



# BELLWETHER

**Bellwether** — the lead sheep of the flock (archaic English)

## LAMB OF GOD LUTHERAN CHURCH

### Interim Pastor Notes...

This time of year, our lives seem to be overflowing with all the hustle and bustle of getting ready for Christmas. There are lights to hang, trees to decorate, cookies to bake, cards to send. . . not to mention all that shopping and wrapping. There is so much to do already, without taking any time out to reflect on “the real reason for the season.” Yet, the Season of Advent asks us to do just that.

In the midst of all the busyness, the Season of Advent deliberately asks us to stop for a minute and take a breath. . . to take a look inside ourselves. . . to let some things go. . . to make room in our hearts for the coming of the Christ Child. And while Christmas lights are already sparkling everywhere, the Season of Advent asks us to eagerly wait just a little bit longer for the true light – the Light of Jesus Christ.

So, as you prepare to welcome the Christ Child this Christmas Eve, I pray you will make time to spend some quiet moments over the next couple of weeks. And I pray God will surprise you in those prayerful moments. As we wait expectantly for God to break into our lives once again in the most surprising way – in form of a tiny baby, I pray the Holy Spirit will prepare our hearts for God’s most perfect gift of love!

In Christ’s peace and light -- *Pastor Berner*

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901 Scenic Hwy  
Haines City, FL 33844  
Tel: 863-421-2811  
Fax: 863-421-0651

[www.lambofgodhainescity.com](http://www.lambofgodhainescity.com)

## Christmas Season COVID Update

With the Christmas Season fast approaching, Council spent a great deal of time talking about our COVID protocol at its last meeting. As we all know, it is complicated; and Council is taking their responsibility to everyone seriously.

Please know that we are listening to all of you -- with some folks wanting to get rid of masks, and other folks only coming to in-person worship because they feel safe because everyone is wearing masks.

Data tells us masks not only protect the person wearing the mask, but more importantly protect those nearby. Data also tells us that under the right circumstances, even those vaccinated can spread the virus when not wearing masks. So, vaccinations and masks give the best combination of protection for all.

Even though Polk County numbers have recently gone down, with folks traveling from all over and gathering indoors for the holidays, the numbers are expected to rise again. And just this week, hospitals are seeing an uptick in numbers.

With those things in mind. . . and the fact that the number of folks in worship will increase, there will be more families in our pews, and we all want to sing more for Christmas. . . Council has decided to stay the course with masks, for now; so we can all joyfully and safely celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. Council will review where we are at again in January.

So, here's what that means for now:

- Continuing to socially distance from each other
- Continuing to wear masks in worship
- Asking folks to sing softly
- Encouraging folks to use hand sanitizer before and after communion, etc.
- Continuing to take contact information for visitors at the door
- Indoor Fellowship Hall events with masks when not eating
- Spread out and social distancing in Fellowship Hall
- Small groups (if all vaccinated) may decide among themselves to wear masks optionally

As we wait for the coming of the Christ Child this Advent, we are being asked to wait to give up our masks for an hour or so of worship for the sake of one another. We thank you for your faithful service as you take care of yourselves, and your neighbors in Jesus' name.

Together in Christ -- Lamb of God Council

## Council VP Corner—Linda Leiwig

As we approach the holiday season, and I get older, I realize that this is often a time of reflection. Each year I remember all of the fun I've had with family and friends. Then I look around and see there are many not as fortunate. I'm so grateful that God has blessed me and my family. This motivates me to do little things... like trying to pay it forward.

Often when I'm standing in line to buy my coffee, I pay for the person's behind me. It's not a big deal, just a cup of coffee, right? But it puts a smile on that person's face every time. I don't know their situation, for all I know it's the richest person in the world standing behind me. It's just a small random act of kindness that not only makes the recipient smile but the giver as well.

