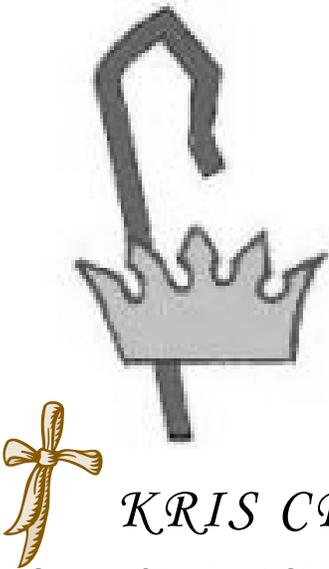


THE STAFF

Shepherd King Lutheran Church

DECEMBER
2019

OFFICE HOURS: Monday—Thursday 9-4
Closed Fridays



KRIS CROSS.

Some of the best Christian theology is found in traditional hymns. This is especially true of the Advent and Christmas season. How do we explain the expectant waiting we engage in during Advent? How can we express clearly the meaning of “God with us,” incarnate in Jesus Christ? Hymns do a great job of that.

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear. Rejoice!” This has been one of my favorite hymns since I was a small child. I love the mysterious aura created by the music in a minor key. It seems to conjure the presence of the holy in a slightly frightening, breath-taking way, underscoring God’s otherness, holiness, and grandeur.

What are we hoping the Savior will do when he arrives? *“O Come, O Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan’s tyranny; from depths of hell your people save, and give them victory over the grave. Rejoice!”* (ELW, #257) What a beautiful counterpoint created by the solemn music and the glorious word “rejoice!”

I’m not sure my Advent sermons always convey the incredible hope of this season, the tingling expectation, even greater than a child looking for presents under the tree. The reality of Christmas is much deeper than receiving gifts or even warm and happy family gatherings. It is this:

“O Lord, how shall I meet you, how welcome you aright? Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart’s delight! Oh, kindle, Lord most holy, your lamp within my breast to do in spirit lowly all that may please you

best...Love caused your incarnation; love brought you down to me. Your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty. Oh, love beyond all telling, that led you to embrace in love, all love excelling, our lost and fallen race.” (ELW 241)

I can’t say it better than the hymns in our hymnal. Advent is upon us. We are filled with joyful expectation. As the days pass slowly, we reflect on who is coming and what it means for us and the whole world. We wait and watch, barely containing our excitement at what will be when Jesus arrives. The Advent message is one worth sharing, through our living and our singing.

“All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last...Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace! All clear every gateway, in haste, come out in haste!” (ELW 266)

Worship with us this Advent. Get caught up in the hope and excitement. Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming, bringing welcome, love, and new life.

Pastor Kris



Pastor Kris will take her final week of vacation from Thursday, December 26 through Wednesday, January 1, 2020.



Stewardship thought – using the gifts God has given us, wisely and for good.

“Remember this – you can’t serve God and Money, but you can serve God with money.” *Selwyn Hughes, English pastor and author*

“In this covenant (Genesis 9:9-11 – after the flood), God made a commitment not to destroy the Earth. Because of our love for God and our desire to be the image of God, a reciprocal covenant from us is an important act. Lovingly caring and nurturing health within all of God’s creation is an outstanding act of stewardship.” *Luke Gasho in Creation Care: Keepers of the Earth.*



New Members

Shepherd King will receive new members on Sunday, December 1. Please speak to Pastor Kris if you are interested in joining.



Advent and Christmas

Advent will be upon us on December 1st, and Christmas 24 days later. We will observe the season each Sunday, but especially in the following ways:

Sunday morning, December 8, during worship the choir with voices from Ebenezer Lutheran in Maxwell will present a cantata called “Messiah, Heaven’s Glory.” Afterwards we will have our traditional holiday lunch in the Fellowship Hall.

All are invited to go Christmas caroling with us to home bound members on Sunday, December 22, from 4 to about 6 pm. We will meet at the church at 3:45 and leave promptly at 4:00.

We will celebrate Jesus’ birth on Christmas Eve, December 24, with worship at 5pm. Friend and guest, Don Irwin, will provide special music on the piano, not only during the service, but beginning at 4:30. Come early and enjoy the sounds of the season.

