



VIEW from the lake

The newsletter of ABIDING PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH - Budd Lake, N.J.



From the Pastor

Honoring God by Celebrating Diversity

I want to start by saying “thank you” to the loving community of Abiding Peace. I’m sure most of you were not expecting our congregation to jump into a discussion about gender identity to start off the new year. But the way you have responded to the news about my child’s non-binary identity – with love, and the desire to understand, and holy curiosity – has affirmed what I hoped would happen in our congregation. We trust each other, and we do the hard work of showing up and seeking wisdom together. That’s all I can ask of you, and I am both proud and grateful to be the pastor of this community.

With all that being said, I do not expect this learning to be easy or automatic. Some really good and faithful questions have been asked, and I’m sure there will be more. I welcome the chance to explore and seek God’s guidance together. One question that I was asked just this week by an old childhood friend is one that comes up often in Christian discussion of trans identities: *“We know God doesn’t make mistakes, so how can he support trans identities? Isn’t that saying that God made a mistake with their bodies?”*

It’s an important question, because it goes to the heart of what we believe about God’s sovereignty and also what we believe about trans and non-binary people. My answer is that I DON’T think God does makes mistakes. I don’t think my child’s gender identity, or the gender identities of other trans and non-binary people are mistakes. They weren’t born in the “wrong” bodies. They were born with diverse genders that don’t fit into the limited “male” and “female” categories of our culture. They open our eyes to the beautiful diversity of God’s creation.

ELCA pastor and trans man Asher O’Callaghan has described this understanding of God’s creative diversity in a beautiful way. He writes:

February, 2020

**March Newsletter Deadline
February 27, 2020**

Worship: 10:00 am

**For hospitalization or other
pastoral care needs, please call
Pastor Serena at 908-458-3940**

OUR MISSION & PURPOSE

Abiding Peace Lutheran Church makes Christ known by welcoming all people to a supporting and accepting place to grow in faith and community and to serve the Lord as people created by God, saved by Christ and nurtured by the Holy Spirit.

**Phone: 973-691-9393
Website: www.abidingpeacechurch.org**

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COUNCIL & MINISTRY LEADERS

Officers

President	Heather Nilsen
Vice President	Gerry Ayotte
Secretary	Howard Corneilson
Treasurer	Nancy Ayotte

Council Members

Gerry Ayotte	Cindy Pawlo
Nancy Ayotte	Pat Scalora
Howard Corneilson	Sibylle Schroeder
Ray Mueller	Alexis Sweeney
Heather Nilsen	

Ministry Leaders

Arts & Crafts	Sibylle Schroeder
Christian Education & Youth	Karen Coates
Evangelism	<i>Vacant</i>
Fellowship	Demetria Laird
Finance	George Pawlo
Financial Secretary	Nita Persson
Messengers Dancers	Mary Kasakove
Mutual Ministry	Heather Nilsen
Property	<i>Vacant</i>
Social Ministry	Sibylle Schroeder
Seniors	Sibylle Schroeder
Stewardship	Ray Mueller
Worship & Music	Mary Kasakove

OUR STAFF

Pastor:

Serena Rice
Cell: 908-458-3940

Music Director:

Ben Schroeder
benmschroeder@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant:

Christine Strobel
office@abidingpeacechurch.org
Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 5:00 pm—7:00 pm

Continued from page 1—Pastor's Column

“In the beginning, God created day and night. But have you ever seen a sunset?!? Well trans and non-binary people are kind of like that. Gorgeous. Full of a hundred shades of color you can't see in plain daylight or during the night. In the beginning God created land and sea. But have you ever seen a beach?!? Well trans and non-binary people are kind of like that. Beautiful. A balanced oasis that's not quite like the ocean, nor quite like the land. In the beginning God created birds of the air and fish of the sea. But have you ever seen a flying fish, or a duck or a puffin that swims and flies, spending lots of time in the water and on the land?!? Well trans and non-binary people are kind of like that. Full of life. A creative combination of characteristics that blows people's minds. In the beginning God also created male and female, in God's own image, God created them. So, in the same way that God created realities in between, outside of, and beyond night and day, land and sea, or fish and birds, so God also created people with genders beyond male and female. Trans and non-binary and agender and intersex, God created us. All different sorts of people for all different sorts of relationships. Created from love to love and be loved. In God's image we live.”

It's natural to feel afraid of affirming trans and non-binaries genders if we think that means saying that God messed up. But what if, instead, it means giving God glory for the full spectrum of God's creative vision? What if the actual challenge to God's sovereignty is to limit God's creative power to just the two genders that our culture is used to recognizing? What if we honor God when we celebrate the beauty and uniqueness of identities all along the gender spectrum?

