



First of the Month @ CLC

December 1, 2021

Dear Christ Lutheran Church,

Good news! We have hired a new Music Minister! His name is Paul Delgado. He is from Whittier and graduated from Biola University Conservatory of Music. He is a choral director, singer, pianist, composer/arranger with past experience in two churches (one small and one large) as music director. In addition, Paul has been the artistic director of a chamber choir that has performed in a number of venues, even collaborating with the L.A. Philharmonic Brass Ensemble in a performance.

Paul will start on January 1 of the new year. Among the many challenges he faces between now and then will be to secure housing in Visalia and settling into a new routine. As a single man in his mid-30s, he is excited about Christ Lutheran Church and looks forward to further developing the music ministry of the church. The search team (Marti Johnson, Ashley Irvine, Pam Merkel, Peter Chambers, Noel Thompson, Leanne Malison, and I) believe he has the gifts and skills necessary to do an outstanding job.

I am sure you all will welcome this news with excitement. This is something many have been praying about for the past 6 months. We have been fortunate as a church to have a wonderful legacy of music leadership. Lim Forgey will hold a special place in our hearts. It probably doesn't need to be said, but it will be helpful to remember that Paul is not Lim and will have a style all his

own. Please join me in helping Paul to feel welcome and to develop the CLC music ministry in his own unique way. I have every confidence that we will be blessed.

As I announce the advent of Paul Delgado's ministry, let me say how blessed we have been to have so many people step up into our music ministry these past five months. Notably, Pam Merkel has done an incredible job leading the worship choir, Amy Zisko has gone the extra distance in choosing music and working with choirs and singers, Denise Egge has arranged all the special music offerings, and Alison Libolt has been a great help in leading the 9:30 contemporary band. And all of this has been accomplished at a time when we have negotiated safety measures due to a pandemic.

Speaking of Advent, that is where we find ourselves now. What a beautiful time of the Church Year. These four weeks that lead into Christmas offer an alternative focus from the hustle and bustle of a consumer-driven culture. In addition to Sunday worship, I hope you will make every attempt to join mid-week worship on Wednesday evenings at 7:00. This "scaled-down" worship service will follow the beautiful *Holden Evening Prayer* with Holy Communion. The Community Connections Center venue will offer a chance to gather around tables and even engage one another in conversation as a part of the service. Unfortunately, we are unable to live-stream this service.

I do hope that all will be in worship on Christmas Eve. We will be offering two on-campus services, 7:00pm and 11:00pm. Both will be live-streamed. The 7:00 service will offer the Christmas story plus many of the popular hymns of the season. Child care will be available. The 11:00 service is the traditional "Candlelight" service that finishes with a candle-lit sanctuary as we sing *Silent Night*. These are two of my favorite worship services of the year.

December is also the month that we meet in a congregational meeting on Sunday, December 12, at 9:00 am, both on campus and on Zoom (the Zoom link will be sent out in the weekly eBlast). Make plans to attend. The two items of business are the approval of our Prayer Team, and the passage of the 2022 Church Budget. Members will have noticed a planned increase in the Budget for the next year, and those who participate in the December 5 Budget Forums will have a chance to discuss it in detail. The bottom line is that we are facing increased costs which require congregational financial support.

Part of the increased costs have something to do with two staff changes for 2022. One staff change will not be as noticeable as the other. Lauren Chambers, who has been in the position of Director of Relational Ministries, will now become the part-time Director of Adult Ministries. This position will broaden her responsibilities in the church as she will oversee all small groups, Bible studies, JPEG events, Women's Ministry, Men's Ministry, Reconciliation Ministry, New Member assimilation, and anything else that assists our adult members be connected to ministry. In addition, Lauren will continue her studies at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.

New to the staff will be a Director of Administration. Most recently Lou Wessler was our Church Administrator until he moved from the area. We discovered in his departure how valuable it is to have someone largely responsible for the operation and upkeep of the church campus. We revamped this part-time position a bit and have posted it on our "job openings" on the web site.

Take a look at it. If you, or someone you know, would be perfect for this position, please apply! The deadline for resumes/applications is December 15.

A final bit of news is to let you know we are updating our live stream capabilities. Through some generous donations, we are adding a second camera (which will allow for smoother transitions between “shots”), and adding computers and software that will help us project words to the screen while viewing bands/singers. We are converting the “old sound room” into the video room and hoping to have everything complete by January 1. For those who depend on live stream worship, my expectation is that you will find these changes very helpful.

My greatest request for our membership is for your prayers. We are still making our way through uncertain times. It is frightening the way this pandemic continues to threaten life and livelihood. Pray for our church’s health and well-being. In addition, the Christmas season can be a challenging time of the year for some; please pray that our worship and ministries provide a message of hope and healing for all. And finally, pray that our members and guests will be faithful to the mission and ministry of our church. Christ Lutheran Church is a special community of faith in our city, and what we have to offer is so deeply needed.

Have a wonderful Advent, and a holy Christmas. And may God bless us in the New Year to come!

Peace,

Pastor Brian

