

HOPE RISING EDITION

CHRIST
THE KING LUTHERAN
CHURCH

CTKELC.ORG

THE KING'S BANNER NEWSLETTER



\$15

**FESTIVAL
TICKETS ON
SALE NOW!**

**SCAN
ME**



**WITH HOPE, ANYTHING
IS POSSIBLE!**

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Buen día mis amigas/os/es,



This edition of the King's Banner, Newsletter of Christ the King Church, encompasses a season of hope in the life of this, our spiritual home. Spanning the months of November 2023 through January 2024, this edition highlights key dates during this period. For an exhaustive listing of events and articles, please check out our website at ctkelc.org.

Check out Pastor Jennifer's Desk, page 5, as she announces this year's Advent Theme: Await: Prepare the Way! On page 8, you will find the listing of Advent and Christmas services and events for both campuses. Join us in rejoicing with Freewheels Houston on their 8th year and 2,000 bikes delivered anniversary, pages 10-11. For parents and youth, pages 14-17 have a listing of events for youths to participate during these three months. There is a new section, page 20, in the King's Banner, entitled, "Saints in Focus." On page 22, you will find information about this year's Crèche Festival, December 16 and 17, entitled, "Hands of the People: A Crèche Festival." Read through this edition to get a fuller listing of events.

With hope, anything is possible!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sergio Rodriguez".

Pr. Sergio Rodriguez
Editor, The King's Banner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel McWhirter".

Rachel McWhirter
Layout Designer

THE PASTOR'S DESK

Beloved Community of Christ the King Lutheran Church,

As I write this letter to you, fall has arrived in Houston. The air is crisper; warmer clothing has been unpacked; and cold hands are warmed with a cup of hot tea. While I am hopeful that fall weather will remain with us, it is yet to be seen.



“For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees?” (Romans 8:24)

During these first two months, many of you have shared your individual, congregational, and community-related hopes and dreams with me through stories of past experiences and hoped-for future realities. The excitement and energy around forward movement is both palpable and rising.

Both our CTK Festival and our Fall Stewardship Focus have embraced the theme, “Hope Rising.”

We are in a season of hope, a season of visioning and dreaming, as we build our capacity for becoming a spiritual home for both those who already are present with us and those who may be seeking a place to call their spiritual home. As our hopes rise, we respond because of the grace that has been lavishly given to us through the ultimate embodiment of hope, Jesus.

As our hopes and dreams rise like prayers before God, we enter our New Church Year with the season of Advent. Advent, from the Latin word “adventus” meaning “arrival,” includes the four Sundays before Christmas day, which means that this year the 4th Sunday of Advent is on Christmas Eve. Each Sunday we will light a new candle in our Advent wreath, awaiting the arrival of both the Christ-child and also Christ in glory at the end of time.

Opportunity abounds throughout the months of November and December for us to spend time together and for us to invite others in our lives to spend time with us in our spiritual home. Please get out your calendars as you read through this issue, and prioritize the moments of tradition and ritual that will nourish you, your families, and your friends throughout this season of Advent.

“A voice cries out: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’” (Isaiah 40:3)



***Hope is rising!
Await: Prepare the Way!***



Scan this QR code to join our private CTK Facebook group where you can interact with Pr. Jennifer!

Grace and peace and above all hope,


Pastor Jennifer

BANNER FEATURED EVENTS

CTK FEST 2023: HOPE RISING NOV.17

It's our time to party for a good cause, really, several good causes! The CTK Festival celebrates our anniversary as a congregation caring and sharing for each other and for our neighbors in need. 100% of the proceeds benefit our outreach ministries and community partners. See Pg. 8

FREEWHEELS 8 YEAR CELEBRATION

Please attend the **Nov. 18 celebration** of our work together to welcome refugees and less-fortunate neighbors. See Pg. 9



THANKSGIVING WORSHIP + DINNER

November 23, 10:30 AM
CTK Rice Village Campus.
After worship, join us in the parish hall for a Thanksgiving meal with all the trimmings provided by our FaithFULL feeding ministry. All Are welcome!

LUTHER LEAGUE CHRISTMAS TREE DECORATING GATHERING

December 10
The Luther League will gather at the Rice Village campus to decorate the tree and participate in a white elephant gift exchange. See pg. 16.

ANNUAL MEETINGS 1 + 2

Dec. 10 and Feb. 4, 2024 at the Rice Village Campus. See pg. 7.