Christmas lasts for 12 days. On Sunday, December 29, we will have Lessons and Carols for morning worship.

And on January 5, the final day of the Christmas season, we’ll look forward to Epiphany Day.

Worship with us!

Congregational Meeting

The first pass of the proposed budget for 2019 will be held immediately following worship on Sunday, December 1st. At this meeting all members will receive a copy of the proposed budget. The treasurer and financial administrator will go over it, section by section, to point out any increases or changes. Members will then have until the meeting in January to think about the budget and raise any questions they might have. It will be voted on at the meeting in January.

Mission Endowment Fund Forum

You should have received in the mail a letter and an FAQ sheet about Shepherd King’s plans to establish a Mission Endowment Fund. Please read them both carefully. There will be a congregational forum after worship on Sunday, December 1, to discuss these plans. Bring your questions and your comments and be sure to stay for the meeting. A Mission Endowment would provide a new avenue for members and friends to support the ministry of Shepherd King into the future.

Adult Forums

We were glad to have Blair Thompson with us on November 3, to talk about the ministry of the San Antonio Children's Bereavement Center. Located at 205 West Olmos, the Center helps children who've lost a loved one, and families who have lost a child make their way through grief. If you would be interested in taking a tour of the Children's Bereavement Center (daytime, week days), let Pastor Kris or the office know and we can look into scheduling that.

On December 1 we will welcome Paul Pfeifer, member of St. Paul Lutheran in Karnes City. He will tell us about the work that AMMPARO does. The word "amparo" in Spanish means to protect a living creature from suffering or damage. AMMPARO stands for: Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities and is a ministry of the ELCA.

All Adult Forums begin at 8:45 am



Sunday School

Lane Ongstad will conclude his course on "Heaven and Earth" at the end of December.

Beginning January 12, Pastor Kris will begin teaching a class on Racism, using as resources "Black and White: Disrupting Racism One Friendship at a Time" by Teesha Hadra and John Hambrick, and "Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in America" by Lenny Duncan. We'll wrestle with what the term "White Privilege" means in our world and in our lives. The class on racism, 8:45 to 9:30 Sunday mornings, is open to all. Children's

Sunday school meets on the first Sunday of the month, at 9:00.



Poinsettias

Poinsettias are used to beautify our chancel area for the Christmas season. They are given to the glory of God and in honor of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Please purchase your own plant and bring it to the church by Saturday, December 21 at 11:00 a.m. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex so we can list the contributors in the December 22 & Christmas Eve Bulletins.

Staff Christmas Gift

Shepherd King has a long standing tradition, that on Christmas Eve we present the Pastor and Staff with a token of our appreciation. The Church Council is asking the congregation, if they are able, to consider sending a monetary gift no later than December 15 to the church office or placing it in the offertory plate on Sundays. Make sure you designate your gift to the staff, pastor, or individual of your choosing. Their hard work and dedication to SKLC is often taken for granted, please let us show them how much they mean to us.

Sincerely,
The Church Council



RACHEL CIRCLE
 CHRISTMAS DINNER
 Tuesday, December 3, 2019
 6:30 p.m. at Alamo Café
 RSVP With Mary Ridgeway

MEN'S EARLY BREAKFAST
 Thursday, December 19
 8:00 a.m.
 Magnolia Pancake House



Sunday, December 8

Please bring an entrée, appetizer, vegetable, salad or dessert to serve 8. ***Hors d'oeuvres will be served immediately after the service.*** Lunch will begin around 11:45 AM to allow those participating in the worship service time to finish with their duties before they join us.

LADIES LUNCHEON
 Will not meet in December



Miller Child Development Center

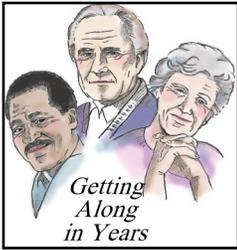
As we have in years past, we would like to once again collect new toys for the 50 children at the Miller Child Development Center. These children range in age from 6 months to 5 years old. Please place the UNWRAPPED gifts in the box in the Narthex of the church or in the Fellowship Hall through December 8. Support Ministries will deliver them to the center on Monday, December 9. Their staff then picks the gifts that will fit each young child. Thank you for bringing joy to these children.

