



# Lifetimes

January 2023

## From the Pastor



Pastor Kai Nilsen

Our Advent/Christmas theme of *Longing for...* has been, for me, a rich exercise of paying attention to the hopes and desires of my heart that keep nudging me along—moment by moment, interaction by interaction. I hope it has been an encouragement for you, too.

This week I was invited to join one of Incarnation's small groups in conversation about longing. The leader passed out multiple quotes about longing—some whimsical, some that made us wonder, and each person, in turn, read their quotes followed by an open conversation about what we heard and how it connects to our lives. The conversation began with a few funny anecdotes but quickly tapped into the deeper yearnings of each person:

- Longing to have been at the bedside of a loved one when they died.
- Longing for resolution of a chronic health issue.
- Longing to know how to care for a loved one with dementia, and how to care for themselves in the process.
- Longing for the world to be different and more reflective of God's love and compassion and justice.
- Longing for their grandkids to know the "love of God" like they do.

In our individual longing, we uncovered the unique path that each of us were walking. In our communal longings, we were one.

As we approach the New Year, we will tap into a longing that we all have, the longing to live A Good Life. Notice I said A Good Life, not The Good Life,



as if there is only one path to living a good life. In our Epiphany sermon series, we will discover and listen to some of the great invitations that shape a good life for Jesus' people:

- We know who we are: In baptism we are named as dearly beloved children of God.
- We heed Jesus' invitation to "come and see." We are curious about this Jesus life.
- We say "yes" and follow: We intentionally design our life around his life.
- We listen and respond to his teaching: Our focus for the last few weeks of the season will be on the teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.

Our longing, itself, is an anticipation and expectation that A Good Life exists and that God desires we live it. It's not a life devoid of pain and struggle, but it's a life of purposeful attention to the "way of Jesus" and how his way of being, relating, forgiving, welcoming, and loving can be our way!

We hope and pray A Good Life continues to emerge in the New Year for us and for all.

Blessed New Year—2023! Peace, Kai



Wyatt Stahl  
President

Cleo Wade wrote “Fear worries, ‘How will I get there?’ Faith Smiles knowingly, ‘We will get there.’” It is amazing how a few words can say so much. This is my last article for Lifetimes, and one of my last works as congregation president.

On February 5, we will have our annual congregational meeting. This will be our time to close the door on 2022 and set our hopes and works on what 2023 can be for our community of faith. Although I used to find these meetings somewhat uninteresting, the three years that I have spent on council have enabled me to see the strength and commitment of our community of faith – the great number of individuals that work, often unseen, to move us all forward so that “we will get there.” Now, when I look at the line items in the budget, that item is

linked to the face of someone I know, and I can better see how they are working to improve our worship service or help the just cause of one of our partners in ministry. This is not to say that I find the budget exciting. But I am finding the meaning behind the numbers.

If anything the last few years has shown us is that we can neither predict, nor control what the world will bring to our doorstep in 2023. But we can be determined in what we will bring to the world – a community of faith that helps shoulder each other’s burdens, share in each other’s joys and brings the love of Christ to any and all. Watch our feet because they are moving in a blessed direction.

Blessings to all.  
Wyatt

## Among the Congregation

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Public Prayer List: People affected by winter storms; Dale Anderson; Marian Ness; Konni Hovey; Murt Seltz; Anne Bidne; Jim Crawford; Kara Genia; Orris Haraldson; Joe Stepka; Wayne Quehl; Lowell Odland; Erling Husby; Erica Bratland; Jim Morse; Linda Hudepohl; Chris McDermid; Mike Wielenberg’s mother; Lorinda Mishek’s cousin; Brad Kaeter’s father; Gary Magner’s sister; Bill Fitzsimmons’ brother; Jim Mishek’s sister; Sue Bernlohr’s mother; Al and Carolyn Ek’s son; the Beckman family’s friend, Drew; Kim Wielenberg’s friend, Andrea; Maddie St. Martin’s friend, Jesse; Nancy Haugen’s friend, Joyce; Bill & Joan Reichwald’s friends Mike, Emily, Jonathan & Harper; Kim Wielenberg’s friend, John; Josh & Amy Johnson’s friend, Joel

Sympathy to: the family of Lu Durbahn on her death; Mary Farquhar & family on the death of her father; the family of Lavonne Rasmussen on her death; the family of Alice McEwen on her death; Dave Bernlohr & family on the death of his mother; Troy Heller & family on the death of his stepdad; Jay Millerhagen & family on the death of his mother; the family of Lavonne Rasmussen on her death; the family of Alice McEwen on her death; the family of Lu Durbahn on her death

