

ELIAS COMMUNICATOR

Called by Christ, we live our faith in Word and Deed

December 2023/January 2024



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From the **PASTOR**

Grace and peace to you - in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have heard it said that God speaks to people in many different ways. For some it may be through a favorite hymn. For others it may be through a favorite scripture passage. And still for others, God may place a person in one's life to deliver a message.

In my case God used an animated character from a well-known Christmas cartoon to speak to me. You may have heard of him. His name is Linus and he is one of the main characters from Charles Schultz's Peanuts cartoon. As an unchurched youth my parents' stories centered on Santa Claus and his elves and never on the birth of Jesus during the holiday season. However, every year my siblings and I would gather around our small black and white television set to watch the animated special "A Charlie Brown Christmas".

It was during the viewing of this cartoon that my siblings and I heard the story of the birth of Jesus. For those of you that may be unfamiliar with the show, Linus is Charlie Brown's friend and he attempts to ease his friend's concern that Christmas has become too commercialized by retelling the story of the birth of Christ from the Gospel of Luke.

Linus spoke of the angel telling the shepherds "Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11)



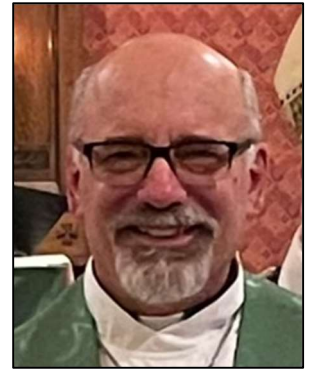
I'm still amazed that God would use an animated character to speak to me about the birth of God's Son and as Linus says "The true meaning of Christmas." Perhaps this Christmas you can be the one that God uses to speak to others about the true meaning of Christmas. It is a well-known fact that many people are willing to attend church during this time of year. Will you please prayerfully consider who you may

want to invite to attend our services on Christmas Eve here at Elias?

Our 10:30am service will be a traditional Advent 4 service as we continue to anticipate the birth of Jesus. Our 7:00pm candlelight service will be a celebration of familiar lessons and carols. I am beyond excited to celebrate our first Christmas together as your pastor! May God bless you during this most festive time and throughout the upcoming New Year.

In Christ,

Pastor Joe



Coming Events

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

The Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held on Sunday evening, December 24, beginning at 7:00 PM. We will enjoy traditional Christmas music and lessons together as we await the arrival of the Christ Child. Rumor has it that Cheryl Carney and her musical friends are preparing some special music as well.

The regular Sunday worship service with Holy Communion will be held as usual at 10:30 AM on December 24.

Yard Sale/Soup 'n' Sandwich Sale

The November yard sale/soup 'n' sandwich sale was a great success, with a profit of right around \$6,000 to benefit Elias and the W/ELCA. (It's hard to give an exact figure, because the yard sale never really ends!) Many thanks to all the folks who worked hard to make the combined sales happen, but especially to Connie Fisher and Deb Zimmerman.

Plans already are in the works for the next sales; we will pass along that information as soon as it is available.

Prayer Hotline

For anonymous prayer support, call the Mother Seton Prayer Line: 866-202-4934.

Food 4 Kids

Food 4 Kids is available on the first and third Saturdays of each month, 9:30 AM - 12 noon, in the big Sunday School room. You may get a FREE bag of food consisting of 4 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 4 snacks and 4 drinks for each child up to 18 years old. Please share this information with anyone you think would benefit from this program. See Connie Fisher if you have questions.

W/ELCA

The ladies will gather at Higgenbotham's in New Oxford for their annual Christmas Tea on Tuesday, December 12. On January 16 they will resume their monthly Bible study at 10:00, followed by a luncheon at 11:30 and then Bingo. Please bring a friend, your Bible if coming to the Bible study, and a prize for Bingo.

Turn Off the Lights!

That's what we tell our kids at home, and it holds true at Elias as well. Please be sure, when leaving the church, that all the lights are turned off, and that the doors are locked.



