



The InnerNet

December 2023

"So, Pastor, when can we start singing Christmas carols?"

Actually, no one has asked about this – but I imagine it's lingering in your minds. And, truth be told, my car radio and my office spotify are already tuned to "Holiday Classics." But, not in worship...at least not yet. As you know, the "Twelve Days of Christmas" are the twelve days FOLLOWING Christmas morning ending on Epiphany (when the Magi arrived). That's right! Christmas has its own season in the church year.

For now, we prepare for the "Advent"-ure that is coming.

As the days grow shorter and darkness comes faster, it is easy to get disoriented. But, being disoriented isn't always bad. As a matter of fact, the coming of God in the flesh of Jesus is disorienting. As Mary reminds us, "He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty" (Luke 1.52-53). And darkness isn't bad either. In fact, without darkness, we aren't. Remember, creation began in darkness. Seeds grow in the darkness of soil. Our bodies get their rest and renewal in the rhythm of darkness. In fact, according to the National Institute of Health "growth hormone is typically released in children primarily during sleep" (<https://factor.niehs.nih.gov/2022/11/papers/sleep-growth-hormone>). Maybe the challenge is that in darkness and disorientation, we realize that we are not in charge and don't always have the clarity of direction that we wish we did.

Enter music... During this time of Advent, pay attention to the music – the tunes, the rhythm and the words. Sometimes the rhythm is easy and the tune flows naturally. Other times it is unfamiliar. That's okay. Sometimes unfamiliarity causes us to slow down and see or listen in ways we otherwise may not. Especially in these days leading up to Christmas, it is easy to get caught up in the commercialism and easy "jingles" that surround us and miss the disorientation (and re-orientation) that Jesus' coming calls us to, just as it is easy to get so blinded by the bright lights that we miss the new creation that springs forth from darkness.

Here's the promise...The one who created "in the beginning" is continuing to create and carries you and all of us in the divine hands, promising to travel with us when the rhythms and tunes are familiar and when they aren't. This is the one who calls us into the adventure of Advent. And this is the one whose coming we await. Slow down. Pay attention.

Blessings to you on your advent journey,
+ Pr. Sara

Congregation Acknowledgements!!

December Anniversaries

12/08 Russell and Lillian Stephens (33)
12/13 Tim and Cindy Meadows (54)
12/21 Eddie and Pat Sipe (60)
12/30 David and Linda Frixen (40)



December Birthdays

12/02 Barbara Avard, Lisa Krause
12/03 Dawn Gibson
12/06 Gordon Hann
12/07 Ryan Huber
12/08 Maxine Christ
12/09 Millie McWilliams, Emily Zeis
12/11 Larry Wagstaff
12/13 Matthew VanSandt
12/15 Bob Fleishacker
12/16 Susan Phipps
12/20 Karen Kaufeld
12/21 Rebecca VanSandt
12/23 Kenneth Kilminster, Ray Kilminster, Justin Krause
12/26 Polly Farris
12/29 Cliff Ilderton
12/31 Joy Forster



Praying for Possibilities!

12-01-12/08 God and Maxine Christ
12/08-12/15 Janet Wagstaff and Jean Dunne
12/15-12/22 Indra Persaud and Pat Snodgrass
12/22-12/29 Frank DeLoache and Marty Jenkins
12/29-01/04 Anita Mitchell and Glenda Kilminster



Church Information!!

Your Offerings:

Contribute directly to the church through the on-line button on the website, using the QR code or by mail to

Living Saviour
6817 Carmel Road
Charlotte NC 28226

Thank you for your generosity.



Vanguard Account

The church has set up an account at Vanguard. If you wish to contribute mutual funds, ETFs or stocks that have an appreciated value, you can contribute these to Living Saviour's Vanguard account. By doing so, you can avoid capital gains taxes. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Avar.

