



A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



At Acacia Park Lutheran Church, we welcome you!

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February 2019

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

I have a print that hangs in my bathroom with the Jeremiah 29:11 quote printed on it. It is a good reminder each morning that no matter what I face during the day, I know that God is with me. This print was given to me by the council president of my first call, a congregation that closed after I served as their pastor for almost three years. The council president gave me the print toward the end of the process, and she told me that the Bible passage got her through some of the hardest days of the closing process.

This past year this quote hanging on my bathroom wall meant a little more to me than it has in previous years.

So much happened this year - in each of our lives, in our world, and in Acacia Park Lutheran Church. There were many times I felt overwhelmed, and the Jeremiah quote got me through my day. If we think back on all we as a congregation did this year, there were times we had extreme joy with babies being born, new members joining us, the baptism of Tim Jones, Gabbie's first communion, and Ryan and Megan being confirmed. There were many fellowship opportunities that allowed us to foster relationships and support one another including a chili cook off and a pancake breakfast. We gathered to study the word of God by attending Pub Theology, Bible study, and the mid-week Lenten gatherings. All these events are what bring us joy. The hundreds of sandwiches we make each year and the food and clothes we donate to St. Cyprian's are ways we give back for all the blessings and joys we receive during the year. We give back, and we will continue to look for ways to give back during the next year.

Then there are the times that Jeremiah quote carries us. There are times we need to be reminded that God does care for us, that God does have plans for us.

This year we underwent a few uncertain endeavors. The council led us through conversations and an eventual partnership with New Life. We have trust that God does have a plan for this partnership. We trust that this partnership is one of the plans that give us hope and a future. We are still easing into the relationship, and there are still a few bumps we have to smooth out - but the ways that God is blessing us and fulfilling the plans to prosper Acacia Park Lutheran Church can already be seen. Our budget is feeling more flush, and we are able to update many areas of the church that need some attention. We are getting a new office computer; we will buy hearing devices for worship; the landscaping around the church was updated and brought under control. (Thank you to the Thompson family for all you did!) The extra wiggle room in the budget also made us feel that we can undertake and succeed in a large capital campaign to raise \$25,000 to fix the roof, get new front doors, and do some waterproofing work.

This year we also welcomed new members, many who left long-time, loved congregations due to a recent move. We welcomed others because their beloved

congregation, Grace Lutheran in Elmwood Park, made the faithful decision to close and share their funds and members with other ministries - including supporting Acacia Park Lutheran Church with the blessing of new members and people joining us in worship and with a financial gift.

Some of the steps we take during a year are planned, and we go through the year smoothly - but each of us will meet bumps during the year: some of our plans will not work out; the unexpected happens, so we must adjust. These are the days I turn to Jeremiah and I trust that God is with me, that God had a plan, and that God does want each of us to have a hope and a future.

We begin our journey into 2019 with hope and anticipation and also with an open heart. During the course of this next year we will continue to build our relationship with New Life, update the building, and continue to raise money toward our capital campaign goal of \$24,000. (We are so close, only \$2,000 more to reach our goal!) My contract with Acacia Park ends in September, and the council will be considering extending my call. So over the next few months, you as a congregation may want to discern the gifts you need from a pastor, gifts that will assist you with the next phase of Acacia Park's ministry. This is a time that we have to have trust in the Jeremiah verse, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." God has taken each of us this far into our journey through life and faith, and we trust that God continues to have plans to prosper us and give us hope and a future. There are many great blessings happening at Acacia Park Lutheran Church, and my prayer is that we can keep the momentum going this year by placing trust in God and prayer.

Blessings,

Pr. Meagan Sherman-Sporrong

2019 Annual Congregational Meeting

Our 2019 Annual Congregational Meeting took place on January 27th at which time the election for new church council members was held. The following people were elected for the 2019-2022 term:

Katie Dupree
Patti Dupree
Mike Miskawitz
Dagny Bloland (2nd term)
Linda Engler (2nd term)
Marion Engler (2nd term)

They join current council members Linda Lowery, Bruce Leckie, Sondra Wince and Kären Tompkins. Congratulations one and all!

A special note of **THANKS** goes out to Karen Lanners and Marcia Walther who will be stepping down from the church council this month after many years of dedicated service. Thank you both for your time and many talents. Also, **THANKS** to Karen Lanners for her four years of service as council president.

