



First of the Month @ CLC

November 1, 2022

Dear Christ Lutheran Church,

Happy All Saints Day. While October 31 is “All Hallows Eve,” November 1 is the Hallowed Day. And it is so because we honor the memory of those who have lived their life faithfully, and now rest as saints in God’s eternal kingdom. While I am remembering the four Christ Lutheran Church members who passed away since last November 1 (and whose names will be spoken in worship this coming Sunday), I also recall those who have passed and who have been influential in my life of faith. I hope you have opportunity to remember those who have likewise influenced you.

The activity around Christ Lutheran Church is exceptionally high. I do not remember a time when there has been so much happening. You ought to see the campus calendar; there are days when not a room is available anywhere!

Our Sunday worship theme for November is *UR Church*. The word, “church,” has the two letters right in the middle, U-R, which suggests that “you are” an essential part of what the church is and does. I am excited to share that we will have two guest preachers this month who will share what it means to be the church in local and global outreach. Adrienne Hillman, founder and CEO of Salt and Light, will speak on November 6 about doing ministry to and among the homeless in Tulare County. On November 20, Pastor Lisa Kipp, from Lutheran World Relief, will be with us. She will give us insight into how we are a part of the Church in matters of need around the world.

I am also excited to share that we will not only gather for Thanksgiving Eve worship on Wednesday, November 23, but that we will once again enjoy a pie social following worship. Bring a pie to share! Much of the service will include our Lahu members, including an insightful message which will provide greater understanding of the Lahu experience. Worship is at 7:00pm.

We have also “kicked off” our 2023 Pledging Campaign. Members have received their 2023 pledge card in the mail and have been asked to prayerfully fill it out and return it to the church some time in November or early December. While every pledger will remain anonymous, the cumulative total of pledge amounts will be tallied and displayed on the wall in the foyer. Our goal for 2023 is to reach the level of \$750,000 in pledges, which would be a 17% increase over 2022. May God move in your hearts to rise to the occasion of supporting your church for ministry in the year to come.

Some additional events in November worthy of your attention:

- Sunday, November 6, there is an informational meeting for those interested in attending the summer 2023 Servant Trip to Thailand. The meeting is at 12:30 in the office conference room.
- Sunday, November 6, the Central San Joaquin Valley Conference will meet at Christ Lutheran Church at 2:00 to meet interim Bishop Claire Burkat, and synod vice-president Simon Wong. All are invited to attend.

- Saturday, November 12, at 11:00, we gather to celebrate the life of Eleanor Hawkins. A luncheon will follow.
- Sunday, November 20, at 10:45 in the Christian Life Center, a special conversation with community leaders regarding their perspective of need in our city. Consultant Jeff Kjellberg will facilitate this conversation. All are invited.
- Sunday, November 20, at 4:00pm in the Christian Life Center, there will be an informational meeting for those interested in a Calvin Reformation tour in September of 2023.

We are also focusing our attention in November in preparing for a unique and wonderful way to be of service to our neighbors on the streets during Christmas. On Christmas Day afternoon, at 2:00pm, we will be joining a couple other churches in providing a meal for people experiencing homelessness. Volunteers are needed. In addition, we are collecting hygiene items to package up and give away. We are collecting these items throughout November and early December. Check out the weekly eBlast to see what items are needed. We hope to reach 250 people and make this a Christmas where they hear and experience the love of God through our efforts. What better way to honor the Christchild, who himself, was a survivor of the streets of Bethlehem.

On a personal note, I ask your prayers for ChristKids Preschool. Because of Universal Transitional Kindergarten, our enrollment at the Preschool has dropped considerably. Every effort is being made to “get the word out” about the value of a ChristKids Preschool experience, and to offer this experience to as many children as possible. Our director, Denise Egge, and her staff, have done a wonderful job, but they (along with the Preschool Board) need our prayers and encouragement as they make their way through this challenging time. Thank you for your support.

And finally, I wish to highlight a portion of the information shared by our consultants at the October 9th presentation. As you may recall, the consultants met with over 100 members who shared their hopes and dreams for CLC’s future. The section of the report (which can be found on the CLC web site), “Identifying the Next Senior Pastor,” states...

The primary focus for the future is to build on the strengths of the congregation established under Brian’s leadership but with need to establish and embrace a new and more missional direction. In a changed and changing cultural landscape, it is no longer viable to ‘do business and usual.’ To this end, Christ Lutheran has engaged The Joshua Group to guide them toward identifying and embracing their core identity and discovering a preferred future. It is upon and in concert with this work that the new Senior Pastor will be able to inject their vision for where the church will go in the years ahead. It is especially important that the future includes successful efforts to engage younger people and families while crafting a more focused and well-integrated missional engagement with the broader community. Therefore, the next Senior Pastor at Christ Lutheran Church of Visalia will be:

- *Highly relational, initiating connections and coming to know people personally, extending love, care and grace.*
- *A biblically centered preacher who is relevant, engaging, personable and theologically articulate and astute.*
- *Able to bridge the gap between conservative and more progressive realities of the congregation and community.*
- *Forward looking and imaginative but also aware of the correct pace of change for the organization.*
- *Motivated and skilled at empowering the people for ministry including staff, lay leadership and members.*
- *Committed to doing all things with excellence.*

The next Senior Pastor is one who, ‘Seeks after God’s leading and effectively communicates that to the congregation,’ [and who] ‘Loves deeply and cares but is driven and courageous in shaping the future.’

Toward that end, I invite you to join me, and the whole church, in prayer.

Peace,

Pastor Brian Malison