Gustavus Adolphus

LUTHERAN CHURCH PASTOR: Jo Bauman Johnson WEBSITE: gachurchmpls.org

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A Message from Pastor Jo

I am back to ministry at GA, and glad to be here! I'd like to thank the leadership and congregation of GA for allowing my medical leave to occur. It was very much needed – even more than I realized when I requested it.

I tend to be a person who overcompensates when I'm not feeling well. Back in my full-commission sales career, if I had a migraine, I'd do a required presentation in energetic style and then collapse onto a sofa until the next one. I'm older now, with a more complicated medical history and without the reserves of youth.

Having the concentrated time to get medical issues researched, and a regimen to follow to address them has been extremely helpful. Also helpful was the opportunity to just simply and deeply <u>sleep</u>.

None of this would have been possible without the medical leave, which has put me back on a much healthier track and ready to be back at GA with you again. I am grateful for this congregation, and I see all of us working together in God's name in 2019 to spread the Gospel and do God's work!

Blessings and peace to you all, Pastor Jo

Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, January 27



All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend the annual meeting of the congregation <u>after worship</u> on Sunday, January 27. We will hear and read reports from staff and groups within the congregation, elect new church council members, take the second vote on our new constitution and bylaws, and take action on the 2019 budget. Obviously, this is a very

important meeting. We hope for good attendance and participation.

Deadline for Annual Reports

Persons preparing reports for their group or committee are asked to submit those reports to Phil Holzman no later than January 15. Reports submitted in Microsoft Word format are best. Talk to Phil if you have questions. You can e-mail the reports to him at philh@gachurchmpls.org.





January 2019 EMAIL: info@gachurchmpls.org SUNDAY WORSHIP: 9:30 a.m.

2019 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for the new year will be available as soon as we receive them from the printer! (As of Dec. 31 they have not arrived.) We have made a conscious effort to consolidate the number of boxes we ordered this year. If members did not pick up their box of envelopes last year, we did not order a box for them for 2019. We realize that many people use the yellow pew envelopes, Simply Giving, other methods of online giving, or just put a check in the offering plate on Sunday morning. Not everyone uses our envelope boxes.

What those who use envelope boxes <u>will</u> notice is that their envelope number will change for 2019; this reflects the fact that we have ordered many fewer boxes this year and realized quite a cost savings to our budget. If you have questions, please contact Phil in the church office. Thank you for your understanding about this change.

If the envelopes do not arrive in time for Sunday, Jan. 6, we ask that you place your offering in a yellow pew envelope and write your name on the envelope so that you receive credit for your gift.



Bible and Brews

When: Tuesday, Jan. 8, at 6:30 p.m.
Where: Sean and Jenny's, 1392 Buchanan Place NE, Columbia Heights

Join us on Tuesday, Jan. 8, as we discuss Scripture, current events, the Church, and of course... beer.

Bring your favorite libation to share with the group. (If you'd like to help our hosts by bringing a snack as well, please do!) This month we'll once again meet at the home of Jenny and Sean Tessmer. Hope to see you!

Frolic Starts Again on January 6!

Children 0-36 months and caregivers, please join us after church on Sundays in the downstairs "Ikea" room during the Sunday school hour. We sing, read a story, and let our children play. It is a great way to develop relationships with other parents and caretakers as well as introduce Sunday school to your littlest ones. Looking forward to seeing you there! (Please note that Sunday School classes begin January 6 as well.)

LITTLE STEPS, BIG FAITH.

Monday Night Book Club on January 28

Monday Night Book Club will meet at 7:00 p.m. on January 28 at GA to discuss...a book we haven't selected yet! Look for upcoming information in Sunday bulletins for our next read.

Results of December Quilters' Sale



The sale was deemed a success! \$612.00 was raised, which will be distributed between GA's Community Meal, the Hat & Mitten drive in January, and God's Global Barnyard. Thanks to all who purchased items.