As you reflect on your blessings, I hope you will take the time to look around to others that may be in need. There are many opportunities sponsored by our church this time of year. You can select to buy a gift for one of the farm worker's children. You can donate food or money to buy food for a family in need. You can support our Hugs for Heroes program. These are just a few opportunities. Whatever you decide, I know you'll be rewarded with a smile. You may not see it, but God will see the smile, and the recipient of your gift will be forever changed in some small way.

May you have a safe and Blessed Thanksgiving. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!



*Merry Christmas!*

**HOLIDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

**CHRISTMAS EVE**  
4:00 PM – Afternoon Service  
6:00 PM – Spanish Service  
8:00 PM – Evening Service

**CHRISTMAS DAY**  
Online Worship Only

## Happenings at Lamb of God & Cordero de Dios

### MEMORIAL GARDEN WORK DAY



The Memorial Garden Committee would like to extend a big thanks to those who came out for the work day in the morning of November 12. We trimmed up the area and marked the stones so they would be easy to identify in the future.

Thanks to Janette, Laverne, Carol, Ken, Tim and Linda

### CHURCH CLEAN UP

In the afternoon of November 12, several members of the Mission came to do some much needed power washing of our sidewalks and outer building walls by the parking lot. After a short break, we moved inside to do some cleaning in the Fellowship Hall and start decorating for Thanksgiving.



We would like to extend our deepest and most sincere gratitude and appreciation to the volunteers: Alex, Beatriz, and Ana Rosado; Pedro and Maritza Concepcion; Wanda and Saira Bango-Sanchez; and Marcos. We are grateful to all our volunteers. It is a blessing to have you as part of our church family.

A special thank you to Alex who had the idea and made it happen. Alex stated "I truly feel a part of this church family and that means a lot to me, like never before. I have finally found a home and my spirit feels full." What a blessing and amazing words.



We know and feel the Holy Spirit moving all around us and also know



that our "Church Together in Christ" as one, and through intentional prayer, our church family will continue growing. As we say, "One Church with Two Expressions," One family, One love that pours out onto us and comes from the Holy Spirit, learning, knowing and loving our Lord Jesus Christ! To God be the Glory!!!

Many Blessings and Peace, *Pastor Izzy*



# ALL SAINTS & VETERANS' SUNDAY



## THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION



A special thanks to all the volunteers who worked tirelessly behind the scenes, decorating, prepping, cooking, serving, cleaning, and making our Thanksgiving event run smoothly: Ana, Saira, Marcos, Beatriz, Alex, Maritza, Pedro, Noyda, Nancy, Wanda, Omar, Izzy, Kathy, Flora, Lynn, Dennis, Gladys, Carol, Janette, Jim, Sandi, Linda and all of you who go unmentioned that made this Thanksgiving Celebration a wonderful occasion and which reminded us how blessed we are to have our church family.

## Cápsulas del Corazón— QUE SIGNIFICA LA NAVIDAD?

Llegó la Navidad! La época más hermosa del año, una festividad que no quisiéramos que acabara. Algarabía, fiestas, regalos, parrandas, luces por doquier y un sin fin de cosas más. Pero, nos hemos detenido a pensar, que es en realidad la Navidad? Cuál es el verdadero significado?

**En Lucas 2:6-7 dice: Y, mientras estaban allí, se le cumplió el tiempo. Así que dio a luz a su hijo primogénito. Lo envolvió en pañales y lo acostó en un pesebre, porque no había lugar para ellos en la posada.**

La Navidad es un momento glorioso en el que celebramos el nacimiento del niño Jesús. Debemos honrar el nacimiento con un mensaje de fe, esperanza y amor para poder unirnos a Dios, compartiendo las tradiciones en familia y compartiendo la importancia de dar y recibir amor, de alimentar el espíritu y disfrutar de las pequeñas cosas de la vida, es el mejor regalo que podamos ofrecer. Recordar valores como la unión, la paz y la solidaridad, según las creencias religiosas, alejándonos de las formas mundanas y paganas y enfocándonos en vivir con verdadera fe.