The Ladies Corner

At some point in my younger years I read that time goes faster as we "age." I don't think that I really believed that but I do now! It seems that I just wrote the article for the November issue of the STAFF and it was not my best. I was negative as I reflect on that article. I did not mention that Thanksgiving is probably my favorite holiday (Family, Food, Friends, Food and Football) because it is almost stress free. But there is hope. The Christ Child is coming and we will rejoice once again as we feel the peace and the goodwill that comes with God's Gift. We are saved through Grace and it is a precious gift. It allows us to continue to serve our Lord and to make a difference in this world. Instead of lamenting (as I did) have a grateful disposition. Counting our blessings increases well-being. And we have so many to count! Please read Linda Post Bushkofsky's article on page 38 of the December Gather. When you have finished, read it again. It speaks to all of us.



Merry Christmas, Peace.
 Shirley Hormuth, Coordinator



Getting Along In Years—Don Hill

Cognitive Reserve Part 2

The research from the Nuns Study, which was the subject of Part 1 of this essay, and its unexpected results delivered an important question mark. How could subjects like Sister Mary, who exhibited little in the way of dementia pathology while alive, show at autopsy the abundance of evidence necessary to have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease? Neither she, nor the other subjects who exhibited a similar anomaly, had had any medical or cognitive interventions to account for this. Then what explains this apparent resistance to so dread a disease as Alzheimer's?

Many in the medical community believe the explanation is Cognitive Reserve. The primary source for this essay is Dr. Yaakov Stern, considered the father of Cognitive Reserve since much, but by no means all, of the research on CR in the past three decades has been his.

Advances in medical technology have sharpened to the point that researchers are adding both density and facets to Cognitive Reserve: a blessing, certainly, but nonetheless one which needs to be approached in small pieces. The following is a long quotation from Yaakov Stern's 2013 research paper, "Cognitive Reserve in Aging and Alzheimer's Disease." I have added in bold and parenthetical print, numbers prior to sentences needing further discussion, and will reference them below:

The concept of Cognitive Reserve (CR) first emerged from epidemiologic observations. **(1)** While epidemiologic studies can only describe correlations and do not directly test causation, they are useful for deriving hypotheses and exploring ideas. **(2)** A wealth of epidemiologic studies suggest that an array of life exposures seem to be associated with a reserve against age or Alzheimer's Disease (DR)-related pathology. **(3)** While the original observations concern easily measurable variables like education or occupational attainment, more recent studies have delved more deeply into lifestyle factors, cognitively stimulating behaviors, personality factors and the like. **(4)** In the aggregate, they suggest that contributions to reserve come from multiple sources, and that reserve is not a fixed entity but can change across the lifespan depending on exposures and behaviors. **(5)** This is a hopeful idea, since it suggests that changes in lifestyle even later in life might impart reserve against age-related cognitive decline or dementia. Despite this exciting possibility, carefully controlled studies will be required in order to translate this idea into a practical intervention. Such studies would yield practical information both about the combination and timing of activities that may lead to more successful aging. (Stern 2013)

(1) This kind of research is exacting, particularly when it comes to declaring something proven; and researchers are cautious with that word. "Correlation" is a first step. Stern mentions correlation in the second sentence above; the idea supports sections such as: "Epidemiologic Evidence for Reserve," "Neuroimaging Studies of Cognitive Reserve," and "Neural Mechanisms Underlying CR [Cognitive Reserve]. The term refers to empirical support for his hypothesis. The scientific method, and, thus the validity of the claim for correlation, rests on a future researcher's ability to replicate the results of the original test. If so, the process proceeds; if not the conversation ends and a new path is chosen.

(2) and (3) Here the author is highlighting one of the most important aspects of CR: how it is acquired. He has analyzed the autopsy and the subject's medical and cognitive history, as well as her or his *curriculum vitae*. An analytical process will be followed with all subjects, in the search

(Continued on pg. 6)

(Getting Along In Years continued)

for clues or patterns of similarity. Stern, reviewing past research, as well as his own work, saw a correlation in levels of education. He writes: "The relationship between education and dementia is controversial. Several epidemiological studies report a higher prevalence of Alzheimer's disease (AD) in individuals with fewer years of education." (Stern 1992) And additionally:

Several lines of evidence suggest that aspects of life experience such as educational or occupational attainment provide a "cognitive reserve" against the clinical manifestation of the neuropathologic changes of AD. Higher educational and occupational attainment has been associated with a reduced risk of incident dementia. (Stern 1999)

(4) There are two salient points here to consider. With regard the building of Cognitive Reserve, Stern cites one of his studies in the subject:

...we evaluated the effect of thirteen activities, combining intellectual, physical, and social elements. Some of the activities with the most effect were reading, visiting friends or relatives, going to movies or restaurants, and walking for pleasure or going on an excursion...there are a variety of options."(Stern 119, *Sharp Brains Guide to Brain Fitness* 2013)

As a prescription for improving one's health, this is not a tough pill to swallow.

And, regarding the best time to practice these things, Stern says:

...no matter one's age, education, or occupation, our level of participation in leisure activities has a significant and cumulative effect. A key message here is that different activities have independent, synergistic effects. This means that the more things you do and the earlier you start, the better. But you are never stuck. It is better to start late than never. (Stern 119)

(5) This is indeed a hopeful sign. The research, Stern's and others, has built a strong case for the efficacy of Cognitive Reserve, despite the fact that it is still *correlation*, at this time, rather than *causation*.

It is a case sufficient in its strength to urge one to implement the kind of lifestyle changes Stern suggests in his Conclusion. So much of Cognitive Reserve - and one's access to it - depends not only on how we have already lived our lives, but also on the way we decide to live the rest of our lives— and I believe most importantly – on our focus on our intentions. And remember, it is better to start late than never.

Works Cited

- [Stern, Yaakov. "Cognitive Reserve in Ageing and Alzheimer's Disease." *Lancet Neurology*, Vol. 11 No.11 November 2012. Google](#)
- [Stern, Yaakov, et al. "Inverse Relationship Between Education and Parietotemporal Perfusion Deficit in Alzheimer's Disease." *Annals of Neurology*, Vol. 32 No. 3, 1992. Google](#)
- [Stern, Yaakov, et al. "Rate of Memory Decline³ in AD is Related to Education and Occupation." *Neurology* Vol. 53 December 1999. Google](#)
- [Stern, Yaakov. "Building the Cognitive Reserve." *Sharpbrains Guide to Brain Fitness*. Eds. Alvaro Fernandez, Elkhonon Goldberg, and Pascale Michelon. Sharpbrains, Inc. 2013 \(Book\)](#)

Bridges to Hope: Mental Health Training for Clergy and Faith Leaders.

In January, there are two opportunities to attend this training, offered by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Participants will receive an overview on mental health myths, guidelines for recognizing mental health disorders, and resources to address them.

You can attend Bridges to Hope on either Thursday, January 9, or Saturday, January 25, at Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Austin, 9 am to 2 pm. Registration is \$10 to cover the cost of lunch.

If you cannot go in person, the event is also offered for streaming online. There is no cost to participate online.

Pastor Kris plans to attend one of the workshops in Austin. Please let her know if you are interested in going, or in following the conference online. She'll help you get registered.



Farewell

Thank you so much for the many cards, calls, and personal well wishes shared with me, after the death of my father Edgar A. Owre who passed away in September. The outpouring of love from my family at Shepherd King will never be forgotten.

So it is with mixed emotions I have decided to move to Sacramento, California and live in the family home beginning in December. I have so many memories being part of SKLC and being part of your lives as you have been with mine, that made this decision difficult, but I feel now is the time to move closer to my family in California, who have been wanting me to move back for many years. I will be gone, but hopefully not forgotten as I begin a new chapter in my life. I promise to come visit SKLC and you in the upcoming years, and all of you (not at the same time) are welcome to visit me in California.

With all my love,
Eric L. Owre

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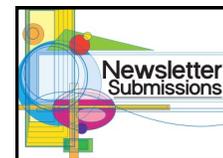
2019 Contribution Notice

Members of the congregation who desire to receive a tax donation credit are requested to have their contributions in the church office by December 31, 2019. If mailed, the envelope must be postmarked on or before December 31, 2019.



Holiday Office Closures

The church office will be closed for Christmas on December 25 & 26 and for New Year's at noon December 31 through January 1.



January STAFF

Please note that the deadline for the January STAFF will be the second Monday, December 9, 2019.