INTERGENERATIONAL LAS POSADAS + WAFFLE CAFE

December 17 at the Rice Village Campus
All children, youth, and adults are invited to join us with our Sunday School teachers and musicians as we lead an intergenerational Las Posadas followed by our annual waffle cafe breakfast! See Pg.14.

MLK PARADE

January 15, 2024
Join Christ the King Church to walk in MLK, Jr. Black Heritage Society Parade. See pg. 13

RIC SUNDAY WORSHIP

January 28, 2024
Join us for on RIC Sunday for a special worship service as an RIC congregation.



FOR MORE
EVENTS +
DETAILS,
SCAN THE QR
CODE OR
VISIT
WWW.CTKELC.ORG/EVENTS

LIFE TOGETHER

Annual Meeting Pt. 1

Dec. 10, 2023 at 12:30

Rice Village campus Parish Hall
Lunch will be provided by our FaithFULL
Feeding Ministry

Annual Meeting Pt. 2

February 4, 2024 at 12:30

Childcare will be available during
both meetings.



Young Adults Group

Are you a Young Adult (21+) and are looking for fellowship, conversation, and good brews? Join our Young Adults Group and check us out! November 26, December 17, and January 28, 2024.

Contact Rev. Sergio Rodriguez for location

CTK RICE VILLAGE
2353 RICE BOULEVARD,
HOUSTON, TX 77005

Thanksgiving Worship & DINNER

All Are Welcome!
NOVEMBER 23
10:30 AM

Following the 10:30 a.m. worship service, there will be a Thanksgiving Day Dinner in the parish hall, hosted by the FaithFULL Feeding Ministry.

CTKELC.ORG
Email: CTK@CTKELC.ORG

FaithFULL Feeding
at Christ the King

Hybrid Sunday Forum

Sundays, 9:30 AM at the Rice Village Campus
Parish Hall or Zoom

November 12: Hope Rising: Biblical Stewardship 101

November 19: Hope Rising: Discerning Your Time and Talent

November 26: Hope Rising: Strategically Employing Our Time, Talents and Treasures

Special Advent Forum on December 10: The History and Evolution of the Nativity

Scan the QR Code for the full programming lineup



Advent and Christmas 2023

Rice Village Campus

2353 Rice Boulevard, Houston, TX 77005

WORSHIP

- Dec. 2** Contemplative Advent 1, 6 PM
- Dec. 3** Advent 1, 8:30 AM + 11 AM
- Dec. 6** *Holden Vespers, 7 PM
- Dec. 9** Contemplative Advent 2, 6 PM
- Dec. 10** Advent 2, 8:30 AM + *11 AM
- Dec. 13** *Holden Vespers, 7 PM
- Dec. 16** Contemplative Advent 3, 6 PM
- Dec. 17** Advent 3, 8:30 AM + *11 AM
- Dec. 20** *Holden Vespers 7 PM
- Dec. 21** Longest Night 7 PM
- Dec. 23** Contemplative Advent 4, 6 PM
- Dec. 31** *Name of Jesus, 11 AM

KEY
* = Livestream



EVENTS

- Dec. 3** Advent Wreath Workshop + Chrismon Making 9:30 AM
- Dec. 10** Youth Christmas Party + Tree Decorating, 12:30 PM
- Dec. 15-16** 2nd Annual Creche Fest
- Dec. 16** Blues, Brews, and Bonfire 7 PM
- Dec. 17** Las Posadas + Waffle Cafe 9:30 AM
- Dec. 20** Crossing Borders Christmas Show

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

- | | |
|---|--|
| Dec. 24
*Advent 4 11 AM
Family, 2 PM
*German 4 PM
*Festival 8 PM | Dec. 25
Lessons + Carols*
11 AM |
|---|--|



Advent and Christmas 2023

Memorial Campus

12211 Memorial Drive, Houston, Texas

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

December 24
at 4 PM



Join Us!

December 2
Christmas Tree Lighting plus
Ornament and Chrismon Making!
3 PM

CTKELC.ORG

CTK FEST 2023

HOPE RISING

Featuring:

Food and Fun!
Our ever popular Sociables!
Piecemakers' Quilt Drawing!
Wishing Wall (featuring our
outreach ministries)
and Wine Pull!