Baptized: Callan James Bork, son of Kristy & Zach Bork and Elle Cecile Martin, daughter of Kailey & JP Martin

Help welcome Solid Ground families as they settle in their new homes and community. A Welcome Basket filled with cleaning supplies is presented to each family when they first arrive at Solid Ground. Families often have few, if any, household items. Many arrive after staying in shelters, living in cars or bunking with friends and relatives. Welcome Baskets not only fill a necessary need for families transitioning from homelessness, but also serve as a warm and hospitable welcome to our community.

Please consider donating one or more of the following new items: laundry basket, laundry detergent, bathroom cleaner, kitchen cleaner, scouring pads, multi-purpose

wipes, liquid dish detergent, liquid hand soap, hand sanitizer, liquid all-purpose cleaner, toilet paper, paper towels, toilet brush, plunger, broom and mop.

Donations can be dropped off at Incarnation in the bin marked “Solid Ground Welcome Baskets” from January 8 through January 29. Monetary donations are also appreciated as they will help provide Welcome Basket items throughout the year when supplies run low. Please indicate “SG Welcome Baskets” in the memo line of donations.



Join us for an evening of games - BINGO, BOARD GAMES, 9 - square in the air and bring your favorite game to share with us.

Visit here to sign up for fun: [vbspro.events/p/a2c185](https://vbspro.events/p/a2c185)

Green Lake Lutheran Ministries Summer Camp opportunities is now taking registrations for Summer 2023. Camp opportunities are available for kids 1st grade through High School. They also offer a Grandparent camp. Visit here for more information: <https://www.gllm.org/summer-camp.html>

**Preschool Registration**

Registration for preschool for the 2023-24 school year starts in January. Visit the Incarnation website and preschool pages for details regarding class offerings. Registration packets for the 2023-24 school year are available. An enrollment packet can be mailed to you or forms may also be downloaded from the ILC website. Completed forms and fees can be submitted anytime. They will be date stamped when received and held in order for processing following the registration timeline below. Confirmation of enrollment status will be mailed within two days of processing. Call Kirsten Henry at 651-766-0723 for more information, to schedule a tour or to have a registration packet mailed to you.

**Wednesday, January 4**

Processing begins for currently enrolled children.

**Wednesday, January 11**

Processing begins for forms received from returning/ previously enrolled families and NEW children from Incarnation member families.

**Friday, January 13**

Processing begins for forms received from the public.

## A Few Notes from Worship & Music

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Greetings everyone from the music department! What a wonderful Christmas season we've had! We were grateful to have so many congregation members sharing their musical gifts during the weeks of Advent leading up to Christmas - everyone from brass players, flautists, pianists, vocal soloists, saxophonists, and of course, our wonderful choir! I hope that within the many offerings of music you were able to find things that lifted your spirits, provided comfort, and inspired you to connect with the season's theme of "longing."



over 1500 souls across four services - singing, participating, illuminating the sanctuary with candles - it was thrilling, humbling, and inspiring! There is something very special happening in this community!

We are excited for the new year! We will see more participation among our youth in expanded bell choir opportunities, as well as youth vocal ensembles. We will also continue to expand instrumental ensemble opportunities for interested musicians of all ages and levels. **Please get in touch if you would like to participate!** More exciting news to come - stay tuned!

Sean Turner  
Minister of Music, Worship, and the Arts

Over the last several years, each of us has probably uttered the phrase, "I wish things could just get back to normal!" Well, for me, Christmas Eve really struck me that not only do things seem like they are approaching normal but are moving forward with a new momentum and strength. To have

On December 26, a water sprinkler head froze and broke, sending hundreds of gallons of water into the area inside Door 2, behind the wall, down the education hallway, and into Incarnation Hall. The fire department assisted with sweeping out much of the water, but Rick Gravley, Facilities Manager, responding to the situation, called ServPro who came out and started vacuuming the carpets.

As we move into 2023, we also move into new legislative and congressional sessions, both here in Minnesota (January 3) and in Washington, DC (also January 3). Important decisions will be made in the coming months, many of them by newly elected individuals who will bring new ideas, new input and, hopefully, more willingness to work together across the aisles. Redistricting will mean that some of us now have new people representing us. We need to get to know them, and they need to hear from us, too.

