

From the Desk of Pastor Laura

Prepare, Pray, Breathe, Rejoice...Because.

Advent has always been one of my favorite liturgical seasons. It is full of anticipation and wonder, while at the same time can it challenge our patience and our ability to stay mindful and appreciative of each moment. As one of the shortest seasons in the church year, it is quite ironic that oftentimes, it can feel like one of the longest seasons because we wait and long for the fulfilled promise of God coming to Earth in the person of Jesus Christ.

I remember getting ready for Advent last year, when worship and life at Crown of Glory looked so much different than it does now. We were only worshipping via livestream, and we had not seen any of you in person for months. The pandemic was at an all-time peak and waiting for the light of Christ felt more desperate than ever.

Here we are, in 2021, and we have yet to return to what we thought this season may be: "normal," or at least closer to the life that we knew before the pandemic began. However, the pandemic still lingers. Some of us have decided to move on and live our lives as though the pandemic is over, simply resigned to the risks for the sake of seeing loved ones and enjoying all the activities we once did. Some of us are still too afraid of what the pandemic might do to leave our houses for anything except the necessities. Others are cautious, optimistic, and frustrated all at the same time. No one could have anticipated that we would be facing another Advent that would be fraught with frustration and joy, desperation and hope, anxiety and peace. Our tired congregation faces this season that asks us to wait, to watch, and to trust that God will show up for us once again. Does this feel like too great of a request? Are you just too tired? You are not alone.

Each of the four weeks in Advent, we are going to look at a word that captures something we might be feeling or have experienced in 2021: prepare, pray, breathe, and rejoice.

The first weekend (November 27-28), we are going to "prepare." When we find ourselves preparing for something, the process of planning and anticipating can bring us freedom from anxiety and the "what ifs," and respite from the heaviness of our mistakes and fatigue. We prepare because the light of Christ is coming.

The second weekend (December 4-5), we are going to "pray." We cannot always be in motion; we cannot always be actively preparing. Especially this year, after almost two years of living in a pandemic, our souls could use some re-centering. Opening ourselves up in prayer offers reassurance to our weary hearts. We pray because it helps keep hope alive.

The third weekend (December 11-12), we are going to "breathe." Doing so will allow us to lean into the "already but not yet" nature of God in Advent, where the Spirit is already among us and at work, but we wait for the coming of Christ at Christmas. Breathing is something so many of us take for granted, but focusing on it, even if for just a moment, can help us remember that God is near. We breathe to remind ourselves of God's holy breath, the Spirit, who is always with us.

The fourth weekend (December 18-19), we are going to "rejoice." This is the last week of Advent before the moment we have waited for finally arrives: the birth of our Savior, Emmanuel, God with us. Amidst stress, fear, anger, and anxiety, Christ will come among us and for that, we will rejoice! We rejoice because the promise of Jesus holds true, even for us, even now.

Be present with us, won't you? Advent is a season of waiting and watching, and I look forward to journeying through it all with you, no matter what waits for us around the corner. For unto us Christ is born, so let us prepare, pray, breathe, and rejoice!

In Hope,

Pastor Laura Laughlín

Somewhere In-Between

Someone asked me recently, "What does your heart say?" I was not sure how to answer them, because I was not sure if they were ready for the answer, but in my heart, I knew the answer. My heart tells me a lot of things, and lately, my heart has been filled with anticipation and excitement for the coming seasons. We are moving through our stewardship season, a time where we wrestle with what could be, while we sort out what should be. I am not a dreamer, but I am not a realist either; I am somewhere inbetween. That is where I believe we are as a community of faith: somewhere in-between.

Crown of Glory is somewhere in-between growing and figuring out how to grow. We are somewhere in-between knowing who we are as a called and sent community of believers, and not knowing which direction we should go first. Crown of Glory, to me, has always been a place that is in-between energetically doing the next best thing and knowing what that thing is. This, in part, is the very reason I admire this congregation and community so much.

