



Sharing the Light

The mission of First Lutheran Church is to grow together in Christ through Prayer, Worship, and Education and to spread the love of Christ to our community.

December 2025

Publication of First Lutheran Church, Temple City, CA

Advent season, a time to look forward to the coming of our Savior, a time to reflect and remember our baptism and what it means. Slow down, don't get caught up in the rush, and relax. We are in God's hands and He is in control. Love is the reason for the season so let it flow, let it flow.

Pastor Frank Matthews



Embrace — Don't Skip — Advent

by Emily Olson, Lutheran Witness Magazine, November 29, 2017

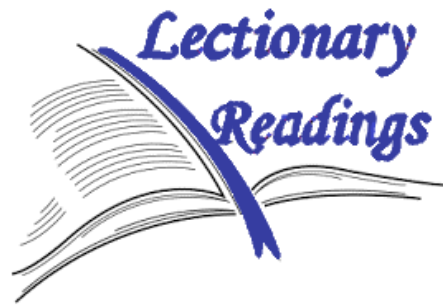
At a Reformation gathering in late October, surrounded by the warm tones of fall foliage, pumpkins, and Luther's roses, a friend who works in retail told me of her current workload. "Tonight's the night my coworkers unload all the holiday stock," she said. "Christmas starts tomorrow."

Her quip is sadly too true when it comes to American commercial culture. In the waning months of the year, we witness seemingly overnight transformations of merchandise displays to red, white, and green, silver and gold bedazzling Christmas tree twinkles. And the marketplace push of holiday ware appears to continually move earlier. We groan at the Christmas countdowns that appear in July or August. But if we're honest with ourselves, we have to acknowledge that we don't just half-heartedly capitulate to the merry jingles. According to retailers, consumer demand is why Christmas comes so early.

Let's face it. Though we know about Advent, most of us choose to skip it for the soft glow of a secularized holiday. We festoon our homes in garland, indulge in bonbons, and buy, wrap and even open gifts long before we've ever heard the Luke 2 readings in church describing Christ's birth. And while we know there are no hard and fast rules about when to haul out the holly, we often exercise our Christian freedom in such matters too freely. At best, our chase of cheery, festive markers of Christmas in the marketplace echoes our true and deep longings for lasting joy and fulfillment. But accelerating our celebrations is unlikely to provide the fix we need.

So what happens when we ignore Advent?

(Continued on page 5)



These are the Lectionaries for the month of December.

Dec. 7	Isaiah 11:1–10	Psalm 72:1–7	Rom. 15:4–13	Matt. 3:1–12
Second Sunday in Advent				
Dec. 14	Isaiah 35: 1–10	Psalm 146	James 5:7–11	Matt. 11:2–15
Third Sunday in Advent				
Dec. 21	Isaiah 7:10–17	Psalm 24	Rom. 1:1–7	Matt. 1:18–25
Fourth Sunday in Advent				
Dec. 24	Isaiah 7:10–14	Psalm 110:1–4 1	John 4:7–16	Matt. 1:18–25
Christmas Eve				
Dec. 28	Isaiah 63:7–14	Psalm 111	Gal. 4:4–7	Matt. 2:13–23
First Sunday after Christmas				

Worship Leader and Dates

Rev. Frank Matthews:

Sundays, December 7, 14, 21, and 28 at 8:30 a.m.

Wednesday, December 24, at 12:00 noon, Christmas Eve Day



Sunday School Time Every Sunday, 9:45 to 10:45 a.m.

Ushers: Craig Boehne, Dave Lassanske, and Don Lammerts

Readers: December 7 and 21: Richard Swanson
December 14 and 28: Christine Geltz

Greeters: December 7: Connie Kean December 21: Sharon Corey
December 14: Diane Oberlander December 28: Norma Boehne

If you are unable to attend worship, you may:

- Listen to the Lutheran Hour sermon at any time you choose – Just go to lhm.org/guide.
- View Worship Anew at 8:30 a.m. on Sundays on DirectTV, Channel 377 from our Fort Wayne Seminary in Indiana. Or you can view it any time at <https://worshipanew.org/by-type/watch?>.
- **Access and/or review First Lutheran sermons online by going to:**
<https://firstlutherantc.org/Media>.

