



My Favorite Season

by Pastor Bradley E. Schmeling

I probably say this every year: Advent is my favorite season.

The deep blue,

the indigo of the early morning sky, that moment before dawn when
all is quiet
and the world has taken its long night's rest yet has begun
to stir.

The glimpse of a mother placing her hand on her pregnant belly
feeling the movement of a new life move across her spirit,
eyes closed for wonder.

Colored lights twinkling on the drive home from church after a meeting
shifting darkness into the space of delight,
remembering my dad, now above in starlight himself,
stringing lights in the front yard.

John the Baptist stepping into the sanctuary for two of our weeks,
the prophet's fire lighting up our complacency,
turning consumerist Christmas on its head.

Choirs and children, visitors and long-missed members crowded together
on the Eve, aglow in angel light,
all of us at some manger or another, waiting for birth.

God of darkness, of black and beautiful night,
moving, opening, birthing, beholding,
Come, Come and save us now.

Gloria Dei Guide

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Worship Schedule

8:15 & 10:45 a.m.

Education Hour 9:30-10:30 a.m.



Be Still, Amidst the Advent Chaos

by Ellen Whitted

Shopping lists, over extended schedules, mall parking lots that are filled with impatient shoppers, one more holiday card to send, grocery shopping ... be still.

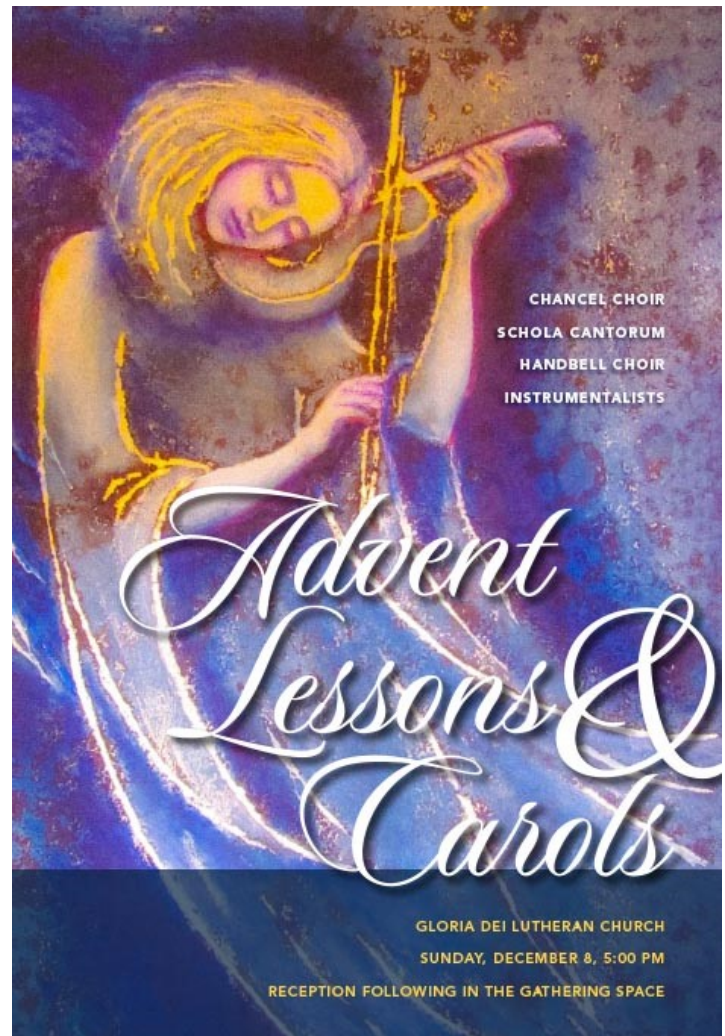
An added commitment because you forgot about the school band concert, shoveling snow, buying the last Christmas tree in the lot, choir practice, sports events ... be still.

Putting up holiday lights, texting family to find out how to make that "one" cookie that your daughter has to have for her last minute cookie exchange, Confirmation, laundry, balancing bills against the purchasing of gifts ... be still.

Church services, decorating the house, picking up the Christmas tree, and broken ornaments, because the cat knocked it down, washing dishes, volunteering for Project Home ... be still.

Lessons and Carols is the one moment that I can be still. Be still long enough to let my mind quiet as I listen to Mary's lullaby and wonder what it was like for the little baby whose bed was straw. Be still long enough to let my body relax and listen to a poem without worrying about the list of things that needs to be done. Be still long enough for my heart to rejoice and be filled with sounds of the Children's Choir telling me that my Lord comes to me. Be still long enough for my soul to sigh with relief knowing that in my stillness he will come ... he will come.