These are the questions that I want to bring to our community as we learn together. You are welcome to bring your questions too. Questions can be holy things. They can draw us closer to God and to each other as we lean in, seeking wisdom, understanding, and love.

[Of course, answers can be holy too – and can give us some anchor points when we feel confused. So, if you did not get a chance to hear Jamie Bruesehoff's presentation on Jan. 12, I have an audio recording. Let me know if you would like a copy. 😊]

Pastor Serena



“Don’t tell me where your priorities are. Show me where you spend your money and I’ll tell you what they are.” So wrote James Frick. Jesus was even more direct: “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Jesus spoke a lot about money because what we do with it has a lot to do with our spiritual lives, our faith, and our priorities.

To reflect upon our priorities, we can look at how we spend money – within our personal households and also within our congregation. Below is a look at the categories of spending within Abiding Peace’s budget of this past year.

3.5% of our spending went to benevolence, also known as mission support. These are funds that we give to the regional (NJ Synod) and national (ELCA) expressions of our church. Just as we as members give in appreciation and thankfulness to God through our congregation, so our congregation gives beyond itself for the wider church.

53% went to our staff, showing a high priority on ministry through people: a pastor to shepherd us in our individual and collective ministries, a musician to lead us in music to better increase our joy and worship of God, and an administrator to help us carry out the everyday tasks of our congregation’s ministry.

20% went to pay our mortgage. Our congregation’s life is blessed by those who have built and paid toward our facilities in the past, and our current payments will bless those who come after us at Abiding Peace.

20% went towards routine cleaning and maintenance of our property, the utilities needed to keep them in operation, and insurance to help us continue our ministry here in a world of risk. It’s not a very exciting category, but stewardship means faithfully caring for what God has blessed us with.

4.4% went to various ministry expenses, especially for worship and music, attendance at our NJ Synod convention, and office supplies.

Continued from previous column—Stewardship Reflections

In addition to our budgeted items, we spent money on other things, mostly according to what was specifically given for those things, including ELCA World Hunger and flowers/decorations. Also in 2019 members gave special gifts to provide a new (holy rather than holey!) roof over our sanctuary. If our budget had been expanded to include the roof fund, it would have been 9.2 % of our budget.

Our congregation’s spending is an expression of our giving – to our ministry, our wider church, our community and world. And our personal giving is an expression of our priorities and values as well. May God bless us as we go forward, both as individuals and as a congregation, in our giving and our spending.

Ray Mueller



It is time to decide if we should continue with our Saturday Breakfast (second Saturday of the month). People who attend seem to appreciate the time together, but attendance has been extremely low. A Saturday Breakfast will be attempted once more on Saturday, February 8th at 9:00am.

For those who would like to attend this breakfast, please bring a breakfast item to share and let Howard Corneilson (973-584-0307 / hgcorn@optonline.net) or the church office know by Thursday February 6th. If this time is inconvenient and you have another suggested time slot, please let Howard or the church office know as well.

Continued next column

Thank You Corner

To the whole congregation – you overwhelm me with your generosity and thoughtfulness. My Christmas gifts – both the personal financial gift and the gift to support people across the globe, make me feel so valued and loved. And I'm just tickled to be able to say that my church donated a latrine in my honor. LOL!
~ Pastor Serena

If you would like to express a "Thank you" in next month's newsletter, please send a brief paragraph to Christine (chstrobel@optonline.net) by Feb. 27th.

✂

PLEASE CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE
973-691-9393
or have someone call for you, if you are
hospitalized.
Because of the HIPAA privacy laws,
the church is **not**
notified when you are admitted to a hospital,
in order to
protect your privacy. The only way we will
know if you are in the hospital is if you or
someone close to you lets us know. Thank
you!

Please clip this article and keep it handy!

Unfinished Object Night February 24 * 7:30 pm

Come and join us for Unfinished Object Night At 7:30 pm. We have been having a wonderful time hanging out and finishing our UFO's. For information and to make sure it's on - call Sibylle at 973-691-1910.



Faith Kitchen Shopping List for February 4

"Chili Rice Dish"

- ~ 1 can of diced tomatoes (14 1/2 oz.)
- ~ 1 large can red kidney beans (40 oz.)
- ~ 1 bag of chili seasoning mix (1.25 oz.)
- ~ 2 green peppers and 1 onion
- ~ 1 pkg. ground turkey (about 1.3 lbs.)

I will pick up the rice.

Please bring these items to church on Sunday, February 2nd.

