



Compassionate. Challenging. Inclusive.

Monthly Newsletter

Inside this issue:

Pastor's Letter (con't)	2
Luncheon re: Kafika House	2
Vintage Spirits	3
Advent Celebration	3
Advent Midweek Worship	3
Lectio Divina	3
Thanksgiving Eve Service/Pious Desserts	3
Sign Up for Flowers	4
Library News	4
Property Improvements	5
Refugee Committee News	5
Great Decisions 2024	5

How Does a Weary World Rejoice?

by Pastor Katy

*A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn...
- O Holy Night, 1847*

It will come as no surprise to you to hear that I love Christmas music. I try to wait until after Thanksgiving to start listening, but a few carols do sneak in here and there, including a particular setting of *O Holy Night*, sung by Harry Connick Jr. (Lest you imagine that I only allow hymnody in our Christmas playlists, we can really rock out to *You're A Mean One, Mr. Grinch* as well.)

Every year I come across *O Holy Night* after not hearing it for eleven months, and I gear up to sing it at the top of my lungs (in the car), and as soon as I get about 30 seconds into the song, I remember: this song is *hard*. It's high! And low. And dramatic. And it requires the singer to hold some difficult notes for long periods of time. It's a wonderful solo if you have the right voice, or it's set in the right key, but even then – it's difficult. It's not for beginners.

Hidden inside the swelling notes of *O Holy Night* are these four small words: "the weary world rejoices." But if this song can be hard to sing, the idea of our weary world truly rejoicing is even harder to imagine. How does a weary world rejoice?

As I write these words, the violence in Israel and Gaza is growing rapidly. By the time you read these words, even more will surely have come to pass. Acts of terror, generations of violence, histories of oppression, deep grief in so many hearts. We struggle to find the right words, to talk to each other across chasms of misunderstanding and hurt. I share with you the words of Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg, who says,

"At the end of the day, everyone must be safe, free, and allowed to flourish, because everyone is holy, created in the image of the divine. Nobody's children should be killed. Nobody's."⁶

How does a weary world rejoice?

While driving to church, or the grocery store, or around town, perhaps even singing a Christmas song, I will see more than one person with no place to live. I will see tents at the side of the freeways and folks holding signs at the intersections. "Help," they say, and whatever their story may be, they, too, are children of God. And yet I don't know how to solve our lack of affordable housing, or food insecurity, or insufficient health care systems that bankrupt people overnight.

How does a weary world rejoice?

At Holy Spirit Lutheran Church

We believe we are called by the Holy Spirit to proclaim and embody the compassionate, challenging, and inclusive love of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

Continued Page 2

Time Change on November 5th!

Remember to "Fall Back!" We return to Standard Time on Sunday, November 5th. Set your clocks back one hour before going to bed on November 4th.

Pastor's Letter (continued)

I talk to parents and teachers every day who are worried about kids - kids with soaring anxiety and depression levels, for whom three years of pandemic was a huge percentage of their formative years; kids who don't know how to manage school, who struggle to connect socially, who need mental health professionals whose schedules are so full they can't fit in a new patient for at least six months.

How does a weary world rejoice?

You have your own stories: of loss, unemployment, addiction, broken relationships. You know how hard it is to sing songs of peace, how we fail to hit the right notes and our voices crack in all the wrong places, how we can't keep up with the lyrics and hold the tone long enough.

How does a weary world rejoice?

This is the question that will form our shared worship life in the season of Advent. As we began last year, we will celebrate an extended Advent of six weeks, beginning on November 12. We will make our way through the stories of Jesus' advent in our world, first from the gospel of Matthew, then John, and then the stories of Luke which lead us to the manger in Bethlehem.

For if our world is weary in its particular ways today, it has always been so in one way or another. The Roman Empire of Jesus' time was terribly violent – oppressing and killing the Palestinian people, many of whom were Jews. When Adolphe Adam wrote *O Holy Night* in 1847, black men, women, and children were enslaved in this nation, and Indigenous people were being expelled from their land and homes. As we wonder about the future of our youth today, we might consider that one writer said, “what has happened to our youth today? They disrespect their elders, ignore the law, riot in the streets, inflamed with wild notions.” That writer was Plato, in 300 BC.

