

**Woodlake  
Lutheran Church**

7525 Oliver Avenue South  
Richfield, MN 55423  
(612) 866-8449  
[www.woodlakechurch.org](http://www.woodlakechurch.org)

Pastor Charlie Plaster  
Pastor Joanne Sorenson

*Woodlake Lutheran Church is a  
congregation of the ELCA.*

**Worship Schedule**

**Sunday Morning**

**10:00am** in the Sanctuary

**Saturday Evening**

**5:00pm** in the Chapel

**Wednesday Morning Matins**

**8:00am** in the Chapel

**Church Office Hours**

Monday.....9am – 12pm  
Tuesday.....9am – 4pm  
Wednesday.....9am – 4pm  
Thursday.....9am – 4pm  
Friday.....9am – 12pm  
Saturday.....Closed  
Sunday..... Before and after worship

*Articles for January’s issue of The  
Messenger are due to  
[office@woodlakechurch.org](mailto:office@woodlakechurch.org)  
no later than December 15.*



**December 2017**



**Christmas and Advent Schedule**

**Advent Worship**

We’ll worship with the beloved Holden Prayer service,  
Wednesdays at 6:30pm (December 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup>)

**Sunday, December 3, 10am Worship: Lessons and Carols**

This is a beautiful service with favorite carols, hymns, and special music interspersed between readings. Our choirs and musicians make this such a meaningful service – a perfect way to start getting into the season!

**Sunday, December 17: Children’s Christmas Pageant, Youth Bake Sale, and New Member Sunday**

Join us during worship on Sunday morning at 10am for a beloved tradition! It is also your opportunity to bring home a delicious baked good and support our youth going on next year’s mission trip.

**Are you interested in membership?** Please contact Pastor Charlie (612-866-8449 ext 12 or [cplaster@woodlakechurch.org](mailto:cplaster@woodlakechurch.org)) if would like to take part in our New Member service on December 17. We’d love to introduce you and get to know you better!

**Sunday, December 24**

**10:00am** in the Sanctuary: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent  
(worship as usual with Communion)

**4:00 pm and 10:00pm** in the Sanctuary: Christmas Eve services (No communion)

**Monday, December 25: Christmas Day Worship**

**10:00am** in the Sanctuary (with Communion)

# Around the Table

Notes from Your Leadership Board

I am writing this article following our 2017 Annual Meeting. Reading the Annual Report, I was impressed with all the work the Leadership Board and the Woodlake Staff put into this past year for our faith community. There is a wonderful sense of purpose and mission. It also spills over into the many, many volunteers who make it possible for Woodlake Lutheran to continue as a viable missional congregation. As outgoing President of the congregation, may I say thank you to all of you for your prayers, cooperative ways, and your servanthood.

This year Woodlake operated in the black and giving was up. Pastor Charlie Plaster was a rock, preaching the Word as we needed to hear it, and giving wise counsel when it was requested. Leadership like his helps us focus on our important goals of mission within and without the congregation's walls.

We have been in transition, yes, but I was reminded by a retired Bishop of the ELCA that it is always best to be in transition – reassessing, reaching, dreaming. He told me that when one is not in transition one is dead, and that transition always makes one think outside the box which can lead to transformation. When one is in transition one dreams (or worries) about goals for the future. No goal achieved is ever an end, but rather a launchpad for new goals. He said one should always be thinking of and transitioning into new and courageous goals.

Woodlake will remain in a healthy transition time with a new Leadership Board and a new Lead Pastor. We will dream and achieve, and if we fail at something we can re-think. And re-dream. I am looking forward to a transitional and transformational 2018! Please keep your leaders and staff in your daily prayers.

## **New Leadership Board for 2017-18:**

President – Scott Dahlquist  
Vice-President – Mary Olson  
Secretary – Barbara Halsne  
Treasurer – TBD  
Children, Youth and Family – Anne Romstad  
Congregational Care – TBD  
Congregational Life – Wayne Schmieg  
Missions – Laurel Johnson  
Properties – Paul Olson  
Worship – Carol Weber Olson

*Wishing you all a blessed Advent and Christmas!*  
Anne Romstad

# Pastor's Corner

“PREPARE”

*“Prepare the way for the Lord.” - Matthew 3:3*

What are you doing for Christmas? It's a question that will be asked often in the coming weeks. What are you doing for Christmas? Are you traveling for the holidays? Are you having a special meal? Some special gifts in mind? What are you doing for Christmas?