We are also in-between seasons right now. November 6 and 7 marked the beginning of our Stewardship Campaign, *What Have We to Offer?*, a sincere look at the gifts that God has given us and at our response to God's grace. Consider being present with us for the remaining two weeks of November's Stewardship Campaign. This coming new year is the pinnacle for a restart to Crown of Glory's ministry and an opportunity to launch into something new! I invite you to consider being present in our worship and joining our mission at Crown of Glory to live out our faith as one community.

Speaking of "in-between," it is not long before we make it to Advent and Christmas! The Christmas season will soon be upon us, and we have plans to make the best of it. For too long we waited to gather in person, as one body of Christ in one place, to celebrate and give thanks for the greatest gift of all, God's love incarnate born in a manger. Can you believe it? A manger! Christmas is a time to remember how lowly Christ's birth really was and how fortunate we are in the life God has given us.

Do not miss out on this coming Advent and Christmas seasons. I urge you to come, be present, and consider what the manger does for you and for this world!

In Christ, Pastor Reggie Klindworth

"His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: 'And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

Luke 1:67, 76-79

"For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal." 2 Corinthians

4:17-18

Nursery News

While we are waiting for the Nursery Ministry Coordinator position to be filled, please take advantage of the kid's activity bags and Kiddo's Corner in the Sanctuary! Materials are being added each week to provide a variety of interactive resources to keep your kiddos engaged! We hope



to have a Nursery Ministry Coordinator soon to help lead these activities and will send an announcement when we have filled the position. If you or someone you know is interested in applying, please contact Krysta Flaharty via email (krysta@crownofglory.org).

SPARK News



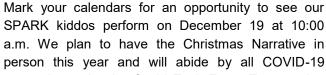
It is exciting to realize that I have been in the role of Director of Children's Ministry for five months now! I am so grateful for all the support I have received from parents and members of this church alike, as I have been in this role.

I am grateful to the people who have volunteered their time to help with SPARK. I knew coming into this position that recruiting volunteers would be a challenge (for a variety of reasons!), but I am thrilled with the support I have received and for the new, easy-to-follow lesson plans for SPARK group leaders. I am excited to see how Children's Ministry will evolve to support our SPARK kiddos and volunteers.

We will continue to face challenges as we come out of this pandemic, but know that I am excited for the ways our church community will grow and find new ways to be in community with one another.

Christmas Narrative: "Do Not Be Afraid"

The time for the annual Christmas Narrative is approaching fast!





protocols set by the Covid Task Force Team to keep everyone safe. In the event we cannot have the performance in person, I do have a virtual plan in place as a backup!

Regardless of the format, I am so excited to see our SPARK kiddos perform this year's Christmas Narrative and for our church to bear witness to their hard work. I look forward to the wonderful activities that are to come, and I am excited to reflect on the gifts of hope and renewal that Christ brings to the world this Advent season.

With Joy and Excitement,

Krysta Flaharty
Director of Children's Ministry

Youth Ministry

Connect and Confirmation

We are moving into the Christmas season, a season of giving. Our Connect and Confirmation youth are invited to take part in a tradition that has been upheld at Crown of Glory for the past fourteen years: our Annual Christmas Gift Night! Each year ,our youth go shopping at a local department store in search of gifts that will support charities for local families who normally would not be able to afford Christmas gifts. Students are asked to bring five dollars that will be matched by Crown of Glory. Students will use ten dollars to purchase a gift for a child in our community. Connect and Confirmation students can be dropped off at the Target Shopping Center in Chaska where they will be met by their adult small group leaders and shop for the evening! All gifts will be collected, paid for, and offered at a local charity. Please see the times listed below for Connect and Confirmation students.



Connect Christmas Gift Night December 8

- Drop Off Time at Target: 6:00 p.m.
 - * Shop for Christmas gifts for local families.
- Pick Up Time at Target: 6:45 p.m.



Confirmation Christmas Gift Night December 8

- Drop Off Time at Target: 7:00 p.m.
 - * Shop for Christmas gifts for local families.
- Pick Up Time at Target: 7:45 p.m.



