
THORNHILL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Christmas Eve Services - Heilig Abend Gottesdienst

Please join us for our Christmas Eve Services on December 24th, 2020.

Due to Covid-19, we will be holding our services on-line only. Please find our Christmas Eve Services at our church's website:

<https://www.thornhill-lutheran.org> or on YouTube.

Wir werden dieses Jahr unsere Weihnachtsgottesdienste virtuell feiern.

Bitte besuchen sie unsere Webseite: <https://www.thornhill-lutheran.org> oder unseren YouTube Channel und feiern sie mit uns die Geburt Christi.

**Wir wünschen euch eine gesegnete Weihnachten
und ein frohes neues Jahr.**

**We wish you all a very Merry Christmas
and a safe, healthy, and happy New Year.**

PASTORAL EPISTLE

Dear Family and Friends in Faith,

December has arrived and we find ourselves, once again, in the growing darkness of the Advent season. “Advent” means “coming”. During the four weeks of Advent, Christians are called to watch and wait, pray and prepare for God’s coming into the world in the divine humanity of Jesus Christ. But Advent is more than the annual celebration of Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem some two thousand and twenty years ago. Advent is *primarily* anticipation of Jesus’ coming at the end of history “to judge the living and the dead”, as the Nicene Creed proclaims, and to finish the work of God’s salvation begun in his death and resurrection.

Lutheran Christianity, with our church’s emphasis on divine grace, presents the prospect of divine judgment as *promise* rather than *threat*. Advent’s call for repentance and conversion does not intend to burden us with guilt, but rather to inspire hope in humanity’s future beyond all our past and present fears, failures and frailties. Advent celebrates Emmanuel – God with us – *in* our darkness, to *lighten* the darkness *within* us, and *enlighten* the darkness *around* us by worship of God, companionship in Christ, and love for neighbours, around the world and around the corner.

Speaking of love for neighbours around the world, during Advent our congregation has traditionally and intentionally supported the mission of **Canadian Lutheran World Relief**, by including a specially designated Christmas Day offering envelope dated for December 25th (see “*Sharing the Joy of Christmas Giving*”, p. 3) We have also promoted the CLWR “*Gifts From The Heart*” Christmas ministry. You can find more details on their website: clwr@clwr.org

As for neighbours around the corner, we have been generous supporters of two local ministries supported by the Thornhill Ministerial Association: the **Yellow Brick House** women’s shelter and our annual **Christmas Assistance Program**. The need this year, in the dim light of the Coronavirus pandemic, is more urgent than ever! Both poverty and domestic violence have increased dramatically during the global Coronavirus pandemic! More details are included on our “*Share the Joy of Christmas Giving*” (page 4).

Regarding our companionship in Christ, I am very pleased and thankful that so many of our faithful members who have kept in touch with one another during this interminable “Year of Covid 19”, offering help and encouragement via telephone, cards and letters, as well as the many means of virtual companionship. God bless you all!

Last, but by no means least, the lifeline of worship has also remained active and available via our longstanding practice of audio live streaming Sunday services on our website. In more recent months we have expanded our worship ministry to include occasional video recordings – which, this year, will include one English, as well as one German language Christmas Eve Candlelight services, in lieu of our traditional Christmas worship schedule. These will be available for access by December 23, 2020.

No doubt the past ten months have been difficult and lonely – for some of us more than others. But it has also been a time to remember God’s presence, purpose and promise in our life of faith, and who we are as beloved children and people of God.

Lift up your heads: God’s salvation is coming!

Lift up your hearts: God’s salvation is near!

Lift up your hands: God’s salvation is now!

May the season of Advent renew us all in hope, strengthen us in faith, inspire us with joy, and fill us with peace.

Holy Advent! Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!

Pastor Peter

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SHARE THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS GIVING

THORNHILL MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION CHRISTMAS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

We have been privileged for many years to participate in the Thornhill Ministerial Association’s annual Christmas Assistance Program. This year, however, has brought us all new challenges, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Because the safe,



collection and distribution of non-perishable food items is difficult our ministry will proceed differently this Christmas season. **We are appealing for financial donations only.** With the proceeds we plan to purchase gift cards for local grocery and department stores to offer families in need who apply and are approved to receive our help.

