

# The Anchor

## From the Pastor's Desk



This morning, I opened a national newspaper to notice a well-known politician firing the first shot upon the “War on Christmas” as he lamented the use of the term “holiday tree.” The politician prefers the term “Christmas tree,” referring to the National Tree that stands on the White House lawn. The lawmaker also experienced prolonged rage afterwards as the national holiday tree will be decorated with a science theme.

And so it begins. The “War on Christmas.”

As people of the Christian faith, we know it’s time to prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus Christ during the season known as Advent. Advent is an intentional time to remember an unmarried refugee teenage girl traveling as a foreigner to another land to give birth to our Messiah among sparse surroundings.

Advent is a reminder of heavenly power given to earthly people like us. This is the true battle of the season—reclaiming the real message of Christ.

Some of us already received our first jolly advertising flyers filling our mailboxes accompanied by holiday emails promoting drastic discounts. There is more stuff and consumption than Mary, Joseph and Jesus could have ever imagined celebrating our Savior’s birthday.

Christ didn’t want more stuff. Quite the opposite. He didn’t ask us to make a commercial celebrating his birth (although Mr. Pillow proudly wears his shiny necklace cross alongside sparkling tinsel pedaling holiday bedding). Jesus didn’t even ask us to have a birthday celebration for him. He did ask us to “love one another” and care for the marginalized and the poor. The “War on Christmas” has everything to do with capitalistic values that exploit Advent and Christmas. The “War on Christmas” is not about semantics or terminology. It’s about where our hearts and treasures lay under the tree.

Christ advocated for the poor, the refugees, the immigrants, the oppressed, the outcasts, and those of us needing the Good News of salvation.

**(Con't on page 2)**

## Upcoming Events in December

- 5th—Advent Service @ 5 pm
- 12th—Advent Service with Sanctuary Decoration @ 5 pm
- 13th—AA Meeting
- 15th—Council Meeting after Worship
- 19th—Advent Service @ 5 pm
- 20th—AA Meeting
- 24th—Christmas Eve Service @ 7:30 pm
- 27th—AA Meeting

To learn more about any upcoming events at Hope Lutheran Church, contact us at (301) 868-2678 or [office@hopeclinton.org](mailto:office@hopeclinton.org)

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I challenge us to remind our inner selves that there is a “War on Christmas,” indeed. There’s a battle over values as people of faith, not terminology, during Advent and Christmas.

Perhaps consider giving a gift to the poor in honor of a loved one through the ELCA’s Gifts of Hope rather than giving more useless stuff that destroys our planet further. This is a better way to win the “War on Christmas.” Gifts of Hope helps the homeless, the hungry, the job-seeker, the young, the elderly, immigrants, refugees, seminary and college students, and those seeking to improve their lives.

Here's the link: <https://www.giftsofhopedc.org/>.

Peace in Christ

*Pastor Kasris*

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### Your Donations at Work

Evelyn Crenshaw

The Outreach Ministry would like to thank HLC for all the donations and support that poured in throughout the year to provide for those in need. Because of your acts of faith and kindness, HLC helped:

- Harvest Worship Center “Shoes for Souls”
- The Oxon Hill Food Pantry
- Warm Nights Program, Our Saviors Lutheran Church
- So Others Might Eat (S.O.M.E)— toiletries collection, Just Desserts, and Holiday Shoeboxes for the Homeless
- Open Door Shelter, DC— Detergent Program
- Lamb Center, VA
- Christle Lighthouse Pregnancy Center, MD—School backpacks and Baby Bottle Fundraiser
- Eyes for Sight
- Ronald McDonald House—Pop tabs and cleaning supplies
- Lifestyles, MD
- Well Suited Man, MD
- One Warm Coat
- UMC, Campus Ministry
- Military Coupon Program
- St. Jude’s Ranch Card Program
- Used Cartridge Program
- Humane Society, Charles County



### Hope Lutheran Church is supporting Toys for Tots!

Until Sunday, December 8, 2019, HLC will accept new, unused toys for the program, for those considered tots to pre-teens. (Toys for Tots prefers not to accept realistic looking weapons and gifts with food. If donated, such items will NOT be distributed.) A collection box for the toys is in the Fellowship Hall.