2023 CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS and Areas of Responsibility

Steven Vick—President	Administrative/ Worship & Music
Janet Axtman—Vice President	Property
Gregg Mitchell—Secretary	Personnel & Admin
Barbara Avar	Financial Secretary & Treasurer
Debby Borrelli	Christian Education
Linda Frixen	Outreach
Rev. Linda Hatcher	Pastoral Care
Laura Michael	Health & Wholeness
Pat Sipe	Lay Care

The next Council Meeting will be on **Sunday, November 19, 2023** at 12:00 p.m. in the Conference Room.

LIVING SAVIOUR CHURCH STAFF

The Reverend Sara Ilderton —Pastor	pastorsara@livingsaviourlc.org
Don Huff , Minister of Worship and Music	dhuff@livingsaviourlc.org
Ruth Mayes , Administrative Assistant	ruth@livingsaviourlc.org
Nancy Mersereau , Organist and Music Assistant	nancyqqq@aol.com
Carla Gearheart , Childcare Provider	carla.gearheart@yahoo.com

Group Activities!!

Wednesday Morning Bible Study

- **We are going back to start at 10AM** instead of 9:30 for the next 4 weeks starting on Nov. 29 in the conference room.
- We are enjoying "AN UNLIKELY ADVENT" by Rachel Billups. You can get the book from Amazon - perhaps other book stores. It is new - copyright 2023 and it sounds very interesting.
- We are looking at the extraordinary people in the Christmas story
- in the eyes of HOPE, JOY, PEACE, AND LOVE.
- We will finish the book on Wednesday Dec. 20th.
- **No class on December 27 and January 3, 2024.**
- Join us on Wednesday mornings to learn & laugh & perhaps learn something new about the season of Advent. All are welcome.

Join us for fellowship, learning, & some laughing. Everyone is welcome. For more information contact Janet Mayer.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Prayer Shawl Ministry will be taking the month of December off. Our meeting will be on Tuesday, January 9th, at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room. We will continue having our 2024 meetings on the second Tuesday of the month at 10:00 a.m.



This ministry makes prayer shawls for church members and others who are in need of prayer and comfort.

If you knit or crochet and would like to participate in this ministry, please join us or contact Jeanne Davis at jeannedavis88@att.net with questions

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Advent Worship each Sunday at 10:30. Dec. 3, 10, 17 and 24

MIDWEEK Wednesday Advent Service–Dec. 6, 13. 20

11:15–Soup lunch served in fellowship hall

12 noon–Worship in sanctuary

December 24

10:30 Service–Fourth Sunday of Advent worship.

5:00–Christmas Eve Worship. Holy Communion and Candle lighting.

Please note: One Christmas Eve service only.

2023 CHRISTMAS CONCERT

**3:00 p.m. on Sunday,
December 10th.**

**HOSTS ARE NEEDED FOR THE
FELLOWSHIP/FOOD HOUR
FOLLOWING CONCERT**

**FINGER FOODS NEEDED FOR
THE FELLOWSHIP HOUR.**

**PLEASE CONSIDER BRINGING
SOMETHING.**

**SIGN UP SHEETS ARE ON THE WELCOME TABLE OR THE
HOSPITALITY TABLE OUTSIDE THE SANCTUARY. OR YOU CAN SPEAK TO
DON HUFF.**



Financial Results for the Fiscal Year Ending January 2024	Budget	Actual
General Fund 01	\$354,160	\$257,232
Contributions & Other Income		
Expenses	\$392,222	\$198,334
Net Income less Expenses		\$58,898
Facilities Fund 02-3241-442		\$33,895
Shabla Gift Fund 02-3271-379		\$66,564

Notes: The figures above reflect the General Fund results through three quarters of our fiscal year that will end January 31,2024. There will be substantial savings in the Pastor Salary & Related Expenses as the result of the vacancy during the first eight months of the year. Actual expenses for the interim and supply pastors during that same period was approximately \$10,000.

