

DECEMBER 2019 PARISH POST

St. Paul's & Buffalo Lutheran Churches

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CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM PASTOR THEA

“Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.” (Luke 2:4/NRSV).

I approach this annual report a bit differently this year—it is a combination report and Christmas message. Popular culture equates Christmas and home. The popular song, “I’ll Be Home For Christmas,” resonates in the hearts of most. There is a longing in the human heart to be where we belong, to know that there’s a place where, in the words of Robert Frost, “they have to take you in.” That place has changed for me and my family through the years. I have fond memories of candlelight Christmas Eve services in this parish, and then going to my home in Minnesota to gather with my family for a festive meal around the family table, the story-telling, and the much-anticipated gift-giving. So, I begin this report at the end—my announcement to retire at the end of this year. Also, I have committed myself to continue to serve the parish until a new candidate is found—so you may see me in the new year.

We have shared over two years of ministry together which I hold dear to my heart. I am grateful for the many individuals who have committed themselves to performing the numerous tasks of keeping the church active, and the planning and fulfilling of the many events throughout the year. I started half-time in June which has changed the face of pastoral leadership. Two of the main concerns were having the pulpit filled on Sunday mornings and confirmation for the parish youth. These have been accomplished.

The leadership team is a hardworking group who will have the Ministry Site Profile finished soon—this allows the synod to pursue candidates for pastor. The Parish Agreement will be the next big task of the leadership. This document functions as the parish constitution. When it is completed, each congregation will vote on its’ contents. Along with stating how the parish will function formally, the Parish Agreement will also hold the name of the parish. Each congregation will keep its congregational name and identity.

Christmas pronounces our identity as God’s children and triggers our homing instinct. Home is at the center of the Christmas story. According to the Gospel of Luke, all went to their hometowns to be registered. When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem they searched for lodging in an overbooked town. The birth of Jesus is the story of God’s willingness to make a home in human life and in the world. Phillip Brooks expresses this spiritual longing for home in his hymn, “O Little Town of Bethlehem”:

(Pastor Thea’s Christmas message continues on Page 2)

O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray.
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
Oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

Emmanuel means simply, "God with us." At Christmas God came down the stairway of the stars with a baby in His arms. God brought Christmas to us. At this time of year we are especially conscious of those without homes or any sense of belonging in their lives. Our true home is not finally in this world, but in God. To go home again is not a journey of miles but a journey we take in our hearts. Christmas is love tugging the world back to God through the powerful clasp of a tiny hand reaching out from a bed of straw. God has come in Jesus to make His home in our hearts.

The peace of Christ and the blessing of Christmas be with you!

Thea Monson, Interim Pastor

FINANCIAL NEWS TO NOTE!

BUFFALO LUTHERAN CHURCH

Buffalo Lutheran Church Balance
November 30,2019 \$6249.00

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Watch for the St. Paul's Report in
the January Parish Post.

Cares and Concerns and Activities

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES WILL BE HELD ON SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER AT 9:00 AM AT BUFFALO LUTHERAN CHURCH (starting at St. Paul's on January 5) AND AT 11:00 AM AT OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH, PAGE. TO REACH PASTOR THEA MONSON PLEASE CALL 701-668-2295, 218-820-7006 (cell), OR BY EMAIL AT pastorthea2.0@gmail.com

REMEMBER THE CHURCH OFFICE has been moved to the Sacristy at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. The office will hopefully be open every Friday from 11 AM-2 PM. If you need something at a different time please call Bette at home at 701-749-2508.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES are being held every Sunday after regular worship services at the church where the service is at. All young people through the sixth grade are welcome. Thanks to Kathy Walburn for leading our group! [No Sunday School Classes on December 22 or December 29]

HELP WANTED! Are you interested in cleaning at St. Paul's Lutheran Church? With services every other month cleaning would need to be taken care of following the worship schedule. Please consider helping, talk to a Council member if this is an opportunity for you! (Also, there is a sign-up list if you are interested)

PARISH NURSE NOTES-Information from November

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We haven't gotten any Parish Nurse December news for December. The Community of Care sponsored an Estate Planning Program in November if you are an Adult Child of An Aging Parent and concerned about helping your parents plan for the future. Are you an older adult concerned about estate planning? Susan Johnson-Drenth, the only Certified Elder Attorney in ND can provide education on Power of Attorney, Healthcare Directives, Medicaid & Probate Triggers. Contact www.communityofcarend.com or call 701-347-0032 for direction about talking with Ms. Drenth.

SCOTT JAGER CANCER BENEFIT was held December 2. If you were unable to attend this event you can still donate! Go to www.LendAHandUp.org. Donate by cash/check (making checks payable to Scott Jager Cancer Benefit) to BankNorth, 405 Main St, Buffalo, ND 58011. For more information contact Carolyn Dostert at 701-371-4578.

Food Drive & Angel Tree: Two opportunities to make Christmas merrier for people in our area in need! There have been inserts in the bulletins with explanations and ideas and we thank Colleen Clancy for all the work she has put into this project!

Tri-Parish Council will meet at 7 PM at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Page on December 8. (Please confirm this time!)

St. Paul's Council meets December 18 at 7 PM.

UPCOMING—

St. Paul's Lutheran Church Annual Meeting will be held following services January 12. Please have any reports for the Annual Report into the office by January 7 if possible!





*St. Paul's & Buffalo Lutheran Churches
& Our Savior Lutheran Church, Page
Christmas Service Schedule*

Christmas Eve, December 24

Service at Buffalo Lutheran Church at 3:00 PM

Service at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Page at 5:00 PM

Service at St. Paul's Lutheran Church at 7:00 PM

No Christmas Day worship

