

Portal ght

the monthly Newsletter of West Portal Lutheran Church and School

JANUARY 2025

PAGE 1

West Portal Lutheran Church Website:

westportallutheran.org

Inside this issue:

Message from Pastor Binz & People Pray	1-2
Message from Pastor Swenson	3
Margaret Finley's Funeral Service	4
Church Events—Poinsettia Decorating & WPL Winter Music Recital	5
News From the Principal's Desk	6
School Events—PTL Christmas Faire	7-8
School Christmas Program	9-10
Christmas Poinsettias	11-12
West Coast Walk For Life	13
January Calendar & Flower Chart	14
January Birthdays & Anniversaries; Angel Tree	15
Message from the Accounting Office	16

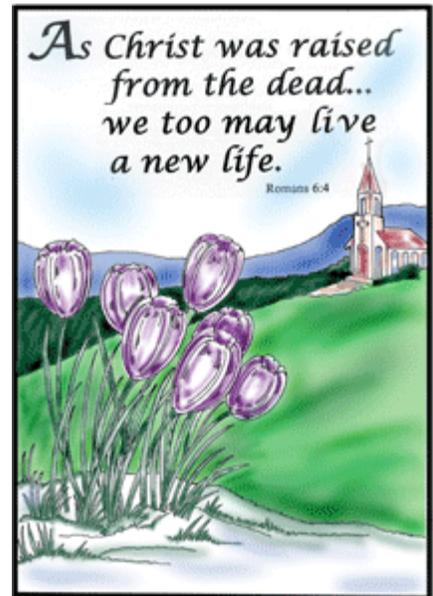
From Pastor Binz

“Remember your baptism”

“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” Rom. 6:4.

The first Sunday after the Epiphany (Epiphany is Jan. 6) is set aside in the church year for remembering the baptism of our LORD. *“Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased’” Luke 3:21-22.*

When individuals, who have been baptized but have not been confirmed come to the communion rail, I offer the blessing and I include the words, “Remember your baptism.” Now they may have no memory at all of their baptism if they were baptized as infants but they will



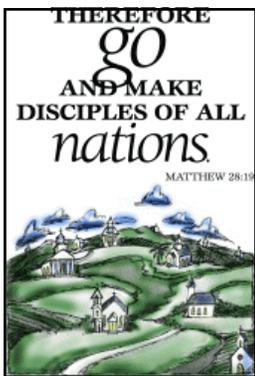
still know the blessings of baptism. Luther writes in the small catechism under the “Blessings of Baptism”: “What benefits does Baptism give? It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.” SC 292.

Our baptism and the blessings from this sacrament is truly a “mystery.” The Greek word for sacrament is actually translated as “mystery.” The blessing accompanying baptism were so important to our Lord Jesus that He instructed His disciples to “Go therefore and make

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” Mt. 28:19.



“In baptism God puts his saving name on us and is truly present to bless us with all His gifts as His children and heirs” SC 287. So when we remember our baptism, we remember that we are children of God. As children of God, we daily receive the blessings that God has for us in Christ

Jesus just as St. Paul writes to the Romans “We walk in the newness of life” Rom. 6:4.



As we start another New Year may we remember our baptism and be reminded of the newness of life that God has accomplished for us through His beloved Son, Jesus Christ our LORD, Savior, and Redeemer.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Binz

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD GOD

for those who are ill, home-bound, or recovering from recent hospitalization: Vincent & Brigitta Ammann, Beatrice Priest’s parents; Emersynn Binz; Elfriede Bonfert; Paul Brase; Charlene Bruggemann-Wong; Angie Cheung, Helen Bok’s sister-in-law; Bill Eves, Virginia Ferry’s cousin; Mary Jo Fischl; Jimmy Fong, Evelyn Fong’s father; Karen Goeglien, Bob Bok’s cousin; Kenny Hioe, Julia Tom’s brother-in-law; Ted Jones; Eliza Latimore; George Mogyorossy, Gilbert Mogyorossy’s father; Sigrid Rogge; Ruth Stresow; Marilyn Tom, Stanley Tom’s sister-in-law; Annalise Traub, Peter Traub’s daughter; Lisa Westermann; Cheryl Wong; Marilyn Wong; Franklin Yee.