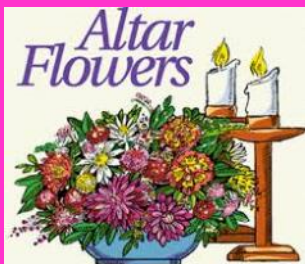
As previously reported, your Church Council is taking every opportunity to generate income while maintaining the safety of the church's funds and in accordance with ELCA guidelines and recommendations. Church expenses are carefully monitored and managed.

Your generosity and dedication to Living Saviour are so appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Avard, Treasurer/Financial Secretary

2024 ALTAR FLOWER DONATIONS



The 2024 Altar Flowers online chart is now available at:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10CoC4CACAC29A6F4C16-46302964-2024>

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Rev. Charlie Zimmerman and Debby Borrelli will lead discussions of the Richard Rohr book, Falling Upward.

Please acquire and read the chapters for the discussions!

Tentative Schedule:

Dec 3	Session 5	Chapters 7-9:	Home & Homesickness Amnesia & The Big Picture A Second Simplicity
Dec 10	Session 6	Chapters 10-12:	A Bright Sadness The Shadowlands New Problems & New Directions
Dec 17	Session 7	Chapter 13:	Falling Upwards Wrapping Up

Please join us at 9:15 am (room TBD 😊)

IN-KIND GIVING TO LIVING SAVIOUR

We have many wonderful congregation members who regularly donate goods and items for various events and ministries during the year in addition to their gifts of money.

We give thanks to all who donate! If you would like contribution credit for such non-cash donations you can complete a pink form (found in the Workroom), attach your receipt(s) and leave in Barbara Avard's mailbox in the Workroom.

The church records these donations and the amount appears in our financial reports as well as on individual giving statements. This gives a snapshot of support for the many collections and generous donations for events and ministries held during the year. This can include food donations for Smithfield, Loaves & Fishes, lunch supplies for Room in the Inn and various other items.

If you would like more information about this please see Barbara.

GATHERING@theTable

Gathering@theTable weekly at 6:15 p.m. on Thursdays in the Fellowship Hall. Come and join us! We will be taking the month of December off due to the holidays.

2023 BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

December 9, 2023 – 9:00-11:00am

Breakfast served 9:00-10:00

Activities from 9:30-11:00

For kids of all ages – come join us for pancakes, scrambled eggs and sausage.

Engage in lots of activities. Hear the Christmas Story, write birthday cards to Jesus, visit the Kid's Shopping Store, and music.

Visit with Santa, have pictures taken with Santa and photos-in-the-manger booth – with costumes.

Pre-Registration is required and available online on our website.

SHELTER MINISTRY UPDATE

Thanks to the outpouring of support, we will easily be able to provide shelter to our homeless neighbors for all eight Sundays in January and February! These are the coldest months of the winter season and our participation in Room In The Inn during those months will serve as a very needed hospice.

Here are a couple of areas that could use a few more volunteers. Please consider adding your name to serve in these positions:

- Laundry Team
- Monday clean up crew
- Overnight Host

The sign up/information sheets will remain out on display should you hear the call to serve!

As we get closer to our time to serve, a schedule will be sent out. Also we will have a "training" session for newcomers to this ministry in December. Many thanks to our generous congregation for the support of this meaningful ministry! Alice Jenkins

November 2023 Council Meeting Summary

Health and Wholeness reported that yoga classes and the 12-step program continue to meet at their scheduled times and that the hospitality shown by us on election day brought two new members to the yoga classes and one new member to the 12-step program. The theme for November is “caring for the carer.” Blood pressure checks will be done during the Craft Fair on 2 December. A seminar is being planned for a Saturday in April 2024 on various topics concerning Alzheimer’s. The fire safety task force met to work out fire drill details and we will have a practice fire drill before we have the real thing.

