



*A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*



***At Acacia Park Lutheran Church, we welcome you!***

**Connect**

**Wonder**

**Celebrate**

**Share**

**January 2018**

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As much as I love Christmas and everything about the season, I must admit that the day of the year I look forward to the most is December 21st, the Winter Solstice. I have a countdown on my computer to this day which starts every year in June because I look forward to it so much. It's the time when the days start getting long again. December 21st is traditionally the shortest day of the year, so I know that when the sun went down at 4:21 pm last December 21st, the next day--December 22nd--the sun was up just a little bit longer. And eventually, we go from experiencing nine hours of daylight to 15 hours of daylight by mid-June.

Those extra six hours of daylight mean so much to me. It makes me more productive; it puts me in a better mood; it allows for more family time; it encourages me to be outside more. There is something about being surrounded by light and warmth that sets my soul at ease. In reality, this extension of the day really won't be felt for another month or two, but on December 21st it almost doesn't matter that the sun is only up for nine hours. It is a special day because I know that the daylight will be extending even if I can't see it right away.

This is what the month of January in worship is like. After Christmas and the day of Epiphany, we enter a green season for a short period of time before Lent begins. These are the days where we know that Lent and Easter are approaching, but the days still feel dark and long. We are not yet in the place of reflection that Lent asks of us, and we are nowhere near prepared for the joyous celebration of Easter morn--that day we shout that Jesus is risen as we begin not only to see but to feel the light of Christ among us.

A new year is often marked by new beginnings and new hope, much like on December 21st when the days start to get longer but the extra daylight isn't felt for a few more weeks. In terms of the church year, January can feel this way. We know what is coming; we trust in the promise; but we are not quite seeing it yet. However, by the time we get to Lent, Holy Week, and eventually Easter morning, we will begin to notice the extra light in our lives again through the promise of new life in Christ.

In Christ,

*Pr. Meagan Sherman-Sporrong*

## Stewardship 2018

Thank you to those who have turned in their pledge cards for 2018. Pledges help us calculate our budget each year, so again, thank you! If you have not turned in your pledge card yet, it is not too late, and it really will help with budgeting and planning in 2018. If you have lost your card, extras are available in the Narthex. You can complete the card and drop it in the collection plate during Sunday worship.

## Worship and Christian Education

### CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION

A special time for children will be offered on **Sunday, January 14th** during worship and will be led by one of our lay leaders. Children will be dismissed right before the sermon to participate in faith formation activities designed just for them. In addition to a story and theme for the day, there will be a related project for all participants. All children ages 3 through 6th grade are welcome.



### MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY



On **Monday, January 15th**, the United States has set aside a day to remember and celebrate the modern-day prophet, Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King will stand forever as a light shining in the darkness of injustice. Dr. King's passion for the suffering and oppressed inspires us to heed God's call to work on behalf of the marginalized in our communities. Please consider participating in one of the many scheduled events throughout the Chicagoland area celebrating Dr. King's life and legacy. Click [here](#) to visit Chicago Events, Fairs and Festivals for a listing of events planned in honor of Dr. King throughout the month of January.

Please note that the church office will be closed on **Monday, January 15th** in observance of Martin Luther King Day.

### PUB THEOLOGY: BASEMENTS TO BACKYARDS



Join us in an informal setting for fellowship and conversation on topics of faith, spirituality, current events, and just about everything in between. Our January date and host are yet to be determined. Anyone wishing to host Pub Theology this month can call or email the church office at 708-453-3662 or [acaciaparkchurch@gmail.com](mailto:acaciaparkchurch@gmail.com) for more information.

### YOU AND THE WORD BIBLE STUDY

On **Sunday, January 21st** immediately following worship, our monthly Bible study group entitled "You and the Word" will meet. Please mark your calendars, and plan on joining us in fellowship, study and discussion.

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

If you are interested in receiving daily Bible readings from the ELCA through your email, click [here](#) to subscribe. Select the "Subscribe or Unsubscribe" option to the far right, and follow the directions.

## Parish Events and Notes

### BRAINSTORM WITH US!

Right after service on **Sunday, January 7th** we will meet to discuss ideas for possible fundraising and service projects. If you know of a need in the community that we might address or have an idea for raising funds, then please come share it with us. Or perhaps you may just want to listen and become inspired. Either way, please plan to stay for this meeting.

## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING



Acacia Park's annual Congregational Meeting will take place on **Sunday, January 28th** immediately following worship. We will hear about the year 2017; have reports from the pastor, president, and treasurer; and adopt a new budget for 2018. Please join us for this important day in the life of ministry at Acacia Park!

### Serving the Congregation and Larger Community

#### ST. CYPRIAN'S FOOD PANTRY

Canned and non-perishable goods for the St. Cyprian's Food Pantry continue to be collected. Food donations may be left in the bin in the Narthex. **No open packages or expired food, please.**

#### THE NIGHT MINISTRY

We are taking January off. In February, we will resume sandwich making and joining The Night Ministry on location to hand out food, coats and cold-weather items, and to visit with the recipients.



#### SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

During the month of **January**, the confirmation class will be supporting the work of ELCA World Hunger by collecting cans of soup for the Souper Bowl of Caring, a non-profit organization that uses the energy of the Super Bowl to mobilize youth in a united national effort to care for people in their local communities who are hungry and in need. Please bring your soup donations to worship on Sundays from **January 7th through the 28th**, and put them in the food donation bin in the Narthex. St. Cyprian's Food Pantry is our designated receiving charity. Soup donations will be taken to the food pantry the week of January 29th, just in time for Super Bowl Sunday on February 4th.



### Programs of Interest In and Around Our Community

#### @ EISENHOWER LIBRARY

**National Puzzle Day:** Stop in the library for free puzzles like sudoku, crosswords, mazes, and word searches. Enter a drawing to win the jigsaw puzzle of your choice. **Monday, January 29th.**

Visit [www.eisenhowerlibrary.org](http://www.eisenhowerlibrary.org) for more program information or to register.

#### @ ST JAMES CHURCH

**Ron Weber & Friends:** St. James musician, Ron Weber, will present a program featuring a variety of music for the organ, piano, voice, and other instruments. The concert is free. A free-will offering will be received. St. James is located at 7400 W Foster Ave, Chicago. Parish office phone: 773-633-9159. **Saturday, January 27th, 3:00 pm.**

#### @ UNITED IN FAITH

New Life for Old Bags work days are the first Saturday of each month at United in Faith Lutheran Church, 6525 W Irving Park Rd, Chicago. Bring friends and treats to share while making mats for the homeless. **Saturday, January 6th, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.**

### Fundraising and Service Projects

#### AMAZONSMILE

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support Acacia Park Lutheran Church every time you shop and at no cost to you. When you shop at AmazonSmile, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection, and convenient shopping experience—including Amazon Prime member benefits—as Amazon.com. You'll also have the added bonus that the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Acacia Park. Log on at <https://amazonmile.com> to get started shopping.



## COOKIE AND CRAFT SALE



A big **THANK YOU** to everyone who attended and/or volunteered for our Cookie and Craft Sale.

Hundreds of cookies were baked and then sold on December 16th, raising close to \$1,400 for the church. We also had a banner year for craft vendors. Eight different vendors arranged for tables and sold a variety of home-made crafts, including jewelry, towel angels, gift baskets, wreaths, floral arrangements, decorative pillows, clothing, purses, baby items, and candles.

More photos of this very special event can be found on our web site: [acaciaparkchurch.com](http://acaciaparkchurch.com).

### Sending Out Our Thanks

**THANK YOU** to everyone who donated warm coats and cold weather items during the month of December for distribution through The Night Ministry and One Warm Coat.

**SPECIAL THANKS** to Sebastian Manilla who so graciously and beautifully lent his voice in song and praise during our Advent worship services in December.

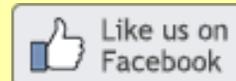
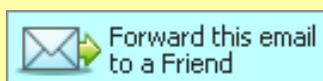


**Connect**

**Wonder**

**Celebrate**

**Share**



**Connect** with us on the web or by email by clicking:

[acaciaparkchurch.com](http://acaciaparkchurch.com)

[acaciaparkchurch@gmail.com](mailto:acaciaparkchurch@gmail.com)

**Share** your thoughts with us by phone:  
**708-453-3662**

**Celebrate** with us Sunday mornings at 9:30 am.

**Church office hours: Monday - Thursday, 10:30 am to 1:30 pm.**

Acacia Park Lutheran Church, 4307 N. Oriole Avenue, Norridge, IL 60706

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