El Adviento es celebrado en esta época y es el comienzo del Año Litúrgico, empieza el domingo 28 de noviembre y termina el 24 de diciembre. Son los cuatro domingos anteriores a la Navidad y nos anuncia la

llegada de nuestro Redentor. El sentido del Adviento es avivar en los creyentes la espera del Señor. Pero mas allá de eso, es un tiempo en el que debemos reflexionar como cristianos, corregir nuestros actos, pedir perdón a Dios por lo cometido y comprometernos a hacer un cambio en nuestras vidas. De esta manera podrá nacer el Mesías en tu corazón.

Y porque unimos el día de Los Reyes Magos a la Navidad? En el Evangelio según **San Mateo 2:112: Cuando Jesús nació en Belén de Judea en días del rey Herodes, vinieron del oriente a Jerusalén unos magos, diciendo: ¿Dónde está el rey de los judíos, que ha nacido? Porque su estrella hemos visto en el oriente, y venimos a adorarle.**

El 6 de enero se conmemora la llegada de los Reyes Magos hasta el pesebre donde había nacido el Mesías para rendirle honor y llevarle oro, incienso y mirra. Esta celebración es considerada una Epifanía del Señor. Es una manifestación divina porque dio a conocer el nacimiento del hijo de Dios. **En Isaías 60:1-6 dice: Jesús ha nacido, con los sabios de oriente todos los pueblos del mundo están invitados a gozar y festejar la gloria de Dios.**

Oremos: Señor y padre Santo: Que este tiempo hermoso que se avecina, nos brinde paz, amor y sobretodo la esperanza que





necesitamos para ser personas de fe y de unión así como tú lo deseas. Ayúdanos padre a honrar nuestra tradiciones y valores cristianos en esta fiesta del Nacimiento de Jesús amando al prójimo, perdonando y pidiendo perdón, limpiando nuestra alma para que puedas nacer en nuestros corazones y así poder proclamar tu palabra y continuar tu obra conforme a tu voluntad.

Ayúdanos a ser como Los Reyes Magos, siempre buscar tu estrella y llegar a ti para poder entregarte lo mejor de nosotros. En el nombre poderoso de tu hijo Jesucristo, Amén.

*Noyda Ruiz Feliciano,*  
VP Grupo Timón, Cordero de Dios.

## Snippets from the Heart— WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN?

Christmas has arrived! The most beautiful time of the year; a holiday that we would not want to end. Excitement, parties, gifts, lights everywhere and endless other things. But have you stopped to think what is the true meaning of Christmas?

In Luke 2:6-7 it says, “And, while they were there, the time was fulfilled. So she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in diapers and lay him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.”

Christmas is the glorious time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. We must honor the birth with a message of faith, hope, and love in order to unite ourselves to God, sharing traditions as a family and sharing the importance of giving and receiving. Love, of feeding the spirit, and enjoying the little things in life, is the best gift we can offer. Remember values such as union, peace and solidarity, according to religious beliefs, and moving away from worldly and pagan forms, and focusing on living with true faith.

Advent is celebrated at this time and marks the beginning of the Liturgical Year,

beginning on Sunday, November 28 and ending on December 24. It is the four Sundays before Christmas and announces the arrival of our Redeemer. The meaning of Advent is to enliven in believers the expectation of the Lord. But beyond that, it is a time when we must reflect as Christians, correct our actions, ask God for forgiveness for what we have committed, and commit ourselves to making a change in our lives. In this way the Messiah can be born in your heart.

And why do we join the day of the Three Kings to Christmas? In the Gospel according to Matthew 2:112: When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, some magi came from the east to Jerusalem, saying: Where is the king of the Jews, who was born? For his star we have seen in the east, and we come to worship him.

January 6 commemorates the arrival of the Magi to the manger where the Messiah was born, to honor him and bring him gold, incense and myrrh. This celebration is considered an Epiphany of the Lord. It is a divine manifestation because he made known the birth of the Son

of God. In Isaiah 60:1-6 it says “Jesus is born, with the wise men of the East all the peoples of the world are invited to enjoy and celebrate the glory of God.”

