



November, 2023

# Join Us and Invite Others!



## Reformation & Rite of Confirmation

Sun., Oct. 29 (Service: 9:30am, Reception: 10:30am)



## All Saints Remembrance

Sunday, Nov. 5 (9:30am) (see page 5)



## Zoom Call with Tanzania

Thursday, Nov. 9 (9:00am) (see page 5)



## Holly Boutique & Bake Sale

Saturday, Nov. 11 (10:00am-2:00pm) (see page 6)



## Stewardship Sunday/Wednesday

November 12 & 15 (see page 3)



## Thanksgiving Service *with* Blended Choirs

Wednesday, Nov. 22 (see page 6)

# CHURCH MATTERS

## A Message from Interim Pastor S. Kelly

I have resumed the monthly meetings with the St. Paul Area Synod Interim Pastors. Our first meeting in August was at Lakewood Lutheran in Maplewood. The Reverend Mike Peterson is the former interim pastor for our ministry partner, Redeemer Lutheran. We planned our topics for the year.



The second interim pastor meeting was hosted by St. Stephen. Our presenter hosted a discussion on the United States historical intersections of class, gender and race. We heard about public engagements Lutheran and other Protestant congregations are leading in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Our third interim pastor meeting took us to St. John's in Lakeville where we discussed how to engage in conflict appropriately within a congregation. We received a framework that a few pastors used with new members and elected leaders. The expectation is to follow the framework for engaging and resolving the conflict within congregational and community life.

At all the congregations, we hear about the larger ministry matters. The hosts' congregations for each monthly meeting ministry has been involved in the following. Lakewood Lutheran in Maplewood is in conversation with Gustavus Adolphus in St. Paul. St. Stephen continues its partnership ministry with Redeemer Lutheran for all families sharing confirmation, and other faith development activities and events with children and youth, who are getting ready for the ELCA Youth Gathering event in New Orleans. St. John's in Lakeville is inviting members and friends in a stewardship ministry of raising \$800,000.00.

When Pastor Thompson is on vacation, I make the hospital calls or any emergency visits to United Hospital. I visit at M Fairview in Maplewood because it is nearby. Pastor Thompson visits at United Hospital. Pastor Kelly will be teaching confirmation at Redeemer the third Wednesdays in November and December.

### **Take an Epiphany Date and Lead a Presentation**

- Epiphany is the season we celebrate Jesus as the Light of the World.
- Could you share one event from your domestic and/or international travel of witnessing Jesus as the light of the world?
- Your presentation will be 10:45 to 11:15 followed by questions and a sending prayer by 11:30.
- The Sunday morning dates are Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28, Feb. 4, Feb. 11.
- I thank you for your prayerful consideration in leading adult and cross-generational faith formation.

10:45-11:30 am <u>Sunday Nov. 5</u>	Conversation on Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations. Congregational vignettes will be shared for your comments on growing fruitful ministry practices	Pastor Kelly
10:45-11:45 am <u>Sunday Nov. 12</u> Stewardship Sunday, Ministry of Intent	Pastor Kelly and Stewardship Ministry Team	Is stewardship like bee-keeping?
10:45-11:45 <u>Sunday Nov. 19</u>	The Reverend Lou Bender	Introduction and presentation forth-coming
Sunday, Nov. 26	No Sunday Faith Formation resumes Dec. 5	

## CHURCH MATTERS

### **“Growing In Generosity”** Stewardship Campaign 2024

Join us as we continue  
bringing God’s LOVE to the world.



