



Established 1886

Keeping in Touch

December 24, 2017



News from the ELCA

Don't miss this message from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton! Disengage the Autopilot

In secular culture, it's easy to "barrel through to Christmas." In her Christmas message, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton reminds us that Advent is a season that bids us to be present, to be still. She suggests we reflect on four words: "Just this. Just now."



"Just this. Just now." Christmas message from the ELCA presiding bishop

You'll find Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's message here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuOZY64aZul&feature=youtu.be>

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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

December 24, 2017



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

- for the **community of First United Lutheran Church**, for its continuing efforts to challenge assumptions and to foster interfaith dialogue and harmony
- for **Pastor Anders Peterson and the Middle Circle community**, for its continuing efforts to break down walls between the church establishment and those who seek truth
- for **the Season of Christmas**, fulfilling the promise of hope and giving to all the example of how to live a spiritual life in the embodiment of Jesus the Christ
- for **all who celebrate holidays this time of year**—whether Christmas, Kwanzaa, the Winter Solstice, a belated Hannukah, Ramadan past or future, Diwali, or simply the Joy of Living, that all may know of Divine Love in whatever form it takes
- for the **students who have returned home for holiday break**, that they may feel and know the reconciliation of love of family and friends.

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

- for **the state of California**, and all states who have chosen a democratic approach to governance, now being severely challenged in that democracy by the administration in power in Washington, D. C.
- for **the children and young people of DACA**, whose future and future possibilities now are uncertain as the administration in Washington seeks to disenfranchise them, and threatening potential deportation
- for those who have lost possessions, homes, and lives in **the wildfires in Southern California**
- for **those who experience a “Blue Christmas”**, who for whatever reasons cannot experience the Joy and Love spoken of this season
- 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

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



"Church Together" A gift from your Synod storytellers/mission interpreters



#MeToo and the Bible

A mentor had told him that once an event or movement hits the headlines, you have a window of 3-4 weeks to address it from a pastoral, faith perspective. So when one victim of Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein's sexual assault went public, opening the floodgates for an immediate avalanche of testimony from similarly victimized women, and when he saw friends and parishioners posting #MeToo on Facebook, Pastor Ben Colahan, Faith - Chico, knew he needed to act quickly.

Pr. Ben also knew he is a male who very much needed female partnership in this project. He reached out to several local colleagues, all women: Rabbi Sara Abrams of Congregation Beth Israel, Rev. Loretta Dickerson of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (already a frequent partner with Faith Church), and Dr. Kate McCarthy, professor of religion and gender studies at California State University - Chico. Together they asked, "What does the Bible say about sexual assault - why it happens, how it happens, and how it is dealt with? How were God's people called to respond to sexual assault?" They imagined and planned a public event called "#MeToo and the Bible."

Each of them selected a Bible story and prepared a brief presentation to provoke a conversation about our current cultural situation. The stories chosen were:

1) The rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13) When Amnon, aflame with lust, raped his half sister Tamar, their father, King David, was angry but did not punish Amnon, his first-born son. Two years later Absalom, Tamar's full brother, avenged the injustice and damage done to his sister by killing Amnon. —————→

2) The disobedience of Queen Vashti (Esther 1) On the seventh day of a banquet he gave for his male friends and subjects, Persian King Ahasuerus, by then quite drunk, ordered that Queen Vashti be brought to the banquet wearing nothing but her royal crown, so all the men might see and admire her remarkable beauty. Queen Vashti refused to undergo this humiliation. The king's advisors assured him that if he let Queen Vashti get away with this disobedience, all households would be filled with chaos as wives would be encouraged to similarly disobey their husbands. Queen Vashti was banished forever from the king's presence, and replaced by Esther.

3) King David's "Bathshebagate affair" (2 Samuel 11:1 - 12:25) King David, his lust aroused by the sight of a beautiful woman bathing, learns that she is the wife of one of the king's soldiers, now deployed in battle. Nevertheless, the king sends messengers to bring Bathsheba to his palace, where they have sex. Bathsheba has no safe way to say "no" to the king, so the sex cannot be considered consensual. She becomes pregnant; David attempts a coverup, and, as a last resort, orders Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, to be killed. The prophet Nathan, David's friend, risks his position and even his life to speak God's word and call the king to repent of his flagrant abuse of power.

4) Susanna accused and vindicated (apocryphal book of Susanna) Two evil judges, overwhelmed with lust for Joakim's beautiful wife, Susanna, warn her that if she will not consent to having sex with them both, they will accuse her of having adulterous sex with a young neighbor. Aware that the word of a woman would likely not prevail over the testimony of two male judges, and that she is likely to be executed for the false accusation, Susanna nevertheless refuses. The evil judges make their accusation, and the assembly believes them "because they were elders of the people and judges," condemning Susanna to death. But Daniel, stirred up by God's spirit, comes upon the scene and demands an investigation to determine the truth in this "they said, she said" scenario. The clever and skillful investigation reveals that the judges were lying; they are put to death and Susanna is exonerated.