Let us pray: Lord and Holy Father: May this beautiful time that is coming, give us peace, love and above all the hope we need to be people of faith and union as you wish. Help us Father to honor our Christian traditions and values on this feast of the Birth of Jesus by loving our neighbor, forgiving and asking

for forgiveness, cleansing our soul so that you can be born in our hearts and thus be able to proclaim your word and continue your work according to your will. Help us to be like The Magi, always look for your star and reach you to be able to give you the best of us. In the mighty name of your son Jesus Christ, Amen.

*Noyda Ruiz Feliciano,*

Cordero de Dios Steering Committee VP.

## Quilter's Guild

This is the season of giving and the quilters would like to thank so many who have provided sheets, fabric, monies to purchase batting and especially those who give us their time and talent.

We are pleased to learn that our 2021 quilts were sent to Bosnia located in the Balkans in the south-eastern part of Europe. These quilts will help the thousands of Bosnians who are still displaced by the war that took place in the 1990's, plus the influx of migrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iraq and Syria. We also delivered 9 doggie beds to the Polk County Humane Society.

We meet on the first Wednesday (Dec 1) and third Thursday (Dec 16) from 9am till noon in the back of the Fellowship Hall. **On December 16 we will have our annual Christmas Cookie exchange.** Please bring a dozen of your favorite Christmas cookie to share. We will stop early for fellowship and to enjoy our cookies.

If you are interested in learning about quilting here at Lamb of God please come join us.



## Recipe of the Month— CHRISTMAS PUNCH

### Ingredients:

2 cups orange juice  
2 cups cranberry juice  
1 cup pineapple juice  
1 cup ginger ale

### Instructions:

Combine all ingredients in a pitcher or bowl over ice. Garnish with orange slices, fresh cranberries, and rosemary, or mint.  
Enjoy!





# Angel Tree Gift Drive

**NOVEMBER 21–DECEMBER 12**

A gift of toys or clothes can make a difference  
to children and their families.

Take a tag from the tree and help bring joy  
to a child this Christmas!

Gifts must be new, wrapped, with the name tag provided.

## ANNUAL BASKET RAFFLE

**TICKETS GO ON  
SALE ON 11/28  
RAFFLE ON 12/19**

**TICKETS:  
3 FOR \$5  
1 FOR \$2**

1: SPA DAY

2: BUT FIRST COFFEE  
THEN A LITTLE CHOCOLATE

3: EVERYTHING FLAMINGOS

4: IT'S 5 O'CLOCK SOMEWHERE  
WINE BASKET

5. GIRLS NIGHT OUT

6. GONE WITH THE WIND

7. QUILT



## *Poinsettias*

If you wish to purchase a  
poinsettia to decorate our  
sanctuary on Christmas Eve,  
in memory/honor of a loved  
one, please complete the form  
found in the narthex, call the  
office or go to our website by  
**December 20.**



**ALL VETERANS CENTER, INC. FOOD PANTRY**

**December 21 | 12:00 noon**



# *Advent* BIBLE STUDY

LED BY PASTOR BERNER ON SUNDAYS AT 8:45 A.M.



## *Arbol de Angeles* **Colecta de Regalos**

NOVIEMBRE 21-DICIEMBRE 12

*Tome una etiqueta del árbol  
y ayude a traer alegría a un niño esta Navidad!*

*Los regalos deben ser nuevos, envueltos en papel de regalo,  
con la etiqueta del nombre proporcionada.*