Called to Glory: Rev. Scott Ganas



Please pray for the family and friends of retired pastor Scott Ganas who passed to heaven on November 23, 2025 while sitting in his recliner. Pray for his wife Monica and other members of the family who will miss Pastor Ganas' contagious wit and his eagerness to share the Gospel message. Pastor Ganas was the vacancy pastor at First Lutheran from 2020 to April 2024. Details about services will be provided as they are learned.



Birthdays

Dave Lassanske	December 11	Betty Nelson	December 24
Pat Caballero	December 15	Sharon Corey	December 28
Erich Armbrust	December 20	Judy Gunther	December 28

Events

Mission Development Team Meeting
Monthly Soup & Sandwich Luncheon
Load the Van to Friends in Deed
Volunteers at Friends in Deed in Pasadena
Board of Directors' Meeting

December 2, Tuesday, at 10:30 a.m.
December 3, Wednesday, at noon
December 5, Friday, at 8:00 a.m.
December 6, Saturday, at 8:00 a.m.
December 21, Sunday, at 11:00 a.m.

News from the Mission Development Team

The October Trunk and Treat brought together nine families who decorated their cars and passed out treats. Four of the cars were from enthusiastic non-members. We even had a surprise visit from paramedics who parked their ambulance and proceeded to hand out candy! Pastor and his wife Kim brought music and "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas." This Grinch had a fun time. Our teen-age Sunday School class did a tremendous job of setting up games, tables, chairs and even stayed for cleanup.



The team's next big neighborhood event will be a celebration of Chinese New Year in February. Team members are setting dates and planning activities.

Soup & Sandwich Luncheons - First Wednesday of the Month

December 3: Christmas songs, carols, and hymns led and guided by Ray Hutchinson will be a treat on that day at noon. This is an opportunity for First Lutheran to share Christmas with Foothill Prep students and staff. "A Charlie Brown Christmas" will be presented and Christmas Bingo with prizes. Come and celebrate with us!

January 7: Join us as we celebrate Epiphany, the coming of the Wise Men, with a presentation both informative and meaningful.

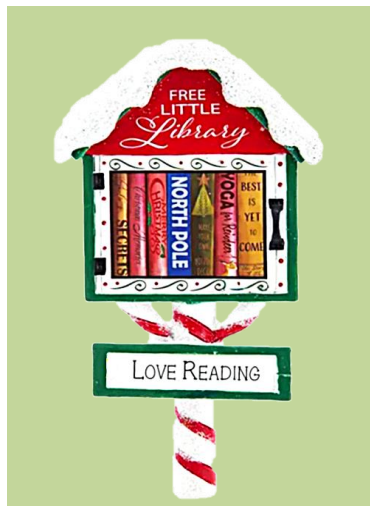
February 4: Black History Month, honoring Rosa Young, who in 1916 turned her school's management over to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, which helped provide the resources to maintain and expand. Rosa Young's efforts led to the founding of 30 elementary schools and 35 Lutheran congregations in Alabama's Black Belt.

March 4: Celebrating World Wildlife Day, we hope to have a return visit of naturalists and animals from Whittier Narrows Nature Center. *[Speaking of wildlife, see article about Dr. Jane Goodall on page 6.]*



Community Prayer Box Update

Pray for our neighbors that they would understand and believe the true Christmas message that Jesus, came as a baby, to endure the pains and discomforts of earthly life and then to die for our sins. Pray that our neighbors would find a church home and actively worship God.



New Selections in Our Little Free Library

Thanksgiving and Christmas books are currently featured in our Little Free Library. Christmas adult novels are included with tales of long-ago romances and nostalgic family life. The children's shelf has the real Christmas story for readers of different ages. Christmas is a busy season but take time to relax with a good book for yourself, and remember books make great gifts.



Latest News from Friends in Deed

"Pasadena Pantry Client Base Increases Amid Uncertainty" was the title of a Nov. 7 article in the *Pasadena Star News*. It highlighted the work and sudden challenges of Friends in Deed in the face of the federal government shutdown. That week, when the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits went unpaid, close to 850 households came through the door, which set a new record. According to Tim Nistler, director of the Food Pantry, the same time last year, around 700 came. (In California, the SNAP program is known as CalFresh, also EBT or food stamps).

Within hours of posting a call for donations in social media, Friends in Deed reported that it received much needed replenishments of food supplies, including its "gold items:" all the shelf-stable canned meats, soups, sauces and staples our faithful First Lutheran members have been donating in hundreds of pounds every single month!

