



Established 1886

Keeping in Touch

December 17, 2017

With gratitude to **Amanda Nelson**: Our friend, associate, and former staff member (in numerous capacities) Amanda Nelson now serves as Executive Director of **Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries**, an organization that “affirms and supports LGBTQ Lutheran rostered leaders and those pursuing a call to rostered leadership, while engaging allied congregations and ministries to proclaim God’s love and seek justice for all.” It was **First United Lutheran Church’s** bold action taken in 1989 that led to the birth of the organization that became Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries. ELM publishes a weekly newsletter, interMISSION. Following is the lead article from this week’s interMISSION.



Blessings for the Longest Night

by Analyse Triolo, member of *Proclaim*

*All throughout these months
as the shadows
have lengthened,
**this blessing has been
gathering itself,
making ready,
preparing for
this night.***

*It has practiced
walking in the dark,
traveling with
its eyes closed,
feeling its way
by memory
by touch
by the pull of the moon
even as it wanes.*



This time last year I was on internship at Trinity Lutheran Church of Manhattan, in New York City, preparing my very first “Service of the Longest Night” and writing a post for this very blog joining my experiences with that of other Proclaim members as we awaited the Advent of the longest night of the year. We each prepared for that night with a service for people who, like many of us, feel the sting of loss more acutely at this time of year. **For me this became therapeutic as I grieved the recent loss of my mother, Diane, who had passed four months earlier.**

First United is a "Reconciling in Christ" (RIC) congregation that has declared that all persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities are equally welcome to join fully in the worship and life of this Christ-centered community.

***So believe me
when I tell you
this blessing will
reach you
even if you
have not light enough
to read it;
it will find you
even though you cannot
see it coming.***

*You will know
the moment of its
arriving
by your release
of the breath
you have held
so long;
a loosening
of the clenching
in your hands,
of the clutch
around your heart;
a thinning
of the darkness
that had drawn itself
around you.*

***This blessing
does not mean
to take the night away
but it knows
its hidden roads,
knows the resting spots
along the path,
knows what it means
to travel
in the company
of a friend.***

I couldn't have known at the time just how impactful my experiences leading a "Service of the Longest Night" would be. After our service concluded with Jan Richardson's "Blessing for the Longest Night," I spoke with a member who shared with me their experience of profound loss, and how they felt disconnected from the joy of the Christmas season even years after losing their loved one. I was so scared of leading a service like this because I didn't think I'd be able to control my own emotions while holding worshipers in their own grief. **What I learned is that I didn't need to be strong enough.** As we each named our saints and placed a white rose on the altar for each, all we needed to do was walk that hidden road together, in the company of one another.



So when
this blessing comes,
take its hand.
Get up.
Set out on the road
you cannot see.

This is the night
when you can trust
that any direction
you go,
**you will be walking
toward the dawn.**

Within days of that service we lost my paternal grandfather, and several months later my grandmother as well. As I led each of their funerals, some of the longest nights of the year for my family, I kept coming back to Jan Richardson's words in this blessing and others from *A Cure For Sorrow*. In these words, we found solace in the knowledge that we aren't alone in our grieving. Nor is any of us as we traverse this road together, trusting that **it is always darkest before the dawn.**

Poem: "Blessing for the Longest Night" from *A Cure for Sorrow* by Jan Richardson. *Emphasis added.*



Analyse has found herself in the long, drawn-out Advent otherwise known as Awaiting First Call. Struggling to be patient, she accepted a job as a Math and Science teacher at a local Elementary School. (Who says Science and Religion can't coexist?!) She holds a Master of Divinity from the Wake Forest University School of Divinity, a Masters of Arts in Ministry from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and is told she's a Master Crafter too! Her new favorite hashtag is #CallMeMaybe.