PortalLight is the monthly Newsletter of West Portal Lutheran Church and School

200 Sloat Boulevard, San Francisco CA 94132
(415) 661-0242

www.westportallutheran.org

Rev. Curtis Binz, Senior Pastor

Rev. Jacob Swenson, Associate Pastor

May Luu, Administrative Assistant

Angie Holt, Church Secretary, PortalLight Editor

Sherise Lee, Principal

Amy Kao, Music Director

Worship Schedule

- 5:00 PM Saturday Worship Service-Lord’s Supper
- 9:00 AM Sunday School-Sanctuary
- 9:00 AM Sunday Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall
- 9:00 AM Catechism Refresher Class-Conference Room
- 10:00 AM Sunday Worship Service-Lord’s Supper

West Portal Lutheran Church is a member congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod & English District

Thoughts From Pastor Swenson

“Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” (Luke 2.29-30 *King James Version*)

Thus began the song of St. Simeon, with which he praised the God of heaven. He kept true His Word to send His Christ for the consolation of Israel and to preserve Simeon in his earthly life until he should see the Messiah with his own eyes. When the holy parents brought the baby Jesus into the temple to present Him to the Lord, Simeon was also there. He took Jesus into his arms and, as God’s people often do, he sang. In the history of the Church, we’ve called this song the *Nunc Dimittis* from its first two words in Latin. It is the third of the three New Testament Canticles we frequently sing. The other two are the Benedictus, the song of Zechariah; and, the Magnificat, the song of Mary.

The song seems to have first been used by Christians in the eastern areas of the Church, during a service called Vespers. It entered into Western usage (where we come in) in the service called “Compline.” The title comes from the Latin word for completion, as Compline was the last prayer service of the day - often around midnight. The service included Psalms and other Scripture readings. There would also be an office hymn, which was often quieter and plainer than the ones sung earlier (or later) in the day. Then, they would sing the *Nunc Dimittis* as a sung confession that, by God’s grace through faith in



Christ, the Christian could sleep in peace - having seen God’s salvation in the Means of Grace.

In time, the *Nunc Dimittis* also became an option alongside the *Magnificat* for the canticle at (Western) Vespers. Vespers was the prayer service held earlier in the evening, around 6-7pm. We followed Vespers for our Advent and Christmas Eve services this year. It became a quieter counterpoint to the Te Deum sung at Matins (more on that later). In this way, things continued for hundreds of years; then, something happened in the Reformation.

Although the *Nunc Dimittis* continued to be an option at Vespers, in the decades following the Reformation it started being sung in the Divine Service, that is, in the chief Sunday service. It wasn’t Luther who did it. As far as we can tell, it was the Scandinavian Lutherans who began to do this. It entered into American usage, and eventually into the LCMS, through the *Common Service* of 1887. The *Common Service*, we’d know better as Divine Service III (more on that later, too). But where did those Swedes put the *Nunc Dimittis*? After the Distribution of the Lord’s Supper. The Christian, having received the forgiveness of sins through Christ’s body and blood, can now depart at peace with God. We sing the *Nunc Dimittis* in Setting IV every time. It is an option in Setting I. We’ll also get to use it when we follow Setting III. Next time we sing it, think about the words of Simeon and why we sing them at that point in the service.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Swenson

Margaret Finley's Funeral Service on December 7, 2024

An overflow of congregation members and guests celebrated the life of Margaret's service to the Lord. The reception in the Finley Court Gym was a time of fellowship & reminiscing. Special thanks to Helen & Bob Bok, Alex & Lucy Lew and Dan Holt in preparing the reception. We are also grateful for the assistance by the school faculty and other volunteers in serving & cleaning for this special event.



West Portal Lutheran Church Events

Many thanks to the Altar Guild ladies for decorating our altar and chancel area with the poinsettia plants. Pictured front (left to right) : Virginia Ferry, Judy Law, Gerda Beisel, Ernestine Gutter, Rhonda Short, Angie Holt, Becky Chan and Darlene Hartman.



WPLS Music Academy Winter Recital held on December 8th



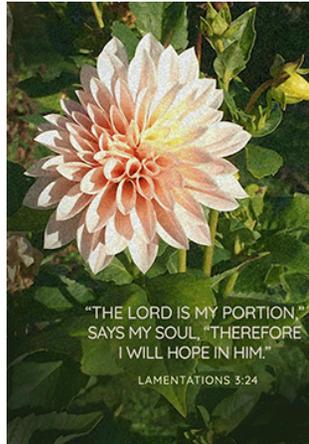
West Portal Lutheran School: News from the Principal's Desk

Dear West Portal Lutheran Family of Faith:

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

"The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

(Lamentations 3:22-24)



A new year approaches, and while the brightness of starting anew offers alluring hope, there is also an accompanying sense of doubt - what trials will come? What sorrows await? Clearly the pessimist in me surfaces, already fearing what has not yet come to pass.

