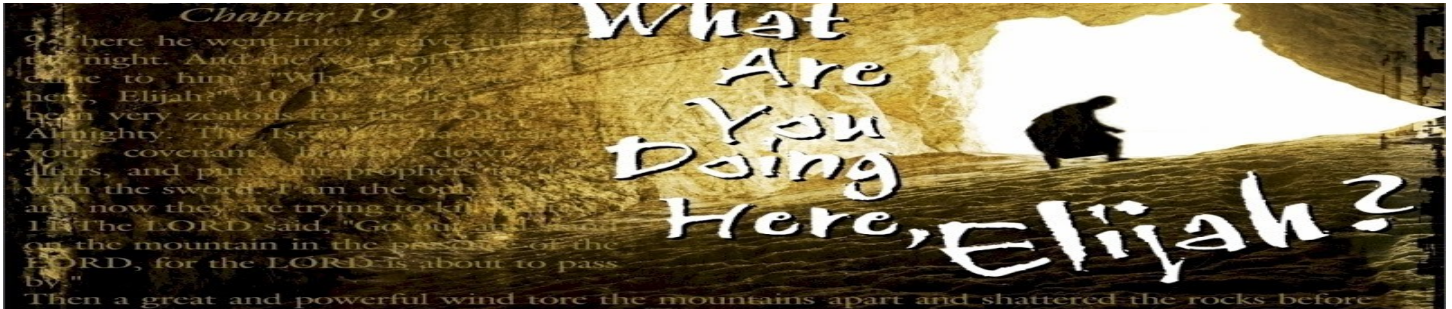




**NEWSLETTER OF
LAKELAND LUTHERAN
CHURCH
FEBRUARY 2022**

Cold Lake, Alberta
780-639-4673
Church Office Hours:
Tuesday - Friday 9.00am-12pm
lakelandlutheran@telus.net
Pastor: Rev. AnnE Zimmerman
780-201-0806
PastorAnnE@lakelandlutheran.com



Rev's Words:

Even in the midst of the struggle of this “seemingly” never ending distant and disjointed experience of an ongoing pandemic - God is close, right?
As our lives continue to seem distant and disjointed. We really do need to truly hold to another reality: God is always close even in this chaotic time.

Consider this story from scripture..

"And the word of the LORD came to [Elijah]: 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He replied, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.' The LORD said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.'

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a **gentle whisper**. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'" (1 Kings 19, NIV).

We are living through a period of deep disruption, chaos and anxiety. The things and people we hold most dear have been separated from us. The normal order of life has been utterly upended. The prophet Elijah was in a similar place. Rejected by his people, chased by his government, he was the last prophet in the land of Israel. Lonely and afraid, disconnected and heartbroken, Elijah waits for God.

God does not arrive in wind. God does not arrive in an earthquake. God does not arrive in a fire. The creator of all that is and was and is to come, is present in the gentle whisper.

God is in the gentle whisper. Though the wind rages, the earth shakes and fire scorches all we see, God will be there, close enough to whisper peace to our hearts.

As we continue to navigate this pandemic, may we remember the absolute tenderness and perpetual closeness of God. In all the chaos and fear, God is always close enough that we can hear a whisper.

Together - let us continue and to pray to our faithful Whisperer:

God of silence and stillness, we trust you are with us. We pray for a Whisper of comfort, encouragement and hope. We struggle Grant us wisdom to accept learning ways as a community of faith.

Draw close to those who are sick and all those who risk illness, caring for them, protecting and uplifting them.

In your name, we pray. Amen.

Pr. AnnE



February Message for Lay and Rostered Leaders and Congregations

Dear friends and family in Christ--

Earlier in the pandemic Bp. Larry drew us to the words of Ezra during the time of the Babylonian Exile. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah were written during a time of great transition. The time of Babylonian exile had ended. Cyrus, the ruler of Persia, had begun to send the people home. And Ezra and Nehemiah were charged with the Herculean task of restoring Jerusalem and the great temple that had been sacked when Jerusalem fell.

For the most part, they were successful. The temple was rebuilt, although it wouldn't achieve its former splendor until the days of King Herod. But it was far from easy. The people doubted and struggled with the immensity of the task. They lost hope that they would see anything resembling what their ancestors once knew. Ezra and Nehemiah, along with some of the minor prophets such as Haggai, urged the people to the task, stressing the need for the temple to be rebuilt and for the people to return to what they once were. The laws, the rituals, the formula of life laid down in books such as Leviticus, had to become central for the people again. It was, after all, when the people had strayed from these actions and began to follow gods and other competing desires that things had gone badly. It was a message about returning to the roots of who the Israelites were. It was only by going back that they could go forward.