If we heed the words of John the Baptist what we should be doing for Christmas has nothing to do with buying gifts, special foods, taking special trips. It has to do with faith. So let me tell you what I am going to do in the weeks ahead to prepare during for Christmas during Advent:

#1. I am going to worship. It seems to me that this is where we start. We go to worship. We do it on Sundays as we light the Advent candles. We do in for the mid-week Advent Services. If we are Matins people, we are there. We prepare first and foremost for Christmas through worship.

#2. I am also going to prepare by being in the Word, the Bible. Maybe I will read the story in Luke 2 about the birth of Jesus several times a week in several translations, each time looking for something just a little bit new. I will do daily devotions. I recommend the online ones. They are good for the faith and they cost nothing. Try “God Pause” from Luther Seminary or “Stillspeaking” from writers at the United Church of Christ. Also, Kindle has all sorts of daily devotion books for Advent for \$.99.

#3. During Advent I am also going to find ways to serve and give back. As a family we are going to give some of the special gifts that are a part of the ELCA Good Gifts program. Gifts like bees, chickens, or pigs. Gifts that give life and sustain life. I am also going to volunteer to ring the bell for the Salvation Army as often as I can during the month of December. Find what works for you. But do something.

So, what are you doing for Christmas?  
Let me know.

*Pastor Charlie*

# Worship and Music Notes

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“Light dawns on a weary world when eyes begin to see all people’s dignity. Light dawns on a weary world: the promised day of justice comes. Love grows in a weary world when hungry hearts find bread and Children’s dreams are fed. Love grows in a weary world: the promised feast of plenty comes. Hope blooms in a weary world when creatures, once forlorn, find wilderness reborn. Hope blooms in a weary world: the promised green of Eden comes. The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands, gush with springs; the hills and mountains shall break with singing! We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace, as all the world in wonder echoes shalom.” (ELW 726 Light dawns on a weary world; text by Mary Louise Bringle, music by William P. Rowan)

This is the song that I picked for lessons and carols on first Sunday of Advent, Dec.3. Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year for Christians. We, choir, handbell, children and all the congregation will share the spirit for the season through music.

This is the time of waiting and spiritual preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus. Jesus came down to world as a light.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light, he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husbands will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1-14). “We also are the light of the world.” (Matthew 5:14a). “Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”(Matthew 5:16) ‘

Through the season, I hope to have a moment to think about “Light.” “I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you...”(Ephesians 1:18a)

*HyeonJeong Lee, Director of Worship and Music*

Craft Sale 2017: You again made it possible for us to give over \$1,100 each to VEAP, Families Moving Forward, and Loaves and Fishes by participating in our craft sale. Thank you!

# Mission and Outreach

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## Boy Scouts of America

Looking for a volunteer opportunity to serve a youth organization with an established service record or know someone who is?

The Metro Lakes District of the Northern Star Council of the Boy Scouts of America is looking for Unit Commissioners.

Unit Commissioners work with the adults of Scout units to help them deliver the Scouting program to the youth they serve.

A Scouting background is helpful, but not required.

Training and assistance are available.

Contact Scott Dahlquist at [sjaadahlquist@comcast.net](mailto:sjaadahlquist@comcast.net) or (612) 919-9232 for further information.

## VEAP

**Just as a reminder, VEAP is not having a Christmas Toy Drive this year,** but instead, concentrating on a drive to increase the basic food and housing needs of clients at a time when those needs are highest. So as you go out to do your shopping for the holidays, please remember our neighbors in need and throw in an extra 5 lbs of sugar or flour, or the ingredients you use to make those special Christmas cookies and bring them to our grocery carts in the corridor for delivery to VEAP. If you don't care to shop, just use one of your Special Offering envelopes and designate it for VEAP. Thank you for your continued support.

