

# OPENDOOR

DECEMBER 2020



## Hark the Glad Sound – Midweek Advent Bible Study

Music has always been a part of the Advent and Christmas seasons, but you may be surprised to learn that that tradition goes all the way back thousands of years before Jesus was even born. The people of God were singing the praises of God long because Christ came on the scene. The children of Israel sang when they had safely crossed the Red Sea on dry land, escaping the approaching Egyptians. King David sang songs that would become part of the Book of Psalms. But in the time right before the birth of Jesus, the number of melodies increased as the chosen participants involved in the coming of Jesus Christ prepared for his arrival.

During this season of Advent, on Wednesday evenings through participation in a Zoom meeting, you will have the opportunity to “hark the glad sound” with Zechariah, Mary, the angels and the Church. We will study about their story in the Bible and join with them in singing the praises of God who sent his Son to the earth to save us, echoing their melodies of repentance, remembrance, rejoicing, and reconciliation. That’s right; we will sing each night during our studies.

So, won’t you sing along and join in this study? These classes led by Jim Lichtenberger will last for one hour on Wednesday evenings in December, starting on December 2 starting at 7 pm. For the last study, we may meet a day early on Tuesday, December 22, since we will be getting close to Christmas. Please sign up by calling Sue Lambert at the church office (447-4205).

Sue will email you the link to the Zoom Bible Study. The study books are no longer in print, but you will receive a list of the scripture verses via email that we will study.



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# CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Christmas Eve Worship will be held on Thursday, December 24, at 7 pm. Of course, at this time, we do not know if there will be in-person worship due to the increased Covid-19 cases. The Church Council on Monday, December 14, will decide that.

Whether or not we can worship in-person, we will still worship the Lord our God who came to us as a frail baby in manger! This gift of God for us grew up, died and rose again so that we might have eternal life and share God's precious love with others.

No matter how we worship that night, live stream or in-person/live stream, we will still hear God's Word and a message, sing Christmas carols, celebrate Holy Communion, have a children's sermon, and participate in our traditional candlelight service. Communion kits are now available in the air lock entrance to pick up for your use at home on Sundays. Candles will be available in December for you to use at your home on Christmas Eve. More information on this will be coming.

I encourage each of you to join in this service which will be available on YouTube and on FaceBook whether we are in-person or not. We are doing everything we can to make this to be a very special service. Be sure to invite your neighbors and friends to join us. As a fellow member, I look forward to leading worship with you on this most holy night.

Sincerely,  
Jim Lichtenberger

With hope, prayer and conviction that HTLC congregation would adapt to new ways, we committed to help 20 families through LUM's Jubilee Christmas.

THANK YOU for . . . . .

- Making donations to Jubilee . Since shopping has changed to a specialized purchase for each child—this kind of generosity is very appreciated!
- Stitching quilts and special holiday masks. You are helping us send messages of warmth and love.
- Using Sign Up Genius to select a child for a special clothing gift. We've seen beautiful and creative outfits arriving. More than 50 kids under the age of 13 will get a new outfit.
- Trying out Amazon's "Wish List" to give each household paper goods and cleaning supplies. Many of us have learned new online shopping tricks! Heavy stuff delivered directly without you toting it around.
- Slipping rolls of wrapping paper into the church to allow parents to wrap their own gifts for each child.
- Volunteering. From dragging wagons into church and bringing giant trees and snowmen up from the basement to agreeing to work outside in the cold. Specialized gazebo hardware has been constructed to create a train station. Thanks folks for sharing time and talent.

More to come....there has already been a wonderful outpouring of generosity and we aren't done yet. It's encouraging to see our church family working together even when we can't BE together.

Watch for more news as we pull the Jubilee Express into the station December 12!

## JUBILEE 2020



*"At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving the others with God's own love and concern."*

— **Mother Teresa**



HTLC Jubilee

### Clothes for a Special Jubilee Child

*The Jubilee Express is still running even though HTLC is not shipping from afar!* No mitten tree in 2020 is a sad - please review this first list of children HTLC will be supporting. Find a special one that you would like to help. Sizes and a few little clues are listed to help you shop for an outfit (shirt and pants) and a book. No PJs this year.

Select your child by checking the box on his/her line. Move to the very bottom and click on the box "Submit." You will get a new email from Sign up Genius to remind you of the details.

One of the most terrifying pieces of Civil War field artillery was notoriously inaccurate.

The eight-inch mortar, for all intents and purposes, was a stubby, sawed-off cannon. It fired an eight-inch-diameter explosive shell – approximately the size and shape of a bowling ball.

Mortars were pulled into position by teams of horses. Shots were essentially high arcs that resembled those “win-\$25,000-with-a-basket-from-midcourt” contests we see during halftime at basketball games. The cannons didn’t need to get much closer than one mile to the enemy. You could line up a row of mortars and simply fire away, day and night.