9th Grade Confirmation: Affirmation of Baptism

We celebrated the Affirmation of Baptism for thirteen of our 9th grade students on Sunday, October 31 at a worship service attended by family and friends. We give thanks for each of these students as they celebrate this great milestone in their life and faith. Our thanks and appreciation to the 9th Grade Confirmation Guides and Leaders: Sherri Eriksrud, Michael Hammerschmidt, David Hauck, Andy Wright, and Confirmation Coordinator, Sherri Taylor!

Pastor Reggie Klindworth Senior Pastor



Confirmands

Kelsey Ruth Berkas
Caiden Patrick Burton
Bennett Gordon Eriksrud
Peter Allan Hammerschmidt
Josie Irene Hauck
Brayden Corey Husfeldt
Ella Jane Keenan
Senja Grace Leeper
Alexis Lynn Schaefer
Hannah Christine Sower
James Joseph Stifter
Quinn Bailey Swanson
Lucille Parker Wright

Senior High Youth Ministry

Senior High youth students, currently in 8th - 12th grade, are preparing for the National Youth Gathering (NYG) that will be hosted in Minneapolis from July 24-28, 2022!

The NYG welcomes nearly 29,000 youth from across the country to participate in this gathering! Visit the ELCA's website (www.elca.org/YouthGathering) to learn more.

If you missed the NYG Information and Registration Night on Wednesday, November 17, but would like to attend the NYG, please contact Pastor Reggie. Crown of Glory's registration deadline is December 21.

In the meantime, all 9th - 12th grade senior high youth are welcome to attend and invite a friend to the following events this winter:

- December: Give a Gift Event!
- Join us as we go shopping for Christmas gifts to support the local CAP Agency Christmas Gift Program that supports families in our community this Christmas season. Each student is invited to bring \$10, that will be matched, to purchase a gift at Target in Chaska on Thursday, December 9 from 6:00-7:00 p.m.! After shopping, we will all head to the coffee shop for a sweet treat! Join us for this Christmas time event.
- January: New Year's at the Burrows in Victoria! Join us at the Victoria Burrows for an evening of fun, games, and bringing in the New Year! Come for dinner, complements of CoG, and stay for games and more on Saturday, January 8 starting at 6:30 p.m.!
- February: Outdoor Sledding Event!
 Bring your favorite sled and join us at the Jonathan Elementary School back yard for a great time with friends. Sledding is on Sunday, February 20 from 3:00 -4:30 p.m.! Invite a friend, bring a sled, and get outside!
- March: Outdoor Skating Event!
 Bring your skates and join us at the clay-hole located in downtown Chaska at Firemen's Park on Wednesday, March 2 from 4:00-5:30 p.m.! Hot chocolate will be provided.

Adult Education and Ministry

Adult Forum



This educational opportunity will continue to take place from 10:05-10:40 a.m. on Sundays in-between worship services. A wide range of topics will be presented and discussed pertaining to our church life together, faith, and the broader community. Presentations will be

by the pastors, ministry team leaders, and outside speakers. Join in the conversation! Contact Pastor Laura with questions, or to make topic suggestions.

Women's Bible Study

Join fellow women of the Word once a month on a Saturday at 9:00 a.m. for coffee and a deep dive into a book of the Bible! All ages of women are welcome to attend. We will be continuing our study of the book of Esther before moving on to another book of the Bible (TBD). It is never too late to join us! The upcoming session dates are below, please contact Pastor Laura with questions and to get signed up!

Women's Bible Study Dates:

December 11

January 22

February 19

March 19

April 23

May 21



Women's Bible Study

Couples' Bible Study

Join other couples at Crown of Glory in exploring and animating our faith together! This unique Bible study dives into faith and Bible topics in a format tailored to couples journeying in faith together. We meet on the first Sunday of the month (except December and January) from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Crown of Glory. Childcare is provided by Krysta Flaharty, Director of Children's Ministry. The upcoming session dates are below, please contact Pastor Laura with questions and to get signed up!

Couples' Bible Study Dates:

December 12

January 9

February 6

March 6

April 3

May 1





Time to Party!