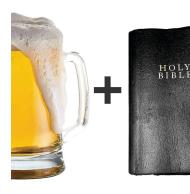
Mitten, Hat, and Scarves Collection

Even the mildest winter weather can be too cold for little hands and ears. Please contribute to our annual hats, mittens, and scarves collection. There is a box in the narthex; all items will be distributed to local elementary schools.

Sign-Up to Help with Sheridan Story Food Distribution

January is GA's month to deliver food at Waite Park School for Sheridan Story. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board at the top of the steps in the narthex. Instructions and details about the food delivery are also posted on that bulletin board. Thanks to those who continue to help with this important ministry.

Jan. Serving Schedule	Assisting Minister	Lector	Sacristan	Transportation	
January 6	Joel Lurvey	Emily Miller	Aaron Bisping	James Hamilton	Jan. Ushers: Ministry Circle 2
January 13	Carlotta Rosebrock	Lynette Paulson	Joan Mitchell	Joel Lurvey	(Carlotta Rosebrock,
January 20	Calvin Huseonica	Kim Huseonica	Brandon Bisping	Pat Lynch	coordinator)
January 27	Cheryl Johnson	Joan Mitchell	Brock Bisping	Brian Hendrickson	



Group Meeting Schedule

Women of the ELCA (WELCA) – No Meeting in January!

Quilters – Quilting session on Thursday, January 3, at 9:30 a.m.

Deborah Circle – The circle will meet on Tuesday, January 8, at 1:00 p.m.

Men's Breakfast – All men are invited to breakfast on Saturday, January 12, at 8:30 a.m. Bring your appetite!

Our Congregation's Vision Statement

(The congregation adopted this vision statement on January 24, 2016.)

God in Christ loves us; therefore, through the Holy Spirit we will:

Do justice

- We **hope** for our community and all of God's creation
- We feed the poor and comfort the afflicted
- We welcome and **respect** our neighbor and the stranger

Love kindness

- We **love** and care for our congregation and our community
- We practice **forgiveness** locally and globally
- We strive for **compassion** and **acceptance**

Walk humbly with our God

- We find **joy** in creation
- We desire to grow in **spirituality**
- We delight in liturgical worship and creative expression

We are all children of God. Jesus calls us by name. With the Holy Spirit, we seek to live out God's grace.

Our Congregation's Core Values

(These values were adopted by the congregation in 2010, just before our current mission statement was written.)

Love Joy Hope Compassion Spirituality Forgiveness Acceptance Respect

Choir News for January

After a brief, well-earned holiday break, our choirs will resume rehearsals in January. Phil always reminds people that January is a great time to think about joining one of our choirs because it's a time of year when we each group is starting new music. Here's the schedule of when each group will resume rehearsals this month:

- Gustavus Bells Wednesday, January 16, at 6:30 p.m.
- Senior Choir Wednesday, January 16, at 7:30 p.m.
- GA Choristers Wednesday, January 30, at 6:00 p.m. (for a four-week session)



Phil Holzman to Attend Sacred Music Conference

Phil will travel to Charleston, SC on January 9 to attend the National Conference for Sacred Music, a three-day event for professional church musicians. As part of this continuing education event, he will attend workshops on worship, handbells, choral music, and children's choirs – all important parts of his ministry here at GA. At the conclusion of the conference, he will travel to Washington, NC to spend the weekend visiting with a long-time family friend before returning to the Twin Cities.

Church Will Be Locked at Noon on Sundays

Beginning January 6, Church Council has decided that the church building will be locked at 12:00 noon on Sundays.

We ask that everyone do their best to be done with their business in the building – including Sunday school and kitchen clean-up – by that time. If not, the doors will be locked, and you will need to let yourself out. Thank you for your understanding of this new policy.



We Love Our Mission Partners!

\$5,438 More Shared Among our Partners at Close of 2018

Thanks to some funds remaining from the tithe of our Capital Appeal and some unallocated benevolence dollars, our Mission Partner Advocates had the happy task of being able to allocate these extra dollars to our Mission Partners at the end of the year.