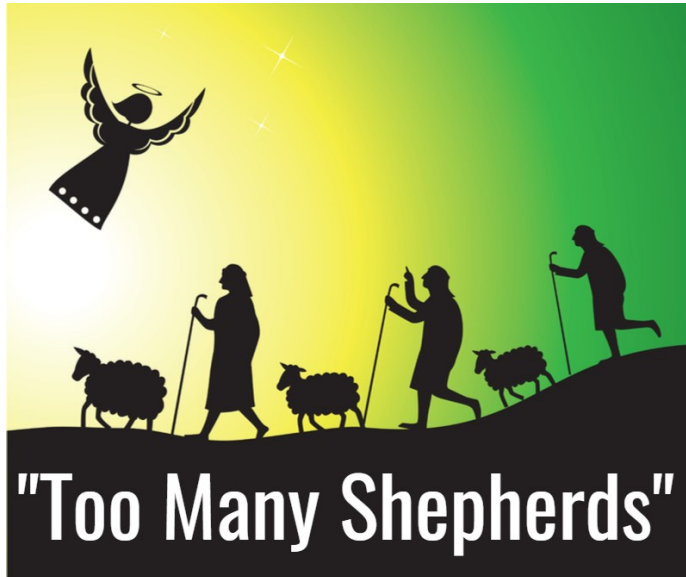
Please consider joining me this year on December 8 at 5 p.m. and be still amidst your Advent chaos.



Holiday Office Closings

The church office is closed for the holidays on December 25 and January 1.

Children's Christmas Worship Service



Join us December 15

A Children's Prelude at 10:15 a.m. in the Sanctuary, invites us to worship.

***Too Many Shepherds* begins at 10:45 a.m.**

This year's [Christmas program](#), *Too Many Shepherds*, by Shari L. Ayers, is a whimsical approach to the story that we may have heard many times. We will focus on the role of the shepherds and be inspired by their story in perhaps a way that we have not discovered yet.

We invite all children to participate in the program. Practices are during the regular Sunday School hour for age 3 through grade 6.

After the program, enjoy a cookie reception with us in Fellowship Hall.

Midweek Prayer with the Grinch and Other Saints

Services Continue through Dec. 18

New this year, we offer peaceful midweek Advent services that include a mix of readings, song and prayer. Take a short "time out" to prepare for the true meaning of the season during Advent and be together as community. Our confirmation classes will join the congregation in these services, instead of their regular class sessions. Each service features one of the saints of the season.

- December 11 - The Grinch, based on *How the Grinch Learned the Magnificat* by Pastor Emmy Kegler of Grace Lutheran Church (northeast Minneapolis), who will join us for this service.
- December 18 - Saint Lucy

Come early for dinner at 5:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. During dinner, everyone can make Christmas ornaments that we will use for our church decorations (or to take home).

Journey to Tanzania

by Pastor Bradley E. Schmeling

We landed in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, boarded a rented bus, and drove 12 hours to Iringa. The seven of us from Gloria Dei watched the countryside change from the coastal flat lands to the highlands, delighting that the temperature and humidity dropped as we drove. The Iringa Diocese is one of the 25 dioceses for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, a church of more than 6 million members, almost twice the size of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

In 1987, the Saint Paul Area Synod began to build a relationship with the diocese, helping to train pastors to serve the fast-growing church. Since then, the companion Synod relationship has grown to become the largest such partnership anywhere in the ELCA. When it began, two congregations were involved; today the partnership includes 66 congregations and a variety of affiliated ministries that address urgent needs in Tanzania. To date, the Synod has channeled more than \$10 million to Iringa, and in recent years has directed more than \$1 million annually.

Most of our trip was designed to familiarize us with the ministries of the diocese. In Tanzania, the church often picks up social services not offered by the government. We visited the Synod's hospital, an orphanage, a school, the diocese's offices, the cathedral church in Iringa, and the university. Most importantly, we spent the weekend with a newer congregation, Kalingapasi, that is looking to partner with a congregation here in Saint Paul. There are hardly enough words to describe the generosity, hospitality and joy of our welcome there. Every single member of our traveling group came back hoping that we can move forward with a partnership. Soon you'll hear a proposal that we consider becoming a partner, including more specifics of what a partnership would look like.

And we have to mention the singing: gorgeous a capella, four-part harmonies, with European and African tunes blended together into a new song. We often found ourselves just humming along with the harmonies, not always understanding the words, but experiencing the depth of our connection across an ocean and a continent.

Over and over again, people greeted us by saying "Bwana Yesu asifiwe," which means "Praise the Lord Jesus." It seemed like the perfect response because Jesus was certainly alive on this journey. Many of us can't wait to go back!