Growing with the Times

A Change to the Elias Altar Flower Program

In previous years, the Elias congregation has generously donated week after week to fill the altar flower vases. At \$35 per week, it was a reasonable cost for live flowers, but as with most things, a change was needed. Beginning in January of 2024, we will be starting a more modern version of the flower program that is both more financially friendly and easier on those who staff the church.



Instead of Elias having a standing order with the florist for every Sunday, anyone wishing to donate live flowers for a specific service will call the florist and make arrangements directly with the florist. After that, a brief email or phone call to Deb Zimmerman in the church office will ensure that the appropriate dedication is placed in the weekly bulletin. It will be a requirement that all arrangements and dedications will be made at a minimum of two Wednesdays prior to the service in question.

To prevent confusion, a sign with instructions and the florist's contact information will be placed in the back window of the church, where the previous binder for flower signups was located. Whoever chooses to donate real flowers is expected to take the flowers with them, or dispose of them, at the end of the service for which they were donated. During services for which no previous arrangements have been made, the seasonal faux floral arrangements provided by the Women of the ELCA will be used.

Some may ask why it was necessary to make this change. There were three main reasons that provided the catalyst for the new program. First, over the years the cost of nice floral arrangements has increased drastically, and while the florist has been quite kind in maintaining the price of \$35 per week, the quality of the arrangements has significantly decreased. Second, as the congregation size has dwindled, so too has the ability to provide flowers for all the needed services. It simply is not reasonable to continue to ask the congregation, or the ladies, to continue to foot the bill for 47+ services a year, especially if we wish to increase the quality of the arrangements. The final reason, and quite frankly one with a significant weight, is the stress it puts on an already limited staff. The need for someone to constantly monitor who put what in the book, whether the florist delivered or if they delivered when they shouldn't have, did the donor take the flowers, etc., is all labor-intensive and exhausting. Getting volunteers to take over programs previously managed by others has proven impossible, and thus a change must be made.

Many churches already have made this change, as it is more environmentally friendly and reduces costs overall. The change was brought to the Congregation Council and approved, and so Elias grows into a new phase of altar maintenance!

Renata Provance

Corner

Council

Once again we are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus, with Mary riding into Walmart on the back of Dominic the Italian Christmas donkey, accompanied by a mariachi band playing “Feliz Navidad.” No, wait, that’s not it - - - how about Mary and Joseph riding into town on a Harley, to the tune of Mariah Carey (remember her?) bellowing “All I Want for Christmas is You!” No, that’s not it either - - - how about a quiet candlelight service on Christmas Eve, with your favorite Christmas carols and readings? I definitely prefer Option 3, and I hope you will join us that night to welcome the Christ Child quietly and reverently. It wasn’t so many years ago that we had to set up folding chairs to accommodate all the worshippers on Christmas Eve; let’s see how many pews we can fill this year!

Congratulations to Nathan Shriner, who will take Holy Communion for the first time on December 10. Nathan has been preparing with Pastor Joe for the past few weeks, and is eagerly looking forward to this next step in his religious growth.

On January 28 we will hold our annual congregation meeting after the worship service. It should be fairly brief: mostly we need to elect Congregation Council members and approve the 2024 budget. Please plan on staying after church for the meeting; please also consider becoming a member of the council (even if you have served on the council before!) It doesn’t take a lot of time, and it’s an opportunity to serve Elias. Please speak to any current council member if you would like to take part in the adventure.

Frank Schmursal



HEAD DEACONS

December – Nita Shank

January – Cindy Rohrbaugh

ALTAR CHAIRPERSONS

December – Renata Provance

January – Deb Zimmerman

LECTORS

December 3 – Frank Schmursal

December 10 – Nita Shank

December 17 – Deb Zimmerman

December 24 – Nina Dolly

December 31 – Paul Harner

January 7 – Matt Provance

January 14 – Renata Provance

January 21 – Frank Schmursal

January 28 – Nita Shank

February 4 – Deb Zimmerman

The Best Gift of All

Again it is the marvelous holiday season, with cold weather, hopefully snow and Christmas. I remember one year when my student, Carlos, came to school announcing that he had received a great gift from Santa – a brand new watch. However, he then added, “I didn’t have the time to do my homework, ‘cause I lost my brand new watch!”