Please send your offering, payable to Thornhill Lutheran Church, **designated to “Christmas Assistance”** by December 13, 2020.

CANADIAN LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Please remember to include Canadian Lutheran World Relief on your Christmas shopping list this year. A special blue envelope is included with your regular church offering envelopes as a reminder and invitation to support this life-giving mission that unites us with Lutheran Christians around the world in caring for the most impoverished among God’s children.



YELLOW BRICK HOUSE

Due to the challenges of working under an emergency order, we are asking that individuals and organizations around the community donate money to supplement the incremental costs of escalating need the COVID 19 pandemic has caused our agency. For example, it costs \$150 per night to provide safe shelter for each woman, and her children, fleeing domestic violence.

Another option would be to donate gift cards from Walmart, Shoppers or President's Choice to empower women at Yellow Brick House to purchase what they need independently. This is a vital first step for many women since domestic abuse often involves financial control as well as physical violence.

Please visit our website for more information about our programs: yellowbrickhouse.org

Thank you for supporting the women and children of Yellow Brick House!

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WANN KOMMST DU, MEIN HEIL? ICH KOMME, DEIN TEIL!

(Adaptiert von dem *Neukirchener Kalender 2020*, bei Peter Lisinski)

Seit des ersten Jahrhunderts warteten und beteten die Christen sehnsuechtig dem Augenblick entgegen, an dem Jesus Christis endgueltig wiederkommen wuerde. Damals erlben sie noch eine Zeit, in der die Ungerechtigkeit ueberhandnimmt. Statt sich dem Retter der Welt anzuvertrauen, werden sich Spoetter ueber Gottes Wahrheit lustig machen. Aber der groBe Tag ist bislang ausgeblieben.

Wir wissen auch heute wie die Menschheit die Weisungen Gottes missachten. Die wiederkunft von Jesus mag sich zwar verschieben, aber sie bleibt nicht aus. Was wie Zoegern und Zaudern aussieht, ist Ausdruck der groBen Geduld, die Gott aufbringt – und zwar vor allem mit uns, den Christen. Der Tag des Herrn wird dem Treiben der Feind Gottes ein Ende setzen. Ohne vorherige Warnung werden dann die Grundfesten der Erde erschuettert. Im Kosmos werden die Elemente vergehen. Nur Gott und sein Wort nicht.

Deshalb sollen wir uns darueber freuen, dass Gott auch heute unterwegs ist, um zu rufen und zu locken. Jesus Christus, Gottes ewiges, menschengewordenes Wort, verspricht wiederzukommen, um seine erneuerten Erde voll Frieden und Gerechtigkeit zu schaffen. Wir koennen darauf vertrauen, dass Gott haellt, was er in seinem Wort verspricht. Wohl uns, und allen, wenn wir seiner Einladung folgen! Dann mag Jesus, unser Herr, wiederkommen, wann er will: denn wir werden bereit.

Council Highlights October to November 2020

October 28th

- Council is looking into a live video web feed for our Christmas Eve services.
- The guidelines of our safety procedures will be added to our website.
- Thank you to Fred Neitzert for repairing the broken handrail (located by our backdoor).
- Thank you to all who participated in the Annual Pastoral review. Your input was immeasurable.
- From your feedback, you provided us, and our congregation, with numerous and thought provoking ideas regarding Congregational goals and Outreach ideas. Due to the pandemic, council is not able to implement them at this present time but is looking forward to working on them in 2021.
- Council reviewed and received the information regarding the Annual Pastoral review.
- We now have an Instagram page for our church; this joins our website and Facebook page.
- We reviewed our Christmas Eve services and how to ensure everyone's safety. They included, but not limited to: everyone who plans on attending would have to pre-register; slightly shorter services to ensure proper cleaning in-between the services; all other guidelines would remain in place, etc. Holding any services always depends on how the pandemic is evolving.
- Annual meeting 2021: due to Covid-19, Council feels that it would be very difficult to currently hold a meeting and will reach out to the Eastern Synod for further clarification on how to move forward.
- To ensure our continued support of Thornhill Christmas Food Drive and Yellowbrick House, we are making further inquiries on how to best assist them.