*In case you missed it, Pages 4 and 5 of the Messenger contains information from our 2017 Annual Report. Full copies of the report are available in the church office.*

## Financial Updates

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As reflected on the enclosed financial statements, we are heading into the next fiscal year with a \$75,550 surplus. How did this happen? This surplus can be attributed to higher than expected income plus lower than projected expenses over the last two years. Envelope offerings in both fiscal year 2015-16 and 2016-17 were higher than budgeted by a combined \$30,900. Your generous gifts to support the church certainly have been generous! Building rental income has come up just short of budget estimates the past two years but continues to contribute over 10% of total income. On the expense side it is safe to say we have been in a transition phase for some time now. Without a full-time senior pastor or a children and youth director, total personnel costs have been lower than would normally be if we were fully staffed. Personnel expenses over the last two years were approximately \$108,000 lower than we had originally budgeted. These lower costs come from lower salaries as well as lower benefits such as health insurance. Most staff employees have private or spouse covered health insurance to rely on. Personnel costs will be rising now that we have called a full-time senior pastor and anticipate filling the children and youth position.

Operating a building the size of our church consumes about 20% of the budget. We are just now beginning to see the cost saving benefits from such things as new LED lighting and carefully searching for lower cost outside services and supplies. While normal maintenance costs have risen slightly overall, natural gas and electric costs were down by more than \$10,000 last year.

Normally unseen expenses such as internet/web hosting and IT support, for example, were \$3,600 less than estimated. Forecasting revenues and expenses 12 months into the future is not always that easy to accomplish, but in certain categories and under “normal” conditions we have been very close. As you can probably appreciate, it is as much an art as it is a science. As briefly discussed above, you can see that efforts are made wherever possible to keep expenses in line and reduced whenever and wherever possible. Your financial support, combined with expense containment, makes it possible to appreciate operating “in the black” at least currently.

And that’s basically how we made a surplus possible. Thanks to everyone for their part in realizing this accomplishment.

### **Fun Facts—**

- This year we had 18 more members submit pledges than last year. (139 vs. 121)
- Of those pledges, seven are for distributions from IRA’s to help satisfy the required minimum distribution (RMD).
- Stock pledges have been submitted by about 5 – 10 members (something to consider).
- About 50 members have signed up for the automatic electronic giving through Simply Giving.
- Don’t throw out your expended printer ink cartridges & laser cartridges. We can get up to a \$20 per month credit at both Staples and Office Depot for recycling with them. This saves us \$480 over the year in office supplies.

Everyone loves a good restaurant meal now and then. Watch for “Timber Lodge night” every month (next one is Monday December 11). Just inform the server that you are with Woodlake and the church receives 15% of the total bill (before taxes of course). Let’s see if we can beat our current rate of taking in \$700 every 12 months.

# Around the Building – Properties Update

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Over the last 12 months continued maintenance and improvements have been made to the church building and grounds. Some of the more notable items include:

- ✓ New LED lighting has been installed in the parking lot and narthex, plus other electrical updates such as motion sensors in the main restrooms. The new lighting provides better illumination while also savings on electrical costs. The motion sensors in the restrooms and class-rooms used by Ebenezer will automatically turn the lights off after a certain period of inactivity, thus also saving on lighting costs.
- ✓ New telephone system replaces our old outdated system using current technology as well as fewer phonelines and at a lower cost.
- ✓ We have switched to a different garbage hauler who also handles recycling and at a lower cost.
- ✓ Ceramic wood looking tile was installed in the Fireside Room along the sliding glass windows leading to the courtyard that rotted. This tile is more impervious to the water intrusion often experienced near these windows.
- ✓ Extensive interior wall painting in several rooms giving us a nice clean and aesthetically pleasing appearance for all to enjoy.
- ✓ Nicely framed photos have also been hung and repositioned by volunteers to increase the aesthetics of otherwise bare walls.
- ✓ Our Monday morning cleaning crew of several volunteer members perform the necessary dusting, wood surface cleaning, and glass cleaning as well as other numerous cleaning tasks to keep the church looking fresh and neat.
- ✓ Restrooms are now cleaned by a professional cleaning company Monday through Thursdays and the Adventista congregation cleans them after their activities.
- ✓ The raised vegetable gardens have been reconfigured as part of an Eagle Boy Scout project to more strategically locate and improve them for the Loaves & Fishes program.
- ✓ A professional lawn and landscaping firm has been hired to regularly maintain the lawn with regular fertilizing and mowing. Several landscaping ideas have been put forth to replace aging bushes & shrubbery along the building and in the parking lot islands, although nothing has been scheduled at this time.
- ✓ A commercial audit was performed on our telephone and internet equipment and contract usage resulting in a clean bill of health.
- ✓ Our main laser printer-copier for the front office was replaced with a new model from a different provider, resulting in an on-going cost savings.
- ✓ Carpet square replacement for the Narthex has been selected and is currently in stock. An installation firm has been contracted to remove the old carpeting and install the new carpet once we give them the go ahead.
- ✓ The new flooring for Fellowship Hall has also been selected and is in stock. This will be a Vinyl Composition Tile (VCT) in 9" x 36" pieces with a wood looking surface and a 40-millimeter wear surface. Moisture testing of the concrete floor checking for water vapor emission and ph levels are necessary before this tile can be installed.
- ✓ Orv Holland has been working as a Financial Assistant to Julie Windler for just over a year now. This is to help transition Julie to 50% working position and give her more time to deal with property matters.