Open Door Learning Center, Northeast Senior Services, Avenues for Homeless Youth, Northeast Middle School Hygiene Closet, Luther Park Bible Camp, and Twin Cities ReconcilingWorks GLBT Scholarship each received \$500, while the MN Council of Churches Refugee Services received \$2,438. Thanks be to God for the generosity of members of Gustavus Adolphus Church.

Thoughts from Pastor Jo

Although you will be reading this most likely in January, I write this article the week before Christmas, about two weeks after returning from my leave of absence.

While gone from GA, I deliberately chose to be gone from the larger world of "Church" as well. Tom and I did not attend other worship services at other congregations; I didn't take the opportunity to tackle the stack of theological books I have waiting for me; outside of my best friend who is a pastor, I didn't spend time in conversation with other pastors, trying to solve the questions of the modern church.

Nope, I just observed. What does it feel like to not go to church every Sunday? What do those who don't attend worship do with Sunday mornings? What is the attitude towards church among those who don't attend, and those who do, but only occasionally?

Outside of living it, another excellent place to find some of these answers has been in a 4-part *Star Tribune* series on the modern church, called <u>Test</u> <u>of Faith, The Unchurching of America</u>. The articles started this July, and ran through the fall and winter, with the fourth and last one published on December 16. (Find them online at <u>startrib-</u> <u>une.com</u>). Here are the topics, by article:

1) Church closings and mergers. Most of the churches profiled in the article, including the one on the front page, were Lutheran.

2) The difficulty in finding and paying for ministers, and the new roles of clergy in today's churches.

3) How a changing society is affecting churches: 1 in 4 Americans claims no religious affiliation.4) What is the future of the institutional church, and how can such churches prepare?

Of course, the Church (capital C), God's people, will always endure. But the <u>institutional</u> church (Lutheran, GA, any example of an organized body of believers) is under stress right now, and changes are happening. To some this is cause for woe and lament, for others change is long overdue. Wherever one finds oneself on the emotional chart, one overriding question, to be true to Christ's Gospel: <u>What is the best way to</u> <u>tell the story of Jesus and the grace of God,</u> <u>especially to those who have not heard it, or</u> <u>heard it in an unloving way?</u>

The attitude of those who don't attend church is varied and complex, but one theme seems to float to the top: indifference. There is a sense that church is just not important: it's fine for those who need it, but not anything that an increasingly higher percent of the population feel is valid and necessary. Most of the population believes Sunday mornings are for coffee shops, not worship.

The challenge of churches, including GA, is navigating the age-old tension between making its own members comfortable and welcoming newcomers. Today's society is changing faster than some in the pews are willing to bend, yet without flexibility we risk the irrelevance the "Nones" have assumed about us. Some churches have transformed so far, the discussion becomes "what is church"? The way to find the path forward is to acknowledge why churches exist at all: <u>We are called to preach, teach, and serve</u> <u>others in the name of Christ</u>, and in those actions, we find our reason for being and our way to relevance now and in the future.

These paragraphs are <u>not</u> meant as a rebuke to GA, in our current state. We are doing well because these core values have not been forgotten. When we keep the first things first, the rest will take care of itself, because it will be in God's hands. Especially at the start of a new year, with new budgets, new goals, new visions – the prospect of considering the best way to tell the story of Jesus and the grace of God forms a guide to create our path forward.

2019 shines with promise. God's presence in our midst is a guiding force to create ever more ways to live in God's love. It will be a wonderful year!

Blessings and peace to you all, Pastor Jo

Financial Report – General Fund

November General Fund Financials

	Nov. 2018	Nov. 2018 YTD	Nov. 2017 YTD
Income	\$32,671.86	\$304,535.26	\$265 <i>,</i> 590.55
Expenses	<u>29,574.66</u>	<u>306,992.83</u>	<u>277,266.83</u>
Income-Exp.	\$ 3,097.20	<\$ 2,457.57>	<\$ 11,676.28>

Notes about November 2018 financials:

Thanks to your generous November giving, our offering exceeded spending by over \$3,097.20! This significantly reduced our year-to-date deficit to a manageable amount. Finance anticipates we will have a large boiler maintenance fee of \$6,600 before the conclusion of December, but with your help, GA will pay down our deficit *and* begin 2019 with a small surplus. Thank you for your continued gifts to God's mission for GA: To build community where God is at the center.

