Term (Strategic) Planning Group

The LOTV Church Council seeks to assure congregation resources are allocated in a responsible and judicious manner. This is relatively straightforward process on a short-term basis, but becomes more complex as future needs are considered. Much as a family should plan for retirement or children's future educational needs; the Council must try to anticipate and (when possible) affect future events that will likely require significant resource commitments. The fact that we have a life altering Mission together: **"That We May Know, Live and Share the Love of Christ"**, greatly increases the importance of longer term planning.

During the last fourteen years LOTV has developed a Long Term Plan every 3-5 years. Our last Long Term Plan was created in 2013. At the Church Council Meeting on November 12, it was decided to embark on another Long Term (Strategic) Plan, targeting completion in time for our next Annual Congregational Meeting.

Strategic Planning requires broad congregational involvement from members, parish partners and non-members. Such participation is necessary to assure the resulting strategy is adequately comprehensive, sufficiently contemplative of probable significant trends, and capitalizes on LOTV strengths. Because the plan will be used to set our direction for the next 3-5 years, and deploy our strengths to improve our congregation and community, it is imperative that widespread participation occurs.

The Council would like to create a Long Term (Strategic) Planning Group composed of a few Council members, 3-5 representatives from the broader congregation, and some contribution from those who regularly interact with LOTV missions or activities. Formal activities should begin after Epiphany (January 6), presuming we can identify membership on the Strategic Planning Group soon.

If you would be willing to serve on this important group, please contact John Price ((970)-409-9200, sjpbco@gmail.com), Greg Orzech ((720)-810-4966, gregorzech@yahoo.com) or Pastor Brian ((970)-531-4312, pastorb@lordofthevalley.org).

The Council thanks everyone in advance for your continued active support and involvement. As the planning process unfolds there will be regular updates and a series of meetings (feedback sessions) to assure ongoing participation opportunities are available to all.



Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study sessions continue in December on Tuesday, December 4th and 18th at 11:00 am. All women of LOTV are invited for a time of sharing, study and support while enjoying a light lunch. For more information please call Pat Edwards at 970-406-8108, Carolyn Stahl 887-9352 or Mary Mulholland 303-898-6743.



Lord of the Valley's
Health and Wellness Ministry



Enjoy a Safe Holiday Season

Holiday safety is an issue that burns brightest from late November to mid-January, when families gather, parties are scheduled and travel spikes. Take some basic precautions to ensure your family remains safe and injury-free throughout the season.

Traveling for the Holidays? Be Prepared

Many people choose to travel during the holidays by automobile, with the highest fatality rate of any major form of transportation. In 2015, 355 people died on New Year's Day, 386 on Thanksgiving Day and 273 on Christmas Day, according to *Injury Facts 2017*. Alcohol-impaired fatalities represent about one-third of the totals.

- Use a designated driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a holiday party; alcohol, over-the-counter or illegal drugs all cause impairment. Make sure every person in the vehicle is properly buckled up no matter how long or short the distance traveled
- Put that cell phone away; many distractions can occur while driving, but cell phones are the main culprit
- Properly maintain the vehicle and keep an emergency kit with you
- Be prepared for heavy traffic, and possibly heavy snow

Even Angel Hair can Hurt

Decorating is one of the best ways to get in a holiday mood, but emergency rooms see thousands of injuries involving holiday decorating every season.

- "Angel hair," made from spun glass, can irritate your eyes and skin; always wear gloves or substitute non-flammable cotton
- Spraying artificial snow can irritate your lungs if inhaled; follow directions carefully
- Decorate the tree with your kids and pets in mind; move ornaments that are breakable or have metal hooks toward the top
- Always use the proper step ladder; don't stand on chairs or other furniture
- Lights are among the best parts of holiday decorating; make sure there are no exposed or frayed wires, loose connections or broken sockets, and don't overload your electrical circuits
- Plants can spruce up your holiday decorating, but keep those that may be poisonous (including some Poinsettias) out of reach of children or pets; the national Poison Control Center can be reached at (800) 222-1222
- Make sure paths are clear so no one trips on wrapping paper, decorations, toys, etc.; NSC provides tips for older adults on slip, trip and fall protection

Mission Nicaragua 2019

Interested in Traveling to Nicaragua?