In our modern world, where feelings become an objective truth, it is counterintuitive to rely outside ourselves on Scripture as a lamp to our feet and a light unto our path (Psalm 119:105). Yet, to the Christian, it is the necessity for which we sift out true truth and emerge victorious. Here in Lamentations we read of a time when there was much destruction of Jerusalem and despite the lamenting, there is hope and salvation that awaits. It may feel disorienting to place hope outside of present circumstance, but our hope is not misplaced in a God who is faithful and a Savior who is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

As we begin the new year, I think of Mrs. Finley and the 46+ years that she spent dedicated to the ministry of West Portal

Lutheran Church and School. Scripture brings further encouragement in Hebrews 12:1-3 as we understand that a great cloud of witnesses spur on our race of endurance today. Knowing Mrs. Finley persisted in her faith gives me the courage to pick up my feet, look to my Savior, and carry on. It is my prayer that together in commUNITY at West Portal Lutheran Church and School we will persist in joyous hope in the new year.

To Him Who Is Able to Keep Us From Stumbling,

Sherise Lee, School Principal

PTL Fundraising



Fri, Jan 3-Sun, Jan 12

Shop at any Sloat Garden Center and 10% of your purchase total will be donated to WPL PTL as part of their **Growing Up Green** fundraiser

Just mention West Portal Lutheran School at checkout!

All proceeds will benefit PTL community and student enrichment programs
Thank you for your support!



Sloat Garden Center San Francisco locations:
• 2700 Sloat Blvd • 3237 Pierce St
• 327 3rd Ave

West Portal Lutheran School Events

PTL Christmas Faire 12-14-24. Thank you PTL for a job well done!





PTL Committee



West Portal Lutheran School Events

Kindergarten - 8th Grade Christmas Program on Dec. 19, 2024



Orchestra led by Mrs. Florence Fong, Orchestra Director/Conductor



Special thanks to Mrs. Janet Lee, Music Director, Mrs. Florence Fong, Orchestra Director/Conductor and Sherise Lee, Principal



Narration by Elizabeth (8A)



Narration and Solo by Isabella (8A)

Christmas Poinsettias

The *Chancel Flowers* and the white poinsettias were given to the glory of God by **Guthrie, Twomey and Crouse Families** in memory of Margaret and Jim Finley, Jr, beloved parents; Frieda and Robert Thomson; James Sr. and Evelyn Finley; Priscilla, Ben and Barry Mathis; and in honor of WPL Church and School staff and families.

"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." Psalm 23:1

Christmas Poinsettias that adorn our Church this Christmas Eve and Day were given to the glory of God for the great gift of His love, Jesus Christ, by the following:

Brigitta Ammann

In loving memory of my brother Hans

Gerda Beisel & Family

In loving memory of Julius Beisel

Pastor & Stacey Binz

In loving memory of Stacey's sister - Michele Cottle

Bob & Helen Bok

In memory of Douglas & Matthew Tom, Rev. Wilbert & Martha Bok and Margaret Finley

Earl Lene De Santiago

In memory of Margaret Finley

The Dye and Willis Families

In memory of Bud and Mary Ellen Ginther, Lottie & Blaine Ginther, Bill & Cecil Vance, Donald Dye & Alberta Hawkins

Rudy & Gail Frey

In praise to God

Darlene Hartman

To honor the Women of the WPL Quilters

Terry Hesselroth

In memory of Rich Hesselroth, Gene & Martha Mize and Marcia Hesselroth

Ray & Kathy Holstead

In loving memory of our parents, Kristin Hyde-DeKolver, John Hyde, Emily Benson, Marie Louise Benson, Emily Keeley, and Ken Diercks

Bill & Nita Luebke

In memory of Bill & Pui Gee, Nita's parents and Marlene Hewison, Bill's sister

Patrick & Grace Man

In memory of Bik May Yeung & Theresa Jeung

The Presley-Nelsons

For the Blessing of Family

The Proehls - Vicki, Karen, Tiffany, Kenny, Bryan & Becky

In memory of Ed, Steven, Glenn & Marge, Doris & Frank

John Rixe

In memory of Jan Lundquist

Rhonda Short

In memory of my aunt Marie Beatty and my parents Richard & Amelia Short

Carol Slettvedt

In memory of my Gammy - grandmother.

Ron & Viviana Soper

In memory of Ron's father and Viviana's mother.

