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GEMEINDEBRIEF – ADVENT 2021

NEWSLETTER – ADVENT 2021

Dear Family and Friends in Faith,

Welcome to the first edition of *ECHO*. Thanks to **Edith Schiller** for suggesting the name for our newsletter, adopted by Church Council at our October meeting.

Echo: “reverberation or reproduction of sound waves; resound, recall, reflect”

According to the dictionary definition, to produce an echo requires two things: an audible sound, and a receiver-transmitter of that sound.

Thus, “to echo” seems a sound definition of the church’s mission. We *receive* God’s word in and through the ministry of the church; we *transmit* God’s word to the world. Apostle John says as much: “We *declare* to you what we have *heard*, concerning the word of life ...” (1 John 1:1). A little later he *echoes* the receiver-transmitter pattern in light of Jesus’ commandment that his disciples love one another: “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19)

Perhaps no single word *reverberates* God’s word of life and love more fully than another word of identical spelling and meaning in both German and English – and many other languages, too – than a word Christians of all nationalities and denominations have spoken more often than any other word in the history of the church – the *Hebrew* word “Amen”. In our congregation, in fact, we intentionally *echo* that very word in the three-fold “Amen, Amen, Amen” we sing at the end of every Sunday worship liturgy! And that’s highly appropriate, because the word “Amen” has three distinct meanings for God’s faithful people!

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WHERE SANTA CLAUS AND SAINT NICHOLAS MEET

For many years now, our family has begun our Christmas festivities by watching the classic Hollywood film *Miracle On 34th Street*. It tells the tale of a charming elderly gentleman, named Kris Kringle, determined to convince a skeptical single mother and her precocious young daughter that he is the “real Santa Claus”.

As most Christians know, Santa Claus traces his origin to the fourth century Saint Nicholas, who was the Bishop of Myra, an ancient port city on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, in what is today part of Turkey. As a bishop he taught his flock that the church is the body of Christ in the world; and in his ministry he personally demonstrated Jesus’ compassion and dedicated the personal wealth he had inherited from his parents to serve Jesus’ mission. Little is known for certain about Nicholas’ life, but many and various popular legends celebrate his legacy.

Perhaps best-known is the story of his secret gift of dowry money for three unmarried daughters of an impoverished family in his parish, thus saving them from possible slavery or prostitution – an option faced by many unmarried women without adequate means of support. Another popular story tells of Nicholas rescuing kidnapped school children from a notorious butcher, thus saving them from potential physical injury or sexual abuse.

Nicholas *exemplifies* the spirit of compassion and charity of Jesus Christ, whose birth Christmas celebrates. When Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, died – on December 6th, AD 340 – his parishioners took up the cause. They began, anonymously, to care for the neediest citizens in their community, giving credit for their good deeds to Saint Nicholas himself. Over the seventeen subsequent centuries, and in many diverse cultures around the world, Saint Nicholas evolved into Santa Claus.

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**“ADVENT AFTERNOON” POTLUCK
(NO HOT DISHES PLEASE – FINGERFOODS ONLY)**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1 1:00 A.M.
(FOLLOWING WORSHIP)**

IN SUPPORT OF *YELLOW BRICK HOUSE*

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This Advent season, as COVID 19 restrictions begin to lift in favour of a return to cherished seasonal traditions, we at Thornhill Lutheran Church are planning to reinstate our traditional “Advent Afternoon” social gathering on December 5, following our Sunday morning

worship liturgy. And, in the true “Spirit of St. Nicholas”, council has officially designated this time to revive our “pre-COVID” tradition of raising support for the Yellow Brick House – a shelter for women and children fleeing domestic violence. Please plan to join us!

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of Rosarie, myself and our household – our son, Jonathan, our daughter, Sarah and her husband, Denis Keane and their children, Chelsea and Evan, to wish you all a “Merry Christmas” and “Frohe Weihnachten!” And may the Advent promise of hope, faith, joy and peace, enrich your life with a “Happy, Healthy and Holy New Year!”

Pastor Peter



Christmas Worship Schedule

Friday, December 24

Deutscher Gottesdienst 4:00 p.m.

Deutscher Gottesdienst 5:45 p.m.

English Service 7:30 p.m.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED!

Contact Nancy Moulson by phone at 416-558-0590 or by Email at nmoulson1@rogers.com by 12:00 noon on December 23.

Sunday, December 26

Bi-Lingual Holy Communion Service 10:00 a.m.

Friday, December 31

Deutscher Gottesdienst mit Abendmahl 3:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 2, 2022

English Holy Communion 10:00 a.m.

CHRISTMAS MOURNING

In this festive season we remember and pray for our grieving companions in faith, this year especially **Gerhard & Olga Jurgeneit** as their family mourns the death of their son, **Michael**. May the good news of Christmas lighten the darkness in this season with the very hope of eternal life the Christ Child of Bethlehem was born, died and raised to fulfill.

"The people who dwell in darkness have seen a great light!" (Isaiah 9:2)

"The light shines in darkness; and darkness cannot overcome it!" (John 1:5)

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial Update

Jan. 1, 2021 - Oct. 31, 2021

<u>OFFERINGS & DONATIONS</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Budget	41,666.66	33,333.33
Actual	<u>-20,507.13</u>	<u>-18,047.20</u>
<u>SHORTFALL</u>	21,159.53	15,286.13

Please help us to eliminate our SHORTFALL of 15,286.13

<u>ATTENDANCE</u>	334	226
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Thank you for your generous support during this challenging time,

it is very much appreciated.

We are back to our regular in person worship services.
You are all invited to join us for our worship services every Sunday

at 10:00 a.m. followed by fellowship.

Your treasurer
Edith Schiller