### **RIFA ANUAL DE CESTAS**

**BOLETOS A LA  
VENTA EL 11/28  
RIFA EL 12/19**

1: SPA DAY

2: BUT FIRST COFFEE  
THEN A LITTLE CHOCOLATE

3: EVERYTHING FLAMINGOS

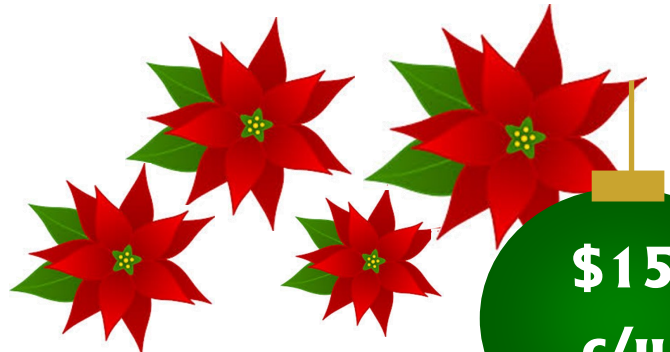
4: IT'S 5 O'CLOCK SOMEWHERE  
WINE BASKET

5. GIRLS NIGHT OUT

6. GONE WITH THE WIND

7. QUILT

**TICKETS:  
3 FOR \$5  
1 FOR \$2**



**\$15  
c/u**

## *Pascuas*

Si deseas comprar una pascua  
en honor o memoria de un ser  
querido. Por favor complete la forma  
que se encuentra en el narthex y  
regrésela antes del **20 de diciembre**.  
También puede llamar a la oficina o  
a través de nuestra página web.



# Congratulations to...

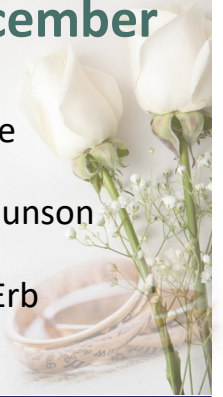
*Best wishes to our members and friends on their special day*



- |       |                        |
|-------|------------------------|
| 12/01 | Luna Morales           |
| 12/03 | Pedro Concepción, Jr.  |
| 12/06 | Myron Bailey           |
| 12/08 | Richard Barker         |
| 12/08 | Jane Messmer           |
| 12/09 | Gladys Hunt            |
| 12/12 | Ann Conner             |
| 12/12 | John Tillson           |
| 12/12 | Marcia Wilson          |
| 12/14 | Evelyn Fonseca         |
| 12/15 | Rebecca Casillo        |
| 12/15 | Connie Jerfita         |
| 12/16 | John Frederick         |
| 12/16 | June Kemp              |
| 12/21 | Jocelyn Torres-Escobar |
| 12/21 | Gabrielle Turzyn       |
| 12/22 | Steve Synstelien       |
| 12/24 | Paul Conner, II        |
| 12/26 | Carmen Quinlan         |
| 12/30 | Douglas Hales          |
| 12/31 | Gloria Ripper          |

## Anniversaries in December

- |         |                      |
|---------|----------------------|
| ♡ 12/03 | Crystal & Rob Valle  |
| ♡ 12/26 | Sonja & Wayne Munson |
| ♡ 12/28 | Lenny & Marilyn Erb  |



## November Offerings

Thank you for your continued support of our Church with your time, talent and treasures.

Offering totals include English and Spanish Congregations combined.