How does a weary world rejoice?

I don't suppose we will fully answer this question in six weeks. But we can sit together, pray together, hope against hope together, and sing together. Even if our voices are faltering, even if we miss the lyrics, even if we never quite reach that top note – perhaps each imperfect voice is a bit of rejoicing in this weary world. Perhaps we might, one day, live into an answer to this ancient question.

Welcome to Advent – to a hope that there will be joy, even in a weary world.

Pastor Katy

*To read Rabbi Ruttenberg's whole essay, scan this QR code:



Learn About Kafika House Tanzania
 Wednesday, November 1st | 11:45 am
 Cross of Christ Lutheran (411 156th Ave NE, Bellevue)



All are invited to a buffet luncheon at Cross of Christ Lutheran on Wednesday, November 1st at 11:45 am to hear Sarah Rejman, the Founder and Director of Kafika House. Kafika House, formally known as Plaster House, is a high-love, low-cost rehabilitative surgery program in Northern Tanzania. Enjoy a variety of African foods and learn how you can invest and change the lives of children living with disabilities who are surgically treatable. Check out their current websites: kafikahouse.org and friendsofkafikahouse.org. Kindly RSVP to Jean Wahlstrom at jeannmarv@comcast.net, who can also provide more information. Kafika House is a longtime global mission project of both Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church and Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, both of Bellevue.

Vintage Spirits

Tuesday, November 7th | 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Thinking about downsizing or decluttering? Moving or transitioning a loved one to a new space? Join Vintage Spirits on November 7th from 1:00 to 3:00 pm, where our guest speaker will be Suzanne Allbee, owner of *Bee Organized*, a compassionate, confidential, and judgment-free organizing team of professional home and life organizers who help navigate times of transition.

Note this date is earlier than our usual meeting due to the holidays, so mark your calendars now!

Feel free to bring shareable treats and invite your friends to learn some tips to make this task easier. Questions? Contact Dierdre Staudt at deirdre.staudt@gmail.com.

Advent Celebration

Sunday, November 12, 10:45 am – 1:00 pm

All are welcome in the Fellowship Hall after the 9:30 and 11:00 am worship services to pick up holly, some evergreens, and ribbon to decorate an Advent log or Advent round. If you have your Advent log or round from a previous year, please bring it to decorate. If you don't have a log, no problem - one will be provided. Each family takes home candles with the Advent log they decorate.

If you have questions, please contact Becky at children@hslckirkland.org.

Advent Midweek Worship

Wednesdays at 7:00 pm, starting November 15th

Beginning Wednesday, November 15th at 7:00 pm, take a deep breath in the midst of your week and join us for Advent Midweek Worship. We'll sing a simplified setting of Holden Evening Prayer, with time for a brief message and communion. Worship will last about 40 minutes; if you can stay until 8:00 pm, join one of our Advent Pop-Up Prayer Groups afterward.

This could be a great way to join weekly worship if Sundays don't work for your schedule, or simply as part of your Advent practice. See you then!

Lectio Divina

Saturday, November 18th | 10:00 am

Encountering the Word of God in your own life is a great privilege as a Christian. You are invited to experience the practice Lectio Divina (Divine Reading) in preparation for Advent on November 18th at 10:00 am at the church. Unlike bible study, which is reading the scriptures for information and to understand the context of the passage, Lectio is actually a method of prayer that leads us into the personal meaning of the scripture, and the transformation of our lives. All are welcome. Questions? Contact Christine Brugman at cebrug@gmail.com.

Thanksgiving Eve Worship and Pious Desserts

Wednesday, November 22nd | 7:00 pm

Join us for Thanksgiving Eve worship and then stay for Pious Desserts! If you're interested in helping with this one-night event, talk with Pastor Katy. Otherwise, bring your favorite dessert to worship and stay afterward for delicious treats and fun conversations!





Sign up for Flowers!

The 2024 Flower Signup Chart is now available on the kiosk in the narthex. You are invited to sign up (in person or by calling the church office) to provide flowers for our Sunday worship services between now and the end of 2024. If there is a special designation (such as an anniversary), please note that as well. You may bring flowers from your garden in a vase from home, or order a bouquet from a local florist or grocery store. Please be sure to take them home after worship on that Sunday.