Example Sociables

*These will be featured in our
festival this year!*

Join our talented Bishop Mike
Rinehart for a Christmas and
Broadway Sing-Along while
enjoying festive eats and drinks!

Experience cocktails, dinner, and
dessert made with recipes from
the Derrs' favorite NYC Italian
restaurant!

Join Deacon Ben Remmert for a
Sci-Fi Double Feature on the CTK
Rice Village campus lawn!

Make cocktails with the Wikers
and take home your favorite
recipe!

*All proceeds benefit our
outreach ministries,
including Lutherhill,
Christian Community
Service Center, Freewheels,
SEARCH Homeless Services,
Meals on Wheels, the
Hospitality Apartments, and
more.*



NOVEMBER 17
RICE VILLAGE CAMPUS
7:00 PM



Dinner Menu:

Your Choice of Beef, Cheese, or
Vegetable Enchiladas
Rice and Refried Beans
Chips and Salsa
Cobbler for Dessert

\$15 TICKETS ON
SALE NOW

SCAN
ME



FREEWHEELS CELEBRATES 8 YEARS **AND 2,000 BIKES DELIVERED**

Freewheels Houston—launched at Christ the King Church in 2015—is marking its eighth anniversary and celebrating freedom through bikes for 2,000 refugees, veterans emerging from homelessness and young people from low-income families.

The Freewheels volunteer crew invites members of the congregation to join our celebration on Saturday, Nov. 18—during CTK Festival Weekend. The event will occur during the Freewheels volunteer shop day from 9 a.m. to noon at 6020 Jessamine, No. 204.

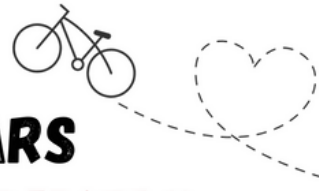
We want to thank the congregation for its unwavering support through prayers, bike donations, volunteering and financial contributions from members as well as the Christ the King Foundation.

In the first nine months of 2023, Freewheels distributed bikes that provide a way to work or school for 400 people, and we are on track to exceed record output of 452 bikes delivered during 2022. Every weekend, volunteers repair bikes and refugees and others come to get bikes as well as helmets and locks.

CTK members launched the ministry with donations of 15 used bikes. We enlisted volunteers from BikeHouston and mechanics from Rice Bikes to repair the bikes and distributed them to refugees from Syria, Iraq, Nepal, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Myanmar at a picnic at Burnett-Bayland Park in the Gulfton neighborhood during CTK Festival Weekend.

The all-volunteer organization persevered through changes in refugee policy, COVID-19 and other challenges to increase our impact and expand horizons.

Freewheels bikes enable refugees to support their families—get to a job or shop for milk and other essentials. Our bikes give veterans emerging from homelessness a way to get home from a shift that ends after the last Metro service. Working with school staff, our bikes serve as rewards for fifth- and sixth-graders in Alief ISD for superior attendance, improved grades, and progress in other areas.



8 YEARS
2,000 BIKES



Freewheels has been repairing bikes and giving them to refugees and veterans for eight years. During that time, 2,000 people have received bikes.

We want people who have volunteered, donated bikes, supported us financially and held us in their prayers to help us celebrate on Saturday, Nov. 18, 10 a.m. - 11 a.m., at the shop at 6020 Jessamine #102, #103 and #204.



FREEWHEELSHOUSTON.ORG

In 2017, at the urging of the consortium of refugee resettlement agencies, Freewheels leased shop space in Gulfton, near the apartment complexes where many refugees start new chapters of their lives in Houston.

In 2023, we have increased our capacity by building new bikes. Students from Strake Jesuit, the Breakthrough Houston student success program, corporations, and law firms have built bikes. Twenty Afghan refugees have assembled their own bikes at the Freewheels shop.

Grants from the Baxter Trust and the Scott Wizig Family Fund at Greater Houston Community Foundation enabled Freewheels to purchase bikes as well as lease additional space for bike build activities.



Freewheels welcomes everyone who wants to help is accomplished by volunteers at our Friday and Saturday shop days; knowledge of bike repair is not a requirement. If you have questions, please contact Bill Mintz, bill.mintz20@gmail.com; Bill Chapman, wpchapman01@gmail.com, or David West, cortex820@gmail.com.

Please attend the Nov. 18 celebration of our work together to welcome refugees and less-fortunate neighbors.





**freewheels
houston**

Donate Your Old Bike!