**Sunday Offerings Collected: \$ 17, 437**

**Budgeted: \$19, 065**

*Offerings from Nov. 7—Nov. 21*

## Tithes & Offerings

- Our website
- Vanco App
- Mail or Drop off during office hours



**FEEDING  
THE HUNGRY  
@A HOUSE BLEST**




**OUR DATES TO HELP OUT ARE:**

**December 3 –17**

**WE ARE ALWAYS GRATEFUL FOR YOUR  
MONETARY AND FOOD DONATIONS.**



# DECEMBER

| Sun   | Mon                                 | Tue   | Wed   | Thu  | Fri  | Sat  |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
|   | 11/29 - OFFICE<br>CLOSED            | 11/30—OFFICE<br>CLOSED                      | 1 OFFICE CLOSED<br>9:00 am Quilter's Guild<br>6:00 pm Joint Planning<br>Meeting | 2 OFFICE CLOSED<br>6:30 PM Bell Choir<br>Rehearsal               | 3 OFFICE CLOSED<br>Volunteers at House Blest<br>114 S 2nd St, Haines City  | 4  |
| 5 ADVENT 2<br>8:45 am Adult Sunday School<br>10:00 am Worship Service<br>11:00 am Worship<br>Committee Meeting<br>12:30 pm Servicio en<br>español | 6                                   | 7   | 8   | 9<br>6:30 PM Bell Choir<br>Rehearsal                             | 10   | 11   |
| 12 ADVENT 3<br>8:45 am Adult Sunday School<br>10:00 am Worship Service<br>12:30 pm Servicio en<br>español<br>Gifts are due                        | 13                                  | 14  | 15<br>BELLWETHER<br>SUBMISSION<br>DEADLINE                                      | 16<br>9:00 am Quilter's Guild<br>6:30 PM Bell Choir<br>Rehearsal | 17<br>Volunteers at House Blest<br>114 S 2nd St, Haines City   | 18   |
| 19 ADVENT 4<br>8:45 am Adult Sunday School<br>10:00 am Worship Service<br>12:30 pm Servicio en<br>español<br>Raffle drawing                       | 20<br>Poinsettias orders<br>are due | 21<br>12:00 pm All Veteran's<br>Food Pantry | 22  | 23<br>6:30 PM Bell Choir<br>Rehearsal                            | 24 CHRISTMAS EVE<br>WORSHIP SCHEDULE<br>4:00 pm Worship Service<br>6:00 pm Spanish Service<br>8:00 pm Worship Service<br>OFFICE CLOSED | 25 CHRISTMAS DAY<br> |
| 26 1ST CHRISTMAS<br>8:45 am Adult Sunday School<br>10:00 am Worship Service<br>12:30 pm Servicio en<br>español                                    | 27<br>OFFICE CLOSED                 | 28  | 29  | 30   | 31   |                      |

# Giving Back to Our Community



During the months of October and November we:

- Bagged and distributed your Thanks 4 Giving food donations at A House Blest, October 1 and 15, and November 15 and 19. Your food and monetary donations are always welcomed.
- Distributed prebagged food on October 19 and November 16 in partnership with All Veterans, Inc.
- Collected over 200 boxes of stuffing and contributed towards the purchase of 400 turkeys that were distributed in partnership with Unity in the Community and A House Blest.
- The Mission members collected food and distributed 17 Thanksgiving baskets to homeless and families in need through the Haines City Schools.



## **Our Vision Statement**

Centered in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, the vision of Lamb of God Lutheran Church is to transform and enhance the lives of members, neighbors and friends through relevant worship and study of God's Word, and through providing Christian service and fellowship opportunities.

## **Our Mission Statement**

The mission of Lamb of God Lutheran Church is to lead and inspire God's people into a growing relationship with Jesus.

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**January Bellwether submissions deadline  
is December 15**

Editors: David Reedy and Evelyn Brewer

## **Lamb of God Lutheran Church**

901 Scenic Hwy., Haines City, FL 33844-8597  
Tel: 863.421.2811, [www.lambofgodhainescity.com](http://www.lambofgodhainescity.com)

### Staff:

Rev. Cheryl L. Berner, Interim/ Senior Pastor  
[pastor@lambofgodhainescity.com](mailto:pastor@lambofgodhainescity.com)

Rev. Izzy Bango-Sanchez,  
Associate Pastor/Mission Developer

Evelyn Brewer, Office Administrator  
[officemanager@lambofgodhainescity.com](mailto:officemanager@lambofgodhainescity.com)

## **SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

8:45 am Adult Sunday School

10:00 am Holy Communion

### Spanish Service

12:30 pm Holy Communion

## **ONLINE WORSHIP:**

[www.lambofgodhainescity.com/worship](http://www.lambofgodhainescity.com/worship)