### **As you partner with St. Stephen Lutheran Church, this is who/how you are helping...**

- ♦ Provide **activities for children and youth** throughout the year
- ♦ Children, youth, and adults with **Faith Education** classes and events
- ♦ Raise money for the **American Cancer Society** with Relay for Life
- ♦ Build a **boy's dorm** at the Makwema Secondary School in Lukani, Tanzania
- ♦ Children learn in Tanzania by providing **secondary school scholarships**
- ♦ Build village **water and well systems** in Lukani, Tanzania
- ♦ **Lutheran Social Service** (including Homeless Teens and Greatest Needs)
- ♦ Support **Neighbors Helping Neighbors** Thrift Store by providing promotional, custodial, and volunteer help. Proceeds from clothing sales benefit local food shelves, shelters, etc.
- ♦ Community togetherness with **Neighbors Night Out** (Night to Unite)
- ♦ Bring the nativity story to life with our **Living Nativity** (derived from the Holy Gospels of Matthew and Luke)
- ♦ Support the **Rancho San Juan Bosco Orphanage** in Tecate, Mexico
- ♦ Donate to the Rice Street Gardens in Roseville, Minnesota
- ♦ **Saint Paul Area Synod** (including Families Together therapeutic preschool and the Planting Hope Campaign)
- ♦ Bring a safer option for children with **Trunk or Treat** (in partnership with local churches and schools)
- ♦ Giving to the **Tubman Alliance**
- ♦ **Union Gospel Mission** by providing bagged lunches
- ♦ Provide local children with **FREE Vacation Bible School**
- ♦ Giving food to the **White Bear Area Food Shelf**
- ♦ **White Bear area schools** with school supplies and other needs

**Thank you for your partnership!**

Please watch for the 2024 Stewardship Drive mailing and be sure to return your annual pledge card to the church. All pledges are greatly appreciated!

**Stewardship Sunday (11/12) & Wednesday (11/15)**

## FEATURES & HIGHLIGHTS

### A Faith Journey

Now that I think of it, three quarters of a century + seems like a long time to be marching along with the music of the church. No doubt it started with my mother singing to me and moved on to 3-year-old Christmas solos, many kinds of choirs at every age, lessons with several wonderful voice teachers, and lots of special performances on a wide variety of stages.

Music based on the Bible sticks in the mind and heart for one's whole life, right up to the end. One of the most important gifts is the constant memory of scripture and sacred poetry that has always filled up my life. My son and daughter have said many times—music is good for the soul. We need it. There is no substitute for it. When my daughter was a teenager doing her own music, she asked me why George Frederick Handel was so easy and natural for her when his music seemed so hard for everyone else. I told her that I had been directing a community choir presentation of the Christmas section of the *Messiah*, so 60 or 70 people had been singing Handel to her from about ten feet away all during the two or three months before she was born: "Comfort, comfort ye my people"—"Rejoice, rejoice"—"Hallelujah!" As the Psalmist says: "Singers and dancers alike say, 'All my springs are in you.'" Psalm 87:7



For these many years music has provided me with melody and harmony in my life, with the opportunity to practice and serve. I started directing choirs with a children's choir when I was 15 and have continued for 50 years to love directing and practicing and serving. The music of the church is a lifelong gift. We remember the sacred words made even more memorable with the melodies and harmonies. The music of church camps, Bible Schools, and Sunday Schools still stays with us many decades later.

Maybe the greatest gifts are the friends of all ages that have come along with me on this faith journey. When I think back, I am amazed at the variety and the strength and continuity of those friendships. Little kids learning their first melodies with those wonderful words helped along with hand motions, the elementary age kids learning to sing harmony and learning how to practice and perform, the teenagers in choirs and small groups each with their own unique gifts and personalities, and adults of all ages working together, with the old hands helping along the newbies. I still have old Christmas tree decorations from those first kids and teenagers, and I use them every year and remember each one. I am grateful for the young mothers' church quartet that practiced at each others' homes while our infants and toddlers played together. Just a couple weeks ago another friend reminded me that we had been singing together for 65 years. Those music lovers of all ages have helped and blessed me on my way—and I pray that they have been a blessing to each other on their journeys as well.

O God, from my youth you have taught me,  
and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.  
So even to old age and gray hairs,  
O God, do not forsake me,  
until I proclaim your might  
to all the generations to come.

- Psalm 71: 17-18 NRSV

Choir Prayer: God grant that what we sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts, and what we believe in our hearts, we may show forth in our lives. For the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



## HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

### Reformation Sunday & Rite of Confirmation (10/29)



Join us as we celebrate Reformation Sunday which honors Martin Luther's bold action on October 31, 1517. Today, we also honor our

Confirmands during the Rite of Confirmation and with a reception immediately following worship.