Tim also highlighted the volunteer workers (including our folks) who come and help weekly out of a sense of community. "I am grateful to be surrounded by so many wonderful people on all sides. Our motto is 'Doing together what we cannot do alone.' I see that every day and it is what gives me hope."



Embrace — Don't Skip — Advent *(Continued from page 1)*

I know what happens, because the consequence buries me like a slow-moving avalanche. By the time we finally reach Christmas Eve — opening day, as it were, of the wondrous season celebrating our Savior's birth — we are exhausted with Christmas. We want it to be over. After six solid weeks (or more) of Christmas carols, we are ready to sing "Silent Night" at Christmas Eve service and be done with it for another year. By New Years' Eve — er, the Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord, when He was just one week old — we've not only skipped Advent. We've checked out of Christmas.

Thankfully, giving Advent our full attention is just the place to start to avoid Christmas burnout. Derived from the Latin word for "coming into," Advent prepares us to observe one of the holiest events in history. It is a thoughtful, penitential time of reflecting upon the steadfast promises of God.

We hear from prophets of old foretelling the Savior, including Jeremiah, who prophesied five hundred years before the birth of Christ: "*Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch,*" (23:5). Isaiah assured Israel that God always remains true to his word: "*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel*" (7:14). Over centuries, God repeatedly reminded his people of his promise to deliver them. So during Advent we also cherish the hope of God's people with John the Baptist, who exhorts wondering crowds to confess their sins and prepare for incarnate God to come (Mark 1:1-8). We, too, hear how our long-expected Savior will cover our sins and forgive us (Matt. 26:28).



One of the best things about Advent is how simple it is. We wait in the quiet stillness as we meet together in Christ's church. Advent wreaths composed of a bit of greenery and four candles help mark the season in our sanctuaries. As our days become darker and colder, we turn toward the flickering candlelight and hear of the Light of the World (John 8:12). Advent, this wonderful, preparatory season, brings us not an artificial panorama of commercial allure but God's incarnate promise of eternal life. Though we can't escape the secular trappings around us, we can focus our eyes on the one thing needful and try to remember and pray the age-old words that God still answers: **O come, o come, Emmanuel.**

Emily Olson is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Casper, Wyoming.



New Prayer Request from Our Missionary in Papua New Guinea

Through our tithe, our congregation supports missionaries Matt and Emily Terhune's work in Papua New Guinea with Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Emily asks for prayer for an upcoming meeting she's in charge of. "Our ministry department is inviting many local pastors from the neighboring villages to come and learn more about the Bible workshops we run. There could be as many as 50-100 people in attendance! Please pray for good relationships and understanding."

She also asks prayer for her health. "About a month ago I was sick with what I think was Covid, and I still don't feel like I have my energy back. This has been really frustrating! Please pray for a full recovery and that I'll be functional in the meantime."

Renowned Primatologist Jane Goodall Passes to Her Reward

Excerpted from article by Mark Ellis in God Reports, October 2, 2025

Dr. Jane Goodall, the world-renowned primatologist and anthropologist, whose groundbreaking work with chimpanzees revolutionized our understanding of primates, slipped into eternity while in Los Angeles on a speaking tour of the US. She was 91. A group in Pasadena expecting to hear from her was left in tears when they learned she passed away before her visit, according to the *LA Times*.

Born in London in 1934, she was raised in the Congregational church. When she later discovered that many of her scientific colleagues were atheists or agnostics, she wrote, "Fortunately, by the time I got to Cambridge I was twenty-seven years old, and my beliefs had already molded so that I was not influenced by these opinions."



The same year she told *Christianity Today*, "I was brought up as a Christian, and I have always believed in God... Nature is my temple."

That temple called her to Tanzania in 1960, at age 26, armed with little more than a notebook and a voracious curiosity. Under the mentorship of paleontologist Louis Leakey, amid the chimpanzees she would immortalize, she made significant discoveries. In 1977, she founded the Jane Goodall Institute, channeling Psalm 96:11-12's call—"Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad... let all the trees of the forest sing for joy"—into Roots & Shoots, a youth program now in 100+ countries empowering young people to be good stewards of the planet.