Let me know if you can come to help cook and serve or call with any questions 973-691-1910.

With gratitude,

Sibylle Schroeder
Social Ministry

Sunday Scripture

February 2

Malachi 3:1-4
Psalm 84
Hebrews 2:14-18
Luke 2:22-40

February 9

Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 112:1-10
1 Corinthians 2:1-16
Matthew 5:13-20

February 16

Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Psalm 119:1-8
1 Corinthians 3:1-9
Matthew 5:21-37

February 23

Exodus 24:12-18
Psalm 2
2 Peter 1:16-21
Matthew 17:1-9

Pastor Serena's February Schedule

Week of January 27—February 2

- Wednesday, Jan. 29: 10:30 am—8:30 pm
- Friday, Jan. 31: 6:00 pm—8:00 pm
- Sunday, Feb. 2: 8:30 am—1:30 pm

Week of February 3—9

- Wednesday, Feb. 5: 10:30 am—8:30 pm
- Sunday, Feb. 9: 9:00 a. - 2:00 pm

Week of February 10—16

- Wednesday, Feb. 12: 10:00 am—4:00 pm
(offsite Synod workshop)
4:00 pm—8:00 pm (APLC)
- Sunday, Feb. 16: 9:00 am—4:00 pm

Week of February 17—23

- Wednesday, Feb. 19: 10:30 am—8:30 pm
- Thursday, Feb. 20: 6:30 pm—9:30 pm
- Sunday, Feb. 9: 9:00 am—12:00 pm

Week of February 24—March 1

- Wednesday, Feb. 26: 10:30 am—9:00 pm
- Sunday, Mar. 1: 8:30 am—1:30 pm

February Birthdays

- 4 Christopher Laird
Alex Ponce
- 5 Sheeba David
- 10 Kendra Prosser
- 17 Hannah Mueller
- 23 Ken Schwier

Senior Meeting Schedule 2020

The Senior Planning Meeting/Tea Party will be held on Wednesday, February 19 beginning at 2:00 pm. Please come and join us!

All are welcome.

Dog's Bedtime Prayer

Now I lay me down to sleep,
The king-sized bed is soft and deep.
I sleep right in the center groove,
My human beings can hardly move.
I've trapped their legs, they're
tucked in tight,
And here is where I pass the night.

No one disturbs me or dares intrude,
Till morning comes and "I want food!"
I sneak up slowly to begin,
And nibble on my human's chin.
For morning's here, it's time to play,
I always seem to get my way.

So thank you Lord, for giving me,
This human person that I see.
The one who hugs me and holds me tight,
And shares their bed with me at night.

Amen!

Chili Cook-Off

It's time for our Annual Chili Cook-off again. Come and join us Saturday, February 22nd at 5:30 pm for a hot time and some pretty good chili as well. Prizes will be awarded for the hottest chili so we will be recruiting judges. Anyone interested in becoming a judge should let me know by February 19th. There will be a sign-up sheet available soon. If you don't want to make chili we will also need desserts and other items such as cheese, sour cream, bread, etc. Hope to see everyone there. Snow date: Saturday, February 29 at 5:30 pm

In Christian Fellowship,
Demetria Laird



SOMEWHAT OFFICIAL RULES FOR A CHILI COOK-OFF

1) SELECTION OF THE JUDGES

Proper judges for any Chili Cook-off should have three principal values:

- a) A complete lack of values or principles, such as integrity. No one with integrity would even attend a Chili Cook-off, let alone judge one. Sales ability counts for extra points if you can sell Spam as real food.
- b) A bribability or sleaze factor, such that judging could be listed on the IRS form under "occupation". Check for questionable occupational ties such as contractor, financial planner, or health care professional.
- c) Taste buds that have visible scar tissue. No one who can even spell "filet de boeuf marchan d'vin", or knows what it is, could hope to qualify.

2) QUALITIES THAT DETERMINE A WINNING CHILI

Chili should be made with:

- a) Absence of any form of vegetable matter. Chili is a meat dish, an entrée. It is NOT a casserole. Corn and beans should be an instant disqualification. Selected peppers are permitted only if ground to a size small enough to escape visual detection.
- b) Density or viscosity. The serving spoon, when placed vertically into the chili pot, should remain erect without help. Chili placed onto a cracker remains there and doesn't trickle down your sleeve. When you water down chili, it is no longer chili. It is soup. Soup is for Wednesdays in Lent.
- c) Applicable "after_____" words. *Afterburn*, such that after a spoonful, it doesn't really matter whether or not they removed your tonsils as a child. *Afterglow*, animals and small children stand next to you outside 'cause you're very warm, all over. Other "after—" words that could be applied include *afterlife*, *aftertaste*, and *aftermath*. Do not try to use *afterburner*—this is a church event!
- d) Fear. The fear that if you burp, you will melt fillings, crowns, and do serious damage to nasal passages.