November 12th

- Due to the increase case numbers of Covid-19 in the GTA, council decided for the safety of all, to stop our in-person church services. We will continue to offer our weekly on-line services.

Christmas Eve Services

- Due to the increase case numbers of Covid-19 in the GTA, Council has decided to cancel our in-person Christmas Eve services. We thank Tony Streisslberger, Pastor Peter, and Rosarie, who will now film two Christmas Eve services (one in German and one in English) for viewing online. They will be up and running on December 24.

November 25th

- Council held their meeting via Zoom.
- Cleaning log is being maintained.
- Filming of our Christmas Eve services are in the works.

- Council needs 3 new council members in 2021. As terms are ending. If interested, please contact Doris Lottermoser or Edith Schiller.
- Thank you Fred Neitzert for repairing the shed. Council will look into a getting a new one in Spring 2021.
- Due to Covid-19, this year Thornhill Food drive and Yellow Brick house would prefer cash donations or grocery gift cards only.
- Council started their review of the proposed 2021 budget. Thank you to the finance committee and Edith Schiller for preparing this.
- The Eastern Synod is working on protocols regarding Annual meetings for 2021. Council will review once we have received them.
- Thanks to Fred Neitzert, Edith Schiller, and Geoff, Tyler, Eric, and Nancy Moulson for organizing, and meeting, to set up the Christmas tree and other Christmas decorations.

Doris Lottermoser, Vice Chair

<u>TREASURER'S REPORT</u>		
<i>Financial Update</i>		
<i>Jan. 1, 2020 - Oct. 31, 2020</i>		
<u>OFFERINGS & DONATIONS</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Budget	54,166.66	41,666.66
Actual	<u>26,234.00</u>	<u>20,507.13</u>
<u>SHORTFALL, Oct. 31, 2019 & Oct. 31, 2020</u>	-27,932.66	-21,159.53
Please help us to eliminate our SHORTFALL of		-21,159.53
<u>ATTENDANCE</u>	1176	334

Dear Members and Friends of the Thornhill Lutheran Church,

The last 9 months have been challenging, and for some, a very difficult period of time. We are still fortunate to have Sunday services on line or with the occasional video. Hopefully you are all healthy and have the support of your family, if you need any additional emotional support, please feel free to call Pastor Peter or any member of church council.

Unfortunately, our income from offerings and donations in 2020 is only half of the proposed budget. Any donation would be greatly appreciated. You can donate on line through Canada Helps, join PAR or mail your donation directly to the church.

We hope that with the New Year comes new hope and freedom so that we may gather again to celebrate the blessing of the lord.

Thank you for your support. Stay safe and healthy.
Edith Schiller

Erntedank Gebet
Edwin Nievergelt (1927-2010)

Herr, gib uns unser täglich Brot.
Hilf, alles Leben ist bedroht,
weil unser satter Sinn vergisst,
dass du des Brotes Geber bist.

Du gibst uns unser täglich Brot.
Lass uns bereit sein in der Not
zu teilen, was du uns gewährt.
Dein ist die Erde, die uns nährt.

Herr, du bist unser täglich Brot.
Du teilst dich aus in deinem Tod.
Wir loben dich und danken dir.
Aus deiner Liebe leben wir.

(Beitrag von Gunther Kunzelmann)



*And she brought
forth her firstborn
son, and wrapped
him in swaddling
clothes, and laid
him in a manger;
because there was
no room for them
in the inn ...*

Luke 2:7

FROHE WEIHNACHTEN!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!

JOINT BILINGUAL "CHRISTMAS CAROL SING" SERVICE GEMEINSAMER GESANG GOTTESDIENST

First Sunday After Christmas 27/12/2020 Erste Sonntag Nach Dem Christfest
Please send your hymn requests to Pastor Peter by Monday, Dec. 21
905 889-0873 or 647-395-7649 or pastor@thornhill-lutheran.org