"Proper, prior, preparation prevents poor performance."
(David Kallman)

Let us have a party! Let us make it a really, great, big, wonderful party because last year's party was, by necessity, a rather subdued affair. However, there is a lot to do first. We need to decide where and when, who to invite, and how to get the invitations out and accept the RSVPs. We need to decide what to serve, what food and drink the invitees will enjoy, do the shopping, the prepping, the chopping, the cooking, and figure out how best to serve the food. We need to clean the house, vacuum the rugs, wash the floors and windows, and maybe rearrange the furniture if we think we will need the extra space. We need to decorate the house and set the table. You get the idea. There is a lot of proper, prior preparation that goes into a good party. Yet all this work is actually pretty exciting, rewarding, and even fun because we know who the party is for and that it will be fantastic!

David Kallman was my first band teacher. He taught me how to play French Horn, my main instrument until I was about 22. He instilled in all his students that "proper, prior, preparation prevents poor performance," a saying that I still use when I direct choirs today. I love the alliteration! Not surprisingly, this axiom applies not just to music but to many situations in life: school, work, sports, marriage, children, etc. It also applies to parties and to Christmas.

If Christmas can be thought of as a party, (and I think it can) then it is a party that needs proper, prior preparation. We are celebrating nothing less than the birth of the greatest embodiment of love this world has ever known. That is certainly worth a great party and our very best efforts. This season, we will sing:

God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay.

Remember, Christ our Savior was born of Christmas Day to save us all from hate and woe when we were gone astray.

O, tidings of comfort and joy!

I love the construction of the old English words. Today instead of "rest ye merry" we might say, "celebrate, be joyful, have fun, party!"

So, as we enter the season of Advent, and anticipate Christmas, we have some preparation to do. The more diligently and properly we prepare, the better the party will be. We want it to be grand! Let us read the scriptures that remind us of our need for love and grace, hope and truth. Let us sing the songs that express our joy and excitement, our expectation and wonder. With Isaiah, let us see our salvation. With Mary, let us ponder the miraculous. Each week, Pastors Reggie and Laura will remind us to prepare, pray, breathe, and rejoice.

Be assured that, just like my weekly French horn lessons with Mr. Kallman, Christmas will come whether we are ready for it or not. Jesus will be born into our lives and love will enter our world whether we prepare or not. Perhaps our preparations, in addition to being fun and rewarding in and of themselves, will make the party sweeter, and perhaps the birth of divine love in our hearts and minds will fulfill what God means for this world to be.

I wish you a thoughtful Advent, a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!

Tom Paulson
Director of Music and Worship

The Advent season is about to begin and 2021 is almost over. The Crown of Glory community has worked our way through a very tumultuous year, as we continue to find the right path out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our congregation has mostly held together through the last 20 months, but we have suffered. We have accomplished a lot but have also fallen short on many of our goals.

We reported in August that at the end of July that we had a shortfall of \$50,000 in our revenue vs. our expenses. Unfortunately giving has continued to be short of our goals. At the end of October, we are about \$65,000 "in the red." In the last Crownicle, we also noted that we received a \$58,000 loan from the Paycheck Protection Program, intended to help us pay salaries and cover mortgage expenses. I am happy to report that the Small Business Administration has forgiven this loan. So, our shortfall is a more manageable \$7,000. We also reported that expenses through July were \$14,000 under our budget, thanks to the Staff's efforts to reduce expenses. Through October, expenses are now \$24,000 under budget, as we continue to cut expenses to meet our fiscal responsibilities.

The Finance Team is now working on a budget plan for 2022. We know we must face the realities of 2020 and 2021 and plan for lower contributions from our congregation. Plus, we recognize the potential for increased expenses for basics, such as heating and air conditioning, cleaning services, and more as inflation affects overall costs. In 2021, our mortgage expenses totaled 34% of our budget. Our Staff expenses totaled 46%, and the remaining 20% includes utilities, insurance, office expenses, external mission support and more. There is very little room for cutting expenses any more than we have already, making our budget challenge great. In addition, during 2022, we will have over \$200,000 in personal loans from members of our congregation that must be paid or refinanced. As we work through the budget process with the Finance Team, the Staff, and the Council, we will consider all these factors and look for the best way to be fiscally responsible.