Yes, gifts, as well as other things, can be exciting. That is why, when I taught school, I always tried to think up interesting things for my students to do each day. I wanted to keep them in the learning mode rather than thinking about Christmas vacation and gifts. This task was not always easy for me to do, and once I said to my mother, “Hey, if you want to come to school to help me, there would then be two of us thinking of brilliant ideas for my class.” Mommy replied, “Not necessarily!”

As a youngster, Christmas time meant that I got to go to the Turkey Shoots with my father. He probably became proficient with a gun as a release from not being able to go into the Armed Forces with his friends, due to being color-blind. We all became aware of this when he cut out and painted the wooden Santa and sleigh, which my mother had designed. There they were in the front yard – a green sleigh and a **green** Santa!!! Anyway, he did become the town sheriff, and by helping to keep the town safe, I am sure he felt he was contributing to the war effort. Fortunately, the only green and red things he probably had to deal with were the traffic lights! Well, I did become quite a “good shot,” and I have Poppy to thank for that. He taught me, as the oldest of three children, even though I was a girl! This is a gift God gave to me through my earthly father.

Recently, God again gave me a gift. I was trying to rent the first-floor apartment of my home to someone who could help me. I often need someone to bring in the bird/deer food from my car, which I purchase, as well as to shovel my path when it snows, etc. I **always** let my answering machine take any calls, as that helps me to get information about a prospective tenant before I make any callbacks. However, after a week, I had not received any calls from my newspaper ad, and I had just sat down and was wondering about this, when my phone rang. Since I was sitting right beside my phone, I decided to answer it, which was quite a novelty for me. The caller was a desperate neighbor who could not afford the \$100 rent raise his landlord wanted. He had been a contractor who had had to retire due to injuries, but he can bring in my bird/deer food, and shovel my path with his snow blower, as well as do other small jobs! He is also a little hard of hearing, so he can not hear my kitties squabbling with me and tearing around on the second floor. This is a great Christmas gift. People have been concerned about my living alone, even with my special emergency phone. So, now I can say that I have a man living in my basement, as it sounds better than a man is living in my cellar – that really has a mystery-novel tone.

God gives wonderful gifts. Thank you, thank you, God, and you are the Best Gift to us all.

Merry-Elizabeth Buckham

Elias Lutheran Church Stewardship Report

Facts and Figures



Attendance	2023
Total Sunday attendance through Nov. 26, 2023	1708
Average Sunday attendance (48 services)	36
Total Wednesday attendance through Nov. 29, 2023	399
Average Wednesday attendance (41 services)	10
Average weekly attendance	47

Pastor Joe's Schedule

Pastor Joe's schedule is as follows:

Monday – Elias home visits

Tuesday – at St. John, Thurmont

Wednesday – at Elias, Emmitsburg

Thursday – at Elias or working from home

Friday – off

Saturday – sermon preparation (at home)

Sunday – services at St. John and Elias, then off

He can be reached by the church phone at 301-447-6239, by his cell phone at 443-255-5229, or by email at jherb1@yahoo.com.

Deadline for the February/March issue is
Sunday, January 21

Elias Communicator

is a bi-monthly newsletter of
Elias Lutheran Church.

Services: **Sunday Worship – 10:30 a.m.**
Sunday School – 11:45 a.m.
Wednesday Worship – 9:30 a.m.

All are welcome to attend
and share God's word.

We are located at
100 West North Ave.,
(P.O. Box 465)
Emmitsburg, MD
(301) 447 – 6239

E-mail: eliasluth@gmail.com

Website: www.eliaslutheranchurch.org

Pastor: Rev. Joe Herb



ELIAS LUTHERAN CHURCH IS A PRAYING CONGREGATION. WE HOLD IN COMMUNAL PRAYER THE PEOPLE LISTED HERE AND THOSE IN OUR HOMES, WORKPLACES, AND COMMUNITIES.