Finally, our **HEARTFELT THANKS** goes to Grace Lutheran Church members for their generous donation this past December of close to \$50,000. Before the annual meeting began, Grace Lutheran members were presented with a thank-you cake to acknowledge their gift to Acacia Park. Everyone then enjoyed cake and coffee while listening to the various meeting reports.

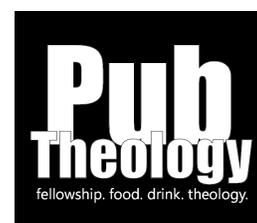
Worship and Christian Education

YOU AND THE WORD BIBLE STUDY

On **Sunday, February 10th** (weather permitting) our Bible study group will meet in the downstairs lounge immediately following worship. Please mark your calendars, and plan on joining us in fellowship, study and discussion.

PUB THEOLOGY

We will meet on **Tuesday, February 12th** (weather permitting) at 7:00 pm at Marion Engler's home, 4842 N Crescent Ave, Norridge for fellowship and friendly discussion of topics including faith, spirituality, current events, and just about everything in between. If you would like to bring an appetizer or treat to share, that would be great! All are welcome. Call or email the church office at 708-453-3662 or acaciaparkchurch@gmail.com for more information.



Parish Events and Notes

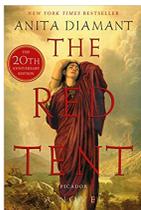
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The church council meets on **Thursday, February 21st** at 7:00 pm.

WELCOME BACK COFFEE AND . . .

Beginning in February, we will again be hosting *Coffee and . . .* after worship once or twice a month. In February, *Coffee and . . .* will take place on **Sunday, February 10th** in conjunction with Bible study and on **Sunday, February 17th** in conjunction with our Night Ministry Food Prep. If you would like to volunteer to bring a treat to share on one or both of these dates, please call or email the church office: 708-453-3662 or acaciaparkchurch@gmail.com.

BOOK CLUB



Our next Book Club selection is *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant. We will meet to discuss the book **Tuesday, March 12th** at 7:00 pm at the church. We still have a few books available for church members to borrow from the church office courtesy of Eisenhower Public Library. Any questions, please call or email the church office: 708-453-3662 or acaciaparkchurch@gmail.com.

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 will once again be "taking it to the streets" to serve a meal to the homeless on **Sunday, February 17th** with The Night Ministry. We need volunteers to help prepare the sandwiches and pack the dinner bags as well as volunteers to drive and help distribute food. If you or anyone you know is interested in going to the location to hand out food and visit with the recipients, please contact Karen Lanners at 773-439-9893. We will also be making 75+ care bags to be distributed locally to people in need.

COAT DRIVE

THANKS to everyone who helped out with our Winter Coat Drive by donating gently-used warm coats and cold-weather items during the months of November, December and January.

From the ELCA

LEARNING TO PROTECT GOD'S CHILDREN FROM EXPLOITATION



Cherish All Children has joined forces with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota in the prevention of child sexual exploitation. Together, they've created the congregational discussion guide "My Neighbor is Not for Sale." Designed to help congregations understand issues of child sexual exploitation and trafficking, this four-session guide is an excellent tool for becoming better informed and work for positive, hopeful change with others in the community.

This resource shares what signs to look for, how to talk with children and adults, and how to make changes in society and transform culture. Each session introduces a topic to prevent child sexual exploitation and offers a biblical response and discussion questions. January was National Human Trafficking Awareness month, but any time is a good time to start this study and begin the work of protecting our children. Faith communities are powerful agents for change - we can make a difference! "My Neighbor is Not for Sale" is free to download and copy. Go to the "Educate" tab at cherishallchildren.org to get started.

Fundraising

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--at 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.



SAVE THE DATE

On **Sunday, March 3rd**--right before Ash Wednesday--we'll be hosting a "Fat Sunday" Pancake Brunch after worship. Make sure to mark your calendars and plan on joining us for a delicious meal of pancakes, sausage, fruit, juice, coffee and tea along with raffles and prizes.

February 14th is St. Valentine's Day.

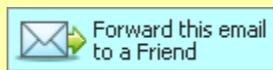


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Connect with us on the web or by email by clicking:

acaciaparkchurch.com

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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