



You Can't Steal What Is Given Freely

Sometime in the night of November 30, an unknown individual broke a window and entered Zion. It seemed that they did not steal anything at first, but we later discovered the loss of an iPhone solely dedicated for streaming church services. They did not vandalize anything, other than the broken window. It looks like they rustled through a drawer or two, but it doesn't seem like anything else is missing. Yes, all the wine is still here too. We reported this to the police and placed the card with the case number on a bulletin board in the main office, next to the other card that is there from our 2017 break in. You might also remember when we had a rock thrown through a window in 2018. Churches are fairly soft targets for vandals and thieves because, in general, no one is there in the late night hours. My experience with security systems is that they are very good at detecting members of the altar guild, but not thieves or vandals. I've spent many late nights going through churches with police officers who have been alerted by a security alarm over this or that non-threatening thing. There's also the now-legendary incident of the alarm detecting a congregation in the church on Christmas Eve!

What are the thieves looking for? Anyone who spends much time here will know that we don't have much in the way of material riches. The Trinity window above the altar is probably the most valuable thing here, and you won't be stealing that very easily. We hardly deal with much cash either. The church's riches are not silver or gold, but flesh and blood. We give freely that which cannot be stolen. The Lord has given us great gifts to share and receive in the church. Can these be stolen? Can the good news of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ be taken away from you? You have been marked with the Name of the Lord, taught and declared with the Word of God, and fed with the true flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, raised from the dead. These are our treasures. All other treasures will fail, rust, or get lost. We receive what cannot fade away, and which shines brightly in this dark world. Our treasures are stored in heaven. More than that, you are the treasures of the church too.

St. Lawrence was a deacon in the 3rd century. His bishop had been arrested, and Lawrence was given three days to gather all the riches of the church and hand them over to the authorities. He sold everything and gave it to the poor. When the authorities came to confiscate the church's treasures, Lawrence pointed to the gathered congregation and said, "These are the treasures of the church! The church is truly rich, far richer than the emperor." He was then burned alive on a gridiron.

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My prayer is that the people who have broken into our church building would repent and believe the gospel. I'd love for them to come and receive these true riches and great treasures which we share here. There is forgiveness for these vandals and thieves. We truly are rich here, richer than any man can even imagine. We worship a God who is born to poor parents of low estate, yet holds everything. You cannot buy what we are given, and cannot steal what is free. The Lord who hung between two thieves has mercy on us all. There is forgiveness here for all sorts of sinners, and it is given freely by the Lord Jesus Christ.

+Pastor Kyle Mietzner

CHURCH NOTES

Christian Education Opportunities

*Our schedules are changing constantly due to Covid.
Check for updates in the bulletin, during
announcements and in weekly emails.*

Children's Sunday School—on hold

Adult Bible Study—Sundays @ 11am
—will resume in January

Women's Study—will resume in January

Youth Catechesis—Wednesdays @ 4pm via Zoom

Birthdays

| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| Ellee Mietzner | 12/1 |
| James Anderson | 12/2 |
| Pedro Davila | 12/2 |
| Georgia Monzon | 12/9 |
| Rebekah Glowinski | 12/16 |
| Susan Lively | 12/31 |



Helping Hands Meal Prep

Our outreach program to help feed residents at Brother Francis Shelter and Clare House has resumed at a reduced level. Due to social distancing guidelines, Helping Hands are recruited as needed.

Church Contacts

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|----------------------|---|
| Church Office: | 338-3838 |
| Preschool Office: | 222-3838 |
| Pastor's cell phone: | (336)944-2394 |
| Church address: | 2100 Boniface Pkwy Anchorage, AK 99504 |



Pioneer Home Christian Fellowship

Suspended temporarily.

Offerings

You are welcome to mail your offerings to the church to be presented during the next Sunday worship service. This can also be done through your financial institution's BillPay service.

Advent & Christmas Services



Advent Services will be held on Wednesdays, December 4, 11 & 18.
There will be a potluck at 6pm and Vespers Service at 7pm.

December 24 Christmas Eve Service of Lessons & Carols at 7pm

December 24 Christmas Eve Divine Service at 11pm

December 25 Christmas Day Divine Service at 10am

STEWARDSHIP

Christmas is coming. It is a joyous time of feasting. The Church feasts upon the Word of God in sermon, song, and sacrament.