### Christian Singles Lunch Bunch (10/31)



Please feel free to join our group for lunch on the last Tuesday of each month (11:30am). RSVP (required) on Sunday before event by contacting Judee Bramscher at 651-269-6122. On October 31<sup>st</sup>, we will be gathering at the Blacksmith Lounge & Broaster (17205 Forest Blvd N, Hugo, MN 55038) – RSVP by 10/29.



### God's Word

God's Word Bible discussion group, led by Phyllis Ballata, meets in the Library on Thursdays (1:00-2:00pm). Walk-ins are welcome.



### Daylight Saving Time Ends (11/5)

Remember to set your clocks back one hour on Saturday, Nov. 4 before you go to bed.

### All Saints Remembrance (11/5)

On Sunday, November 5, we gather in worship (9:30am) for a service of remembrance to honor members who have died in the past five years. This year, we invite you to bring a photo of a loved-one (framed or unframed) that you may place on the communion rail before the service begins. You are also welcome to light a candle in their memory. The photo and lit candle can be in memory of anybody. Please remember to take your photo with you after the service.



### Cookie Baking (11/8)

Please join us on Wednesday November 8 (9:00-12noon) in the kitchen to bake cookies!! All the cookie dough and supplies will be provided. These cookies will be packaged and sold for the Holly Boutique & Bake Sale held on Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>. No experience needed and all are welcome. Come for fun and coffee and fellowship!



### Zoom Meeting with Tanzania Mission Partners (11/9)

Please join us from your home or wherever you are at 9:00am for a zoom meeting with partners from Lukani Parish. We will be able to ask questions, share fellowship, and pray together. Karen & Ken Smith will be in Tanzania and will facilitate the meeting. Please look for the Zoom meeting ID and passcode in Weekly Updates and Announcements.



### Wednesday Bible Study

Led by Interim Pastor S. Kelly on Wednesdays (11:00-11:45am) in the library.

### Retiree's Breakfast (11/9)

Attention all retirees! You are invited to join other retirees from church for breakfast (Thurs/9:00-10:00am) at Perkins in Maplewood on County Road D.



## HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

### Holly Boutique & Bake Sale

Saturday, Nov. 11  
10:00am-2:00pm



#### Crafters & Bakers...

We are in need of: home-made crafts, quilted or crocheted items, artwork, homemade soaps and lotions, woodcraft items, jam and jellies, lightly-used Christmas decorations, freshly baked breads, rolls, cookies, and sweets.

Proceeds to Benefit... The Tubman Alliance, White Bear Lake Area Food Shelf, Lutheran Social Services (for homeless teens), and projects at St. Stephen.

How to Donate... Leave craft items, beginning now, in the church office marked "Holly Boutique". Please fill out the Contribution Sheet, available in the office, to help us out when marking items.

#### Other Ways to Help...

- 1) BAKE desserts (pie, cake, bars, cookies) to sell the day of the event. Baked items may be dropped off up until the boutique begins. Wrap and seal items and indicate if nuts are used in your baking.
- 2) Join us on COOKIE BAKING DAY, Wed., Nov. 8 (9:00am)
- 3) Help us SET-UP and pack cookies on Friday, Nov. 10 (9:00am-12noon).
- 4) WORK A SHIFT during the boutique on Saturday, Nov. 11 (9:30-12noon or 11:45am-2:15pm).
- 5) Help with CLEAN-UP on Monday, November 13 (9:00am).
- 6) Come and shop, have lunch, enjoy the music, and INVITE OTHERS!

#### **CRAFTS NEEDED**

We are accepting hand-made crafts NOW and hope you consider donating for our sale.

### Stewardship Sunday (11/12) & Wednesday (11/15)



Join us on Stewardship Sunday/Wednesday as we pledge our commitment of growing in generosity. Following Sunday worship, Pastor Kelly and the Stewardship Membership Team will be presenting "Is Stewardship Like Bee-keeping?" (10:45-11:45am). Please read page 3 for more information about how your partnership with St. Stephen is helping bring God's love to the world!



### Church Office Closed (11/23 & 11/24)

On Thurs., Nov. 23 (Thanksgiving Day) and on Friday, Nov. 24, the office will be closed.