Many of those decisions will impact people who live with hunger, both here in the United States and in countries around the world. The causes of hunger are many - poverty, climate change, transportation issues, lack of education, and conflict to name only a few. The

## Water Damage

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As a result there are sheets of ice at Doors 1 and 2 due to the draining system. Please be aware of this as you approach the building. We are working with our snowplowing company to remove it.

We are in the process of working with our insurance company to file a claim. More information will follow in the weekly worship emails.

## A New Year, A New Congress

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renewal of the Farm Bill, which currently will expire in 2023, can and should make a difference for farmers, producers, markets, and consumers worldwide.

Consider sending a New Year's greeting to your elected officials. This is a good time for you to be in touch with your elected officials. Send them an email or make a short phone call to let them know that you, as a person of faith, will be praying for them during the session ahead. Wish them and all those who work on our behalf a year of cooperation and care for each and every person's welfare.

You can find contact information for your legislators by going to: <https://www.qis.lcc.mn.gov/iMaps/districts/> and entering your complete address.

## Baptism of Jesus - The Saint John's Bible

Unlike the gospel of Luke, which begins with the birth of Jesus, the gospel of Mark starts with the baptism of Jesus (Mark 1:1-12). We often associate the beginning of Jesus' ministry with his baptism; and it seems only appropriate that we start a new year with Jesus' baptism, which encourages us to consider our own baptism.

Donald Jackson's illumination of the Baptism of Jesus in The Saint John's Bible includes many aspects besides Jesus, John the Baptizer and the Jordan River. Who is the man in the foreground? He comes right out of the frame of the illumination. It is not Jesus. Is the man coming or going?

Where is Jesus in the image? Even though we don't see the words that God speaks in the illumination ("You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."), we can see the heavens torn apart.

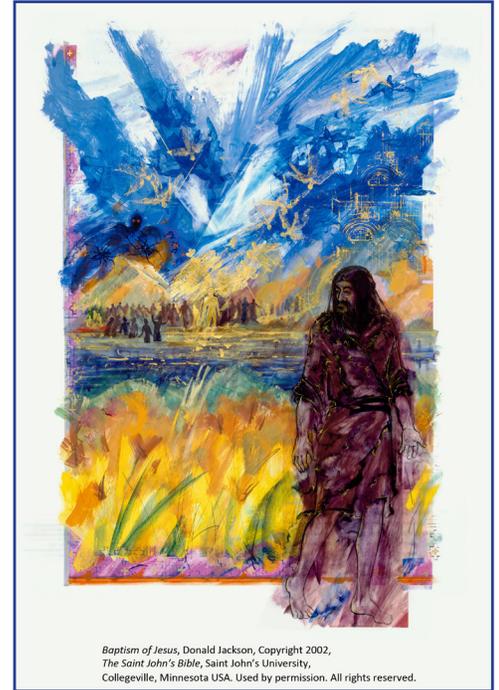
We see ominous creatures on the left upper portion of the image. What do they represent? Consider the 12th verse to give you an idea.

What stands out for you in this illumination?

What do you wonder as you look at this illumination?

How does your own baptism relate to this illumination?

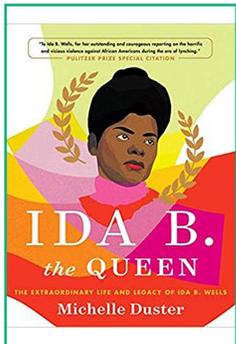
How might this image help you as you enter the new year?



Baptism of Jesus, Donald Jackson, Copyright 2002, The Saint John's Bible, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Incarnation has a Heritage Edition of The Saint John's Bible on display in the Chapel. To view or for personal/group reflection and learning, follow the hallway to the west of the Sanctuary.

## Apostles Library Book Review



*Ida B. The Queen*  
by Michelle Duster

In recognition of February being Black History Month and Incarnation's focus on Racial Justice, this month's book review is of *Ida B. the Queen* by Michelle Duster. Ida is identified to be a journalist, suffragist and an antilynching crusader.

In 1862, Ida B. Wells was born enslaved in Holly Springs, Mississippi. In 2020 she was awarded posthumously with a Pulitzer Prize. Wells committed herself to the needs of those who did not have power.

In the eyes of the FBI, this made her a "dangerous negro agitator." In the annals of history, it makes her an icon who inspired many to follow in her work including Rosa Parks, Medgar Evers, Martin Luther King, Jr.