St. John Cassian Romanian Orthodox Church

Our friends at St. John Cassian Romanian Orthodox Church have purchased their own building near the corner of West Avenue and Highway 10, on Thorain Blvd. On Sunday, November 3, they held an inaugural worship service there; in attendance was the Romanian Archbishop. At the end of the service, Father Valentin presented Pastor Kris with an icon (pictured below). He said that the building where they will now be meeting was made possible because of the assistance and friendship offered by Shepherd King.

An icon not simply a picture. As explained in this website: http://www.orthodox.cn/catechesis/iconhistory_en.htm "... in all ages and in all cultures the icon is not a piece of art, but an aid to worship, and an instrument for the transmission of Christian tradition and faith. The Holy Spirit speaks to people through icons. Anywhere an icon is placed (except maybe in a museum) a place of worship and prayer is set, because the icon is not an end in itself, but a window through which we look with our physical eyes at the Kingdom of Heaven and the realm of spiritual experience. It is important to remember thus that the icon is concerned only with the sacred; the icon is theology in images and color... For the Orthodox Christian the icon is not an aesthetic object, or an object of study; it is "living art" if we can call it such. It is meant to transfigure and to inspire the person to prayer and contemplation."



This particular icon, showing the Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus, comes to us as a prayer for God's care and comfort, with the hope that we will be held as close to God as Jesus is being held close to Mary.

The congregation council will find a place to display the icon where all can see it and reflect on its message of God's love in Jesus Christ.

Financial Health

Contributions Income for OCT	\$ 19,580.00
Budget Required for OCT	\$ 22,636.00
4 Weeks in OCT	
Miscellaneous Income for OCT	\$ 388.59
MIF Loan Repayment From Donations	\$ 779.41
St. John Cassian (Bldg. Usage)	\$ 700.00
St. John Cassian (Extra Bldg. Usage)	\$ -0-
RC Academy (Bldg. Usage)	\$ 1,567.50



TOTAL INCOME TO OPERATIONS THRU OCT	
THRU OCT: 2019 CONTRIBUTIONS /MISC.	\$23,015.50
TOTAL EXPENSES FOR OCT	\$23,326.14
TOTAL INCOME	
CONTRIBUTIONS AND MISC. INCOME	
LESS EXPENSES for OCT	\$ <310.64>



December 1
Jean Tschirhart
Helen Veters

December 2
Hunter Pape

December 9
Janice Colvin

December 10
Gerri Schubert

December 14
JW Wendell

December 17
Lane Ongstad

December 19
J.D. Marek
Conner Strawn

December 21
Delmus Brau

December 26
Roberto Barron, Jr.

December 28
Jessie Tebbenkamp



SKLC Memorials

Donnie and Shirley Hormuth
In Memory of Edgar Owre
Donnie and Shirley Hormuth
In Memory of Vicki Gullickson



Upcoming Music Events

DECEMBER 6th, 7th, & 8th - TEXAS LUTHERAN'S CHRISTMAS VESPERS - "ALL EARTH IS HOPEFUL" in Jackson Auditorium on the TLU Campus, Seguin, Texas. December 6th & 7th Vespers begin at 7:30 pm and December 8th Vespers begin at 4 pm. Tickets are free but required due to limited seating. Tickets are available online or at the TLU Bookstore beginning November 1st. For more info and reservations, contact TLU at vespers@tlu.edu or (830) 372-8063. This year's program is a reminder of Advent as a time of quiet reflection, prayerful waiting, and hopeful anticipation of the birth of Christ.

DECEMBER 8th - MESSIAH - HEAVEN'S GLORY

@ Shepherd King during the 10 am worship will be presented by musicians from Shepherd King & Ebenezer, Maxwell. Following worship, a luncheon will be held in the Fellowship Hall.

DECEMBER 11th - CHRISTMAS CAROLING ON THE RIVER

@ 7:15 pm. SKLC has 2 barges reserved and one is already filled with our musicians! Seating is limited so please reserve your place ASAP by contacting Paula @ kummerps@gmail.com. Reservations are \$10 each.

DECEMBER 24—CHRISTMAS EVE—5 pm Candlelight Service. Steinway Artist, Don Irwin will provide special music beginning at 4:30 pm.

Shepherd King Lutheran Church

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CHURCH COUNCIL