It was almost impossible to predict where the shells would land. That’s what made them so scary. Those who lit the fuses and those in the enemy trenches were equally in the dark.

Mortars therefore weren’t really tactical weapons, designed with win battles. They were weapons of terror.

In that regard, they worked beautifully. You could break an army’s spirit from a mile away.

We still have mortars today. They’re known as social media.

If you have a laptop you can launch projectiles of rumor, gossip, and criticism with just a few keystrokes. You can be 10,000 miles away. Send out a Tweet or a Facebook post, sit back, and see where your messages land. Wait to see who responds.



## MODERN MORTARS

*If you have a laptop you can launch projectiles of rumor, gossip, and criticism with just a few keystrokes.*

It can be a nightmare, especially if you’re a middle school or high school girl.

As Nancy Jo Sales reveals in her book *American Girls: Social Media and the Secret Lives of Teenagers*, it’s painful to be an adolescent sitting on her bed at midnight, watching as a digital mortar shells land on her smartphone. Someone, or a group of someones, has delivered the flat screen verdict that she is a tramp, a prude, a pretender, or merely irrelevant.

Such “anonymous” correspondences are the preferred weapon of the bully.

You don’t have to be there. You don’t have to deal with someone else’s body language or facial expressions. You can execute an emotional

hit-and-run. Sales believes this is almost certainly linked to the sharp rise in adolescent suicides over the past 10 years.

**What can we do?**

Stop shooting mortar shells indiscriminately into someone else’s life. Refuse to hit Reply All when you’re facing a personal issue that calls for one-on-one sensitivity.

Among the many things made harder by the pandemic, it’s now more challenging than ever to find appropriate ways to approach someone. Alone. Just the two of you. In search of healthy ways to go forward.

Check out Jesus’ blueprints: “If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you’ve made a friend. If he won’t listen, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If he still won’t listen, tell the church. If he won’t listen to the church, you’ll have to start over from scratch, confront him with the need for re-

pentance, and offer again God’s forgiving love.” (Matthew 18:15-17)

Think how many wars would never need to be fought, and how many casualties we could avoid, if we all retired our mortars.

Or if we voluntarily switched ammunition.

If people started lobbing messages of encouragement and kindness, we’d suddenly hear a new standing order:

*Fire at will.*

From “Morning Reflections” written by Glenn McDonald.



Glenn is an ordained Presbyterian minister, has 33 years of congregational leadership experience, and is the author of ten books on discipleship and spiritual formation.

Glenn McDonald [glenn@glennsreflections.com](mailto:glenn@glennsreflections.com)



## NOVEMBER 9, 2020 COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The November 2020 HTLC Council meeting was held online via Zoom.



The meeting was opened at 6:55 by Floyd Garrott, who explained that the names of Nita Cunningham and Kevin Letcher were inadvertently omitted from the roster during the October Congregational Meeting. These Council members have agreed to serve another term. A motion was made by Stan Harlow and seconded by Michele Russell that the Council elect Nita Cunningham and Kevin Letcher to serve on the HTLC Council for this term ending in October 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting called to order at 7:05 by Nita Cunningham  
Devotions: Michele Russell

### Election of Council Officers

Floyd Garrott made a motion to appoint Al Davis to serve as Treasurer of HTLC. It was seconded by Bob Montgomery and passed unanimously.

Pastor Randy Schroeder facilitated the election of Council President and Vice President. Nita Cunningham and Kevin Letcher were elected to serve as President and Vice President respectively.

The November 2020 meeting agenda was approved.

Attendance: Nita Cunningham, Floyd Garrott, Pastor Schroeder, Stan Harlow, Michele Russell, Carolyn Claussen, Kevin Letcher, Al Davis, Dave Krueger, Bob Montgomery, Elizabeth White  
Absent: None

The minutes of the October Council meeting were approved.

### Reports

Pastor's Report - No report available

Pastor Randy Schroeder was introduced as Pastor of Record for Holy Trinity Lutheran Church through April 30, 2021

### Treasurer/Financial Secretary Report

#### October 2020

**Summary: Month Ten of the Calendar Year 2020 - Target Percent is 83.33%**

**Current Envelopes:** Income for the month \$20,616 which is \$2,301 below the monthly need of \$22,917.

**Total Income YTD:** Income is above projection by \$890

**EXPENSE:** All categories are within projections.

#### NET INCOME:

October:	Loss	(\$3,293)
Year-to-Date:	Gain	\$9,946

#### CURRENT ASSETS

Total Balance:	\$320,607
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#### IN REVIEW:

A generous bequest was received from the Robert L. Boothroyd estate and placed in General Memorials Fund.

Holy Trinity has been named in another will of a long time member. Mr. Schrier is handling the estate and will keep the Treasurer apprised of developments.