Daryl Mattson's final Finance meeting was December 13. He is resigning from the Finance Team after 13 years of service. Thank you, Daryl!

Thinking of contributing to GA from your IRA? If you designate funds toward GA out of an IRA, it will not be a part of your taxable income for 2018. If you have questions about this, feel free to contact Dan Hager, Finance Manager.

Next Finance Committee Meeting: Thursday, January 10, at 6:00 p.m.

Hello Gustavus Adolphus,

Now that the holidays are past, I want us to take the month of January to think about some of the initial challenges that our refugee neighbors face when they arrive in the United States. Let's try on the shoes of our refugee neighbors for a few moments.

Refugees are picked up from the airport from local resettlement agencies, like our mission partner the MN Council of Churches- Refugee Services (MCC), that take the family to their new home. The family will then meet with their resettlement case manager frequently for assistance navigating our systems; typically up to 90 days after arriving in the United States. Agencies like MCC locate housing for the family, help them sign up for county benefits, and connect them to resources that they need such as employment, education, English classes, transportation, medical services, etc. Let's take a closer look at some of the common challenges that families face during this period.

Enrolling children (and adults) in school is one of the first things that a resettlement case manager needs to work on when the family arrives. For many refugee children, school may have been disrupted from the crisis they encountered in their hometown or was never an option. Here they have access to school but adapting to an American school environment takes time. Sitting still for hours, listening to classes in a foreign language, finding your way around the school building, learning the rules, etc. are all things that students are experiencing immediately upon entering school. This is a lot for a student to absorb in addition to the culture shock that they are already experiencing outside of school. *Take a moment and think about what it must it feel like for a parent that has limited school experience to struggle to help their child understand their homework. If it were you, would you feel frustration? Would you feel embarrassment? Would you feel pride that your children are getting an experience that you were not given as a child? What about if that parent is enrolled in GED classes and your child is picking up on lessons quicker than you are? How do you wrestle with these emotions and forge ahead? When someone starts talking to you in English and your child understands more than you and responds for you, how does that change your relationship with your child?*

Securing employment is one of the hardest challenges for a refugee to overcome. Language is an obvious battle for many but not all, and even jobs that do not require English skills (for example: assembly work) for the position still require English to read the schedule and know when their shift takes place. Some refugees have been told that they do not qualify for the job they have applied for because they do not have any previous work experience in the United States. Others are over-qualified for the jobs that they are applying for but unable to get back into the field that they had previously been employed. For example, in my former caseload of refugees and asylees, I've had a surgeon, chefs ambassador, and a perfumer- all accepting jobs as janitors, assembly workers, PCA's, etc. They were happy to find employment to support their family but discouraged that their work experience and skills are not being used. *How would you feel if you were a surgeon and the closest you can get back into your profession is cleaning the hospital floors?* The next time you see someone with limited English cleaning a building or taking parking tickets in a parking garage, remember that person could be a well-respected doctor, professor, or banking executive in his/her home country.

Why is finding employment so crucial for families if they receive financial assistance for initial resettlement and qualify for county benefits? Refugees only receive intensive case management for the first couple of months that they are here. After that they are on their own to pay their rent and other bills associated with living in a rental unit. That's why it is so important that resettlement agencies work to build relationships with property managers in the community and teach families how to navigate the housing market. Case managers have the difficult task of finding an affordable, safe place that can legally housing the right number of family members before the family arrives. Keep in mind that it is incredibly hard to find large rental units (think 3 or more bedroom units) that are affordable in the Twin Cities. *No idea how expensive rental units are right now? If you haven't had to look for an apartment lately it may shock you to learn that according to a Star Tribune article on September 4th, 2018, the average cost of a 2 bedroom apartment in the Twin Cities metro area is \$1,272/month.* Case managers also need to convince property managers to accept a damage deposit and rent from a third party, waive the requirement for previous housing history, and know that communication will likely be difficult with a family that may have limited English.