GOOD LUCK!

FEBRUARY

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FIND A REPLACEMENT IF YOU CANNOT SERVE.

FEBRUARY	GREETER	USHER	LECTOR	ASSISTANT MINISTER	COMMUNION ASSISTANT	POWERPOINT
2	Pat Scalora	Pat Scalora	Linda Venator	Sibylle Schroeder	~ Howard Corneilson ~ Maria Kearney	Joe Barrett
9	Howard Corneilson	Doug Laird	Jeanne Scalora	Joe Barrett	~ Heather Nilsen ~ Cindy Pawlo	Sheeba David
16	Ken Schwier	Cindy Pawlo	Sue Stirrat	Mary Kasakove	~ Pat Scalora ~ George Pawlo	Ray Mueller
23	Carol Biunno	Pat Scalora	Quinn Rice	Sandy Carlson	~ Doug Laird ~ Sibylle Schroeder	Jeanne Scalora

COUNTERS: **2:** George Pawlo **9:** Howard Corneilson **16:** Nancy Ayotte **23:** George Pawlo

ALTAR GUILD: Sibylle Schroeder

BREAD BAKING: Serena Rice



Keep These Friends in Your
Heart & Prayers

Keep these friends in your hearts and prayers:

Those who are sick or in need: Sharon Puglia, Juli Pullara, Rich Apgar, Michael Krush, Judy Wayman, Tamsin Skeels, Don Larsen, Sandy Olson, Col. Phillip E. Miller, Jim Kosiorek, Randy Esposito, Pat Linn, Eleonor Braun, Jim and Patricia Porter, David Coyne, Megan McGuire, Donna Woody, Gillian George, Mary Kathryn Laird, Eastlyn Rodriguez, Richard Biunno, Gertrude Price, April Inglin, Isabella Adams, Laura Dennis, Michael, Rachel and Cora Pawlo, Gayle Pinkham, Sophia Hawthorne, Owen Strong, Baby Jackson Cook, Kacie Schmidt, Gregg Clark, Susan Jacob, Luke Mueller, Lynn Peterson's family and friends, Alexandra Heinz, Chris Mastakas, Pat & Jeanne Scalora, Robert Buckley, The Canon family, Howard Gentler, Susan Nigra, Cindy Behler, Elisabeth and Otto Schroeder, Jim Tangen, Amelia Krusch

Those in mourning: Vivan Skaar and family

Those who are expecting: Kimberly Defreitas, Christina & Chris Belfiore, Paulette (Anyiateh) Asong

FEBRUARY 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 8:00 pm NA Mtg.
2 PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD 9:30 am Music Rehearsal 10:00 am Worship 11:30 am Anniversary Committee Meeting	3	4 9:00 am Faith Kitchen	5 6:30 pm AA Mtg. 6:45 pm Women in the Bible: Hannah 7:45 pm Choir Rehearsal	6	7 8:00 pm NA Mtg.	8 9:00 am Church Family Breakfast 8:00 pm NA Mtg.
9 5TH SUNDAY/ EPIPHANY 9:30 am Music Rehearsal 10:00 am Worship 11:15 am Sunday School 11:30 am Race & Racism—Sharing our Stories	10	11	12 6:30 pm AA Mtg. 6:45 pm Women in the Bible: Michal 7:45 pm Choir Rehearsal	13	14 8:00 pm NA Mtg.	15 8:00 pm NA Mtg.
16 6TH SUNDAY/ EPIPHANY 9:30 am Music Rehearsal 10:00 am Worship 11:30 am Christian Responses to Antisemitism w/ Rabbi Dani Zucker	17	18	19 6:30 pm AA Mtg. 6:45 pm Women in the Bible: Bathsheba 7:45 pm Choir Rehearsal	20 7:15 pm Council Meeting (All are welcome)	21 8:00 pm NA Mtg.	22 5:30 pm Chili Cook Off Snow Date: Feb. 29 8:00 pm NA Mtg.
23 TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD 9:30 am Music Rehearsal 10:00 am Worship 11:15 am Sunday School 11:30 am Reading the Entire Gospel of Matthew	24 7:30 pm Unfinished Object Night	25	26 6:30 pm AA Mtg. 7:30 pm Ash Wednesday Service @ Flanders United Methodist	27 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	28 8:00 pm NA Mtg.	29 8:00 pm NA Mtg.