

# THE LYNNEWOOD LINES

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR LYNNEWOOD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## Pastor's Letter

*"Just then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid! For behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people" (Luke 2: 9-10).*

Words for frightened shepherds spoken thousands of years ago. Words that could just as easily be meant for us right now....2020 has been a year full of fears and often short on joy and good news. And yet, the words of the angels are timeless and true. God has been born to us! There is a light to guide us through any darkness, a strength to comfort our need, and a hope to carry us through difficulty. God's love born to us in Jesus is always good news and always cause for joy!

Christmas amidst pandemic probably doesn't appear on any of our "wish lists." This year will not bring neighborhood parties, Christmas caroling, or endless hours at the mall. This year may not even bring our families together for meals, presents and fun. Our 2020 Christmas may not be "perfect" by Martha Stewart's standards or ours and yet, isn't this the "perfect" opportunity to remember what Christmas really means?

Christmas means love and kindness for those most in need. It means peace that transcends circumstance. It means God is with us and our fears cannot define us. Our "less than perfect" Christmas celebrations cannot stop the perfect love of God from reaching us. What incredibly good news!

This Advent Season, let's prepare our hearts for the arrival of God's perfect love. Let's give more generously and pray more fervently. Let's allow God's creative Spirit to inspire new traditions and safe ways to connect with those we love.

The angels are still singing and they still have the power to lead us toward God's surprising joy!

Pastor Jenn

## IN THIS ISSUE

PRAYERS &

ANNOUNCEMENTS: p. 2

ADVENT SERMON SERIES: p. 3

STEPHEN MINISTRY: p. 4

BIBLE STUDIES & SMALL

GROUP MINISTRIES: p.5

SEASONED CITIZENS: p.6

MUSIC NOTES: p. 7

OUTREACH: p. 8

CHILDREN & YOUTH: p.9

FINANCE UPDATE: p.10



As a reconciling congregation that **dares to question, love, and serve**, we offer wide welcome to all people regardless of age, sex, racial or ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, family status, physical or mental ability, or economic or immigration status.

# Prayers and Announcements

## *In Need of Prayer*

### Prayers for Our Lynnewood Community

- For the wonderful music we continue to enjoy from our Lynnewood musicians each Sunday despite sheltering in place!
- For the tech team as they work hard to bring worship into our homes each Sunday morning.
- For those who joined us and donated to our Virtual 5K Event last weekend. We exceeded our fundraising goal!
- For Jan, who is still recovering from surgery.
- For Anne, whose health is not doing well.
- For Carol, who is continuing chemotherapy.

### Prayers for Our World and Nation

- For our nation, state, and county as we face a surge of COVID-19 cases.
- For those who will be separated from loved ones this Christmas.

## Advent Special Events

### **Sunday, December 6 - Drive through Communion following worship 10:45-11:45**

Join Pastor Jenn and our Stephen Ministers for a drive through Holy Communion and Advent Blessing. Each individual and family can stay in their car, receive individually wrapped communion elements and a blessing to send you into the week ahead.

### **Saturday, December 12 - Journey to the Manger: Pilgrimage Experience - 1-4 PM**

Come to the church anytime between 1-4 PM to walk a lighted outdoor path commemorating various parts of the Christmas story. Along the way you'll find stations honoring those important to Christ's birth with questions about how you can welcome Christ and his way of Hope into your life. The journey will culminate at the manger, the center of our Hope. This is a great experience for all ages! Don't forget your masks!

### **Sunday, December 13 - Youth Christmas Party -1PM**

This will be a safe, outdoor physically-distanced allowing our youth to celebrate the holiday with one another!

### **Monday, December 21 - Blue Christmas Ritual - 4 PM**

We will gather on the longest night of the year to acknowledge the losses of 2020, honor those who have supported and encouraged us along the way, and celebrate the light that no darkness can overcome. This is an Outdoor event in our main parking lot, lasting approximately 20 minutes. Please remember to maintain 6 feet of distance between individuals and/or households and wear a mask! Although we cannot provide chairs for everyone who may attend, there will be a limited number of chairs for our elders and others who may find standing too challenging.

### **Wednesday, December 23 - It's a Wonderful Life Watch Party - 1 pm; Movie rolls at 1:30**

Join our hosts, Emmie and Peter, for an afternoon of fellowship and fun. Put on your Christmas sweaters and hats, grab your eggnog and cocoa, and cue up It's a Wonderful Life on Netflix or On Demand! Or if you have an Amazon account and want to watch the movie on your laptop, send Emmie an email with the subject Watch Party, and on 12/23 she will send you a link to the movie Amazon Watch Party. We'll zoom in for some cheer, watch the movie on our own TVs or laptops, and then share some conversation to follow.