The contributions for Jubilee Christmas trailed prior years. HT has committed to support 20 families which is five fewer than normal.

*Finance Team recommends that Council allocate Specials Funds to supplement any short fall.*

A slight budget modification was suggested and approved at the Annual meeting held 10.18.20.

We are grateful for your ministry partnership.

Albert Davis, Treasurer

The October 2020 Treasurer's Report was approved.

#### Old Business

The retirement of Parish Administrator Sue Lambert was discussed. Sue has graciously offered to extend her retirement date to the end

## NOVEMBER COUNCIL CONTINUED

of December 2020, and the Council is grateful for Sue's help in this time of transition. Discussion included the timeline for hiring a replacement and the possibility of providing a time for training from Sue. Hours, daily schedule, and financial considerations were also discussed. A motion was that the Mutual Ministry committee organize the search for a new Parish Administrator and advise the HTLC Council in this decision. The motion passed.

### New Business

The Pastor of Record contract for Pastor Randy Schroeder was read, and his duties and compensation were discussed.

Nita Cunningham and Kevin Letcher, along with support and funding through the Evangelism Committee have proposed that Dr. Rachel Ploskonka guide large group and small group discussions to provide grief and emotional support to the congregation during this time of transition and change at HTLC. Dr. Ploskonka joined the Zoom meeting to further discuss the format of the online large and small group meetings. It was decided that the first meeting will be scheduled for Monday, December 7 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Pastor Schroeder advised that this type of support is valuable as the congregation experiences many changes. The Council supports this proposal.

Pastors for pulpit supply were announced as follows:

- Steve Albertin- Nov 15, Nov 22, Nov 29, Dec 20, Dec 27
- Jim Lichtenberger- Dec 6, Dec 13, Dec 24

Bishop Gafkjen has recommended that in person worship be suspended at this time because of the large increase in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and positivity rates. After discussion, Dave Krueger moved to follow the recommendation of Bishop Gafkjen and Synod guidelines to suspend in person worship at this time. Bob Montgomery amended the motion to specify suspension through December 13, 2020, when the issue could be revisited during the December 14 Council meeting. The motion and amendment were seconded by Carolyn Claussen and passed, with one nay vote.

Bob Montgomery moved to allow small groups to continue use of the building under present safety and health guidelines, and that Jubilee Christmas continue under the health guidelines of Lafayette Urban Ministry. Al Davis seconded the motion, and it passed with one abstention and one nay.

### Committee Reports:

*Committees communicated electronically as needed and did not meet in person.*

Evangelism –No new report.

Technology – Report submitted.

Remaining live-stream reliability issues will be solved by replacing the wireless connection now in use with an ethernet cable. A contractor will complete the installation this week.

Property – Report submitted.

Completed and pending repairs and maintenance were listed.

Fall clean up day scheduled for November 14 with a rain date of November 21. A plan for volunteers is ready.

Mutual Ministry –Nita Cunningham will write an article for the Open Door about the meeting with Bishop Gafkjen and the HTLC Council. We are grateful for her leadership in organizing the farewell for Pastor Doane on Sunday, November 8. She will continue to coordinate pulpit supply through the transition.

Christian Education –No new report submitted.

Youth – No new report

Stewardship –No new report

Worship/ Music – Report submitted.

The committee is discussing how to adapt Christmas decorations for the year. Carol Letcher is starting to work on Advent music. Sue Lambert will prepare the bulletins with Carol's input; the bulletins will be sent to the presiding pastors each week, and they will be given the option of selecting the hymn of the day that supports their sermon topic.

Outreach – Report submitted. Jubilee Christmas will continue as planned. Because of COVID-19, Pack Away Hunger will not take place as in previous years. An alternate activity will be announced.

The HTLC Council gratefully acknowledges all the committee members and volunteers who give so generously of their time, talents, and resources to support the ministry at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

A motion to adjourn was passed and the meeting closed in prayer.

Next meeting: Monday, December 14, 2020.

Submitted by Carolyn Claussen



## PRAYER FOR OUR CHURCH

“O sweet Child of Bethlehem,  
grant that we may share with all our hearts  
in this profound mystery of Christmas.

Put into the hearts of men and women this  
peace for which they sometimes seek so  
desperately and which you alone can give to  
them.

Help them to know one another better, and to  
live as brothers and sisters, children of the  
same Father.

Reveal to them also your beauty, holiness  
and purity. Awaken in their hearts love and  
gratitude for your infinite goodness.

Join them all together in your love.  
And give us your heavenly peace. Amen.”