The interesting thing about the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is how they have paralleled something of our own journey during this time of pandemic. For long stretches, we were exiled from our houses of worship. We had no choice during those dark early months of the pandemic. No one had any vaccine protection. Herd immunity was a deadly pipe dream that we believed could never be achieved in a humane way. Slowly, we were allowed back, and it has been a rollercoaster ride ever since. Masks. No Masks. Capacity limits. No Capacity limits. Vaccine passports. A fourth wave. A fifth wave. We have been able to stay open this time around, but all with uncertainty lurking in the back of our minds. When will things change again? Will there come a time we have to close our doors? And what does our future look like? Has the pandemic damaged us beyond repair? We were already beginning to see the cracks in our foundation prior to Covid. Have the last 22 months broken the foundation altogether?

As we struggle with answering these questions, it can become very easy to do as Ezra and Nehemiah and Haggai, amongst other, tried to do. Go back to what we once knew. Go back to that point when things still made sense. The future is too uncertain. The only way we can go forward is to go back.

It is a tempting route. I have longed more than once to go back to a time when things were more sensible, when I knew how to proceed. I look back and can't help but shed tears as I remember a world that once made sense. It wasn't perfect, but I knew what I could do to help make it better. Now? I don't know what to do and I definitely don't want to think about the future. I just want some certainty again, something of the past to reassert itself and ground this shifting, liminal time.

Ezra and Nehemiah tried to ground their people in those kinds of certainties. And it failed. Yes, for a few generations, they moved forward and were successful in rebuilding the temple. But it didn't truly last. By the time we encounter the narrative again, the Romans are the new power in the land, having swept away the last vestiges of Greek and other Eastern powers. Jerusalem is a vassal state of another great empire and the powers of Jerusalem are either in league with Rome or preaching a spiritualism based on a rigid adherence to the law, almost to the exclusion of God. The promises of Ezra and Nehemiah had faded away in the truth that the past was now gone, and the people did not know the way forward.

As heartbreaking as it is to admit, it sounds eerily familiar. I wish it didn't. I look to the future, and I don't think that the past will meet us there. Those days are gone. And it breaks my heart. During this time, Christ's words from the Book of the prophet Isaiah

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

He then goes on to say, in a rather final way, *"Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."* (Luke 4: 18-19, 21)

This short passage has Jesus making the statement that this ancient prophecy from Isaiah has come to pass in the hearing of all those in attendance. It seems oddly aggressive considering the context he finds himself in. No one was challenging him. No one said anything about who he was or about his mission. Yet his tone seems almost confrontational, as if he is challenging something greater, something beyond this moment that the Gospel is situated within. It is as if he is challenging an idea.

Where Ezra was attempting to give people hope by reading from the law, so Jesus is doing something of the same. But there is a difference. Where the push at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah was to go back to the days when Israel adhered to the law and was thriving, Jesus was issuing a different kind of hope. It was a hope based instead on something more ancient, more lasting, more enduring than the laws of Israel or of custom and tradition. Jesus was speaking to the only thing that could guide the people out of the uncertainty that they had felt for generations. It was what had bound them together as a community to begin with and what had emancipated them from Egypt's power. It was what gave them the hope of real grace in their life. It was, namely, God, moving in their midst, doing marvelous things, and drawing them after to walk as God's children. It was not ritual or tradition. Those were tools that helped them connect to God. They were not replacements for God.

The pharisees were the children of that line of thinking. They believed that ritual and tradition would lead to purity. Yet it was never truly so. The heart of the covenant was God's love for the people and the people's love for God. It was that love that would ground them but also propel them into new life.

Jesus was reminding them of this fact. And he was showing them that something new was indeed happening in their very midst. God, through Christ, had come to show them the truth that Moses and the prophets had never been able to fully demonstrate, as much as they had tried. Their hope was not in the past or tradition or in ritual. It was in God. The core of their faith was this God who would, as Jesus proclaims bring good news to the poor.

and proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
would let the oppressed go free,
and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

The way forward was never about going back. It was about going forward in all joy and peace in believing.

