

## KNIFE RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH

### MIDWEEK DEVOTION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS NOVEMBER 25, 2020

#### DEVOTION Dog-paddling and Lowering Expectations

On Sunday, Nov. 22, I watched our Thanksgiving themed worship service and had a curious experience: I discovered that the service was meaningful, effective, and beautiful. And why was that curious? Because I knew the backstory behind the service! That particular virtual service was arguably the most fraught with obstacles to overcome that we have had throughout this entire pandemic period of time. Our videographer, Scott Shelerud, was unwell with Covid-19; fortunately he was able to be home and is recovering well, but this meant that Jim Allert stepped in to edit, which immediately changed several behind-the-scene factors. Already submitted pictures or readings had to be redirected. Steve Carlson and Phil Berge were suddenly recording their wives being Pastors or Church Musicians in the sanctuary, a task for which neither has been formally trained. An element of the service was inadvertently left out and had to be recorded and added after the initial first YouTube posting of the service, which actually was twice-reposted, due to yet another technical issue. The bulletin, which I send on to Melanie mid-week, had to be revised 3 or 4 times, as we had to add names to the prayer list or include Smart Team updates. In short, it was uphill sledding, and yet—none of that showed in the final, rich version of the service. I was reminded of watching a dog doing the dog-paddle; lots of frantic motion beneath the surface of the water, but above the water, all that is seen is the dog's confident head moving purposefully towards a goal. The fact of the matter is, all involved in creating our worship services these days have become expert dog-paddlers, whether we wanted to or not! But as one wise worship team member stated, "All any of us can do right now is our best."

I'm thinking this metaphor and wisdom carries over into our lives in general right now. If asked how we are doing, I imagine most of us would respond, "Pretty well". And in many ways we are, most likely, doing pretty well. On the other hand, we are almost all also carrying significant weights of anxiety and sadness right now as we deal with a Thanksgiving, and potentially a Christmas, that is just not what we would have envisioned or for what we had hoped. The combination of this dramatic surge of the coronavirus, the holiday season, and the more isolating season of winter is a rough one. No matter how "pretty well" we are, no matter how calm the face above the surface of the water may look, most of us are dog-paddling furiously under the water, doing our best just to stay afloat. I know that's true for me.

Which means what? At least one thing it means for me is to *lower expectations*. To accept, as that wise worship team member said, that "all any of us can do right now is our best." That translates into expecting less of ourselves—and of others—during these difficult times. Our scaled down Thanksgiving meal for just our household doesn't have to be a gourmet triumph. We don't have to force a holiday season merriment we may not feel. We don't have to compensate for not being together at Thanksgiving or Christmas by launching into excessive bouts of holiday shopping or out-zooming the next family in making connections. This is the time to lower our expectation for us and others and simply focus on doing the best we can under trying circumstances. Psalm 131 states, "O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not

raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul....” There may be times to aim for the highest goals possible and have great expectations of ourselves and others, but this is not one of them. This is time to calm and quiet ourselves and simply be grateful to God that our heads are still above water, and that God is holding this whole messy and sad world in God’s hands. And those are good hands in which to be! May God grant to each of us the grace to lower our expectations and calmly quiet our souls into God’s hands.

In Christ, Pastor Susan

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#### A NOTE ABOUT ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICES BEGINNING ON THIS SUNDAY

We will be using our Advent Wreath this season during church worship. The families doing the lighting will record doing so in their homes for inclusion in the worship; the same candle will be lit during the service in the sanctuary as well. I would very much encourage all of us to light the appropriate number of candles within our homes as well, whether on an Advent Wreath, a yule log, or simply an assortment of four candles. We will be lighting candles for hope, peace, joy, and love, in that order.

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#### KNIFE RIVER PRAYER LIST:

In need of healing: Veronica Persons, Susan Anderson, Elsa Keeler, Becca Kuechle, Les Bolen, Fred Wright, Reid Carson, Kayla Davidson, Archie Moore, Pastor John Reppe, Gary Swanson, Faith Swanson, Seth Goodnature, Pat Hovis, Sarah Monaghan, Melyssa Bloom, DeWayne and Maurine Rubedor, Emma Durward, Bill Crandall, Becket Lundgren, Ella Jackson, Dave Olin, Miranda Jackson, Blair Raycraft, Del Hubbart, Susan Hubbart, Scott Shelerud, John Whaley (broken ribs)

Special circumstances: Jacques Basson (Anne Lu’s brother, who is working with Covid-19 patients in Dubai.)