The Stranahan Family

In memory of Ann Stranahan, Darlene Lau, and Ed & Mary Sales

Pastor & Faith Swenson

In loving memory of Samuel Enoch and Talitha Koum Swenson

Stanley & Julia Tom

In loving memory of Margaret Finley

Nancy Tso

In memory of my maternal grandparents.

The Wendt Family - Jason, Kimberly, David & Aaron

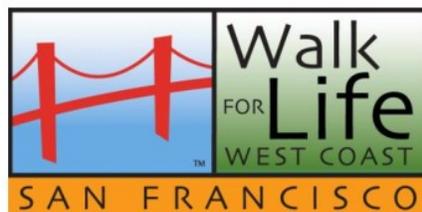
In memory of Rhelda Evans-Latimore and Mrs. Finley

Many thanks to our Altar Guild; our Greeters, Ushers, and Lectors; Church Office Secretaries May Luu and Angie Holt; Office Helpers; Elders; Christian Service Committee; Coffee Hour Fellowship Providers; Christmas Church Decorators; those who set up the outdoor nativity; and others for their extra assistance this Advent/Christmas and to anyone else whom we accidentally forgot, "*Many Thanks!*"

- Pastor Binz

A Word From the Church Council

As we celebrate the real miracle of Christmas – God's demonstration of love for us through the Lord Jesus Christ – we also thank Him for the many blessing He has given to this congregation. We are especially grateful for the ministry of Pastor Binz, Pastor Swenson, Principal Sherise Lee, the church office staff, and the faculty and staff of the School, for their commitment to serving the Lord. We appreciate the officers, directors, and volunteers who use the gifts God has given them to serve West Portal Lutheran Church and School. May all of you share the blessings of knowing the Christ Child as you gather with family and friends this Christmas.



Walk For Life West Coast Pre-Walk Gathering Site

WHEN: Saturday, January 25th 2025, 11:00 am



Participants are welcome to meet at West Portal Lutheran Church before the event, to enjoy some good fellowship & refreshments, then travel to the march together on the SF MUNI light rail train.

Sign up at: https://www.lcms-life.org/need/detail/?need_id=934482

WHERE: West Portal Lutheran Church & School Parish Hall

200 Sloat Boulevard, San Francisco, CA 94132

Tel. (415)661-0242 URL WestPortalLutheran.org

(Parking on small parking lot & on streets around the church & school.)

Host: The Rev. Curtis Binz & West Portal Lutheran Church & School

11:00 am Fellowship & Refreshments

11:30 am Walk to West Portal/Sloat/St Francis Circle Muni Station

11:45 am Muni Train to Civic Center Station

12:00 pm Walk to Civic Center Plaza, the corner of Larkin St. & Grove St.

(A LCMS representative will be standing at this corner with a LCMS "feather flag" to direct people to exactly where our group will be standing).

12:15 pm Arrive

12:30 pm Main Event



Wednesday, 1/1 CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED
 Saturday, 11/4 10:00 AM Quilt Class-Fellowship Hall
 Saturday, 1/4 5:00 PM Worship Service-Lord's Supper

 Sunday, 1/5 9:00 AM Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall
 Sunday, 1/5 10:00 AM Worship Service-Lord's Supper
 Sunday, 1/5 11:15 AM Church Council Meeting

 Wednesday, 1/8 11:00 AM Midweek Bible Class
 Saturday, 1/11 5:00 PM Worship Service-Lord's Supper

 Sunday, 1/12 9:00 AM Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall
 Sunday, 1/12 10:00 AM Worship Service-Lord's Supper
 Sunday, 1/12 11:15 AM Elders Meeting
 Wednesday, 1/15 11:00 AM Midweek Bible Class
 Saturday, 1/18 5:00 PM Worship Service-Lord's Supper

 Sunday, 1/19 9:00 AM Sunday School-Sanctuary
 Sunday, 1/19 9:00 AM Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall
 Sunday, 1/19 10:00 AM Worship Service-Lord's Supper
 Wednesday, 1/22 11:00 AM Midweek Bible Class
 Saturday, 1/25 11:00 AM Walk for Life-Fellowship Hall
 Saturday, 1/25 5:00 PM Worship Service-Lord's Supper

 Sunday, 1/26 9:00 AM Sunday School-Sanctuary
 Sunday, 1/26 9:00 AM Adult Bible Study-Fellowship Hall
 Sunday, 1/26 10:00 AM Worship Service-Lord's Supper
 Sunday, 1/26 11:15 AM Altar Guild Meeting-Library
 Wednesday, 1/29 11:00 AM Midweek Bible Class

Altar Flowers

Flower Charts for the year 2025 are now posted in the Narthex. This is a very special way to help decorate the Altar, and to commemorate events or to remember loved ones. Flowers may be taken home or are delivered to our sick and shut-in members. Please call May Luu or Angie Holt in the church office, 415-661-0242, if you have any questions. The cost of a floral arrangement is \$55.00 thru Mystic Garden on Ocean Ave. We encourage you to sign up for the new Flower Chart.