## Advent Sermon Series

# Bringing Christmas Home

Worship Begins  
at 9:30 a.m.



Lynnewood.org

The idea of "being home for Christmas" probably doesn't conjure quite as much comfort and joy this year. Some of us may be refraining from parties, family visits and travel plans. Long-standing traditions may be put aside for safety and we may be wondering if we should "keep Christmas" at all. In this season of online worship, at-home wreath lighting and physically-distanced caroling, it is more important than ever to invite Jesus home for the holidays. This Advent season, we will journey into the four gospel homes and discover what Christmas means from each writer's perspective. Each week we'll ask two important questions, "Where does this Gospel writer think the good news begins?" and "How can I invite that good news into my home and my life today?" This Christmas is like none we've known, which is why the Good News of God with us is more important than ever. Let's bring the good news of Christ's hope, peace, joy and love into our homes, our hearts and our world.

### **ADVENT 1 - November 29**

Christmas at Mark's House: Surprised by Hope (Mark 1: 1-11)

### **ADVENT 2 - December 6**

Christmas at Matthew's House: Peace that Passes Understanding (Matthew 1: 1-6, 16-23)  
Drive Through Holy Communion 10:45-11:45 in back parking lot

### **ADVENT 3 - December 13**

Christmas at Luke's House: Unimaginable Joy (Luke 1: 5-14 and Luke 1: 26-38)

### **ADVENT 4 - December 20**

Christmas at John's House: Love Lives Here (John 1: 1-5, 14)

### **CHRISTMAS EVE - December 24**

Live-Streaming at 5 PM with Zoom Fellowship  
Join us for a service of song, scripture, light and hope for all ages.

# Stephen Ministry



When an event shakes up your world, it can be very difficult to manage physically, emotionally, and spiritually. As we navigate these unknown waters, it is important that you know you have a caring church family supporting you. You also have nine Stephen Ministers who are very willing to help you with the fear, isolation, uncertainty, and grief of temporarily losing life as we know it.

If you would like a phone call from a Stephen Minister, who can just listen, offer a prayer, share a scripture and generally keep in touch with you during this virus challenge, please email Linda. She will have a Stephen Minister reach out to you.

It is also a time for all of us to reach out to loved ones, close friends, church family and acquaintances to let them know they are not alone. "I am thinking of you".

1 Thessalonians 5:11 "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up..."

In love and faith,  
Your Stephen Ministers

## "I'M NOT QUALIFIED TO BE A STEPHEN MINISTER"

Have you ever been asked to be a Stephen Minister? Has someone suggested that you would make a good Stephen Minister? Did you answer with the above statement? Or did you just say that to yourself? What qualifications are necessary to be a Stephen Minister? You need to be a caring person who is willing to learn, grow, serve and have faith in God. You must be able to maintain confidentiality. You would need to make a commitment to training and supervision.

The training for this ministry is thorough and practical. It includes listening, dealing with feelings, assertiveness, confidentiality, maintaining boundaries, and how to begin and end caring relationships. You learn how to care for people who are grieving, dying, aging, divorcing, feeling isolated, lost a job, angry with God or experiencing other life's challenges. The goal of training is to prepare you for whatever you might encounter as you spend time with a care receiver.

Through reading, lectures, sharing questions and answers and skill practices, you will learn what you need to know to be able to "walk" with your care receiver until they feel God's healing. You are the "care giver" and God is the "cure-giver". You are not a counselor and not expected to solve problems. You are asked to walk beside another person as they work through their challenges. A Stephen Minister brings an open and non-judgmental heart, creates a safe and confidential environment, listens with compassion and remains with you as long as needed.

Think about it. Being able to serve one-on-one and make a difference in someone's life during a difficult time. What better way to serve God! It will change your life. Our current Stephen Ministers are Donna G., Susan G., Debbie R., Lou R., Lorna K., Steve K. and Linda V. If you are interested or just curious, please feel free to contact any one of us and we will be happy to share with you what this has meant to us in our faith journey.

# Bible Studies & Small Group Ministries

## NOURISH AT NOON

Join Pastor Jenn at noon on **Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>** for a time of sharing and prayer. Come and nourish at noon through Zoom.

Meeting ID: 842 1052 9685

Participant ID: Just press #

Password: 4444

Mobile: Call (669) 900-6833. Enter the meeting ID and then the password when prompted.

To MUTE or UNMUTE, please press \*6

We will meet again on December 28<sup>th</sup>. Details are forthcoming, so please keep an eye on the weekly email!

