

“Advent – Christmas ... may the spirit live in our hearts and souls”

ALL SAINTS LUTHERAN CHURCH “Oasis of Joy” USA

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Advent/Christmas ... 2017

Dear Friends ...

I do my share of reflecting this time of the year. Maybe some of you do, too.

I try to look inside my heart ... I try to be more attentive and in touch with the hearts and spirits of others ...

I try (not always successfully) to keep in touch with what this time of the year is supposed to stand for ...

I think back on all the “Christmas newsletters” I’ve written over my 43+ years here ...

and the same word keeps popping up ----- **JOURNEY.**

I realize how “predictable” I can be. You could probably make a list of the “top 10” words or phrases I use when I write and talk ... and most of you would undoubtedly put down the same ones.

LIFE IS A JOURNEY.

We work. We plan. We do our best to provide for ourselves, our family, all those who depend on us.

We have our goals and our dreams. For the most part ---- we try to stay true to the principals we believe in and stand for. Along the way ... we take some risks. We make decisions that may or may not turn out the way we want them to. Most of us have things happen to us ... totally unexpected ... and the very course of our journey is changed in a moment of time.

Do you ever look back ... and wonder how you got to where you are today???

It’s a mixed bag. We’ve had things happen ... that are just plain unfair. Maybe you wonder “why me?” ... or “what did I do to deserve this?” ----- it’s only human to feel this way when things aren’t going the way we’d like. On the other hand ----- most of us certainly have had moments when we’ve been touched by someone’s goodness & grace & generosity ... and we think: how did I get to be so blessed??

In the middle of moments and feelings like this ... are the so-called “ordinary days” when we grind it out, and give each day our very best shot.

From the very heart and soul of who I am ... I want to thank each of you ... for accepting me and supporting me ----- as your pastor and, hopefully, as your friend.

You have inspired me --- to see God’s spirit come alive, in life’s often-ordinary-and-unexpected moments.

You have helped me discover and re-discover ... over and over ... that generosity is a life-style, a way of living, a way of looking at life.

You have been my text-book and my teacher helping me see the church ---- not as a building or a job or just another place. The church is where we live ... it’s where we work ... it’s how we walk ...it’s wherever Jesus’ message takes shape in the way we treat others.

I remember a pot-luck supper the church had the week after I arrived at All Saints in July of 1974. Afterwards one of our older members comes up to me ... everyone called her “Mimi.” She is now one of the “saints” who has gone before. Like many at that time ... she was a bit frustrated. In the 12 years since the church was founded ... they had 5 pastors, and now there is this 25-year-old “kid,” barely out of school.

She looks at me: “Pastor ... please give us a chance.”

I look at her ... “Listen ... I’m fresh out of seminary, with no experience ... please GIVE ME A CHANCE.”

I’ll never forget those words ... “please give me chance.” She gave me a chance. All Saints gave me a chance..

Over these many years ... you've given me a "chance" ----- through good times and tough times ...
in the midst of my weaknesses and foibles and "catch phrases."

Think of all those who have given you a chance ... those to whom you have given a chance ...
and an incredible and gentle God ----- who sends us his son, and gives us a "chance" everyday:
to live and to make a difference in our "little corner of the kingdom." Have I said that before????

Love and Joy to all ...
"rev"

After the holiday has concluded ... we'll begin our NEW FISCAL YEAR. Your financial support for our humble
humble enterprise means so much. We have a good, loving, and open place here. We are able ... thanks
to your generosity and openness ... to touch a lot of lives. And, most of all ---- we are here to support you and
your family and your friends. Whether it's a funeral or wedding or baptism ... a visit to you or someone you
care about ... or just an open door and a cup of coffee. We want ALL SAINTS to be here forever. You may be
an every-Sunday kind-of member ... or are just here once-in-a-while ----- we need all of you to support and
care about our shared ministry. Offering envelopes for 2018 will be out soon ... or you may support us by
direct deposit or having your offering sent weekly or monthly ... what matters is just doing the best you can ...
and sharing this journey together. THANKS FOR ALL YOU DO. (Many of you have your giving statement
enclosed ... if you have any questions ... give Kathy Klang a call --- 708-945-0588)

CHRISTMAS AT ALL SAINTS

- *Two more "advent suppers" --- Thursday, December 14 and 21, 6:30 ... followed by worship at 7:30.
- *ARTISTS' FAIRE this Sunday, December 10 --- all morning. Also, the Stagg High School Choir will make its
annual visit to our church ... singing at the 8:30 service.
- *CARLO ... the amazing trumpet musician ... will be with us for both services on December 17.
- *THE SUNDAY SCHOOL has their annual CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE REHEARSAL
on Saturday, December 16 --- 9:00 – 10:00 am. FUN!@!!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, CHRISTMAS EVE

- **One service in the morning ----- 10:00 AM
- **Sunday School Christmas Eve service at 4:00 PM
- **Peggy and I are hosting an "open house" in Charter Hall from 8:00 – 10:00 PM
Come for some refreshments around our beautiful tree.

CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP ... one service at 10:00 PM ... we share the Lord's Supper after the service,
for those desiring to stay.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25, CHRISTMAS DAY ---- one service at 10:00 AM.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31 ... regular times for service, 8:30 and 11:00 (no Sunday School)

THE PRAYER CONNECTION

- *Tom Devlin is at Christ Hospital, recovering from a fall. *Linda Ruisz continues her journey with cancer.
- *Jack Mitchell, son of David and Megan, sister of Jenna --- would have been his 19th birthday December 3 ...
we miss him!! *Jim Dodge's sister Noreen died recently. *George Andrew's dad – George Sr. – also
died recently. *Pat Gow (Gary's mom) is now at a re-hab facility in Naperville ... she is off the ventilator!!
- *Joanne Gename's mom Alice is at Holy Family Villa. *Kate Walsh (LuAnn's daughter) recently had an
MRI. *Jim Gedmin's son has been in the hospital. *Susie Turnock is a grandma ---- her daughter Suzie and
husband Fino have a baby boy – Antonio. *Laimdota's brother Indulis is living with cancer ... while his wife
recovers from a stroke. *Marti Aanarud's mom – Matilda – should now be home from the hospital.
- *Tom and Judy Splayt both had CT scans this week. *Little Knox Kenny is still in the hospital.