EXTRAORDINARY LUTHERAN MINISTRIES



PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE
December 17, 2017



* **For the following we express Gratitude and offer Thanks:**

- for Board of Supervisors President and now **Acting Mayor London Breed**, who holds the promise of new directions and a greater bend toward social and economic justice for San Francisco
- for **Pastor Susan Strouse** and her 13 years of ministry, leading this community into a greater and broader awareness of a Christianity that embraces all of humanity and the encompassing endless universe
- for **Emily Czarnik-Neimeyer**, our newest member, and the gifts she brings to us and the promise she embodies in her pursuit of a life in Christian service
- for **the Season of Advent**, offering hope and expectation for a better world to come
- for the **young people of First United**—Stephanie, Sophia, Gabriel, Elizabeth, and Ezekiel—who display both evidence and assurance that a better world will come

* **The following we hold in our hearts and pray for Relief, Release, Solace, and Comfort:**

- for the City of San Francisco, the family and friends of **Mayor Ed Lee** upon his unexpected death, who worked humbly and tirelessly to build an even greater city than he inherited
- for **women working in garment factories in Bangladesh**, who suffer from sexual harassment and abuse, and seek ways to overcome the entrenched power structure that prevents them from opposing it
- for those who have lost possessions, homes, and lives in **the wildfires in Southern California**
- for **Muslims** worldwide, who are subject to baseless prejudice and discrimination that arises from ignorance
- for **Jews** worldwide, who throughout history have been and today are subject to baseless prejudice and discrimination that arises from ignorance
- for **the people of Puerto Rico**, whose suffering and neglect by their government continues
- for the on-going **work of Robert Mueller** and the Special Council Investigation team and the House Intelligence Committee, that justice will be served

☐ *If you would like to add someone or something to the prayer list, please contact Orion.* ☐

Welcome, Emily!

Last Sunday we received into membership Emily Czarnik-Neimeyer. You may recognize Emily, since she has been a part of the Turk & Lyon community and Middle Circle for several years. Below is a brief bio by way of introduction.



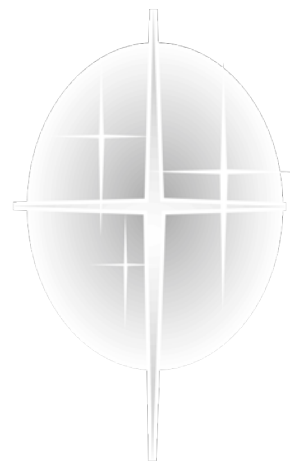
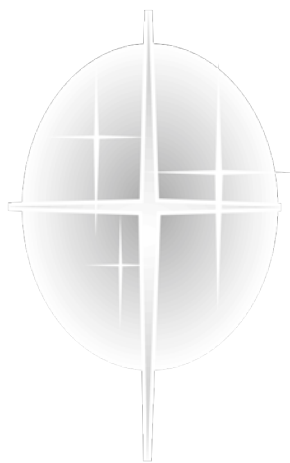
I am a first-year M.Div. student at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS) in Berkeley and have been living in the Bay Area for 7.5 years. Lutheran Volunteer Corps (LVC) brought me to San Francisco from Wisconsin in 2010; I was born, raised, and got my B.A. in Wisconsin.

Prior to my time at PLTS, I worked in University Ministry and got an M.A. in Higher Education and Student Affairs at the University of San Francisco (USF). My work in University Ministry primarily consisted of leading retreats, and I also led community engagement and global immersion programs. My six years at USF were incredibly formative and enriching, and it was during these years that I got involved in First United and Middle Circle.

I am passionate about and experienced in the areas of higher education and student affairs, community outreach and engagement, Critical Race Theory, retreat and workshop creation and facilitation, ELCA Lutheran and Jesuit Catholic theologies and pastoral care, and gender and sexuality-based programming and spirituality. In addition to my love for engaging in these areas, I love to do Yoga, watch movies, talk over meals with family and friends, babysit, speak German, and travel.

OUR COMMUNITY

Blessed Advent, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year



From now until 2018:

Dec. 17—Third Sunday of Advent, 5:00 pm at St. Cyprian's

Dec. 24—Christmas Eve, 7:00 pm at the Alliston Johnson home

Dec. 31—First Sunday after Christmas and New Year's Eve, ZOOMChurch



December 18
Ched Hinger

December 19
Daniel Eickmann

December 23
Heather Hargraves

December 26
Kirk Pessner
Andreas Mueller



Humbly
welcome
the word
that has
been
planted
in you.