Prayers for Healing:

Elwood Carney, Shelby Fogus, Brenda George, Linda Herb, Monroe Hewitt, Fred Hoff, George Hoffman, AJ, Carl Keeney, Dave Little, Hayden McKenny, Gail Shaker, Julie Sweeney, Taylor Wiles, Dustin Winfield, and Sharon Winfield.

Ongoing Prayer Concerns:

Nancy Andrew, Erma Bechtol, Alan Brauer, Harriet Buhrman, Brent Cluster, Rex Davis, Annie Eyler, Rosie Eyler, Dani Fink, Dick Fisher, Bev Frushour, Bob Frushour, Kathe Givler, Judy Hale, Paul Hoffman, Betty Leatherman, Dolly Long, Bobby Moser, Ronda Buhrman Olsen, Matthew (Pete) Shank, Linda Shields, Diane Shockey, Ernie Shriver, Kenny Slick, Richard Smith, and John Wilhelm.

For those serving in the Military:

Logan Councillor, Jacob Fannin, Jimmy Hoffman, Nathan Jeffcoat, Noretta Kime, Lucas Mort, Austin Schaeffer, Ashley Shank, Gretal Shank, Kevin Shank, Sally Shank, Sam Shank, and Kailey Williams.



Prayer shawls and blankets are available!

If you know anyone, on this prayer list or not, who would benefit from a prayer shawl or prayer blanket, please contact Deb Zimmerman (717-334-8318).

December 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 8:00 pm – AA	2 8:00 pm – AA
3 10:30 – Holy Communion Lector: Frank Schmursal 11:45 – Sunday School	4	5 CHURCH COUNCIL 7:00 pm	6 9:30 am – Holy Communion 8:00 pm – AA	7	8 8:00 pm – AA	9 8:00 pm – AA
10 10:30 – Holy Communion Lector: Nita Shank 11:45 – Sunday School	11	12 Ladies’ Tea at Higgenbotham’s in New Oxford	13 9:30 am – Holy Communion 8:00 pm – AA	14	15 8:00 pm – AA	16 8:00 pm – AA
17 10:30 – Holy Communion Lector: Deb Zimmerman 11:45 – Sunday School	18	19	20 9:30 am – Holy Communion 8:00 pm – AA	21	22 8:00 pm – AA	23 8:00 pm – AA
24 10:30 – Holy Communion Lector: Nina Dolly 11:45 – Sunday School 7:00 – Candlelight Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26	27 9:30 am – Holy Communion 8:00 pm – AA	28	29	30
31 10:30 – Holy Communion Lector: Paul Harner 11:45 – Sunday School						

January 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 NEW YEARS DAY	2 CHURCH COUNCIL 7:00 pm	3 9:30 am – Holy Communion 8:00 pm – AA	4	5 8:00 pm – AA	6 8:00 pm – AA
7 10:30 – Holy Communion Lector: Matt Provance 11:45 – Sunday School	8	9	10 9:30 am – Holy Communion 8:00 pm – AA	11	12 8:00 pm – AA	13 8:00 pm – AA
14 10:30 – Holy Communion Lector: Renata Provance 11:45 – Sunday School	15	16 10:00 am – Ladies’ Bible study, lunch, and Bingo	17 9:30 am – Holy Communion 8:00 pm – AA	18	19 8:00 pm – AA	20 8:00 pm – AA
21 10:30 – Holy Communion Lector: Frank Schmersal 11:45 – Sunday School <i>Communicator</i> deadline	22	23	24 9:30 am – Holy Communion 8:00 pm – AA	25	26 8:00 pm – AA	27 8:00 pm – AA
28 10:30 – Holy Communion Lector: Nita Shank 11:45 – Congregation meeting	29	30	31 9:30 am – Holy Communion 8:00 pm – AA			



SEE YOU AT ELIAS...IN THE MEANTIME, WE ARE UNITED IN CHRIST OUR LORD

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Elías Communicator

P.O. Box 465

Emmitsburg, MD 21727