*Ida B. The Queen* tells the awe-inspiring story of a pioneering woman who was often overlooked and underestimated - a woman who refused to exit a train car meant for white passengers; a woman who brought to light the horrors of lynching in America; a woman who cofounded the NAACP. Written by Wells's great-granddaughter Michelle Duster, the book is a unique visual celebration of Wells's life, and of the Black experience.

Annual Congregation Meeting  
February 5, 11:30 a.m. In-person & on Zoom.

The Feed My Starving Children Action Group at Incarnation is seeking volunteers to join our team, assisting with annual MobilePacks™ and other ongoing efforts to support this valued ministry partner. Are you someone who is interested in helping to both plan MobilePacks™ and be present during the event? Specifically, help is needed with hospitality, volunteer recruitment/registration and logistics coordination. We are also looking for student volunteers to help generate interest within local schools. This is an excellent opportunity to serve with friends, classmates and teammates. Our next MobilePack will be held on site at Incarnation April 26-30, 2023.

According to Feed My Starving Children, the world is currently facing the worst hunger crisis in our lifetime. Upended supply chains and a war in Europe triggered a devastating spike in food prices this year. We saw poverty skyrocket through failed rainy seasons in Africa and increasing civil unrest in the Caribbean. Around the world, already-fragile communities are suffering under these conditions. The World Food Programme has called 2022 “a year of unprecedented hunger.” As always, the most vulnerable populations bear the brunt. (Source: fmsc.org)

The Action Group meets on the last Tuesday of each month from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. throughout the year. As we get closer to MobilePacks™, there may be extra meetings to finalize details. During the MobilePack, Action Group members are on site working with the FMSC team directly to ensure the event runs smoothly.

When asked about their service on the FMSC Action Group, team members expressed several different reasons as to “why” they serve:

- Don Martin has been a part of the group since 2008 and helps with community outreach to coordinate with local businesses and organizations to secure volunteers and financial donations. He states, “The motto of Feed My Starving Children is feeding God’s children in body and spirit. Food is the most basic of needs of the body. Hope is one of the most basic needs of the spirit. When we join together as a community to pack meals, it is a concrete way to



express our hope that all will be fed, and that feeds and strengthens our spirit. When the food is received, it provides hope and food to those most in need. In addition, it is a fun multi-generational experience with a LOT of positive energy.”

- Mike Vant is the current leader of the FMSC Action Group. He noted that he has been a supporter of FMSC for a long time but after traveling to the Dominican Republic on a FMSC Food in Action trip and seeing the impact up close with his own eyes, he knew he wanted to be more involved in the FMSC mission.
- Claudia Wiebold, who recently joined the group after retiring from her career, said, “FMSC is an incredible organization, they so effectively feed so many around the world! I’ve been involved with MobilePacks since Incarnation began hosting them.” Claudia also works with Don Martin to coordinate the monthly packs at the FMSC permanent site in Coon Rapids.

It is often said within the Incarnation community that service is an expression of the outward journey. Our inward journeys of faith help us to discover who we are as children of God, our OUTWARD journeys help us act out God’s mission of love. When we share our time and gifts, we join God and our fellow Christians to create a better, more loving world for God’s children. In the process, we also are changed.

Are you ready to join us...until all are fed?

For more information, contact Mike Vant at [mjvant@gmail.com](mailto:mjvant@gmail.com).

Photo Credit: Feed My Starving Children

## MANY "GOOD GIFTS" SHARED

The table displaying the ELCA Good Gifts options for holiday giving in 2022 had many members of the Incarnation community stopping by and purchasing gifts, asking for a catalog, and/or telling us that they had already made a purchase online through the ELCA. We appreciated those who bought "gifts" for family members, for teachers, for friends, and just for themselves. (One woman purchased individual items for each of her four children AND for all her grandchildren). We enjoyed the conversations with people who stopped to look at the ornaments, ask questions, and talk about the needs of the hungry.

Our most memorable experience this year came when a young girl arrived with her pink piggy bank, one she had received previously at a Hunger display. She carefully

opened it and helped count out the accumulated coins and the one paper dollar bill. She had enough money to purchase a chick! She even had a few pennies remaining and placed them carefully back into her bank and took it home again



to continue saving for another "gift" later. This young girl, and her parents, are setting an example for each of us - one person, no matter our age, can make a difference as we work together to end hunger in God's world.

Christmas and New Year blessings and many thanks from the Hunger Awareness and Advocacy Group.