ON THE SCHEDULE REFRESHMENTS



Worship

Willing to help?
Contact Orion at
orion@fulc.com

THE VIGIL
Interfaith Annual Homeless Persons Memorial



Thursday, December 21, 2017 at 5:30 PM

Civic Center Plaza (Polk Street Side)

(Please bring your candles)

Co-Sponsored By:



**SAN FRANCISCO
NIGHT MINISTRY**
50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY 1964-2014



San Francisco Interfaith Council

*Celebrating our diverse faiths & spiritual traditions
Bringing people together to build understanding
Serving our community*

Michael G. Pappas, M.Div., Executive Director • mgpappas@sfinterfaithcouncil.org
P.O. Box 29055 • San Francisco, CA 94129 415.474.1321
www.sfinterfaithcouncil.org

San Francisco Religious Leaders Mourn the Death of Mayor Edwin M. Lee

December 12, 2017 - San Francisco



Photo by Bill Wilson

In this season, when many religious faiths anticipate the hope of new light and life, we, the religious leaders of San Francisco, pause to offer prayers of new light and life for Mayor Edwin M. Lee, who passed away early this morning. We extend heartfelt sympathies to his wife Anita and their daughters Tania and Brianna.

A great friend, supporter and partner of San Francisco's religious community, Mayor Lee always sought the counsel of and engaged faith leaders in responding to our City's challenges of homelessness, housing affordability, civil, human and immigrant rights, as well championing efforts to protect our most vulnerable residents. His decades of service, tireless efforts to better life for all of our residents and love for San Francisco are his precious legacy.

At this most difficult time, Clergy are asked to remember Mayor Lee at their worship services as well as to lift up in prayer our Acting Mayor London Breed and our City of San Francisco.

May the memories of times shared with Mayor Lee bring strength and comfort to us all and to our City.

Kaushik Roy, *Chair, San Francisco Interfaith Council*
Rita R. Semel, *Past Chair, San Francisco Interfaith Council*
Michael G. Pappas, *Executive Director, San Francisco Interfaith Council*



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Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Interfaith Activities

Monday, January 15, 2018

11:00 am (March/Parade)

From Caltrain Depot at 4th and Townsend

"The Urgency of Now"

"We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there "is" such a thing as being too late.

This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and postive action."

— Martin Luther King Jr.

The San Francisco Interfaith Council invites faith leaders and their congregants to join in the 2018 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebrations to be held on Monday, January 15, 2018 at San Francisco's Yerba Buena Gardens. The 2018 March/Parade will begin promptly at 11:00 am (arrive early) from the Caltrain Depot at 4th and Townsend. Once the March/Parade arrives at the Yerba Buena Gardens, the 8th Annual Interfaith Commemoration Ceremony will commence.

A host of other activities and programs that will take place to mark the occasion may be found on the San Francisco Interfaith Council partner organization's website:

<http://norcalmlkfoundation.org/Events.html>

ELCA Presiding Bishop Responds to Decision to Move U.S. Embassy in Israel

December 6, 2017

I am deeply disturbed to learn of the Trump administration's plans to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel away from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The ELCA has long held the view that a negotiated, final status agreement, including a "shared Jerusalem," must be reached without unilateral actions by any party that would prejudice the outcome of negotiations.

This unilateral action would not support the cause of peace and a two-state solution, but rather would unnecessarily create further tensions and possible violence that would make efforts to bring them back together for talks much more difficult. As my brother in Christ and colleague, Bishop Munib Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, has often said, the security of Israelis depends on the freedom of Palestinians and the freedom of Palestinians depends on the security of Israelis. This proposed action would make both more insecure.

To proceed with this plan will only further isolate our nation from the global movement for a just peace for Jews, Christians and Muslims alike in the region and our church's policy that seeks an end to the occupation, an end to terrorism and violence, and, ultimately, the establishment of a viable, contiguous Palestinian state. Since the announcement is one of intentions, I call upon the president to rescind this plan and instead continue to focus on our nation's ability to contribute constructively toward a peaceful settlement of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Along with other interreligious partners, I continue to stand ready to discuss with the president ways to reach a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton





MULTIFAITH RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL OBSERVANCES 2017