### Christian Singles Lunch Bunch (11/28)

Please feel free to join our group for lunch on the last Tuesday of each month (11:30am). RSVP (required) on Sunday before event by contacting Judee Bramscher at 651-269-6122. On November 28, we will be gathering at Sak's Sports Bar (1460 Co Rd E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55110) – RSVP by 11/26.





## HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

### Living Nativity (12/16)

There is renewed excitement this year for our annual Living Nativity so be sure to participate by signing up for a 30-minute shift on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup> (4:30-7:30pm). Our coordinators are busy coordinating! Husbands and wives are encouraged to sign up for the Mary & Joseph roles. We also need angels, wisemen, and shepherds. No experience is necessary and this is a great opportunity to invite your friends and family from the wider community to volunteer with you and/or attend. Come inside for hot chocolate or apple cider, tasty treats, a kid's craft area, live music and caroling. Bring a cellphone or camera and use our holiday vignette as a backdrop. Please sign up when you see the Living Nativity display in the narthex or contact Tami in the office: 651-777-1107 or [office@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:office@ststephenwbl.org)

### The Living Nativity



### Reserve Now for OWL's Christmas Gathering

Please contact Judee Bramscher at 651-269-6122 if you wish to join other OLDER WISER LUTHERANS for a Christmas Luncheon on Wednesday, December 6th (11:30am) at the Lake Elmo Inn. Hurry, we only have 25 openings!



### Come Join the Choir!

Choir members and anyone who may wish to join the choir are invited back to the church on Wednesdays (7:00-8:00pm) for practice. If you wish to participate or have any questions, contact Kari at [ballatahosmer@gmail.com](mailto:ballatahosmer@gmail.com)

### Fellowship Group

All are invited to gather in the narthex on Wednesdays (10:30am) to share news, lift each other up with encouragement, and simply just visit! This is an informal group and all are welcome. Contact Judee Bramscher (651-269-6122) if you have questions.



### Grace & Praise Worship & Community Meal

Each Wednesday, join us (*and invite others*) to attend our casual Grace & Praise (GAP) worship service (6:00-6:45pm) in the sanctuary and Community Meal (5:15-6:00pm) in the Fellowship Hall.

### Cooks Needed for Wednesday November 15th Meal

We are in need of volunteers to prepare, cook, and serve (FOR 25 PEOPLE) Wednesday evening community meals. Get reimbursed for up to \$50. Mealtime is 5:15-6:00pm before our Grace & Praise (GAP) Worship Service. Choose one or as many Wednesdays as you like (through May of 2024). Sign up in the kitchen or contact Tami in the church office [office@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:office@ststephenwbl.org) or 651-777-1107 ) to get onto the schedule.

### ((( 2024 Church Calendar )))

We are working on our 2024 church calendar. Please submit any requested event dates and times to Tami at [office@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:office@ststephenwbl.org) before Saturday, November 25.

### Annual Meeting Reports DUE (1/7/24)

Please promptly submit your 2023 annual reports to the church office at

[office@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:office@ststephenwbl.org)

by Sunday,

January 7, 2024

Thank you!



## APPRECIATION

**Pat Miles Event...** Thank you to all who helped make this a wonderful event on September 24th. Over 120 people attended. (photo-right)

**Music Festival & Auction...** The 32nd annual Music Festival and Auction on Saturday October 14 was a great success. We had approximately 80-90 people present at various times during the event. We were able to raise approximately \$5,700 (before expenses) for our church! The event included great music, a silent auction, and a live auction. Thanks go to all the people who donated, who volunteered at the event, and who provided homemade desserts.



## Blessing of the Animals...

We gathered at Wedgewood Park on Saturday, October 7th! 26 humans showed up (8 folks we didn't know), 15 animals, and one picture of a pet. Thank you to everyone who participated this year in a new location as we expand our reach to bless beloved neighborhood pets!