Your old bike will be repaired by volunteers and provide everyday transportation for refugees and veterans who need to go to work and school and stay healthy and connected. We also give helmets, locks, and lights with every bike.

Our riders prefer mountain bikes and hybrids
Our greatest need is for adult mountain bikes and hybrids with 26-inch, 700c and larger wheels. We also need youth bikes with 24-inch wheels for young people from low-income families.

HOURS
Friday and Saturday
9am - noon
6020 Jessamine #103,
Houston, TX 77081
CONTACT
281-864-0725
info@freewheelshouston.org

**We Accept
Bike Donations
Fri. & Sat.
Mornings!**

LEARN MORE



www.freewheelshouston.org





Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

AMMPARO

Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities

The AMMPARO Committee is eager to announce a **new, ongoing giving program** that will directly support the families and individuals who seek support at St. James Family Life Center. The center actively supports the needs of a primarily immigrant community in the Garden Oaks/Oak Forest area. Their work includes providing staple food items through their food pantry, rental and utility assistance based on need and emergent situations, as well as outreach to nearby apartment complexes where they connect families with additional resources and support. They have also established relationships with HISD and Pasadena ISD to assist families in developing the skills necessary to support their children in their educational endeavors. The center also conducts citizenship classes, immigration forums, financial workshops, and ESL classes.

In order to care for the basic needs of as many people as possible on a regular basis, the AMMPARO Committee is

How can I donate? Any and all donations will help us provide for the basic needs of those at St. James. **However, recurring donations of even just \$10/month can transform a one-time charitable exchange into a source of long-term stability for hungry families.** Sign up online now via Christ the King's **online giving page**. Simply select the subcategory of AMMPARO and type "St. James."

What other ways to connect and give are possible? We also intend to grow our relationship with St. James by offering quarterly community gatherings. We will continue to accept furniture and homewares on a selective and coordinated basis. We will provide communication about volunteer opportunities throughout the year.

We thank you for your consideration for some of the most vulnerable in our Houston community.

pledging to provide 100lbs of rice, 100lbs of beans, 40 boxes of spaghetti, and \$200/month in rental and utility support to St. James Family Life Center. **For just \$10 a month, you can provide 10lbs of beans or rice or five boxes of spaghetti to hungry families right here in Houston. For \$20 a month, you could be the reason one of our neighbors avoids eviction. For a little over \$500 a month total, we can provide food security, stable housing, and hope to new immigrants trying to make Houston their home.**

How will this work? With the congregation's generous monthly support, the AMMPARO committee will make monthly purchases to fill their food pantry and provide money for rental and utility support. Our efforts will help fulfill an ongoing need for food to fill the Center's pantry and money to support families in desperate situations.





**COP28
UAE**

Distribution of Devotionals for U.N. Climate Conference

**November 18+19, before and after
each worship service at the Rice
Village Campus**

A daily devotional for use from Nov. 30 – Dec. 12, during the U.N. Climate Conference in Dubai, is available. Pray for world leaders at the climate conference each day, and for ourselves that we may all act as good stewards of God's beloved creation. Pick up the devotional on Saturday, Nov. 18 and Sunday, Nov. 19, before or after worship services at Christ the King, **download a digital copy** **here** or contact Lisa Brenskelle at **brenskelle@aol.com** for an electronic copy.

ENVIRONMENTAL INTERFAITH PRAYER VIGIL AT HERMANN PARK

**People of all faiths and
spiritual traditions are
invited to a time of prayer,
mediation, and reflection
in support of the U.N.
Climate Conference
(COP28)**

**DECEMBER 3, 2023
AT 2:30 PM**

EVERYONE LOVES A PARADE!

Join Christ the King Church to walk in MLK, Jr. Black Heritage Society Parade on January 15, 2024 downtown Houston. Please contact Rebecca Shields, **rshields63@gmail.com**, to participate.



FEATURED CHILDREN EVENTS



Advent Retreat Dec. 1-2

A 1st-6th grade mini-retreat where campers gather for an action-packed 24 hours at the Hill with Deacon Ben Remmert. We'll get ready for Christmas as we explore the story of Jesus' birth and prepare space in our lives and our hearts for Jesus to come. **Cost: \$60 per camper.**



Las Posadas Rehearsals

All children and friends of Christ the King Church will be rehearsing the Las Posadas program and songs during the Musical Gatherings on **November 26, December 3, and 10 at 9:30 a.m.**

image credit: Carmen Lomas Garza, Las Posadas, 2000



Intergenerational Las Posadas

On **December 17, during the Sunday Forum hour**, all children, youth, and adults are invited to join us with our Sunday School teachers and musicians as we lead an intergenerational Las Posadas beginning in the parish hall and will end in the courtyard!