## TUESDAY ZOOM MEN'S RELIGIOUS STUDY

Join for a time of fellowship and study on Tuesday nights at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

Meeting ID: 920 7883 8310

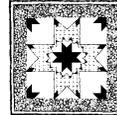
Passcode: 4444

## Wednesday Chancel Choir Get Together (Zoom)

Are you in the choir and missing getting to see everyone during rehearsal? Join us for our Zoom get-together during our usual rehearsal time! Zoom meeting opens at 7:15 p.m.

Meeting ID: 878 6882 9810

Passcode: 4444



## PRAYERS & SQUARES

Please remember whenever we have a quilt, it is not finished until you participate by tying a knot or laying your hands on a knot and saying a prayer. If you would like to help with this ministry, please contact the church office at [office@lynnewood.org](mailto:office@lynnewood.org) or by calling 925-846-0221.

## MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

Join Raeanne on Mondays at 7 pm for a time of faith, sharing and prayer. We are currently discussing the book of Revelation using *The Non-Prophet's Guide to the Book of Revelation* by Todd Hampson —We discuss 1 chapter per week.

Zoom Meeting ID: 822 241 9110

Password: 4444

Mobile: Call (669)900-6833. Enter the meeting ID and then the password when prompted.

## KNITTING GROUP

The knitting group is on hiatus at the moment as they await more volunteers. If you know how to knit and would like to join this group, please contact Yvonne.

## DREAM GROUP

This group, led by Lisa R., meets the third Thursday of the month at 11:00 a.m. During the shelter-in-place order, this group will be meeting by Zoom.

## Seasoned Citizens

### Seasoned Citizens

Once again, our Seasoned Citizens were able to meet via Zoom in November. We had a lively discussion about our plans to celebrate Thanksgiving. Because of these uncertain times, we all felt it was important to be patriotic and always wear a mask because we care.

Many plans were still up in the air. We want to be careful not to gather with those who are not part of our "bubble." Some are dressing warmly and eating outside at separate tables with the hope that it does not rain. One tradition is to use that day to put up the Christmas tree. Some of us are cooking a chicken and pretending it's a turkey. Others want to attend the chicken dinner because they like chicken better than turkey!

Our lively discussion was enjoyed by eighteen (18) participants. Our next non-lunch Zoom gathering will be Tuesday, December 15, 2020.



## Music Notes



Advent and Christmas are probably my favorite seasons in the liturgical calendar, especially with all the seasonal music that fills this time of year. 2020 will not be an exception when it comes to Advent and Christmas music. Coronavirus has not put a damper on our musical celebrations here at Lynnewood, even if our schedules have been rearranged due to unforeseen circumstances.

Jason shared a trombone ensemble for the first Sunday in Advent. What a special treat to hear his arrangement and performance of Eric Whitacre's *Lux Aurumque!*

It has been our tradition for some time to have a Christmas orchestra on the Sunday before Christmas. We are keeping somewhat to that tradition this year, thanks to Mohab and Jason who are working together to organize a virtual ensemble of musicians. We will hear their Christmas medley on December 20.

Many of you were blessed with the Lynnewood Virtual Choir singing Mark Miller's *Roll Down, Justice!* during our November 15 service. Our virtual choir is currently preparing a Christmas piece which we will share with you during the Christmas Eve service.

We will also be graced with harp and violin music, and several vocal numbers this Advent and Christmas. My one regret is that we won't be able to do our usual Christmas caroling to shut-ins due to the pandemic. Nevertheless, I hope that each of us will make an effort to reach out to someone who may be homebound and share some Christmas love and cheer with them!

This Christmas, may you experience God's love in a new and profound way, and may His peace and joy remain with you in the days ahead!

Joyfully,

Amelia

[music@lynnewood.org](mailto:music@lynnewood.org)

# Lynnewood Outreach

## How Can We Help Open Heart Kitchen?

Due to the shelter-in-place mandate, Open Heart Kitchen is not operating out of Lynnewood on Sundays. We can still help them though as they work to make sure people are fed despite the current pandemic. If you would like to help, please send in a donation check to Lynnewood and note "Open Heart Kitchen" in the memo line. Thank you.

### Bundles of Joy

Bundles of Joy is an on-going joint project with Axis Community Health and several other churches in the Tri-Valley. It is only made possible by the donations we receive each month. We provide 14 bags per month to Axis to be given out to low-income pregnant women. Please help us to continue to reach out to families in need and show them what a caring community we are. Donations from the list below can be given to the church office.