- 1 Linda Silveria
- 1 Elaine Uy
- 2 Jordan Crisologo
- 2 Marvin Dye
- 2 Avery Nulph
- 4 Alexander Hsiao
- 6 Edward Wong
- 6 Stefanie Nixdorf
- 6 Henny Laksana
- 7 Kinnan Wong
- 8 Jessica Gatchalian
- 8 Roland Jung
- 9 Hiroaki Murata
- 9 Quentin Lo
- 9 Jacob Ngai
- 10 Chris Chao
- 11 Khalil Mrabe
- 11 Sylvia Mrabe

- 11 Kristen Fung
- 12 Stephan Kolsanoff
- 12 Luca Stofferahn
- 12 Jacqueline Kwok
- 13 Nicholas O'Beirne
- 13 Kevin Szeto
- 13 Cameron Park
- 15 Rachel Hung
- 16 Earl Lene de Santiago
- 16 Courtney Park
- 16 Sharon Tabar
- 17 Nathaniel Fong
- 18 Michele Boyer
- 18 Sheila Tabar
- 19 Lauren Wong
- 20 Trinity Batiste
- 20 Michi Boyer
- 20 Sean Patrick
- 21 Aaron Fung
- 21 Danielle Hirano
- 21 Amy Kao
- 23 Vincent Ammann

- 24 Jeremiah Gatchalian
- 24 David Lew
- 25 Alice Yue
- 27 Brigitta Ammann
- 27 Sherise Lee
- 27 May Luu
- 27 Chadwick Sheh
- 29 Otto Fung
- 29 Gordon Yee
- 30 Pichaya Khamvatee
- 31 Donald Woo
- 31 Laurie Gonsalves
- 31 Archie Wong



- 22 Morteza & Sharon Tabar
- 25 Hiroaki Murata & Megumi Amano
- 31 Rev. Curtis & Stacey Binz

"Pray for one another" (James 5:16)

Let us follow this command of God's Word. Use the birthdays and anniversaries list each month to hold up one another to the Lord in prayer. You may wish to keep this list on your refrigerator, in your Bible, in your Portals of Prayer, or in some convenient place. What strength we receive from Almighty God when we sincerely pray for one another! And in these "interesting times," a call to a member wishing him/her birthday or anniversary greetings would probably be appreciated. It's particularly important that we keep in contact with each other when we're unable to meet in person.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Salvation Army Angel Tree Toy Drive. Members were able to take angel gift tags to purchase gifts based on the child's wish list. In addition, we collected over \$100 in donations and we received additional toys for the toy drive. The additional money will be sent to Salvation Army. We appreciate your generous donations which made this toy drive a success.



Grace Man, Director
 Christian Service Committee
 628-228-9378
gmanfrk@yahoo.com



From the Accounting Office

Important Notice

To ensure the deductibility of your church contributions, do not file your 2024 income tax return until you have received a written acknowledgment of your contributions from the church. You may lose a deduction for some contributions if you file your tax return before receiving a written acknowledgment of your contributions from the church. Annual contribution statements will be sent to you by the end of January. If you have not received your statement by early February, or if you need to receive it earlier, please contact the church accountant, Howard Scully.

PLEASE PICK UP YOUR 2025 CHURCH OFFERING ENVELOPES. They are arranged in alphabetical order on the table in the narthex. If you have a box in the mailroom your envelopes may be there. **Please start using your 2025 envelopes in January, and recycle (do not reuse) your old 2024 envelope boxes and any unused envelopes.** Your 2025 envelopes are a different color and most likely have a new number. If you did not receive a box of envelopes and would like one, please contact the church accountant, Howard Scully: Tel: (415) 661-0242 ext 225e-mail: howard.scully@wplsfc.com

***Y**our tithes and offerings support the mission and ministries of West Portal Lutheran Church. If you wish to make an online donation, please use the QR code below. PayPal deducts a small fee from these donations, or you may add a nominal amount to your donation by checking the box to help cover the fees.*