Long Term Concerns: Sue Sigel, Laurie Jackson, David Pierce, Jan Moon, Pat Hanson, Pat Levenske, Dani Mattson, Lyle Northey, Leif Zmolek, Kane Bolen, Aspen Winbigler, Deb Allert, Peggy B., Corine Sutherland

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#### SCHEDULE THIS WEEK

Today, Wednesday: Midweek devotion and announcements sent out

Thursday: Thanksgiving Day

Sunday: Virtual worship-Advent begins

Tuesday: Lectio Divina at 9:00 AM online

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## **SMART TEAM/CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATE, PLUS A MESSAGE FROM DR. ANNE SKADBERG**

Our Church council has approved the following recommendations from the Smart Team in response to the current surge of Covid-19 in our community. Please read these through carefully. Also included is a message from Dr. Anne Skadberg. While she references Thanksgiving specifically, her words may well apply to holiday celebrations and events throughout December as well, so please take note.

### **RECOMMENDATION #1:**

*The Smart Team unanimously recommends that KRLC immediately suspend all in building small group meetings until further notice. Signs for Small Group guidelines should be taken down. Essential staff will continue to have access to building. Sign-in sheets will remain at both entryways and staff still asked to register so there can be quick contact/follow-up if needed. Additionally, they must schedule time for building use with Melanie McMillion (except for in/out pick up or drop off) and maintain appropriate safety guidelines – social distancing, masking, handwashing & sanitizing*

### **RECOMMENDATION #2:**

*The Smart Team identified the following as Essential Staff:*

*Pastor Susan Berge – office work, pastoral duties, worship prep and recording*

*Melanie McMillion – Administrative Assistant*

*Michael Dent – Bookkeeper*

*Edward Lee – Treasurer (although Ed stated he does not need to go into building)*

*Lawrence Burkhard – Endowment, Christian Ed, Worship team*

*Sharon Shelerud – Custodian/Cleaning*

*Bill Berg – Check Furnace and building maintenance*

*Carol Carlson – Organ/Piano for worship practice & recording*

*Scott Shelerud – Worship videographer (back-up: Jim Allert, Phil Berge, Steve Carlson)*

*Altar guild/decorating: designated person, one at a time, in the building.*

*For Advent, this is Julie Stewart. (Mary von Goertz and Delores*

*Jackson also.)*

*Newsletter Assembly: Kay Struve, Sharon Shelerud, Vicky Gorman*

*Worship Team – Pastor Susan, Carol Carlson, Lawrence Burkhard, Scott*

*Shelerud, Jim Allert, Phil Berge, Steve Carlson.*

Please read the following message from Dr. Skadberg:

Greetings All,

The time we were hoping wouldn't come has arrived; we are surging. This is the time to really pull back on activities and behave much like we did at the onset of the pandemic when we were trying hold it off so we could adequately prepare and supply. The hospital is very stressed right now and particularly the nursing staff, so we must try to push down this surge. The bulk of the spread is occurring when people who unknowingly have COVID, are unmasked and close to others. This describes the environment at our traditional holiday gatherings. We are very worried that the surge will worsen after these gatherings. It is okay and indeed smart to not gather with people outside of our own households right now. As kids we feel bad if our parents are spending Thanksgiving alone, however we are doing them a favor. I said to my mom, "I don't think we should get together for Thanksgiving right now" and she said "I AGREE". I know she was relieved. I have talked with my patients about this and I sense relief when I tell them, "No, your college aged grandchildren can't come for Thanksgiving, nobody should". I think it makes it easier if someone, the matriarch, patriarch, or kid, comes out and says, "we have to pass on gathering this year". I think deep down everyone is okay with that and it may save suffering and/or grief.

The vaccine news is encouraging. There will be a significant improvement in this, we just need to do the right thing now to mitigate the damage it does in the meantime. Masks and distancing are essential and effective. Do not go to places where they are not being worn. We are seeing unusual complications in people who get through the initial illness, so I just can't stress enough how important it is to avoid any unmasked contact with people from outside of your household, and better yet try to isolate as much as possible.

As always, if you have questions, feel free to call me. 340-6485

Anne Skadberg

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NEW OPTION FOR ONLINE OFFERING – Do **YOU** still need offering envelopes???

We are now offering the option to submit your weekly offerings online. Simply click on the link on the church's home page that states "NEW: Make online donation here via Subsplash" and watch for the link on upcoming YouTube videos. Make a one-time donation, or set up a recurring offering that allows you to support the church even when you're away. If you've decided to use Subsplash on a regular basis and WILL NOT NEED offering envelopes for 2021, please let Melanie know!!

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#### PHOTO REQUESTS FOR ONLINE WORSHIP

We are asking people NOT to submit pictures of children without parents' permission. It is also important NOT to submit pictures from magazines, websites or sources that may be under copyright or ownership of others. Original photos preferred. Thank you!!