Lutherhill Rally Day

On **January 7**, come and join us for a special Sunday as **Lutherhill will come to the CTK Rice Village Campus** to teach during the Adult Forum and give our children, youth, and parents a taste of Lutherhill. This is a great opportunity to come and hear from our partners in outdoor ministry.



Acolyte Training: January 27 at 11:00 a.m.

All new and current acolytes are invited to a training with Deacon Ben Remmert on January 28 at 11:00 a.m. – 12 noon in the nave.



Interested in helping with our Children's Ministry?

In a Godly Play class, there are always a storyteller and a doorperson. Adults are there in service to the children and to support the community that develops. If you would like to help or want more information, please call Marie Monroe or Deacon Ben Remmert.



Seafarer Gift Wrapping Party: December 10 at 9:30 a.m.

Come and join us for a great morning of fellowship as we wrap all the collected Seafarer Gifts on Sunday, December 3 beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the youth room. Donations of wrapping paper are always welcome.



FEATURED YOUTH EVENTS



Luther League Christmas Tree Decorating Gathering December 10 at 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

All 6th – 12th grade youth and their parents are invited to help decorate the church Christmas tree at 12:30 p.m. Afterwards, we will have our white elephant exchange. Please bring a gift under \$10 (new or used) for the gift exchange. Gifts are typically something laying around the house that you don't want and that is funny, tacky, or "Gag Gift."



Waffle Baking or Las Posadas Help: December 17 at 8:00 until 11:00 a.m.

Youth volunteers are needed for our Children's program on December 17. Waffle Café beginning at 8 a.m. Volunteers will making and selling waffles during Las Posadas to support the youth going to 2024 ELCA Youth Gatehring. No experience necessary. Donations of waffle batter and toppings are welcome to help cut the cost. We also need a few youth to help out with our Las Posada's program, we would love to have a few youth lead a station or help out with the pinata at the end of the program. To RSVP or for more details, please contact Deacon Ben Remmert.





Epiphany Party: January 6 at 12:30 p.m.

All youth are invited to come to church to help take down the Christmas tree! After we take down the Christmas tree will go have dinner in the village. Join us for a great time and helping us get ready for the Epiphany season!



Youth Worship Server and Crucifer Training- January 27 at 11:00 a.m. at the Rice Village Campus



Luther League Winter Lock-In: January 13-14

On January 13 beginning at 6:30 p.m., all middle school and high school youth are invited for an evening of fellowship and fun as we have a lock-in at the church. We will have service opportunities, fellowship, and come together for devotion and prayer. RSVP by January 10 to Deacon Ben Remmert at benremmert@ctkelc.org as spots are limited. Cost is \$20 includes supplies, activities, and meals.



LUTHER LEAGUE ADVENT D&D MEETINGS

Mondays at 6:30 p.m. with our friends at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Each meeting has our time together adventuring and devotional prayers. No experience is needed and dice are provided. We will take a break after Christmas and will start back up in January. If you are interested in participating, Contact Deacon Ben:

benremmert@ctkelc.org



Scan the QR code for more children and youth events at CTK or visit:
www.ctkelc.org/programs/youth-and-children

Contact Deacon Ben:
benremmert@ctkelc.org



FRESH START BACKPACKS PROJECT

an Eagle Scout Project by Peter Bryant



THANK
YOU
😊



Thanks to your overwhelming generosity, CTK member and Eagle Scout candidate, Peter Bryant, was able to complete **325 fully stocked school backpacks for immigrant and refugee youth new to the Houston area.** The backpacks were distributed between CTK mission partner, St. James Family Life Center, the YMCA, and Church World Services for distribution to K-12 students entering schools throughout the metro area.

These backpacks will make a huge impact in the lives of these young students and help them get a good start in their new schools. Thank you for your generosity!





BLUES, BREWS, & BONFIRE!