There is an overwhelming number of things that a refugee or asylee person needs to learn once arriving in their MN home. Little things like learning how to run a shower when you've never had running water, turning on an oven when you've only cooked over an open flame, purchasing groceries with money you are not familiar with or not being able to barter for the price, and getting on the bus can be overwhelming for someone who has lived a very different lifestyle. It doesn't matter how posh of a former lifestyle a refugee may have lived, there is always a learning curve for anyone starting over in a new place. That is why many resettlement agencies have volunteer roles (like MCC's co-sponsorship) to help with all of these challenges and answer questions for newly arrived refugees. The resettlement agency's case managers can only do so much so this the perfect place for those of us native to this area to help guide someone new like our refugee neighbors.

It can be easy to forget how overwhelming it is to start something new and fail to approach our refugee neighbors with compassion, understanding, and a helping hand. I'm going to leave you this month with a verse from Matthew (25:35-40):

³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' ³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' ⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Until next month,

Lona Hendricks

P.S. If you would like to engage your children in discussing refugees in our community, MCC suggested a children's book on their Facebook page entitled, <u>My Name Is Not Refugee</u> by Kate Milner.



Minneapolis-Saint Paul Area Synod 2019 Reconciling in Christ Worship Service

Saturday, January 26th 2019 4:30PM

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church 700 Snelling Ave S St Paul, MN 55116

Preaching: Pastor Javen Swanson Presiding: Pastor Bradley Schmeling

Soup Supper to Follow Worship

Come and join your Twin Cities Reconciling in Christ Community as we celebrate our RIC welcome and shared mission!

2019 marks the 10th anniversary of Gustavus Adolphus Church becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation! This RIC designation is an important part of our congregation's identity.

Phil Holzman invites members of GA to join him in attending this worship service on Jan. 26. Talk to Phil if you're interested in attending.

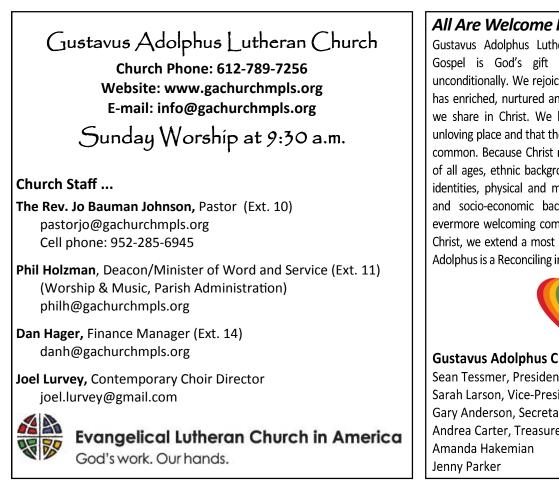


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...to build community where God is at the center. God's Mission for GA Church...

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All Are Welcome Here!

Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church proclaims that the Gospel is God's gift to all people, to be shared unconditionally. We rejoice in the manner in which diversity has enriched, nurtured and challenged the life and ministry we share in Christ. We know that the world is often an unloving place and that the experience of alienation is all too common. Because Christ reconciles us, we welcome people of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, physical and mental abilities, educational levels, and socio-economic backgrounds. We strive to be an evermore welcoming community. Following the example of Christ, we extend a most heartfelt welcome to all. Gustavus Adolphus is a Reconciling in Christ congregation.



Gustavus Adolphus Church Council Sean Tessmer, President Sarah Larson, Vice-President Gary Anderson, Secretary Andrea Carter. Treasurer

Ed Huble Erik Peterson