Items Needed for the Bundles of Joy Project:

- Diapers (Newborn – Size 1)
- Pacifiers
- Cloth Toys or Stuffed Animals
- Bibs (We usually include 2.)
- Wipes
- Blankets
- Rattles
- Hats (We usually include 2.)
- Baby Wash, Lotion, Powder or Ointment (We include 1 item per bag.)
- Newborn Outfits – Size 0-6 months (We usually include 1 per bag.)
- Pajamas, Size 0-6 months (We usually include 1 per bag.)
- Onesies, Size 0-6 months (We usually include 1-2 per bag.)
- Baby Booties or Socks (We usually include 2-3 pairs.)
- Cash or Gift Cards (Target, etc.)

### THE ANNUAL GIVING TREE IS COMING TO LYNNEWOOD...but virtually!!!

This year, we will once again have the opportunity to bring holiday blessings to approximately 80 children & their families from Marylin Avenue Elementary in Livermore, and from the Pleasanton Unified School District. Many of the children are in desperate need of clothes, sweaters, jackets, etc., thought it is also wonderful if they have a toy or two to open on Christmas. As you can imagine, the need this year is especially great!

However, given the ongoing pandemic, the schools feel it would be best to offer "no contact" giving this year. Therefore, we will have a "Giving Tree" campaign for donations of gift cards from Target and Walmart. These can be purchased by you, or you may make a monetary donation to the church by designating "Giving Tree". Donations and gift cards may be mailed to or dropped off at the church, or Betsy will gladly pick them up. All gift cards and donations must be in by DECEMBER 11, and will be distributed to the families by the schools before winter break.

If you have any questions, or if you would like to request donation pickup, please contact the church office.

Thank you so much for your continued generous support of this truly worthwhile project!!!

### THE IMPORTANCE OF EGG CARTONS

The Tri-Valley Haven Food Pantry is very thankful for the many empty egg cartons that are delivered weekly to their food pantry. They must repackage the eggs they receive from the grocery stores in smaller quantities for their clients. In addition to egg cartons, we are now expanding our request for paper/plastic bags and individually wrapped plastic eating utensils. The egg cartons and bags will continue to be delivered to the food pantry. But the individually packaged utensils will be delivered to Open Heart Kitchen. If you are able to save these items, but don't want to make a trip to the church, Linda will be happy to pick them up. Just email, call or text her and she will let you know when she is driving through your neighborhood on her egg carton "route". Thank you for all the ways you reach out to serve the community.

# Children and Youth News

Each month with our kids and teens, we'll be focusing on a theme. This month, we're thinking about...

## Hope

Advent is a season of hope. Hope is one of those words that gets tossed around a lot but is hard to pin down, especially these days. We're all scrounging for it, searching for news stories about vaccines, acts of kindness or, when things get really desperate, just watching videos of puppies.

We're not in all that different of a place than those ancient Jewish folks hoping for change around the time of Jesus' birth. Life under the Roman empire wasn't what they wanted it to be, but there wasn't a lot they could do to change it quickly.

Hope wasn't so much an emotion as it was a discipline. It took patience, grit and self-control not to rush into an action that would endanger themselves and their neighbors while also believing change was possible. We're not living under an empire, but we may be feeling a similar lack of control. Let's take a page out of their book. Let's believe change is possible, but let's also live with the patience, grit and self-control that hope asks of us.

With hope,

Sam

### Carry-Out Kid's Church

Each month, families can get a "to go" box for their kids. Boxes are based on a theme (Hope in December), and will include a story, craft, activities and more. Request a box by emailing Sam at [sam@lynnewood.org](mailto:sam@lynnewood.org).

### Kid's Corner

Want to keep up with children's programs at Lynnewood? Make sure to subscribe to Kid's Corner, our weekly email for families. It includes parent resources, announcements, activities for kids and more. Email Sam at [sam@lynnewood.org](mailto:sam@lynnewood.org) to subscribe.

### No Room? Let's ZOOM!

Join us at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoons for youth "No Room? Let's Zoom!"  
[CLICK HERE](#) to join!  
Password: 773788  
If you choose to dial in, the meeting ID is 833 265 636.

### LWood College Crew

LWood College Crew zoom— Join us at 5:30 p.m. on Sundays for a college student hangout through Zoom! [CLICK HERE](#) to join!  
Password: 483900  
If you choose to dial in, the meeting ID is 956 2559 7865.

# Finance Update

OCTOBER FINANCE UPDATE									
Operating Budget	Amount	% difference from budget							
Donations (Year To Date)	\$337,116	-19.3%							
Expenses (Year To date)	\$520,083	-16%							

Donations do not include rent income from Quarry Lane.

We collected an additional \$7,404 for Fire Relief, bringing the total to \$10,394.

We collected \$425 for World Communion Sunday.

\$700 was donated for the Kids Helping Kids fund.

If you would like to better understand where our church stands financially or the financial goals of our church, please see any member of the finance committee. We would be happy to discuss our finances with you!