## RALPH REEDER

Dear Incarnation Community -- On behalf of Ralph Reeder Food Shelf and our neighbors served by them, the RRFs Action Group cannot thank you enough for your generosity over the last couple of months.

- When we put out the call for "Thanksgiving for All" in October, you generously donated 622 pounds and \$1,300 plus \$500 in gift cards .

- When we took part in the Alternative Giving Fair in November and requested "Holiday Baking Bags" through the beginning of December, you generously donated 2,154 pounds and \$2,100 plus \$150 in gift cards.



## LIFEHAVEN



An overwhelming thank you was expressed by the staff at LifeHaven for the generous gifts from Incarnation through the LifeHaven Youth Holiday Gift Drive! The wish lists of youth and their children at LifeHaven were generously filled.

There were more than

80 gifts (including six handmade crib quilts) given to nine youth, and eleven children (including one who is soon to be born) and \$455.00 in gift cards were given in addition to the gifts. An Incarnation small group and members from Hands and Hearts had a lot of fun and did a great job wrapping the gifts before they were delivered to LifeHaven.

70 additional gifts were donated for the LifeHaven House and Program. This included items to welcome new Youth to LifeHaven, such as robes and slippers. Also included were items to help youth transition into independent living, such as a set of pots and pans. \$600.00 in gift cards were donated to the LifeHaven Program for year-round use for birthdays, rewards for achieving set goals, use before benefits become available, and other emergency situations.

It was wonderful to kick off this Drive with Incarnation's Alternative Giving Fair this year. It gave so many of us the opportunity to listen to those sharing how they were connected to LifeHaven in the past, hear what opportunities are available again, answer questions, & learn more about the youth and children program at LifeHaven. Thank you to so many who stopped by the LifeHaven Giving House before or after worship throughout Advent to share LifeHaven stories, information, and questions about the program. Your deep care is so appreciated! To learn more about LifeHaven, please visit [incarnation.org/LifeHaven](http://incarnation.org/LifeHaven).



*Celebrating after gifts are wrapped.*

# Memorials

We honor the memory of loved ones in the memorial gifts given below:

Date Range: 11/21/22 to 12/19/22

Donor	Fund Name	In Memory of
Jim & Carol Fruehling	Memorial – ELCA World Hunger	Dave Bernlohr’s Mother (Carol)
Jim & Julie Meinen	Memorial – Undesignated	Dave Bernlohr’s Mother (Carol)
Thomas Sullivan	*Memorial – Youth Ministry	Tim Abraham
Rachel Lagus	*Memorial – Youth Ministry	Tim Abraham
James & Carol Vyhanek	*Memorial – Youth Ministry	Tim Abraham
Fred & Sally Lawless	*Memorial – Youth Ministry	Tim Abraham
Robert & Lisa Ost	*Memorial – Youth Ministry	Tim Abraham
Brian & Elizabeth Nelson	*Memorial – Youth Ministry	Tim Abraham
Marlys J. Nelson	Memorial – Quilters	Tim Abraham
Donors who gave through family	*Memorial – Youth Ministry	Tim Abraham
Donors who gave through family	*Memorial – MicroGrants	Tim Abraham
<i>*For those donors who did not designate a specific fund, the family requested we allocate \$ here.</i>		
Joe & Laura Hughes	Memorial – Undesignated	Gaitha Good
Marlys M. Nelson	Memorial – Ralph Reeder Food Shelf	Karen Nelson
Don Alsop	Memorial – Undesignated	Rollie Seltz
Lawrence & Carolyn McBride	Memorial – Undesignated	Rollie Seltz
Tim & Carol Vanrooy	Memorial – Undesignated	Rollie Seltz
Larry Lindquist	Memorial – Undesignated	Rollie Seltz
Van De Walker	Memorial – Undesignated	Rollie Seltz
Gail D Larson	Memorial – Undesignated	Rollie Seltz

## November Financials

Actual November Operating Giving	\$154,942.39	YTD Operating Giving	\$1,711,974.47
Actual November Operating Expense	\$167,448.04	YTD Operating Expense	\$1,816,774.73
	(\$12,505.65)		(\$104,800.26)
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Actual November Mortgage Giving	\$33,058.45	YTD Mortgage Giving	\$317,944.79
Actual November Mortgage Expense	\$20,675.00	YTD Mortgage Expense	\$272,790.00
	\$12,383.45		\$45,154.79