

JANUARY 2019 PARISH POST
St. Paul's & Buffalo Lutheran Churches

Comments from Pastor Thea (from January 2018 . . .)

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“And Jesus matured, growing up in both body and spirit...” (Luke 2:52).

In this time of reflecting, I have been thinking about my youngest grandson, Adrian, who is now 5 years old, and who has, for some time, been shedding his shy, meek and sunny personality in favor of a bolder, more fearless, daring disposition. His older brother, Olaf, at an early age discovered the secret to extricating himself from his crib. It was later determined that his older sister had served as his personal coach. Adrian topped that at 2 years of age by hurling himself out the second story window of the house, landing with a thud on the hard landscape blocks below. His panicked parents, emergency medical providers, and anxious grandparents were all relieved that he survived the 12-foot fall with only a small scrape and a bruise.

As I have reflected on these incidents from years past, I am reminded of a story I heard some time ago of a small child who decided to act out the Christmas story. He created the crèche scene using stuffed animals and dolls to represent those gathered around the manger. As he completed his casting, he selected the family cat to play the role of the Baby Jesus. But when he tried to place the tabby cat in the doll cradle, it promptly leapt from the bed and scurried away to a hiding place. The little child ran after it, shouting, “Jesus, you get back in your cradle!”

Christmas can be one of the most beautiful times of the year. It’s the fascinating story of God’s Son being placed at the doorsteps of the world—a romantic story of a young couple surrounded by shepherds and angels and a great light from heaven. It’s the story about God coming right into our midst.

It’s not surprising that we feel a little let down in the days after Christmas. Already stores have replaced Christmas decorations with Valentine’s Day trinkets and cards. Someone said, “Nothing is as over as Christmas when it’s over.” We packed so much into the four weeks of Advent. We may appreciate the quiet relief that follows Christmas, yet there is an understandable grief that comes when the proud Christmas tree wilts and sheds its needles (or gets packed back into its box), the joyful music ends, family members bundle up to return to homes and jobs, and the colorful decorations are stowed away until next year. We return once again to “normal,” the “real world.”

If only Jesus would stay in His cradle! If only He’d remain the cute, tiny, baby that we can cuddle and woo.

Pastor Thea’s letter concludes on Page 2 - - -

We'd prefer that Jesus remain the Babe of Bethlehem. But Christmas was just the beginning of God's plan.

In the days following Christ's birth the Holy Family was forced to flee for their lives, eventually to return to Nazareth where the grown-up Jesus would announce His mission. Not all appreciated the adult Jesus. He was met with fierce animosity. From the moment of His baptism in the Jordan Jesus would proclaim the truth, befriend outcasts and sinners, and call us to be His ambassadors, reflecting the light of His love to all the world. Christmas would lead to Epiphany when the news of God's marvelous love is made public.

Christmas may be over, but living for Jesus may be just beginning for some of us. Someone imagined Jesus to say, "If you look for me at Christmas you won't need a special star—I'm no longer just in Bethlehem, I'm right there where you are." The message of Christmas reaches beyond Bethlehem, urging us to regard everyone we meet as one for whom God sent His Son into the world.

Jesus is no longer in the cradle; He's out in the world in the hearts and lives of all who seek to live their lives for Him.

Thank you for brightening my days and adding such joy to Christmas this year by your cards, gifts and special greetings. And thank you for the programs and concerts, all pointing to the God of love in whose arms a Child was carried from heaven to earth and placed at the doorstep of the world.

The light of Christ illumine your hearts and homes throughout the new year!

Thea Monson, Interim Pastor

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FINANCIAL NEWS TO NOTE!

BUFFALO LUTHERAN CHURCH

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Be watching for financial statements next month!

January Acolyte Schedule

January 13	Chloe Wetch	January 27	Kiana Lerud
January 20	Riley Besette	February 3	Chloe Wetch

Please try to acolyte as scheduled and feel free to trade with someone if necessary.

Dear Family and Friends,

University of California researcher Sonja Lyubomirsky, states, "40 percent of our capacity for happiness is within our power to change." If this is true and it is, there's hope for us all.

1. Unhappy people believe that life is hard. Happy people know life can be hard and tend to bounce through hard times with an attitude of curiosity versus victimhood. They take responsibility for how they got themselves into a mess, and focus on getting themselves out of it as soon as possible. Perseverance towards problem-solving versus complaining over circumstances is a strength of a happy person. **Unhappy** people see themselves as victims of life and stay stuck in the "look what happened to me" attitude versus finding a way through and out the other side.