We hear the proclamation of the message of the angels: “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11). We mingle our voices with theirs as we sing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased” (Luke 2:14)! We receive the proclaimed Savior, Christ the Lord, not wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in manger but wrapped in bread and wine placed into our mouths for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. We feast in great joy indeed because of this great blessing from our Lord and God.

God’s people in ancient Israel also feasted with great joy. The Lord showered His abundant blessing on His people. And He commanded them to feast upon it (Deuteronomy 16). The people were to go to the place appointed, where the Lord would make His name dwell, and give offerings, each man as he was able, according to the blessing of the Lord that He had given them (Deut. 16:10, 15, 17).

And there the Lord would bless them with joy as they feasted upon what the Lord had provided. They ate of the choice parts of their offerings. They enjoyed the company of all the people of God as they together heard His promises of blessing, sang of His bountiful goodness, and partook of what He gave.

We feast on the Word who became flesh to dwell among us, not just during Christmas but throughout all the year. We feast not just on the salvation He has wrought for us in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, but we feast also on all the temporal blessings that God gives out of His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us. We enjoy the rich bounty that God provides, not only in Word and Sacrament, but also in house and home, property and income, family and friends.

Let us then, as did our brothers in the faith from ancient Israel, give as we are able, according to the blessing of the Lord our God that He has given us. Let us, like them, give generously of the first fruits of our income, which He gives, so that all may know and enjoy the salvation He gives and the joy we have in the Savior born in the city of David, who is Christ the Lord.

lcms.org

FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

Janet McCullough zionlcmsmusic@yahoo.com

Due to health advisories related to choral groups during this COVID pandemic, we will not resume adult choir practice for the foreseeable future. My hope for Christmas is that we can fill our liturgies with solo and family musical offerings.



Christmas Eve 7pm – Lessons and Carols
Christmas Eve 11pm – Midnight Divine Service
Christmas Day 10am – Divine Service



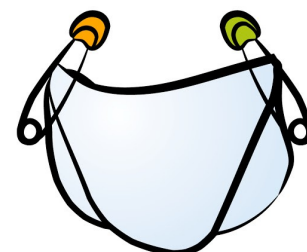
If you play an instrument and/or are a vocal soloist and are willing to share your talent in our Christmas liturgies, please contact me. I would also love to have some instrumental players who are willing to join in accompanying the carols. Please contact me with any questions and to let me know what you are willing to contribute to our Christmas music.

Lutheran Social  Services of Alaska

LSSA Diaper Drive

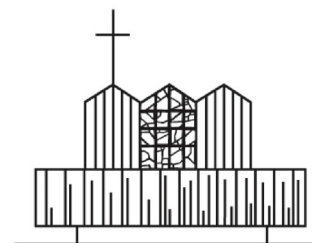
Every year for the LWML Women's Advent Brunch, the ladies bring diapers to aid LSSA and their clients, which creates a good supply of this much needed staple for low income families with infants. This year, the Advent Brunch is canceled, but we're being asked to help with keeping the diaper tradition alive. During the month of December, please keep LSSA in your thoughts as you are out shopping. The need is for **medium** and **large** size diapers, any quantity. Bulk boxes are absolutely welcome, as LSSA breaks these into smaller packages for various size households. Monetary donations are also gladly accepted. Please leave diapers in the coat area.

And as always, food items are needed to stock the LSSA food pantry. Consider picking up even one extra item for LSSA during your next grocery trip. Donations can be left in the LSSA box in the coat area.





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DECEMBER

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|-----------|------------------------------------|--|--|--|-----------|
| 29 9:30am Divine Service 11am Bible Study | 30 | 1-Dec 7pm Elders Meeting | 2 4pm Youth Catechesis via Zoom 7pm Advent Service | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 9:30am Divine Service 11am Bible Study | 7 | 8 7pm Council Meeting | 9 4pm Youth Catechesis via Zoom 7pm Advent Service | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 9:30am Divine Service 11am Bible Study | 14 | 15 | 16 4pm Youth Catechesis via Zoom 7pm Advent Service | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 9:30am Divine Service 11am Bible Study | 21 | 22 | 23 4pm Youth Catechesis via Zoom | 24 7pm Service of Lessons & Carols 11pm Midnight Divine Service | 25 10am Christmas Divine Service | 26 |
| 27 9:30am Divine Service 11am Bible Study | 28 | 29 | 30 4pm Youth Catechesis via Zoom | 31 | 1-Jan | 2 |