We resonate with the ancient Israelites of Ezra and Nehemiah. We are frightened and saddened and angry. We don't know the way forward as we long for the past. But Jesus comes into our midst, just as Jesus did in this text from Luke and reminds us again of the great and amazing beauty of God's love. No pandemic or exile can change that love. Tradition might come and tradition might go. But God's love endures forever. That love will lead us into a future unlike any we could have imagined. What is left for us to decide is whether we can accept that or whether we will cling to a past that can never be reclaimed. It isn't easy. The way forward will be terrifying, and we will be scared. But God is with us and God still has use for the church in this world. All we can do, we can truly do is trust in God's guidance, leaning on the one who has been active and present throughout the course of human history, inspiring the very best of who we are and what we can yet become.

Drawing on the Words from Carrie Newcomer

Lean In Toward the Light
Winter is the oldest season,
But quietly beneath the snow,
Seeds are stretching out and reaching,
Faithful as the morning glow.

Lean in toward the Light.
Let it go, shake off the dust.
Lean in toward the Light.
Today is now, tomorrow beckons.
Lean in toward the Light.
Keep practicing resurrection.

The shadows of this world will say,
There's no hope why try anyway?
But every kindness large or slight,
Shifts the balance toward the light.

Waters wind and open wide.
Lean in toward the Light.
Don't just walk when you can fly.
Lean in toward the Light.
When justice seems in short supply.
Lean in toward the Light.
Let beauty be your truest guide.

The shadows of this world will say,
There's no hope why try anyway?
But every kindness large or slight,
Shifts the balance toward the light.

The prayer I pray at eventide.
Lean in toward the Light.
All left undone be put aside.
Lean in toward the Light.
And when forgiveness is hard find.
Lean in toward the Light.
Help me to a least to be kind.
Lean in toward the Light.
Lean in toward the Light.

Blessing and Peace in † Christ,

Rev. Prema

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.

1 John 3: 1

Education

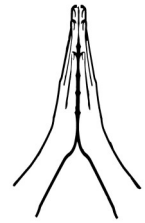


In person Sunday School will begin in the new year on January 9 providing the Cold Lake Covid numbers continue to decrease and there are no school outbreaks. If the numbers rise or there are school outbreaks we will continue with in service Sunday school activities.

Worship

Prayer Chain :

We are blessed in our fellowship to have the gift of intercession and people that are willing to pray and praise in circumstances in our daily lives. Prayer requests can be emailed to Anne Tucker at a_tucker@telus.net or you can call or text her on 780-812- 0208. The request will then be fanned out to our praying volunteers. Please know that requests to the prayer chain are kept confidential and no request is considered too big or too small for prayer. If you wish for your prayer request to be continued please send a second request. Thank you for your support of this ministry. If you wish to volunteer to be on the prayer team please let Anne know.



YOUR OFFERING

You are now able to e-transfer money to the church.
If you wish to do this please use the following email to e-transfer
from your account.

financialsecretary@lakelandlutheran.com



You can also drop your offering at the church during normal office hours or mail to us at Box 456, Cold Lake, AB T9M 1P1. Thank you for your continued support of our church.

Service & Care



Service and Care extends a very special Thank You to all who have committed to make Lakeland Lutheran a great place to worship. You know who you are!!! Our musicians and choir inspire us all through their ministry. Committee member's who make our ministry what it is and for the countless hours spent behind the scenes that most of us don't realize even happens. Sunday school is an important ministry for our youth & thanks to those who keep this working. Please take time throughout the year to thank those around you & encourage each other to continue to serve the Lord our God.

If you see an area of ministry that you would like to be involved in please know you are welcome.

BIRTHDAYS and ANNIVERSARIES in FEBRUARY



Feb 2 – Jo Petterson

Feb 6 – Connie MacLeod

Feb 7 – Ross Lohmaier

Feb 23 – Dorothea Mathews

Feb 24 – Arletta Ahenakew

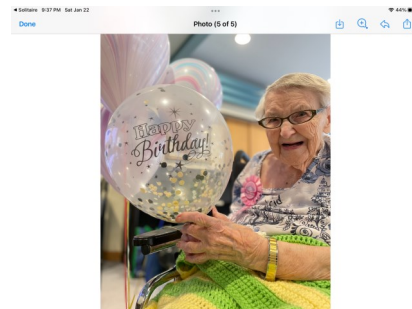


Feb 1 – Nancy and Cal Gerber

Thank You

A very big thank you from Josephine Sinclair and her family for all the cards, gifts, treats, good wishes and prayers through Christmas and her birthday.