## PRAYERS

**Jesus said “My Father’s House shall be a House of Prayer.”**



## Help Keep Us Informed

Please help keep us informed of any concerns that you would like our congregation to be praying about, including those serving in the military and any deaths among family members, by contacting the church office at 651-777-1107 or [office@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:office@ststephenwbl.org)

## APPRECIATION



### **Veterans & Families on Veterans Day (11/11)**

Veterans Day ceremonies across the country take place on November 11 at 11:00am (a time that commemorates the ending of World War I). Although another holiday, Memorial Day, honors deceased veterans, Veterans Day honors ALL veterans with an emphasis on military personnel still living.

*Thank you veterans (and families) for your service to our country.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

# November Birthdays



## CHURCH MATTERS

### Church Council Highlights

1. The decoration committee will be working on facility improvements. If you have suggestions for improvements, contact Jill Sandvik, committee chair. Committee members are: Jill Sandvik (chair), Denise Ashley, Anne Jackson, Brenda Steady, Kathy Anderson, Karen Smith, Darlene Birkland, and Cheryl Skrypez.
2. Everyone is encouraged to complete the on-line congregation survey. You will be getting several reminders to take it. Please take it only once. Deadline for taking it is November 6.
3. Our devotion at council was on Hospitality as a fruitful practice of congregational life.
4. We affirmed our historic practice of passing the offering plate as a response to God's word.
5. We had a great turnout for the Pat Miles event, there were approximately 122 participants.

### Winter Weather

It's that time of year! Just a reminder that if WHITE BEAR LAKE school district cancels school or cancels evenings activities, St. Stephen will close for the day/evening as well. In the event that it snows and school is not canceled please use your own judgement on whether or not you should drive to church. It is rare that we have to close on a Sunday (it's only happened once in 35 years), but if we feel we need to cancel a Sunday service we will do everything we can to relay the message to our members, including posting a notice on our website.



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### In This Issue

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### The Steppingstone Newsletter...

Is distributed monthly. If you have any items for the **December** issue, please send them to [office@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:office@ststephenwbl.org) by Friday, Nov. 10.

Newsletters are also available in the narthex information racks or via email.

Please let us know if you have a change of address so that we can update our mailing list.

### Staff

**Interim Pastor** ▪ Sharon Kelly  
[ipk@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:ipk@ststephenwbl.org)

**Visitation Pastor** ▪ Juli Thompson  
[julia.a.thompson@gmail.com](mailto:julia.a.thompson@gmail.com)

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**Children & Families Ministry Director** ▪ Paul Schultz  
[childrenmin@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:childrenmin@ststephenwbl.org)

**Communication & Administrative Coordinator** ▪ Tami Heart  
[office@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:office@ststephenwbl.org)

**Custodian** ▪ Paul Swanson

**Digital Ministry Director** ▪ Zach VanDyke  
[zrv10000@gmail.com](mailto:zrv10000@gmail.com)

**Funeral Luncheon Coordinator** ▪ Kathy Anderson  
[kathleen856@q.com](mailto:kathleen856@q.com)

**GAP Worship Director** ▪ Justin Woodruff  
[jwoodruff@homfurniture.com](mailto:jwoodruff@homfurniture.com)

**Nursery Caregiver** ▪ Lisa Klingbeil

**Organist and Senior Choir Accompanist** ▪ Cindy Bittner  
[cynthia.k.bittner@gmail.com](mailto:cynthia.k.bittner@gmail.com)

**Senior Choir Director** ▪ Kari Ballata  
[ballatahosmer@yahoo.com](mailto:ballatahosmer@yahoo.com)

**Wedding Coordinator** ▪ Missy Kneip  
[mothergoose2954@yahoo.com](mailto:mothergoose2954@yahoo.com)

**Youth & Families Ministry Director** ▪ Melissa Whitman  
[mwhitman@redeemerwhitebear.org](mailto:mwhitman@redeemerwhitebear.org)

### Council & Leadership

**President and Staff Relations**  
Marla Amborn—[MarlaAmborn@gmail.com](mailto:MarlaAmborn@gmail.com)

**Vice President, Finance & Stewardship**  
Ted Field—[FieldJackson@msn.com](mailto:FieldJackson@msn.com)

**Previous President and Church Council Secretary**  
Betsy Clark—[eaclark001@comcast.net](mailto:eaclark001@comcast.net)