DECEMBER 2017

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Mawlid an Nabi * - Islam |
| 3-24 | Advent – Christian |
| 6 | Saint Nicholas Day - Christian |
| 8 | Bodhi Day (Rohatsu) ** - Buddhist |
| | Immaculate Conception of Mary - Catholic Christian |
| 12 | Feast day - Our Lady of Guadalupe - Catholic Christian |
| 13-20 | Hanukkah * - Jewish |
| 16-25 | Posadas Navidenas - Hispanic Christian |
| 21 | Solstice |
| | Yule – Christian |
| | Yule * - Wicca/Pagan northern hemisphere |
| | Litha * - Wicca/Pagan southern hemisphere |
| 24 | Christmas Eve – Christian |
| 25 | Christmas * - Christian |
| | Feast of the Nativity ** - Orthodox Christian |
| 26 | Zarathosht Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathushtra) ** - Zoroastrian |
| | St Stephen's Day - Christian |
| 28 | Holy Innocents – Christian |
| 31 | Watch Night – Christian |
| | Holy Family - Catholic Christian |

For Interfaith News Roundup, the Religious Calendar, and much more, go to
<http://theinterfaithobserver.org>



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Interfaith Winter Shelter Season 2017-2018!



Greetings! Would your congregation/organization like to cook and serve a meal at the Interfaith Winter Shelter for the 2017-2018 season. The Shelter will be open from Sunday, November 19, 2017 through Wednesday, February 28, 2018.

PLEASE NOTE: This invitation is for congregation/organization host sponsors only and not for individual volunteers. Those signing up are committing their congregation/organization to cook and serve a meal on the date(s) they have requested.

The dates for the host site congregations are below:

Sunday, Nov. 19, 2017 - Friday, Dec. 8, 2017
St. Boniface Catholic Church (133 Golden Gate Ave.)

Saturday, Dec. 9, 2017 - Friday, Dec. 15, 2017
St. Mark's Lutheran Church (1031 Franklin at O'Farrell)

Saturday, Dec. 16, 2017 - Saturday, Jan. 13, 2018
St. Mary's Cathedral (1111 Gough Street)

Sunday, Jan. 14, 2018 - Saturday, Feb. 3, 2018
St. Mark's Lutheran Church (1031 Franklin at O'Farrell)

Sunday, Feb. 4, 2018 - Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2018
First Unitarian Universalist Society (1187 Franklin Street)

You may select your date(s) by visiting:

[Interfaith Winter Shelter Sign-Up](#)

If you have any questions, please contact Cynthia Zamboukos at [415-474-1321](tel:415-474-1321) or email cynthiaz@sfinterfaithcouncil.org

Thank you!



Coming Events (this week and beyond):



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 10:30 AM

FULC MUSICIANS REHEARSAL
Chez Orion

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 5:00 PM

WORSHIP—3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
at St. Cyprian's

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 7:00 PM

CAROLS, LESSONS, AND COOKIES
at the Alliston Johnson residence

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 8:00 PM

IMPROV CLASS WITH THE SECRET IMPROV
SOCIETY
at St. Cyprian's downstairs

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 5:00 PM (TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

NEW YEAR'S EVE AND FIRST SUNDAY AFTER
CHRISTMAS WORSHIP
ZOOMChurch—details to be provided

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 10:00 AM

HOUSE CHURCH—EPIPHANY
at home of Dana & Sophia McDonald

FOR FULL DETAILS

on all events, go to www.fulc.com, & click on Calendar

Sunday Worship

5:00 p.m. at
St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church
2097 Turk Street @ Lyon

Church Offices at
2097 Turk Street @ Lyon

Mailing Address:

1388 Haight St., #180
San Francisco, CA 94117
Phone: (415) 359-1025

For information visit our website:
www.fulc.com
email: info@fulc.com

currently in Interim Pastor
status
email: info@fulc.com

Anders Peterson,
Mission Developer
anders@middlecircle.org

Orion Pitts
Music Director &
Office Administrator
orion@fulc.com

NOTE:

Deadline for submission
of all information or items in
Keeping in Touch is
Wednesday at 12 noon
of the week of publication.
Items submitted after this time

Assistance Policy

First United's policy is to help people by finding services when possible, and will provide gift cards for specific financial needs. All requests for help must go to Pastor Susan. Please do not ask members for money,