— **Pope John XXIII**

## LET'S CELEBRATE

### December Birthdays

- 1 Linda Widmer, Walter Lott
- 2 Frances Lillo, Terry King
- 8 Jeff Greeley
- 18 Richard High
- 23 Mary Anderson, Elaine Miller
- 24 Elna Niezabitowski
- 25 Lloyd High, Helen Hoffman
- 27 Alice Mau
- 29 Noah Longdo
- 31 Taylor Davis, Gabriel Widmer

### December Anniversaries

- 5 Doug & Julie Gustafson
- 18 Franz & Sue Frederick
- 22 Jim & Cheryl Schrier

# Church Clean up

Wayne Russell, Dan Lokke, Don Lambert, Floyd Garrott, Bob Montgomery, Kevin Letcher, Susan Davis, Stan Harlow and Arlan Stavnheim pitched in to haul branches, clear leaves, cut limbs and lug Jubilee Christmas items from storage.

Even after some fierce wind storms, HTLC looks great. Thank you volunteers!





### Let's Talk About It...

2020 has been a difficult year. With health concerns, disruptions to everyday life and uncertainty that comes with the departure of our pastor, we are planning time with Dr. Rachel Plonskonka. She is a Purdue Professor and the Director of the Purdue Counseling and Guidance Center.

The session will be open to everyone. Dr. Plonskonka will train small group leaders for sessions on dealing with grief, and sense of loss.



Join us Monday, December 7, for a Zoom discussion with Dr. Plonskonka.

### Books Available:

As Pastor Doane cleared his study, he asked that HTLC donate some of his collection. After Jubilee Christmas, the books will be located in the main entrance between the glass doors. You are welcome to stop by and select any book that you like.

After the first of the year, remaining books will be donated to the library.



Church council installation  
November 1, 2020.

## Bishop Gafkjen meets with HTLC Council

On October 28, HTLC Council members and Bishop Gafkjen met via Zoom. Nita Cunningham shared these highlights:

Bishop Gafkjen began the session with devotions using Isaiah 43. He led a discussion on “what is God saying to you in this text” and suggested using it as an anchor as transition meetings begin.

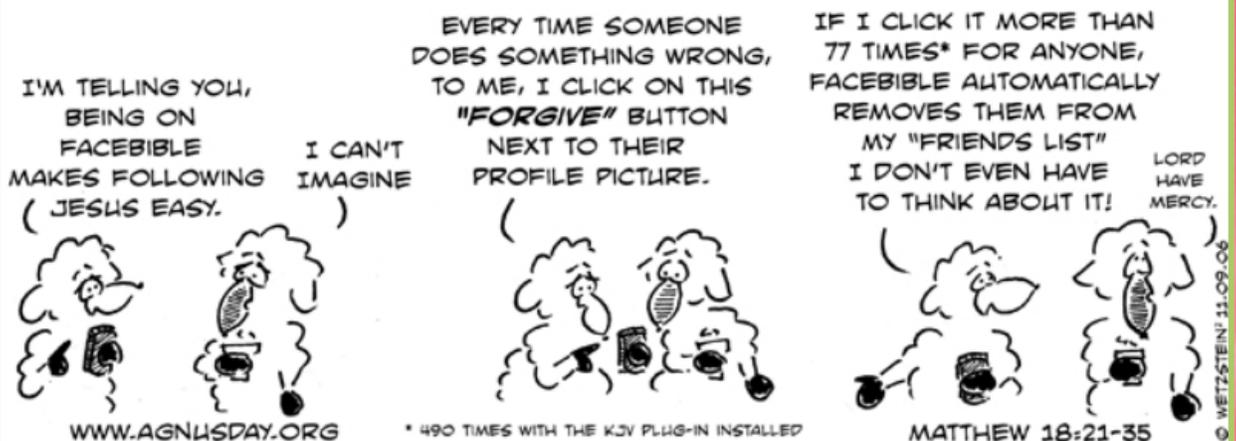
As a congregation and as a council, we should focus on the future. Although Synod staff are not currently traveling for in-person meetings, they will guide and assist with next steps via Zoom. He advised Council to focus on healthy leave-taking and to create a space to talk about loss and change.

These Synod staff are also available to congregations with a vacancy.

- Rev. Heather Apel will help with issues related to Pulpit supply or assignment of an interim pastor.
- Rev. Nancy Nyland can lead the congregation through exploring God’s expectations at this time; what is He calling on HTLC to be and do? She offers help and guidance in identifying important priorities for a pastor at HTLC, and matching our site profile with ministry site profiles. When it comes to forming a call committee, she provides assistance for the committee in their activities.

Bishop Gafkjen said we are not alone in this process. He and the Indiana Kentucky Synod staff are our pastors and will walk with us in this journey. Holy Trinity Lutheran Church is on the special prayer list.

## Agnus Day



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**Sunday December 20, 2020**

Watch online as part of the livestream  
church service

**“A Virtually Perfect Christmas Program”**

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Celebrate Christmas with HTLC’s youth. Listen as our children share the Christmas Story with their own illustrations and voices. Hear our young families join together singing Christmas Carols.