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**Adult Learning**  
Scott Ziemann—[ziemanscott@outlook.com](mailto:ziemanscott@outlook.com)

**Bookkeeper**  
Cindy Bittner—[treasurer@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:treasurer@ststephenwbl.org)

**Children, Youth, & Families**  
Bethany Zenner—[bethanyzenner@hotmail.com](mailto:bethanyzenner@hotmail.com)

**Congregational & Community Care**  
Phyllis Ballata—[pballata@msn.com](mailto:pballata@msn.com)

**Evangelism**  
EVERYONE

**Fellowship**  
Cheryl Skrypez—[cskrypez@gmail.com](mailto:cskrypez@gmail.com)

**Financial Secretary**  
Brad Wilm—[RuthaBradj@gmail.com](mailto:RuthaBradj@gmail.com)

**Mission and Benevolence**  
Pastor Sharon Kelly—[ipk@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:ipk@ststephenwbl.org)

**Property**  
Kathy Stickler—[kstickler23@gmail.com](mailto:kstickler23@gmail.com)

**Treasurer**  
Mary Beth Skunes—[treasurer@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:treasurer@ststephenwbl.org)

**Worship & Music**  
Denise Ashley—[deniseashley1@yahoo.com](mailto:deniseashley1@yahoo.com)

### Church Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 9am-3pm; Friday 9am-Noon



St Stephen Lutheran Church  
1965 East County Rd E  
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

# What's Happening

## Sundays

Worship (with band, organ, or piano)  
& Faith Ed **9:30am IN-PERSON**  
(Services are live-streamed and online)

## Wednesdays

Grace & Praise Worship (casual)  
& Faith Ed **6:00pm IN-PERSON**  
(Community Meal at 5:30pm, \$5/pp)

## Calendar Highlights

- 11/1 Food Shelf Collection (Wed)
- 11/2 Worship & Music Ministry Meeting (Thurs/6:00-7:00pm)
- 11/2 Mission Exploration Team (Thurs/7:00pm) *also on 16*
- 11/4 Genene Peterson Memorial Service (Sat/11:00am)  
Visitation-10:00am, Luncheon-12noon
- 11/5 Daylight Saving Time Ends (Sun/2:00am)
- 11/5 All Saints Remembrance (Sun/9:30am)
- 11/5 Fruitful Ministry Practices (Sun/10:45-11:30am)
- 11/5 Food Shelf Collection (Sun)
- 11/6 Executive Committee (Mon/3:30pm) *also on 20, 27*
- 11/8 Cookie Baking (Wed/9:00am-12:00noon)
- 11/8 Blended Choirs Rehearsal (Wed/7:00-8:00pm) *also on 15*
- 11/9 Retiree's Breakfast (Thurs/9:00-10:00am)
- 11/9 Decorating Committee (Thurs/5:00pm)
- 11/10 Content DEADLINE for December Steppingstone (Fri)
- 11/10 Boutique Set-up and Cookie Packing (Fri/9:00am-?)
- 11/11 Holly Boutique & Bake Sale (Sat/10:00am-2:00pm)
- 11/11 Veterans Day (Sat)
- 11/12 Boutique Church Sale (Sun/10:30am)
- 11/12 Stewardship Sunday
- 11/12 Is Stewardship Like Bee-keeping? (Sun/10:45-11:45am)
- 11/13 Boutique Clean-up (Mon/9:00am)
- 11/13 Church Council Meeting (Mon/7:00-9:00pm)
- 11/15 Stewardship Wednesday
- 11/18 Rita Engelhardt Memorial Service (Sat/2:00pm)
- 11/22 Most Wednesday programming—ON BREAK
- 11/22 Thanksgiving Service w/Blended Choirs (Wed/7:00pm)
- 11/23 Thanksgiving Day (Thurs—NO service, office CLOSED)
- 11/24 Church Office CLOSED (Fri)
- 11/26 Sunday School—ON BREAK
- 11/28 Christian Single Lunch Bunch (Tues/11:30am)
- 11/28 Evergreen Team Meeting (Tues/7:00pm)