2. Unhappy people believe most people can't be trusted. Healthy discernment is important, but most happy people are trusting of their fellow man. They believe in the good in people, versus assuming everyone is out to get them. Generally open and friendly towards people they meet, happy people foster a sense of community around themselves and meet new people with an open heart. **Unhappy** people are distrustful of most people they meet and assume that strangers can't be trusted. This behavior starts to close doors on any connection outside of an inner-circle and minimizes chances of meeting new friends.

3. Unhappy people concentrate on what's wrong in this world versus what's right. There's plenty wrong with this world, yet **unhappy** people turn a blind eye to what's actually right in this world and instead focus on what's wrong. They'll be the ones complaining and responding to any positive attributes of our world with "yeah but". **Happy** people are aware of global issues, but balance their concern with also seeing what's right.

4. Unhappy people compare themselves to others and harbor jealousy. **Unhappy** people believe someone else's good fortune steals from their own. They believe there's not enough goodness to go around and constantly compare yours against theirs. This leads to jealousy and resentment. **Happy** people know that your good luck and circumstance are merely signs of what they too can aspire to achieve. **Happy** people believe in unlimited possibilities and don't get bogged down by thinking one person's good fortune limits their possible outcome in life.

5. Unhappy people strive to control their lives. There's a difference between control and striving to achieve our goals. **Happy** people take steps daily to achieve their goals, but realize in the end, there's very little control over what life throws their way. **Unhappy** people tend to micromanage in effort to control all outcomes and fall apart in dramatic display when life throws a wrench in their plan. The key here is to be goal-oriented and focused, but allow room for letting the unexpected happen. Going with the flow is what happy people have as plan B.

6. Unhappy people consider their future with worry and fear. **Unhappy** people fill their thoughts with what could go wrong versus what might go right and fill their head with constant worry and fear. **Happy** people experience fear and worry, but make an important distinction between feeling it and living it.

7. Unhappy people fill their conversations with gossip and complaints. **Unhappy** people like to live in the past. What's happened to them and life's hardships are their conversation of choice. When they run out of things to say, they'll turn to other people's lives and gossip. **Happy** people live in the now and dream about the future. You can feel their positive vibe from across the room. They're excited about something they're working on, grateful for what they have and dreaming about the possibilities of life.

Obviously none of us are perfect. We're all going to swim in negative waters once in a while, but what matters is how long we stay there and how quickly we work to get ourselves out. Practicing positive habits daily is what sets happy people apart from unhappy people, not doing everything perfectly. Walk, fall down, get back up again, and repeat. It's in the getting back up again where all the difference resides.

I wish you all a **Happy** New Year. Peace in Him, Gwen Fraase RN Parish Nurse CHM

JANUARY SUNDAY WORSHIP WILL BE HELD AT 9:00 AM AT BUFFALO LUTHERAN CHURCH* 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 pastorthea@gmail.com

***St. Paul's Lutheran Church** will hold their Annual Meeting Sunday, January 20 and the Worship Service will be held at St. Paul's to accommodate the meeting. Everyone is invited to coffee after worship and St. Paul's Annual Meeting will follow.

St. Paul's Annual Report: Please have anything you'd like to see in St. Paul's Annual Report into the office no later than January 16 (earlier if you can!).

Coffee and compliments: Please consider joining us for a time to share coffee and treats after every worship service. We forget to remind and thank people for sponsoring this time of fellowship. May we "get together".

A Note from Karen Tabor: Buffalo WELCA will accept free will offerings for our coffee hour following services beginning in 2019. This will go towards the many causes we support. [Our Community Health Ministry account (Parish Nurse) has a \$118 balance at this time, & \$300 was due before year's end. Checks can be made out to BLC (Parish Nurse or CHM in the memo line).] Thanks for your continued support.

Information from the Buffalo Lutheran Church Annual Meeting: Our 2019 Officers are Bruce Pueppke, President, Jeff Beilke, Vice-President, and Kerry Ronning, Secretary. We do need one more Council member and volunteers are welcome, talk to Bruce about it. Connie Boyd and David Larson are Call Committee members and Dalen Grieger and David Larson will work on the Parish Profile.

Adele Smith has retired from her WELCA Co-President position. We thank her for her many years of dedicated service! Shirley Anderson is serving as a Co-President and volunteers are welcome to serve as Co-President.

† **May we remember in prayers of sympathy** the family and friends of Mindy Erickson. Mindy passed away on December 8 and her Memorial Service was held at the Nazarene Church, Valley City. May she rest in peace!

Please keep in mind that we reserve the privilege to edit any information that is submitted for publication to the church office. Thank you!