DECEMBER 16, 7-9 PM
RICE VILLAGE CAMPUS
COURTYARD

TOPIC: CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND THEIR HISTORY



BLUES, BREWS, & GOOD NEWS



JANUARY 19, 7-9 PM

RICE VILLAGE CAMPUS COURTYARD



TOPIC: THE CHURCH ON THE MOVE: CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS IN HOUSTON

NEW MEMBER CLASSES

Christ the King Church offers new member classes on a rotating schedule after worship at 12:30 pm at our Rice Village campus. All are welcome! Please contact Pr. Sergio Rodriguez for info on the next available class!

WELCOME



SAINTS IN FOCUS:

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER'S FINKENWALDE SEMINARY

A Brief Lesson and the Martyrdom of Seminarians in World War II *Written by Tony Settles*

In the early 1930s in the dying days of the Weimar Republic, there arose a nationalist group, the self-styled German Christians, or *Deutsche Christen*. They were Nazis at heart who incorporated Nazi ethnicized nationalism and anti-Semitism into their theology. This means that they were both idolatrous and heretical. They pushed for a "Reich Church" that in effect replaced God with Hitler. Indeed, Bonhoeffer called Hitler "The Idol Fuehrer." Bonhoeffer's Confessing Church arose in opposition to uphold the true faith. Thus began the Church Struggle or *Kirchenkampf*. This was not only theological, it was ecclesiastical and political as well.

Bonhoeffer's reaction was:

"The next generation of pastors, these days, must be trained in church-monastic schools in which the pure Lutheran doctrine, the Sermon on the Mount, and worship are taken seriously. It is time for a complete break with what is being done by this idolatrous and dangerous state. Speak out for those who cannot speak - this is the very least the Bible asks of us in times such as these."

So Bonhoeffer's Finkenwalde Seminary was born. It lasted from April 26, 1935 until September 11, 1937 when it was shut down by the Gestapo.

But Hitler didn't stop there.

War came. All of the Western Front except Great Britain had surrendered by 1940. Then Hitler invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. This opened the war on the Eastern Front beyond Poland. The Eastern Front cataclysm

killed more people than all previous wars combined. How did that happen?

Answer: on the Eastern Front, it was not merely a war of conquests as in the West. No, Hitler waged not one, not two, but three wars of "racial genocide" against the Jews, Slavic Peoples, and the Roma. Nazi ideology classified them all as subhumans or *untermenschen* to be annihilated.

The Nazis and their Reichs Church wanted revenge against the Confessing Church, Bonhoeffer, and Finkenwalde. Orders were issued to draft Finkenwalde seminarians and send them to the racial genocidal Eastern Front rather than to the West, which had already surrendered.

Here are 27 names of martyred Finkenwalde seminarians (last - first names):

August, Reinhold; Bojack, Konrad; Brandenburg, Willi; Christ, Guenter; Grosch, Goetz; Harhausen, Christoph; Hofmann, Hans; Janikowski, Otto; Klapproth, Erich; Krause, Winfried; Krause, Wolfgang; Kuehn, Rudolf; Lerche, Otto-Karl; Liedtke, Herbert; Maass, Theodor; Marwitz, Alexander von der; Onnasch, Fritz; Preuss, Adolf - Friedrich; Rhode, Kurt; Rohr, Gerhard; Schumacher, Erich; Seydel, Gustav; Tetsch, August; Veckenstedt, Eberhard; Vibrans, Gerhard; Waelde, Paul; Zenke, Robert.

Of course this list is incomplete and I regret that I could list all who were martyred. All of them are in the church triumphant now and we honored them on All Saints Day. They are avatars of the faith. They paid the ultimate price. And they are an inspiration to us all.



WOMEN IN TRANSITION

Transitions holds their annual Christmas Potluck on December 11 at 1pm at Bette Bower's home at 2225 Albans Road. Lunch will be provided. If you've never been to a Transitions meeting, this would be a good time to start! If you are coming, please let Bette Bowers know at bettebowers@sbcglobal.net.

Women in Transition is a group of women who enjoy each other's company, like to learn something new, do something fun, provide a service, have good food and a glass of wine together. Meetings are held the second Monday of each month in a member's home. Some previous meetings have been about Black spirituals, a trip to Houston's Botanical Garden, a presentation of Sew Loved Quilts (photo), a discussion of how specific women have impacted our lives in positive ways and a variety of programs about health, fitness, finance, downsizing, widowhood, and





HANDS OF THE PEOPLE A CRECHE FESTIVAL

**Celebrating 800 Years of Nativity Art
Hands of the People: A Crechè Festival
Saturday, December 16 and
Sunday, December 17
9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.**



Saint Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) commemorated Christ's birth with a living nativity in 1223. As word of his compelling depiction spread, the reenactment of the first Christmas, by members of the community, would become a popular tradition throughout Christendom. Saint Francis's living nativity would also serve as the inspiration for the miniature representations of the Christmas story that would eventually be found in homes around the world.