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#### WHO ARE WE MISSING?

We are attempting to cast our net wide in sending out these emails, along with postings on Facebook and our church website. Additionally, we are sending snail mail copies to those who are without online resources. If you know of someone we are missing, please let us know, so we may include them too!

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MASK MESSAGE FROM JOANIE LEE We continue to make masks, and realize that masks wear out from wearing and washing. Please don't hesitate to ask for replacements. We have plenty. Contact at [joanielee14@gmail.com](mailto:joanielee14@gmail.com).

## KRLC HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

### **1) Best Christmas Ever - Kristy Pollard**

A very deserving family in a difficult situation has been chosen for our further gift efforts. Please be ready to read a separate email/ mailing that you will receive for further updates.

If you have any questions please reach out to Kristy Pollard 651-983-6033 or email [kshelerud@gmail.com](mailto:kshelerud@gmail.com)

### **2) Gift Tags For Elder Care Gifts**

WOW!! Gift tags have ALL been spoken for! Incredibly awesome response, folks! Thank you so very, very much! **For those took on responsibility for a**

gift(s), the gifts are due back to Melanie by Nov. 28. It is helpful if they are in a gift bag, (no gift wrapping, please) along with a tag with the name on it. If possible, please deliver to Melanie's home. 834-6032 Again, thanks so much!

### **3) God's Global Barnyard & Good Gifts: Gift Giving During The Holiday Season**

Like past years, there will be the opportunity for you to give Barnyard animals and/or Good Gift items as gifts for the holidays. Because of the pandemic, there will not be a tree decorated with ornaments in the Narthex during the Advent season.

Instead, there are two options: 1) complete the form below and enclose it with the funds in your donations to the church or 2) go directly to ELCA's website <https://goodgifts.elca.org> and complete an on-line order. If you choose the first option, the Church will get credit for its donations to charity. Note, the Synod's Holy Cow award is based upon the Church's giving (option 1). With the first option, if you wish, we can mail you the ornaments (if we have not run out of them) for the gifts you purchased so that you can pass them on. All gifts will be acknowledged in the Church's newsletter. Ornaments we have on hand are Good Gifts of piglets, goats, honeybees, school supplies and uniform for a girl plus an assortment of other gifts. For a complete listing of all Good Gifts, you can also consult the ELCA's website and download the order form listing all of the Good Gifts: <https://goodgifts.elca.org/congregational-resources>. All of the Good Gifts items are fine, and these gifts grow the church, fight hunger and transform lives. Thanks.

**ELCA Good Gifts – God's Global Barnyard donation**

**FROM:**

**IN HONOR OF or**

**IN MEMORY OF:**

<b>Good Gift Item(s)</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Qty</b>	<b>Total</b>
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Put "x" in first column if you want to receive an ornament or card for the gift

**4) Help For Our Red Kettle Bell Ringers! -- SEE UPDATE AT BOTTOM OF PAGE!!**



**Knife River Lutheran Church  
Red Kettle Bell Ringers  
Giving Opportunity**

**Virtual Fundraiser in lieu of  
live bell ringing on Dec. 9  
at Two Harbors Super One**

John Safstrom was an incredible human. He was always the first to offer to help. He had a wonderful sense of humor. He lived his life in a way that showed his love of Christ . . . he walked the walk.

Because of the pandemic, our "regular" volunteers (year, after year, after year) are uncomfortable with live "ringing" this year. And rightly so! Because the KRLC quartet often closed out the long day of ringing with "ringing AND singing" during the final 5pm - 7 pm shift . . . and because John Safstrom was a vital part (a full 25%) of that quartet . . . we would like to dedicate this year's fundraising effort to him. We want to BEAT our last year's take! Our goal is to bring in OVER \$1,167.87 in John's memory and honor. ALL funds raised go to our LOCAL Salvation Army for LOCAL needs. **NOTE: ALL BELL-RINGING IN TWO HARBORS CANCELLED DUE TO COVID!** This makes our efforts especially critical. Please give if you are able!



Jim Allert & John Safstrom

If you are so moved, Red Kettle donations may be mailed to the church (PO Box 218, Knife River, 55609), added to your offering envelope, or you may use Subsplash on the church website. Make checks payable to KRLC with Red Kettle Bell Ringers in the memo line. **PLEASE try to get all donations to the church by December 7** so our check can be delivered in John Safstrom's honor and memory on December 9 (our day to ring!). ?'s: Contact Melanie at 834-6032 or email her at [mc1000000@aol.com](mailto:mc1000000@aol.com) Thank You!!

**UPDATE: As of Friday, Nov. 20, we've raised \$955!!! Can**

**you help us reach and BEAT our goal of \$1,167.87??  
Time is short!**