Despite having less than 2 weeks to publicize the event, #MeToo and the Bible, about 60 people came for the presentations and ensuing lively conversation. Pr. Ben reports, "Responses ranged from, 'Thank you for doing this,' to 'Could we please do more on this topic?'" It has now become clear that the issues of sexual assault and harassment will not evaporate from the public consciousness in two or three weeks, and Pr. Ben is hoping the team can offer a follow-up event, perhaps one that asks, "What do healthy relationship dynamics and sexuality look like in the Bible?"

***Do you have a story that you would like to share?
Send any Church Together story requests
to mic@spselca.org.***



EXTRAORDINARY LUTHERAN MINISTRIES

Go Tell It on the Mountain

by **the Rev. Amanda Nelson**
ELM Executive Director

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere!
Go, tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born!*

It seems that from the very beginning, followers of the faith have been asked to publicly proclaim and boldly witness to the good news that grace has come on earth in the form of a vulnerable, non-conforming person named Jesus.



*While shepherds kept their watching
Over silent flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light*

As my family and I get ready to stand on the mountain tops again this Christmas to joyfully proclaim Christ's birth, I am thinking about all of the Proclaim members who will lead their congregations in these celebrations this year!

Pastors who have helped to make sure that every detail of the Christmas Eve service - or, in many cases services - reflects the awe and wonder of that first nativity.

Deacons who labor to prepare holiday meals for the homeless, rehearse choirs and special music for their congregations, and corral the children in their pageant costumes (pictures of which will haunt them for years to come!).

Interns who have offered their own pieces of flare to their congregations' celebration of the season while learning what it means to have to "work" the holidays and spend the time away from home and loved ones.

Seminarians and those who are awaiting and in between calls who dream of the ways they will contribute to a congregation's experience of these holy days while resting in the hope and anticipation of Advent.

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere!
Go, tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born!*

I am in awe of these public proclaimers who take heed the calling of this hymn and the Holy Spirit to boldly witness to the joy of that grace come to earth in Jesus; and, who do so in witness to the fullness and holiness of their gender and sexual identities.

*The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed our saviour's birth*

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere!
Go, tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born!*

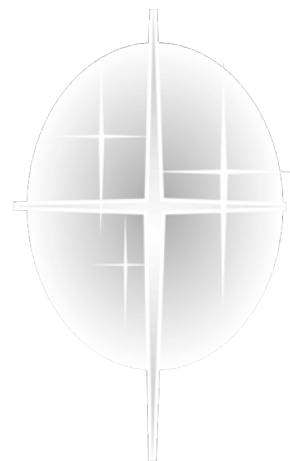
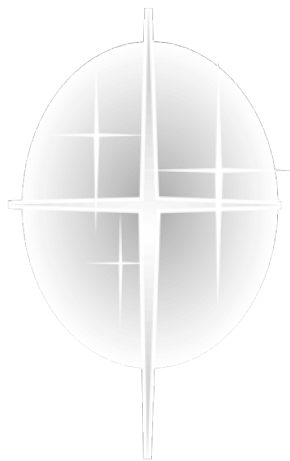
From all of us at Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries - we wish you a very, merry Christmas!



Amanda loves Christmas and especially Christmas music. During this season you will find her sitting by her Christmas tree, drinking glogg, and snuggling with her partner and dog watching Christmas movies.

OUR COMMUNITY

Blessed Advent, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year



From now until 2018:

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 23
Heather Hargraves

December 26
Kirk Pessner
Andreas Mueller

December 27
Sandra Pessner

January 10
David Rohrer



Humbly
welcome
the word
that has
been
planted
in you.

ON THE SCHEDULE REFRESHMENTS



Worship

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



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.

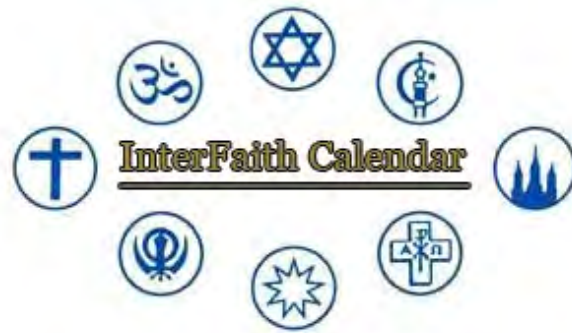
This unilateral action would not support the cause of peace and a two-state solution, but rather would unnecessarily create further tensions and possible violence that would make efforts to bring them back together for talks much more difficult. As my brother in Christ and colleague, Bishop Munib Younan 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>



Coming Events (this week and beyond):



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

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

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 10:00 AM

HOUSE CHURCH—EPIPHANY
at home of Dana & Sophia McDonald

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 5:00 PM

ZOOMCHURCH—2ND SUNDAY AFTER
EPIPHANY
Links to be provided.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 5:00 PM

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY—
PASTOR MEGAN ROHRER PRESIDING
at St. Cyprian's

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,