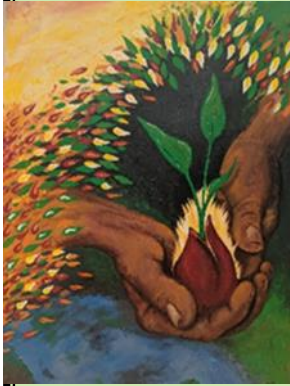
Pastor Sara has been talking with other Lutheran churches in the area about the Youth Gathering in New Orleans in July 2024. Pastor would like the council to begin the process of deciding our core values and a representative from the Synod will join council via Zoom during the December council meeting to discuss the process and offer guidance.

Pastor Sara, Barbara, Janet, and Steve met with Jamiey Graves about having him review and help us upgrade our technology.

Barbara gave council the monthly financial report and the general fund appears to be in good shape and we should end the year with a nearly balanced budget or one with a slight surplus or deficit.

Barbara also gave the Endowment report and the remaining funds for this year were distributed with Project Outpour receiving \$500, Living Saviour Preschool receiving \$800 (to be used for scholarship or tuition assistance), and Second Harvest Metrolina receiving \$385 (which will be matched by another donor at Foodbank).

Council will begin working on the annual report and the 2024-2025 budget to be ready for the January annual congregational meeting.



**Ministry of Health and Wholeness
December 2023
Giving the Gift of Presence**

"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" **1 Corinthians 3:16**

December Focus:

Nursing has defined Presence as a way of being and a way of relating; a way that promotes healing potential and wellbeing. This is no surprise to Christians who believe that every individual is the dwelling place of God's Spirit. As we allow our essential



nature to be truly and fully Present to other human beings, we are offering ourselves as a vehicle or conduit of God's Divine Love. This Divine Love that flows through human beings is thought to be the most powerful healing medicine available. Watch for a publication booklet in December that shares some thoughts regarding how to be Present with other in a time of desperate longing for connection, so that we live into giving to each other the gift of connecting to Divine Loving Presence this Holy Day season. Also take an opportunity to explore the variety of Yoga classes offered in the spaces of Living Saviour Lutheran Church. Yoga literally means to "yoke oneself to God" and was developed as an ancient practice to assist with experiencing the Presence of God within and among us.

ONGOING OFFERINGS: (Space made available by Living Saviour for Community Health and Wholeness Programming)

Monday 6:15 PM – Beginner/Intermediate Yoga
Class provided by Lori Walker of Yoga for You Studios

Tuesdays 9:30 AM- Beginner/Intermediate Yoga
Class provided by Lori Walker of Yoga for You Studios

Tuesdays 10:00 AM –STEPPS to Wellbeing: Start to Experience Peace, Potential and Serenity Peer Support

Develop a practice described by Jesus in the Beatitudes, modeled in his ministry, practiced by the early church, used by Native Americans, and most recently promoted by the 12 Steps of AA—a peer support practice that leads to a life abundant in the Fruit of the Spirit. A valuable resource for those dealing with depression, grief, anxiety, medical recovery or seeking a deeper spiritual connection. A brochure can be picked up from the tea cart. All are welcome.

Thursdays 9:30 AM- Beginner/Intermediate Yoga
Class provided by Lori Walker of Yoga for You Studios

Thursdays at 11:00 AM Chair Yoga-
Class provided by Debbie Mangeney of Feel Good Yoga Girl

Thursdays 6:15 PM- Beginner/Intermediate Yoga
Class provided by Lori Walker of Yoga for You Studios

Saturdays at 9:30 AM Aerobic Exercise –
Class provided by Lyn Addy, Certified Group Fitness Instructor and Health Coach. Another inspiring exercise group of all ages with an excellent opportunity to get that heart rate up, build some muscle strength and receive supportive meaningful coaching from a talented instructor.

Saturdays 10:00 AM- Beginner/Intermediate Yoga
Class provided by Lori Walker of Yoga for You Studios

Giving Information and Practices

Dear Family and Friends of Living Saviour, thank you so much for your generous and dedicated gifts to support our church's mission and ministries. We are excited to look to the future with God's help and the guidance and support of Pastor Sara. We are resuming some of our practices that were put "on hold" for various reasons during the pandemic.