As we enter Advent, we ask you to consider an increase in your giving to help us end the year in a stronger financial position. As a community and a congregation, we have come far over the last several years. We have completed our new building project, reduced our debt, and strengthened our Staff. We continue to help our ministries, such as Bountiful Basket, Loaves & Fishes, Launch Ministry, Love INC, Green Lake Bible Camp, and more. We still have a lot to do and ending 2021 strong will give us a head start on what could be another challenging year. Thank you for considering helping Crown of Glory continue to be a strong part of our community.

Steve Tinker

Finance Team Chairperson, Council Member

Finance Team: David Hauck, Jill Nelson, Ashley Pederson, Lori Robinson, Jodi Sie, and Steve Tinker



Council Corner

2021 Council

<u>President</u> Grant Taylor

Vice President
Rachel Berg Scherer

Interim Secretary
Steve Clay

Members:
Julie Brown

Mary Leopold

Jodi Sie

Steve Tinker

Rebecca Varone

Pastor Reggie

Pastor Laura



Kathy and I moved back to our home state of Minnesota from the Chicago area in 2014 and settled in to Chaska. We found Crown of Glory and were welcomed into the congregation. We were impressed by the friend-liness of the members and the Pastors. The congregation had just approved a major expansion of the church building, and construction started soon after we joined the church. We decided to begin volunteering and getting involved in various ministries. Soon after I expressed an interest in the church finances to Pastor Matt, I was asked if I would consider joining the Council.

Fast forward to 2021, and I am finishing my second term on the Council, six years of serving the congregation, and two years as the Council president. We have gone through a lot in the last six years and experienced many ups and downs. Our building project dragged on for a few years, but we are finally mostly complete; we just have to finish the last updates of our parking lot. We celebrated the 50th anniversary of Crown of Glory with a wonderful year-long celebration. We worked our way into a strong financial position that enabled us to refinance our mortgage and pay off over \$500,000 of personal loans from our members. We have experienced major Staff changes. We placed a Peace Pole on our grounds. We sold a parcel of our lot, swapped for a new area in an agreement with Pulte, and the new housing development is well on its way as new homes are being constructed. We have all worked together to find our way out of the pandemic, and we have explored the best ways to continue our worship at Crown of Glory.

I am impressed by the congregation and the volunteers at Crown of Glory. When needed, the membership has stepped up to contribute time, talents, and money to help us overcome obstacles and raise up the spirit of community, friends, family, and the church. As a life-time volunteer in all kinds of organizations, I know the personal satisfaction of helping make things better. As I prepare to leave the Council, I want to remind you of the joy that can be found when you volunteer and contribute your expertise, draw on your life experiences, and dedicate your free time in service to a greater good. I encourage those of you that may be thinking about how you can serve Crown of Glory to: express your thoughts, add your voice to the conversation, and consider running for the Council. Your church will be grateful, and you will enjoy the experience!

Steve Tinker
Council Member



DECEMBER

- Dec. 5 Women's Advent Tea
- Dec. 11 Women's Bible Study
- Dec. 12 Couples' Bible Study
- Dec. 16 Men's Pub at Unmapped Brewing
- Dec. 19 Christmas Cantata
- Dec. 19 Christmas Narrative
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Worship
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day: No Worship
- Dec. 27 Office Closed: Christmas
 Day Observed
- Dec. 31 Final day to submit gifts for the 2021 calendar year

JANUARY

- January 1 New Year's Day: No Worship
- January 3— Office Closed: New Year's Day Observed
- January 9 Couples' Bible Study
- January 22—Women's Bible Study



FEBRUARY

- February 6 Couples' Bible Study
- February 19—Women's Bible Study



MARCH

- March 2 Ash Wednesday
- March 6 Couples' Bible Study
- March 19 Women's Bible Study









Crown of Glory Lutheran Church 1141 Cardinal Street Chaska, MN 55318