In observance of the 800th anniversary of Saint Francis's living nativity, this year's festival is featuring newly created crechè art. In the spirit of Saint Francis asking his worshippers to use his living nativity to imagine Christ's birth, artists were asked to create new crechè art from any medium/material. These works of art will be exhibited at the festival. Additionally, never-before-exhibited nativities made by artists from the Americas will be on display from a private local collection.

Please invite your family, friends, and neighbors to feast their eyes on these wonderful pieces of art during the two-day festival. And please consider sharing the festival with your social network on Facebook: Creche Festival Houston and on Instagram at [**@creche_festival_houston**](#).



SOCIAL STATE MENTS

**GEORGE
BROOKOVER**

**HIGHLIGHTING
THE ELCA'S
SOCIAL
STATEMENTS
SHARED AS
SUMMARIES BY
REV. GEORGE
BROOKOVER.**



scan for
full article

OUR CALLING IN EDUCATION THIS SOCIAL STATEMENT ADOPTED BY BY THE TENTH BIENNIAL CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY OF THE ELCA (AUGUST 2007) CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

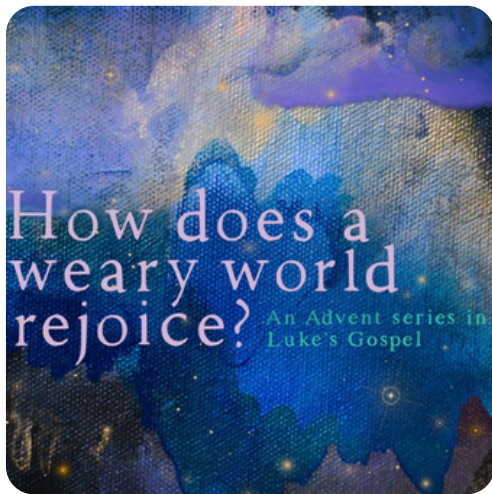
This brief summary is an overview of the approved document (72 pages) and has been prepared by Pastor George Brookover.

The calling of Lutherans and of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in education is closely tied to a Lutheran understanding of vocation. While many understand vocation as a job or career or as the call to be a pastor or priest, Lutherans understand vocation as a calling from God that encompasses all of life for all the faithful. Martin Luther educated as an attorney and then changing “careers” upon becoming a monk studied and taught at a high level. Throughout his status as a ‘reformer’ he noted for zeroing in on the need for all God’s children to be aware of the way that one’s faith is a both a call and a responsibility for sharing the love of God for every person.

Vocation involves God’s saving call to us in baptism and life lived in joyful response to this call.

In Jesus Christ we are loved by a gracious God who frees us to love our neighbor and promote the common good;

in gratitude for God’s love, we live out our vocation in our places of responsibility in daily life—home, congregation, workplace, neighborhood, nation, and global society. Education belongs to our baptismal vocation. Our particular calling in education is two-fold: to educate people in the Christian faith for their vocation and to strive with others to ensure that all have access to high-quality education that develops personal gifts and abilities and serves the common good. This calling embraces all people in both Church and society.



Advent Devotions: How Does a Weary World Rejoice?

As Advent comes again to a weary world, we ask, “How does a weary world rejoice?” From the opening chapters of Luke’s Gospel, we have found a few answers:

we acknowledge our weariness, we find joy in connection, we allow ourselves to be amazed, we sing stories of hope, we make room, we root ourselves in ritual, and most importantly, we trust our belovedness. In the parallel birth stories of Jesus and John, joy arrives—despite trepidation, fear, or grief. In these stories, we find rhythms for rejoicing.

Pick up an advent devotional booklet from A Sanctified Art in the narthex. Each week offers art, reflections, poetry, and hymns. Beginning with Advent and concluding with Baptism of the Lord Sunday, journey through these pages at your own pace. The devotional features biblical commentary by our guest writer, Rev. Cecelia D. Armstrong, and art and reflections by artist Rev. Nicolette Peñaranda.

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