Some criticized her blend of science and faith as naive, but as she quipped in her *Guardian* interview, "Science can tell us how, but only faith tells us why." That is what drove her to forgive even the poachers who ravaged her beloved forests, modeling the forgiveness of the cross.

Goodall's legacy continues through the lives of countless youth who, through her programs, have planted millions of trees and advocated for endangered species. Her only child, Hugo, shared in a statement: "My mother taught me that hope is the heartbeat of change, a gift from God to those who dare to dream." You can find this complete article at www.godreports.com/2025

FLC 80th Anniversary Guest Choir Presents Free Christmas Concert on December 14

Our talented friends at Foothill Academy of Vocal Arts will present an amazing free Christmas concert on Sunday, December 14 at 7:00 p.m.. "Christmas in the Isles" will feature music from Britain. Come and enjoy at Monrovia Community Church, 101 E . Foothill Blvd., Monrovia. www.favachoir.org

Lutheran Hour Celebrates 75th Rose Parade Float Appearance on January 1



Lutheran Hour Ministries will participate in the 2026 Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade with their 75th-anniversary float, "Bringing Christ to the Nations," which is themed around the overall parade theme, "The Magic in Teamwork." The float, built by Phoenix Decorating Company, will be decorated by volunteers, with tours and opportunities to get involved available through the Petal Pushers organization. Interested? Go to www.petalpushers.org for more info.

In Memoriam: Longtime First Lutheran TC Member Oscar Tschopp

Oscar Herman Tschopp was born in Williamsburg, Iowa, the son of Theodor and Selma Tschopp. His family consisted of six boys and one girl. His five brothers and one sister preceded him in death.

The family moved to Cedar Rapids, Iowa where Oscar was confirmed in the Lutheran faith; a faith that remained the foundation of his life. Years later he recalled the lessons from his confirmation classes.

After high school, Oscar worked alongside his father as a carpenter. During the Korean War, he joined the United States Air Force. Following his honorable discharge, he earned a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Iowa State University.



After earning his degree, Oscar returned to California, where he spent many years as an architect. He had a gift for transforming vision into structure, and turning design concepts into buildable plans. Known for his mastery of building codes, he was trusted to manage complex projects and secure building permits. In his later years, Oscar served as an architect for the Burbank Airport during a time of major transformation. Following September 11, 2001, he contributed to essential retrofit and security upgrades.

Oscar met his wife, Jo, at a youth leaders' training session. Their shared love for Christ and ministry drew them together, and they were married in 1969. Throughout 56 years of marriage, they made faith the cornerstone of their life, sharing daily devotions, prayer, and reading Scripture.

Becoming a father was a responsibility he embraced wholeheartedly. He delighted in time spent with Ted and Leona, in leading family devotions, vacations, and Scout activities. He loved to tell stories, and his children remember him reading books and singing them to sleep.

Oscar used his art talent to design and craft felt banners for churches, Marriage Encounter, family and friends. He was also a skilled woodworker. His seven-foot grandfather clock continues to chime. For decades, Oscar taught adult Bible classes. His last study group was working through the Book of Genesis, a journey he deeply wished to finish. His love of Scripture extended to an interest in biblical archaeology. He and Jo visited Israel three times.

Oscar looked forward to heaven, trusting in the promises of Christ. On All Saints' Day, November 1, 2025, the Lord called him home.

He is survived by his wife, Jo; their children, Ted (Louellen) and Leona (James Emory); and grandchildren, Pieter, Hannah, and Helena Tschopp.

Not Receiving Email Special Announcements and/or Prayer Requests?

Email Newsletter: If you would like to receive the newsletter and prayer requests by email, please share your email address with Christine Geltz, Newsletter Editor, at: cgeltz@firstlutherantc.org. You may also send her news and story ideas at that address.

Printed Newsletter: If you prefer to have a newsletter hard copy mailed to you, please call: (626) 287-0968 and leave a message for Elizabeth Yu, Pastor Assistant.

Pastoral Care: Please contact Pastor Frank Matthews at (213) 247-8838 or no1redder@gmail.com.



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

9123 Broadway
Temple City, CA 91780

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DATED MATERIAL**

December 2025

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Website: <https://firstlutherantc.org>

8:30 a.m. TRADITIONAL WORSHIP

Holy Communion every first & third Sunday

9:45 a.m. SUNDAY SCHOOL / BIBLE STUDY

Every Sunday