To that end, please note that we are now again passing the collection plate during Worship. Many of you give through the electronic system of Simply Giving or your own bank. In the past (prior to the pandemic) we began using a giving card that you could choose to place in the collection plate as it was passed as an outward symbol of your online gift.

Well, we have resurrected those cards and they are in the THANKFUL box just inside the entrance to the Sanctuary. On the reverse of the card is information about electronic giving and a QR code that can also be used. Please feel free to take a card as you enter to put in the collection plate. We will recycle these cards each week.

Also in this box are envelopes that can be used for miscellaneous or special gifts by check or cash. The label can be completed with information to insure giving credit to the correct account. Members and Visitors are welcome to use these as needed. If you have any questions or need assistance with your giving, please feel free to contact me.

Blessings to you!
Barbara Avard, Treasurer/Financial Secretary.



GATHERING@theTable

Gathering@theTable weekly at 6:15 p.m. on Thursdays in the Fellowship Hall. Come and join us! We will be taking the month of December off due to the holidays.

DECEMBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 9:00 a.m. Craft Fair 9:30 a.m. Exercise Opportunities 10:00 a.m. Yoga
3 10:30 a.m. Traditional Worship Live Streamed	4 4:00 p.m. Troop 165 Court of Honor 6:15 p.m. Yoga	5 6:00 a.m. First Tuesday coffee 9:30 a.m. Yoga 10:00 a.m. STEPP Group 10:00 a.m. Quilt Ministry	6 10:00 a.m. Bible Study 11:15 a.m. Advent Soup 12:00 p.m. Advent Worship 6:00 p.m. Alleluia Ringers bell choir practice 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir	7 9:30 a.m. Yoga 11:00 a.m. Chair Yoga 6:15 p.m. Yoga	8	9 9:00 a.m. Breakfast With Santa 9:30 a.m. Exercise Opportunities 10:00 a.m. Yoga
10 10:30 a.m. Traditional Worship Live Streamed 3:00 p.m. Christmas Concert	11 6:15 p.m. Yoga	12 9:30 a.m. Yoga 10:00 a.m. STEPP Group	13 10:00 a.m. Bible Study 11:15 a.m. Advent Soup 12:00 p.m. Advent Worship 6:00 p.m. Ringers bell choir practice 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir	14 9:30 a.m. Yoga 11:00 a.m. Chair Yoga 6:15 p.m. Yoga	15 10:00 a.m. Preschool Christmas Program	16 9:30 a.m. Exercise Opportunities 10:00 a.m. Yoga
17 10:30 a.m. Traditional Worship Live Monthly Council meeting	18 6:15 p.m. Yoga	19 9:30 a.m. Yoga 10:00 a.m. STEPP Group	20 10:00 a.m. Bible Study 11:15 a.m. Advent Soup 12:00 p.m. Advent Worship 6:00 p.m. Alleluia Ringers bell choir practice 7:00 p.m. Chancel	21 9:30 a.m. Yoga 11:00 a.m. Chair Yoga 1:15 p.m. LSLC Staff Meeting 6:15 p.m. Yoga	22	23 9:30 a.m. Exercise Opportunities 10:00 a.m. Yoga
24 Advent 4 10:30 a.m. Traditional Worship Live Streamed Christmas Eve 5:00 p.m.	25 Christmas Day Church Office Closed	26 9:30 a.m. Yoga 10:00 a.m. STEPP Group	27 6:00 p.m. Alleluia Ringers bell choir practice 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir	28 9:30 a.m. Yoga 11:00 a.m. Chair Yoga 6:15 p.m. Yoga	29	30 9:30 a.m. Exercise Opportunities 10:00 a.m. Yoga
31 New Years Eve 10:30 a.m. Traditional Worship Live Streamed			12			