If you are interested in serving at the warehouse in Fredericksburg, VA, on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, please let Evelyn Crenshaw know by December 8. Lunch will be provided to the elves that help out! For further information, please contact HLC: [office@hopeclinton.org](mailto:office@hopeclinton.org) or (301) 868-2678.

The Marine Toys for Tots Foundation was established in 1947 with the goal of providing the gifts of new toys to help bring the joy of Christmas and send a message of hope to America's less fortunate children. Presently, the organization distributes an average of 18 million toys to 7 million less fortunate children annually.



### Help Feed the Hungry this Holiday Season

The Oxon Hill Food Pantry desperately needs \$10 gift cards, which they provide to families in need during the holiday season. To help support, please purchase a gift card and place it in the collection plate along with the receipt of purchase. Thank You!

## **Gifts of Hope—Help those in need while you shop for Christmas!**



*Photo by Monika Stawowy*

Today you can purchase a Gift of Hope for a friend or relative while making a contribution to someone who is in need.

Gifts of Hope is a ministry sponsored by the Washington Metro D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). It is an alternative gift-giving program that serves as an intermediary between donors

and organizations serving individuals and families in need locally and internationally. In the more than 25 years since its founding, the organization has raised and disbursed nearly \$4 million to various organizations. These funds have helped the homeless, the hungry, the young, the elderly, refugees, and those seeking to improve their lives.

When you give, you will receive a beautiful Christmas card and an explanation of your purchase, while the actual gift will be forwarded to the organization which helps those in need.

Visit [www.GiftsofHopeDC.org](http://www.GiftsofHopeDC.org) for more information and to give a Gift of Hope.

- **Thank you to the many people who helped to make Pastor Karis' installation reception a great success. The food was wonderful and enjoyed by all!**
- **Would you like to bring Advent cookies on Sundays during Advent? Sign the chart in the Narthex.**
- **Join us for Decorating the Sanctuary on Thursday, December 12, 2019, @ 5 pm, before Advent Service.**

## **ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

John Feldman

Pastor Karis has led Adult Education sessions in November with discussions supported by two books: *Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination* and *I Can Do No Other: The Churches Here I Stand Luther Moment*.

In December, we will continue our series entitled *Jesus and His Jewish Influences*. The 30-minute video sessions will be presented by Professor for Teaching Excellence in Judaism, Dr. Jodi Magness, at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Jesus' teachings were the product of a fascinating dialogue with the traditions, cultures, and history of ancient Jewish beliefs.

The schedule for December is as follows:

- Dec 1—Pastor Karis will continue discussions started in November
- Dec 8—Alexander the Great's Impact on the Jews (J. Feldman)
- Dec 15—Jews and Greek Rule: The Heliodorus Affair (J. Feldman)
- Dec 22—Desolating Sacrilege and the Maccabean Revolt (J. Feldman)
- Dec 29—No Class

In January, Pastor Karis will again lead the sessions, followed by John Feldman leading the sessions in February.

**JOIN US 9 am Sundays**

## **SYNOD YOUTH MINISTRY LISTENING SESSION**

This year, the Metro D.C. Synod, ELCA, and the Lord of Life Lutheran church will host the Synod Youth ministry Listening Session on December 7, 2019, from 12:30 to 3:30 pm.

The gathering will be held at Lord of Life's Fairfax campus to allow for an exploration of the future of youth ministry. The annual youth ministry retreats Chrysalis, and Shekinah will be on hold as the ELCA and Lord of Life Lutheran Church sponsor this event.

All are welcome to attend. Lunch will be served, and participants will have the opportunity to meet the new synod youth faith formation coordinator, Pastor Julia Boudrye. High school youth representatives, adult leadership, and pastoral staff are strongly encouraged to attend.

Registration is required. Please register at: <https://synod-youth-faith-formation-listening-session-lord-of-life.pushpayevents.com/booking/attendees/new>

To learn more about the Synod Youth Ministry, please email Pastor Boudrye at [PastorJulia@lordoflifeva.org](mailto:PastorJulia@lordoflifeva.org).



Metro DC Synod at the ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston

## **ELCA Signs on to Golden Rule 2020 Initiative**

Christian leaders from a wide range of denominations, and theological and political views, signed on to engage in activities that support Golden Rule 2020: A Call for Dignity and Respect in Politics. ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton signed the statement of support.