It is very much appreciated. And she is grateful to still feel connected to her church. Thank you .



CHECK OUT THE FEBRUARY 2022 CALENDAR FOR ALL ACTIVITIES

Are we missing anything from our newsletter? Or is there something you wish we would have in our newsletter on an ongoing basis?

Please make sure that any inclusions for the March Newsletter reach the church office by **FEBRUARY 24th.**

Church

Church is hard.

Church is hard for the person walking through the doors, afraid of judgment.

Church is hard for the pastor's family, under the microscope of an entire body.

Church is hard for the prodigal soul returning home, broken and battered by the world.

Church is hard for the girl who looks like she has it all together, but doesn't.

Church is hard for the couple who fought the entire ride to service.

Church is hard for the single mom, surrounded by couples holding hands, and seemingly perfect families.

Church is hard for the widow and widower with no invitation to lunch after service.

Church is hard for the deacon with an estranged child.

Church is hard for the person singing worship songs, overwhelmed by the weight of the lyrics.

Church is hard for the man insecure in his role as a leader.

Church is hard for the wife who longs to be led by a righteous man.

Church is hard for the nursery volunteer who desperately longs for a baby to love.

Church is hard for the single woman and single man, praying God brings them a mate.

Church is hard for the teenage girl, wearing a scarlet letter, ashamed of her mistakes.

Church is hard for the sinners.

Church is hard for me.

It's hard because on the outside it all looks shiny and perfect. Sunday best in behavior and dress.

However, underneath those layers, you find a body of imperfect people, carnal souls, selfish movies.

But, here is the beauty of church—

Church isn't a building, mentality, or expectation.

Church is a body.

Church is a group of sinners, saved by grace, living in fellowship as saints.

Church is a body of believers bound as brothers and sisters by an eternal love.

Church is a holy ground where sinners stand as equals before the Throne of Grace.

Church is a refuge for broken hearts and a training ground for mighty warriors.

Church is a converging of confrontation and invitation. Where sin is confronted and hearts are invited to seek restoration.

Church is a lesson in faith and trust.

Church is a bearer of burdens and a giver of hope.

Church is a family. A family coming together, setting aside differences, forgetting past mistakes, rejoicing in the smallest victories.

Church, the body, and the circle of sinners-turned-saints, is where He resides, and if we ask, He is faithful to come.

So even on the hard days at church-

The days when I am at odds with a friend, When I've fought with my husband because we're late once again. When I've walked in bearing burdens heavier than my heart can handle, yet masking the pain with a smile on my face. When I've worn a scarlet letter, under the microscope. When I've longed for a baby to hold, or fought tears as the lyrics were sung. When I've walked back in, afraid and broken, after walking away.

I'll remember, He has never failed to meet me there.

Church is a body, a family, a place to love God and love others through our struggles!

Directed Giving For 2021

Cold Lake Food Bank \$5605
Synod \$550
John Howard \$285
On Eagles Wings \$100
Fall Supper \$3635.25