Need a Good Book?

The library will have multiple options featured for the next several weeks:

- Books relating to topics at Pastor Katy's *Way to Live* class have been popular and we still have many to choose from. Other possible topics include indigenous peoples and issues, Palestine/Israel history and culture, Gospel of Mark, and Bible study.
- HSLC will be celebrating an extended Advent season again this year, and we have many devotional and other books for Advent and Christmas, as well as books about the whole liturgical year.

We will also feature other recently acquired books. We always try to have an assortment of fiction and non-fiction, explicitly religious and not, related to the current theme(s) and not.

Where can you find these books? A few are displayed in the narthex (lobby). Be sure to check out children's picture books on the shelves to the right of the other books. Downstairs in the library itself, books are displayed in the windows and on the counters. Yes, feel free to take books out of the windows! And finally, friendly members of our library committee will have more books available in the fellowship hall between services on these Library Express Sundays - October 29 and November 26.

Happy reading!

Ruth Munger, HSLC Librarian

Mission:
To expand the intersection of intellect and spirituality while holding physical space in our busy world for prayer, introspection and study.

Property Improvements

You may have noticed some changes in the landscape around the front parking lot. These improvements are being coordinated by three Boy Scouts completing the requirements to organize and execute a significant project as part of the process to achieve Eagle Scout status.

The first project was the replacement of the plant materials that had not survived the recent dry summers. Over 200 plants were installed. All the plant materials chosen are drought resistant and native to the Pacific Northwest. A team of 20 volunteers installed these new plant materials.

The second project was the construction of a rain garden in the lawn area near NE 124th Street. The purpose of a rain garden is to divert water that flows from our roof downspouts and is conveyed in pipes to Juanita Creek. The Rain Garden creates a space where this water can soak into the ground. In addition to improving water quality, reducing the amount of water conveyed directly to the Creek in pipes decreases bank erosion and flooding. Funding for this project was obtained from a grant from the City of Kirkland.

The third project was replacing the enclosure surrounding the dumpsters in the parking lot. The previous enclosure was nearly 20 years old and was showing its age. This project is more than a visual improvement - it replaces the access gates that have not been working properly for several years.

Questions? Contact the church office at office@hslckirkland.org.



From Refugee to US Citizen to Reunited Family! Story from the HSLC Refugee Resettlement Committee

Seven years ago, an Iraqi mother and her ten-year-old son arrived at Sea-Tac airport to be welcomed by the HSLC Refugee Resettlement Committee. We walked with them as they became fluent in English, financially and culturally literate, residents in a wonderful and supportive community in Seattle and this year, as the mother became a US citizen! However, her husband was still in a refugee camp in Europe, and she so wanted for them "to be a family again". With her knowledge, determination and diligence, she helped him to navigate the complicated world of immigration and.....he arrived in Seattle at the end of September! He already has his Washington State ID, Social Security number, ORCA bus pass and is starting ELA (English Language Acquisition) classes at Goodwill in October. We have been blessed to have an ongoing relationship with this family who have taught us so much about being "welcomers".

Learn more about our projects by visiting our website: hslckirkland.org/rrc-main.

2024 Great Decisions—coming in January!

We will be starting the 2024 Great Decisions study program in January (exact start day/times still TBD, but probably Mondays from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm). In this program from the Foreign Policy Association (FPA), we discuss major foreign policy issues facing our nation and world today and how this informs our faith.

Watch the weekly eNews, Sunday announcements, and future newsletters for more details and how to sign up. Questions? Contact the church office.





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Worship on Sundays - 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 AM

Childcare available at 9:30 am and 11:00 am
Livestreaming at 9:30 am

Go Paperless!

If you'd like to reduce waste and not receive a paper copy of this monthly newsletter, please let us know. A digital copy of this monthly newsletter comes out with our weekly eNews updates, and is also available via our website. Contact office@hslckirkland.org to update your communication preferences. Thank you!

Do you get the weekly eNews?

Did you know we also put out a weekly newsletter via e-mail? It shares the latest news and announcements for Holy Spirit, including this newsletter electronically. If you're not already subscribed, please contact the office at office@hslckirkland.org to have your e-mail address added to the weekly eNews distribution list. Thank you!