The initiative was prompted by a convening of faith leaders earlier this year by the National Institute for Civil Discourse. The Statement of Support notes that "Churches have an important role to play in helping to heal America, and we hope and pray that local congregations will be active in efforts to increase understanding and bridge divisions in our country between now and the 2020 election."

Congregations and individuals are encouraged to promote the use of the Golden Rule in their political discussions and election activities in 2020.

Learn more about this initiative. Visit [www.goldenrule2020.org](http://www.goldenrule2020.org)



Doug Mills/The New York Times via AP

## **ELCA Bishop and Conference of Bishops Support Funds for East Jerusalem Hospitals**

The presiding bishop and conference of Bishops of ELCA have issued a letter to President Trump urging the administration to restore funding to Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) and other hospitals in East Jerusalem. AVH is owned and operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and supported by the ELCA and several other member churches of the LWF.

In the letter to President Trump, the bishops urge the administration to consider the impact financial cuts to AVH is having on cancer patients and others treated at its facilities. These cuts have forced AVH to delay treatments and to turn away patients. While LWF and its member churches will continue to provide lifesaving treatments to patients from the West Bank and Gaza through AVH, "the accumulated debt of the Palestinian Authority make it increasingly difficult for AVH to pay staff, pay pharmaceutical suppliers for medications and avoid interruption of patient treatments."

The letter was signed by the Reverend Elizabeth Eaton, presiding bishop of ELCA, and the Reverend William Gafkjen, chair of the ELCA Conference of Bishops, and notes that as of July 31, 2019, the PA debt to AVH was nearly \$40 million, an unsustainable level for the LWF.

## Advent Thursday Services

The Psalmist says, "Wait for the Lord, be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!" (Psalm 27:14) But how does one wait for the Lord? How does one wait in the busy season of Advent?

The Prophet Isaiah encourages us to wait for the advent of our Lord with prayer (Isaiah 64:1-9), comfort (Isaiah 40:1-11), and joy (Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11) this advent season and always!

Advent Thursday Services are at 5:00 pm on **December 5, December 12** (with sanctuary decoration) and **December 19**, 2019.

*Photo by Lukas Langrock*

## **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**



On Christmas Eve, worship at HLC! This Christmas Eve HLC will usher in the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ in an atmosphere fit for the King of Kings, with Celtic music expressed through flutes, violins, and a harp. All are welcome to this candlelight service.

Service begins at 7:30 pm.

## **ELCA, Church of Sweden, The Episcopal Church Recommit to Address Climate Issues**

The ELCA, Church of Sweden, and The Episcopal Church recommit to work together to advocate for "national and international policies that address the urgency of the climate crisis and help create resilient communities while leaving no one behind." This recommitment is a renewal and update of the commitment made by the three church bodies in 2013.

The statement issued jointly affirms that they have not fully dedicated themselves to the work necessary to affect change, but with God's guidance, "can do better in meeting this critical issue of our time." Specifically, they commit to:

- Advocate for national and international policies and regulations that enable transitions to carbon neutral resilient societies in ways attentive to the many dimensions of climate justice.
- Pursue education and advocacy efforts that attend to the most vulnerable, whose needs must be put ahead of the more privileged.
- Will raise awareness in our churches by promoting the use of education, worship and action resources available locally, regionally, nationally and globally.
- Will seek deeper understanding, through praying and listening to experiences in our own communities and with others, about ways overconsumption can be addressed and about the diverse impacts of climate change.
- Will build multiple collaboration: through support and cooperation with our international communions, through inter-religious dialogue and shared advocacy, through national and international organizations and with all others seeking to address climate change.

