

God's Work Our Hands

TRI COUNTY LUTHERAN PARISH JANUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER

"Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness"

Psalm 65:11 (KJV)



Happy New Year!

As we begin the new year, the year 2021, I stop, like Mary did at the birth of our Savior, and ponder. I ponder all of the things that the world faced in 2020. We started off the year with hopes, dreams and the excitement of the visions we had for our mission centers. But by March we found ourselves no longer able to meet in person. We found ourselves in a turmoil of uncertainty. I found myself becoming a caregiver to my mom, a role that I had often had before, but this time there would be no six week recovery time, as there had been in the past from various surgeries. This time I found myself taking care of a terminal patient and struggling with the harsh reality that no matter what I did, there was no way for me to "fix things" this time. And like so many people this past year, I was faced with all the "firsts". The first birthday without my mom. The first Thanksgiving and then the first Christmas without her. I'm no stranger to all those "firsts", as this year marked the 19th Christmas without my son, Aaron. But it is exactly at times like these that we learn that it isn't us who is in control. We learn that God brings us to these times and he definitely will bring us through them. We learn that God uses these trying times to strengthen us. Through his grace, love, compassion and healing, we learn that we can in turn show that same grace, love and compassion to all those around us. So as we begin a new year together, let's do it with hope. Let's do it with excitement and a passion for helping others as often as we can. Let's learn and grow and thrive as brothers and sisters in Christ. And as we continue to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior in the coming weeks, I pray that all of you can take time to praise God for his bountiful gifts and blessings and live your lives so that you can be a blessing to others and use all the talents the Lord has given you. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all!

A Few Exciting Things Going on: GLORIA DEI'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Gloria Dei will be celebrating their 100th Anniversary in 2021. Tom Nelson volunteered to chair this event. Currently, plans are on hold until we see how things go with the pandemic. It is our hope to have the celebration later in the summer or early fall, and to have past ministers attend. If you would like to help with the planning or if you have any exciting ideas or could share some history about our church, please contact Tom or any council member.

GLORIA DEI ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting at Gloria Dei is scheduled for February 7th, 2021. The deadline for submitting your reports is January 10th.

ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN

Orphan Grain Train has volunteers in 27 regional locations across the United States who gather clothing and other relief supplies for destitute people around the world. They also raise the money to send these relief goods and food where most needed. Locations near us include Julesburg, CO and Norfolk, Grand Island and Lincoln, NE. 98.2 % of all donations go toward Orphan Grain Train mission projects. Only 1.8% of donations go toward administrative and fundraising expenses! **A suggestion was made at the Gloria Dei December council meeting that we have an "Undies Sunday" to help this wonderful organization help those in need. Please bring packages of (new) socks or underwear to church on January 10th if you would like to participate.**

DONATIONS AND GIFTS

Grace and Gloria Dei have been the recipients of several generous donations in 2020, not to mention the grants that Bonita has written. We are so blessed to receive funds every year from the Buckley Trust, Virginia Smith Trust, Dave Erb and many others! THANK YOU!!

HAPPENINGS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Grace and Gloria Dei held Christmas Eve candlelight services on Thursday, December 24th to celebrate the birth of our Savior. Both services were well attended and very beautiful!



Conflict Transformation Skills for Churches

Saturday, January 16, 2021, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm online webinar

Although a normal part of life, conflict is usually seen as something negative. Acquire the knowledge and skills to transform conflict into a force for positive change and spiritual growth. This work-shop will be repeated on February 13, March 22, and April 10, 2021. All events will be conducted online via Zoom. Groups can save up to \$50 apiece, compared to the regular individual rate, when they register all together by the discount deadline. Coupons will be available soon on our website, along with a detailed brochure for each workshop. Questions?

Visit <https://lmpeacecenter.org/>, call our office at 630-627-0507, or email at Admin@LMPeaceCenter.org

MIDDLE SCHOOL GATHERING

Saturday, January 16th at 10:00 a.m. CT through Sunday, January 17th, 12:00 p.m. CT. This event is still tentative and TBD.

MINISTER'S CONFERENCE

January 25th-January 27th, 2021 Sjogren Retreat Center at Camp Carol Joy Holling Pastors, deacons, youth ministers, lay leaders, and any professionals in leadership roles at a church are invited to join us at the 2021 Minister's Conference! During this 48-hour conference, you will have the chance to add to your ministry tool belt with colleagues from across the state and beyond. Additionally, it can count for 11 hours of continuing education credit.

Conference Theme: TRAUMA-INFORMED THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUAL CARE

There are three options for attending this year's conference:

Virtual - Each session will be broadcast online. Attend from the comfort of your home!

Commuter - Come on out to camp for the day, and return home each night

Single Rooms - Come stay overnight at our wonderful Sjogren Center

Everyone that walks through the door of a church has a story that includes both joy and pain. It is easy to praise God for all the amazing things in life, but how do you respond to a person's story of hurt and trauma?

Cost

\$50-Virtual | \$75-Commuter | \$150-Single Rooms (no double rooms)

Arrival: 5 p.m. Monday, January 25 | Departure: 1 p.m. Wednesday, January 27

Questions?

If you have questions about the Minister's Conference, please contact Peter Hansen at PHansen@NLOM.org or 402-944-2544

GLORIA DEI 2020 CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

On Sunday, December 20th, our congregation was blessed with a wonderful Christmas Program. Thank you to everyone who organized, practiced, decorated and participated in this beautiful story about "NO VACANCY"! How awesome to have such a wonderful church family!





This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118:24 KJV

**Worship times are 9:00 a.m. at Grace in Chappell
and 10:30 a.m. at Gloria Dei in Lodgepole
Website: netricountylutheran.com**

January 2021 Calendar Events

Jan. 1st—New Year's Day—HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Jan. 3rd--Epiphany of Our Lord; Confirmation Class @ GD 11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.;

Jan. 10th—Baptism of Our Lord; Gloria Dei Council Meeting after service;

“Undies Sunday” giving event @ GD; Reports for Annual Meeting due

Jan. 16th – 17th—Middle School Gathering 10 a.m. Sat. to 12 p.m. Sun. (TBD)

Jan. 18th—Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday observed

Jan. 19th—Helping Hands on a Mission at Gloria Dei 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Jan. 21st—Panhandle Cluster Meeting 10:00 a.m.

Jan. 24th and Jan. 31st—PMA Brenda’s Day Off

Jan. 25th—Chappell/Lodgepole Ministerial Meeting 2:00 p.m. @ Chappell AOG

Jan. 25th -27th—Minister’s Conference @ Camp Carol Joy Holling (Also via Zoom)

Contact Information

For any pastoral needs, questions or concerns you can contact me at:

PMA Brenda Tophoj

19722 Road 50

Lewellen, NE

Home: (308) 778-0113

Cell: (308) 778-6873

Email: tophoj_gb@hotmail.com