A Mission Team is forming, sponsored by LOTV, to serve the people in Somoto, Nicaragua in June 2019.

- Trip dates: June 20 – June 30
- Trip cost: \$1600.00
- The team will provide medical clinics to rural communities, deliver water filters, deliver layettes and medical supplies to the hospital and maternity house in Somoto and deliver school supplies and Spanish children's books to schools in the communities.
- If you are interested in participating in Mission Nicaragua or supporting the mission please call Carmen Covington at 970-531-2857.

Water Filters

Clean water is one of our focuses making a difference between life and death for children of rural Nicaraguan families. . Our plan is to partner with ERS LA (Emergency Response Services for Latin America), a nonprofit organization. ERS LA manages the donations and volunteers: they coordinate the purchase of the filters from the manufacture "Potters For Peace", transportation to the Somoto area, they determine a community who could benefit from the water filters. Mission Nicaragua Team helps ERS LA and local firefighters to distribute the water filters. Our goal is to purchase 100 filters, each filter costs \$50.00.

Thank you to all who have helped and supported the Chocolate & Coffee Holiday Gift Fares in the local communities in November and December.

Save the date for the Italian Extravaganza, it is February 2nd.



Mission Nicaragua Fair Trade Coffee Sales

New **INVENTORY**, available to be purchased on Sunday, December 9th and 23rd in the Fellowship Room following worship. Thank you for your support.

Men's Ministry

On Wednesday mornings at 7:00 am we have a group of men who gather at Lord of the Valley for breakfast, conversation, prayer and study. This group welcomes men to join them whether for a week or two, a season or year round. They take turns providing breakfast for each other. Sometimes the conversations linger, but they understand if some need to leave earlier. They seek to offer an encouraging, supportive time together. Everyone is invited to participate.

Christmas Poinsettias

We will once again be adorning our worship space with poinsettia plants during our Christmas services. You are invited to donate a poinsettia plant in honor or in memory of a special person or loved one in your life. Each plant costs \$15. A portion of the proceeds will be used to assist our children and youth ministry activities. Orders need to be received by Sunday, December 16th. Plants with no designation will be given "to the Glory of God." Plants may be taken home, or given to someone you know as a way of sharing the joy of Christmas following our Christmas Day worship service on Tuesday, December 25th.



NAME (s): _____

Phone: _____

Number of Plants: _____ (\$15 Each)

I/We donate the poinsettia in **(Circle One)** HONOR /
MEMORY of:

Christmas Family / Visions of Hope

Thank you to everyone for your donations to our Christmas Family. Remember to bring your gifts to Lord of the Valley by Sunday, December 8th. The children will be wrapping the gifts during Sunday School. **In addition to our Christmas Family**, we are offering an additional opportunity for your generosity this Christmas. Visions of Hope is a ministry with prisoners in Oregon that Cathy Childress' daughters are involved with. Art supplies are provided to inmates who then produce artwork that is sold by Visions of Hope. All the proceeds from the art sales supports an orphanage in Uganda, Africa. There are ornaments on the tree for you to use if you wish to support this ministry. We are inviting your gifts to Visions of Hope because this Christmas there is an opportunity to have your gift doubled by a matching grant. More information is available under the Christmas tree or by visiting with Cathy Childress.

Family Game Night

Family Game Night at LOTV on the 2nd Saturday of every month, from 6:30-8:30pm, this month on December 8th. We welcome everyone from the community and suggest that each family brings a snack to share and a game or two to play. We'll need a few people to help with the set-up and clean-up (information will be provided). Please see the signup sheet at the back of the sanctuary. Please feel free to invite friends and family to join us for an evening of fun and fellowship!