## A Message from the President

Lorna Redding

### Celebrating Family

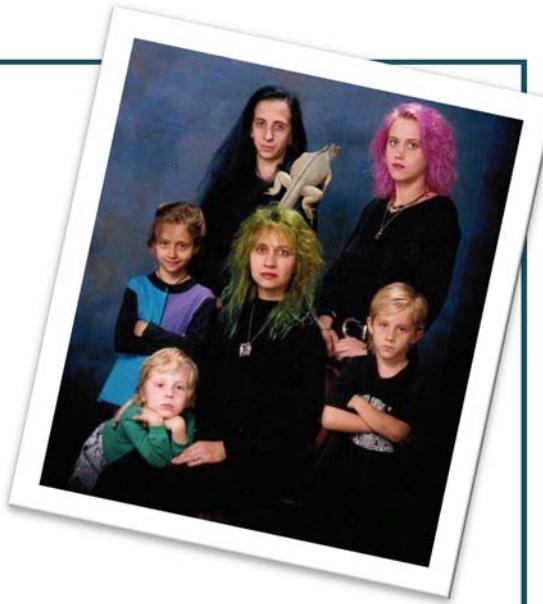
On Friday, October 25, 2019, I was introduced to my newest great-niece, Fiona; she lives in Seattle, Washington. On Friday, November 8, 2019, I called and congratulated my mother on her birthday and celebrating 88 years of life thus far. We chatted and discussed all the calls she had received. I told her I loved her and hoped to visit by the end of the month.

On a recent Sunday, I received a message from one of my cousins that funeral services were scheduled for my uncle. So, I called my mother to ask if she had heard that her youngest brother had died on November 9, 2019.

I can't wait to celebrate my Uncle Milton's life. I hadn't seen him since my grandmother's funeral, who passed on October 23, 2000. And that's life. Celebrating every opportunity that you are given. Celebrating new life, milestones, who we are, God's gifts and blessings, laughter and tears, moving forward with renewed strength that comes from sharing God's love with one another. I wish to thank you all at Hope for your love and support. I encourage you during the "Season of Love," and all year long to celebrate and share God's love.

Love and Blessings,

Lorna



# The Anchor

**Managing Editor**  
Erica Vaughns

**Council Members &  
Contributing Writers**

Pr. Karis Graham  
Evelyn Crenshaw  
John Feldman  
Dyreck Garrett  
Al Leaman  
Ron Muller  
Lorna Redding  
Jeannie Richter  
Tim Rosin  
Linda Leaman  
Vera Vaughns

**Mission of  
Hope Lutheran Church**

The mission of Hope Lutheran Church is to be "God's loving presence in a hurting world."

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For more information about *The Anchor* or Hope Lutheran Church, please contact:

Hope Lutheran Church  
6201 Coventry Way  
Clinton, MD 20735

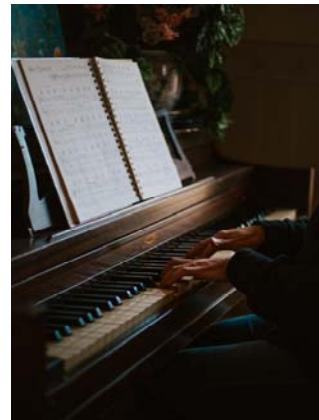
Telephone: (301) 868-2678  
Email: [office@hopeclinton.org](mailto:office@hopeclinton.org)

**Hope**  
Lutheran Church

- Sunday School: 9-10 am
- Worship Service: 10 am
- Celebration Sunday (Fellowship with food) first Sunday of every month, directly after service.

## OPPORTUNITY: PART-TIME PIANIST NEEDED

Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Clifton, Virginia, is looking for a pianist to play at the 8:50 and 10:50 am Sunday worship services. They are looking for someone who has excellent sight reading skills and is comfortable playing from chord sheets and piano scores. Compensation is paid per service and/or practice session. Additional services coming up include Advent mid-week services. If you are interested, please reach out to Michelle Sherman, Director of Music, at [msherman@lordoflifeva.org](mailto:msherman@lordoflifeva.org).



*Photo by Josh Hild*



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

**Washington Metro D.C. Synod Mission Statement:** The mission of our synod is to work with the Holy Spirit to make disciples for our Lord Jesus Christ. To do this we will nurture new and renewing centers for the proclamation of the gospel, where communities of Jesus' disciples gather who share the love of Jesus through their speech and actions.

**About the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:**

The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with nearly 3.5 million members in more than 9,100 worshiping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. Known as the church of "God's work. Our hands..," the ELCA emphasizes the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unity among Christians and service in the world. The ELCA's roots are in the writings of the German church reformer Martin Luther.