Giving the Gift of Christmas

by Pastor Javen Swanson

Christmas is about more than gifts. But giving and receiving presents is one of the ways we share love and experience generosity. For families that lack the means to exchange gifts at Christmas, it can be a difficult season.

For many years, Gloria Dei has partnered with two local organizations to provide gifts for children whose families would otherwise struggle to put presents under the tree. Starting around Thanksgiving until mid-December, we hang tags from the "Giving Tree," near the Gallery on the lower level. Each tag lists an item on

one child's gift list. Members and friends of Gloria Dei take tags from the tree, purchase gifts and return them to church. Shortly before Christmas, the organizations collect and distribute those gifts to families.

Gloria Dei members Kate Ostrem and Laura Schurhamer help coordinate this year's Giving Tree effort. "I think as a church, it's important to support people in our community who need our help," Laura says. "If we can make a family's life more joyous at the holidays, it's important for Gloria Dei to do that." Kate

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Worship Services with Holy Communion

Sunday Worship

December 8 & 22
8:15 & 10:45 a.m.

December 15, 8:15 a.m.

Wednesday Prayer with the Grinch and Other Saints

December 11 & 18
6:30-7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Worship

December 24

Family Holy Communion and
Time with Children

2:00 & 4:00 p.m.

Festival Holy Communion with

Choir and Brass

8:00 & 10:30 p.m.

Christmas Day Worship

December 25, 10:00 a.m.

Festival Holy Communion

First Sunday of Christmas

December 29

8:15 & 10:45 a.m.

Special Events

Women of Gloria Dei Advent Brunch

December 7, 10:00 a.m.

Advent Lessons & Carols

December 8, 5:00 p.m.

Reception follows service

Children's Christmas Program

December 15

Children's Prelude 10:15 a.m.

Program 10:45 a.m.

Cookie Reception
follows program

Christmas Carols Singalong

December 29

9:30 a.m.

Giving Tree from Page 4

echoes that sentiment. "The Giving Tree is the perfect way to demonstrate God's love to our friends in the community who struggle. Participating as a family has helped us teach our children how to be generous during the holidays instead of so focused on getting."

Youth Ministry Director Katie LeClair also volunteers with the Giving Tree. "Gloria Dei has extensive outreach in the local, national and international efforts in both justice and charity," she says. "It is important at the local level that we listen to our neighbors, see their pain, see their need, and respond as a whole body if we are able. It brings the mission of the church forward in a tangible visible way."

Most of the gifts we provide support children whose families receive case management services from Neighborhood House. A handful of the gifts also benefit the youth living at Rezek House, a transitional housing program of Lutheran Social Service that assists formerly homeless youth in finding stable, permanent housing.

"Members of Gloria Dei and close friends experience homelessness or fall on hard times in all 12 months of the year," Katie says, "but when it happens over Christmas, it can be devastating. I volunteer with the Giving Tree to bring some dignity to teens, kids and families so they can experience a little bit of joy in a hard time."

We hope you will be part of our Giving Tree this year, too.

Changes Coming to Gloria Dei's Guide

We will not publish a *Guide* in January. Watch for a new format with the February issue, when the *Guide* becomes a quarterly publication.

It will highlight Gloria Dei's activities coming up in the next three months, along with brief stories to showcase our ministries.

In addition, our website blog and emails will provide information. We will continue to mail the *Guide* and other information each month to members without internet access.

Financial Update

Capital Fund Information

Contributions YTD	\$ 357,873
Monthly mortgage payments	\$ 18,752
Capital Improvement Cost Year-to-Date	\$ 81,821
Balance in Capital Accounts October 31	\$ 386,129
Mortgage Balance October 31	\$ 2,636,139

Sanctuary Renewal/Organ Costs

Architect Fees YTD	\$ 71,244
Organ Costs YTD	\$ 0

Operating Information October 31, 2019

Total Offerings	\$ 101,565
Ahead(Behind)	\$ 9,102
Total Income	\$ 114,663
Total Expenses	\$ 111,171
Net for Month	\$ 3,492
Total Year-to-Date Offerings	\$ 996,968
Ahead(Behind)	\$ (443)
Total YTD Income	\$1,205,014
Total YTD Expenses	\$1,231,670
Net for the Current Year	\$ (26,257)



Lutheran Social Service of MN

Gloria Day members are fortunate to have a counselor onsite two days a week. Karen DeBaun, LICSW, offers counseling services, available to any of us. Typically, she is here Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Call Karen at (612)-879-5320 for more information or to schedule an appointment.



Our Mission

By God's grace, we are called to be a caring, healing and welcoming community who proclaim and celebrate the love of Jesus Christ, live as God's servants and seek justice for all people.

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
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St. Paul, MN 55116