Hosanna Lutheran \$1125
Seminary \$425
Pastor Rude \$150
Campus Ministries \$450

CLWR \$2660
Refugee Support \$175
Adopt a Family \$425
Lac La Biche \$50

Thank you for your generous gifts to others

Anne Tucker, Financial Secretary

**Minutes from December 15, 2021 7:15pm Lakeland Lutheran Church Council
via skype approved**

Approved January 19, 2022

		Email Address	Present	Excused	Minutes Fwd.
President	Cheryl Benoit	<u>cbenoit4u@yahoo.com</u>	Y		
Vice-President	Richard Davis	<u>ppaulellard@live.ca</u>	Y		
Secretary	Anastasia Radke	<u>Aradke2016@outlook.com</u>	Y		
Trustee	Linda Klinger	<u>covan@telusplanet.net</u>	Y		
Trustee	Helen Runke	<u>harunke@telusplanet.net</u>	Y		
Trustee	Cornel Wollman	<u>clwoll@telusplanet.net</u>	Y		
Trustee	Keith Scheidt	<u>kscheidt@persona.ca</u>	Y		
Pastor	AnnE Zimmerman	<u>pastorAnnE@lakelandlutheran.com</u>		Y	
Worship	Helen Flaming	<u>hflaming@telus.net</u>			N/A
Education	Bernie Hartman	<u>berniehartman@persona.ca</u>			N/A
Witness	Dorothea Mathews	<u>dorothea.mathews@yahoo.com</u>			N/A
Service	Gail Chernesky	<u>billac@telusplanet.net</u>			N/A
Support	Cornel Wollmann	<u>clwoll@telusplanet.net</u>			N/A
Treasurer	Kathy Pedersen	<u>lakelandlutheran@telus.net</u>			
Fin/Sec	Anne Tucker	<u>a_tucker@telus.net</u>			N/A
Facility	Bill Chernesky	<u>billchernesky2020@gmail.com</u>			N/A
Mutual Ministry	Keith Scheidt	<u>kscheidt@persona.ca</u>			N/A
Stewardship	Keith Scheidt	<u>kscheidt@persona.ca</u>			N/A
LLC Office	Kathy Pedersen	<u>lakelandlutheran@telus.net</u>	N/A		N/A

Call to Order 7:15 PM Cheryl B

Pastor AnnE shared words from scripture: God's word of life, followed by a prayer

Approval of Draft Minutes with Amendments from Previous Council Meeting November 24th 2021

Moved: Linda Second: Cornel Carried

Reports:

Treasurer Report: attached

It was noted that we are a little bit behind budget in our general offering. In November we had more expense than income due to Insurance pay. Discussion and questions about report, Profit and Losses. Some clarifications about the report.

Kathy Pedersen will take on the position as Treasurer. She will get paid for the work as Treasurer. She worked together with Cheryl on one previous report and will let her name stand for the upcoming year.

Financial Secretary Report: attached

Items to add to the Agenda:

1. Nomination.
2. Proposed Budget.
3. Annual Report submissions

Pastor AnnE's Report: attached

Pastor AnnE will be offering a second Christmas Eve Service at 3.00pm on December 24th. All council members are in favour for a second service.

Worship Committee: Report attached

Linda mentioned that all members of the Worship Committee will stay on for the upcoming year 2022.

Witness and Outreach: Report attached

Committee has asked for another member

Service and Care: No Report this month

Education: Report attached

Such a good feedback from different people about the last service with the Advent Program.

Support and Maintenance: Report attached

Automatic door openers will be installed beginning of the next year. Questions about the rubber coating on the sidewalk in regards to traction and longevity. Cornel answered most of

the questions.

Stewardship: - no meetings

Facility Coordinator: Report attached

Dave Wheeler accepted the position of Facility Coordinator but asked for a backup person in case he is away.

It was noticed that some people would like more details on what Council discussed and updates. Discussion about how to update in the most efficient and most timely manner.

We will explore putting the reports and the draft minutes to the website or emailing it out or putting it out on the Bulletin Board in several copies. We have several Bulletin Boards in the church.

Feedback is appreciated.

1. Richard had some positions still vacant and is waiting for some people to call back. Discussed the National Convention delegate. Timeline has passed for submissions. Richard will prepare a written report in the next newsletter for unfilled positions.

Vacancies in Stewardship—Gord Wickstrand will fill in.

2. We will be trying to have the Annual Report submitted by January 19.
3. Budget: Cheryl talked about the next year's budget. It is attached in the Financial report. Some questions and discussions. Automotive was noticed to be more budgeted than currently is used. Pastor AnnE explained that she does not always submit all trips. Pastor's salary will increase as is set in the Synod guidelines. It is not yet calculated in the current budget. This will be in the next budget proposal. Cheryl has calculated Kathy Pedersen for Health and Dental Benefit and pension and it reflects in the budget draft. Council was in favour to have Kathy on these benefits and with the increase in hours for the Treasurer position and the increase in hourly wage, the minimum for the eligibility for benefits will be fulfilled.

4.

Input from Council:

Anastasia – Liaison to with office administrator

Keith – Liaison to Education/ mutual ministry

Linda – Liaison for Worship

Cornel—Liaison to Support and Maintenance and facility coordinator

Cheryl – Treasurer and Office Administration

Richard – Service and Care

Next Council Meeting January 19th, 2022 at 7:15pm at church

Closing Prayer The Lord's Prayer

Note Draft meeting minutes will be emailed to council members for feedback on any errors or omission. Once approved, the minutes will be posted on the bulletin board by the office door along with a copy of the reports and applicable memorandums.