As you can see, much effort is being made to maintain the church property in an up-to-date fashion and utilize cost saving measures where ever possible.

# Small Group and Circle News

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## Circles

Circles meet once a month and are times for women of all ages to have fellowship, devotions, and Bible study. December *Gather* magazine with Bible Studies are now available in the church office (one for each circle).

**Esther Circle:** December 5 (1st Tuesday), 11:30am at the Yorke Room of 7500 York

**Faith Circle:** December 5 (1st Tuesday), 7:00 pm, at Marilyn O's home

**Lydia Circle:** December 12 (2nd Tuesday), 12:30 pm, Fireside Room.

**Rebecca / Sarah Circle:** December 13 (2nd Wednesday), 1:30 pm, Fireside Room.

**Sunday Morning Circle:** December 17 (date changed due to Christmas Eve), 8:45am in the Heritage Room

## Matins Speakers

Join us for the Matins Morning Prayer service at 8am, every Wednesday in the chapel, and stay for fellowship and coffee at 8:30, with a speaker at 9am.

**Dec. 6:** "Living with a Traumatic Brain Injury," Amy Zellmer

**Dec. 13:** Pr Kris Jarey of Trinity Lutheran Church

**Dec. 20:** Christmas Program and Sing-a-Long

**Dec. 27:** No Program

## Faith and Fiction Book Club

Meets Thursday, December 7, 7:00pm in the Heritage Room. Our book for November / December is *Hana's Suitcase* by Karen Levine. Join at any time!

## Scouting at Woodlake

The 2017/2018 Scouting year is off and running. As many may know, Woodlake has a thriving Cub Scout Pack of over 30 active Cub Scouts involved in many scouting activities. They are in the process of wrapping up their annual wreath and popcorn sale in November and have had a Pancake Breakfast back in October here at the church. Additionally they help out in the Loaves and Fishes Dinner sponsored by the church. In addition to the Cub Scout Pack, the church will be sponsoring a Boy Scout Troop. It has been several years since Troop 384 has been active at Woodlake, however Troop 42, from neighboring St. Richard's, has decided to re-charter with Woodlake as Troop 384. They have over two dozen active Boy Scouts. Both units are very excited to be in such close proximity with one another. They have already had a cooperative relationship with one another, but this will only make this relationship stronger and more effective. There are already talks underway to sponsor additional Scout activities at the church and to bring back Scout Sunday. We are hoping to achieve a more visible Scouting presence here at Woodlake. The future looks bright for our scouting units.

- Paul Lauber, Chartered Organization Representative

## Timber Lodge Fundraiser – Continuing into 2018

As you start setting up your 2018 calendars and planners, go ahead and add Woodlake's Timber Lodge dates! All you have to do for this easy fundraiser is head out to Timber Lodge Restaurant on our specified day of the month, have a great meal, tell your server that you're a friend of Woodlake, and they'll donate 15% of the ticket price back to us.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
TUESDAY, MARCH 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
THURSDAY, APRIL 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
TUESDAY, MAY 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
TUESDAY, JUNE 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
THURSDAY, JULY 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018

## From the Records

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### Funeral Services

*Thank you for keeping these families in your prayers.*

**Ole Refsgaard** (April 11, 1954 - October 14, 2017), service held at Woodlake on November 4, 2017

**Floyd Roman** (February 25, 1923 - November 4, 2017), service held at Woodlake on November 16, 2017

**Katherine Mae Gunderson** (April 25, 1926 – November 15, 2017), service held at Woodlake on November 21, 2017

### Membership Transfers

**Herbert and Leslie Hunter** to St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Bloomington