



VILLAGE VOICES



STRAIGHT FROM THE HART

By Rev. Dr. Robert Hartwell

The church year calendar is quite different from the regular calendar that most of us follow. Whereas the new year for the regular calendar begins on January 1, the church calendar starts on the first Sunday of Advent, which usually falls in late November or early December.

The Sundays of the church year follow a three-year cycle, with each Sunday featuring a reading from the Old Testament (Hebrew scriptures), an epistle reading from the New Testament and a reading from a gospel. Some may wonder how this works out when we have a three-year cycle and four gospels. Each year's gospel readings trace their way through one of the three "synoptic" (meaning following the same basic story arc) gospels: Matthew (Year A), Mark (Year B), and Luke (Year C) — with some John (who presents a unique gospel story) sprinkled in more or less evenly each year.



This year in our lectionary, we are reading from the gospel of Mark. Mark was a scribe in the early church, which means that he wrote down what an author dictated into proper Greek. Scribes were the word processors of the ancient world. Because of this, there are some theologians (and I count myself in their number) that believe the gospel of Mark is actually the Apostle Peter's gospel, and Mark was simply the scribe.

The gospel of Mark is unique in many ways. It presents the disciples as fallible and points to Jesus as the object of our faith. Mark's gospel is also action-oriented and uses an economy of words. There is no extra information in the gospel of Mark, and even the story of Jesus' birth is not included. The gospel of Mark focuses on the Resurrection of Jesus from the perspective of the scared disciples, rather than the glory of the Lord.

The gospel of Mark is rather easy to read and can be quite encouraging to those who are introspective enough to understand their own fallibility. This gospel highlights the greatness and glory of Jesus and His love for His disciples, even when they are making mistakes or feeling weak. Mark's gospel is a reminder that Jesus' followers are fallible, but they can still be blessed with grace and mercy as they follow their victorious risen Lord.

A thought about the new church year and the gospel of Mark that is Straight from the Hart.

FALL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- Saturday Worship service is suspended until March
- Sunday 9 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.
- For those who can't join us in-person, live stream worship at VLC-NY.org or on Facebook or YouTube.
- Tuesday Evening Prayer Conference will be held on 1/30 at 6 p.m. (See page 2)

In this issue

Bible Study	2
The Chapel School News	6
Fellowship News	7
Memorial / Honored Voices	8
Music Ministry	4
Outreach Opportunities	3
Youth News	5

WORSHIP/ BIBLE STUDY/PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES

ADULT BIBLE STUDY Wednesdays 10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

We are off the first week of January and will resume on 1/10 with chapter 14 of Romans. Paul is at great pains to encourage us to bear with each other's weaknesses, not harping on differences in religious practice but seeking "mutual edification." Happy New Year!

THE TUESDAY NIGHT PRAYER SERVICE

The next Prayer Conference call will be resume on Tuesday 1/30.



A generous portion of my devotional time with the Lord is aided by Christian Music. Each month I will share a favorite and I encourage you to take a listen on Apple Music, Spotify, YouTube or similar music service.

This month we are still in the afterglow of the holidays and my recommendation is what I call "year round Christmas music". Elevation Music brings us complex and creative new music for the church that inspires musically and lyrically.

Their Christmas release is haunting and compelling for Christmas or to reflect on the incarnation all year round.

This is no Bing Crosby Christmas but an electronica-inspired yet acoustic-at-its-core, dreamlike celebration of the Word made flesh.

Joy is the centerpiece that riffs on Joy to the World with a Mariah Carey flare.

Infant Lowly is the only loner on the project as a classical one-off in a hand of thoroughly modern Christmas songs. Yet it serves as a classical clasp that holds the decalogue together around a deeply held Christian Christmas display and is the altar call to introduce "Worthy and Wonderful" as a confession of faith. All 10 tracks are pleasing odes to Christmas that can brighten even post Christmas dread with pop infused carols and new holiday favorites.

It's my new go to Christmas album and my strong vote for your Hart beats 2024 freshman recommendation. Check it out today, you won't be disappointed.



Elevation Music
Echo the Angels
2023 Elevation Worship Records
For Apple Music go to <https://music.apple.com/us/album/echo-the-angels/1709550822>



GODCONNECTSTM

A COURSE IN CHRISTIANITY

Join us for an introductory class that connects you to God's love!

Would you like to:
Explore the basics of the Christian faith + Learn more about the faith values of the Chapel School + Prepare for adult baptism or confirmation + Join the Church +Talk and learn about your faith in a caring environment.
Join Pastor Hartwell for GodConnects.
VIA ZOOM or in-person
7:00 PM-8:30 PM (EST)
Tuesday, January 23, 30 and February 6, 2024
Meeting ID: 873 8184 1322
Passcode: 196690



LHM.ORG/GODCONNECTS



Sunday, January 28, 2024

2:00 pm

Picture House Bronxville Theatre
84 Kraft Avenue
Bronxville, NY 10708



Sponsored by the Sluberski Concordia Legacy Film Series of Village Lutheran Church, Bronxville, NY.

<https://tinyurl.com/Sing24>
(914) 337-0207 + www.VLC-NY.ORG

OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

Soup Kitchen Partnership

VLC and TCS are providing the ENTIRE meal for the Mount Vernon Soup Kitchen on the third Wednesday of each month.
Our next date is 1/17

We need volunteers to prepare enough food to feed 80 people.



Please pick up small aluminum trays ahead of time at the Reception Desk. Bring the cooked food trays between 12:00pm - 1:00pm, on the third Wednesday for collection, in the VLC parking lot. These will then be delivered to the soup kitchen.

A menu will be developed each month which will include the meat (or casserole), vegetable, and dessert. No salad requested.



Sign up today at:
<https://tinyurl.com/MealCooking>

For more information, contact Katie at ETAKWHIT@aol.com



ST. MONICA'S CIRCLE: St. Monica was born in the 4th century and she is recognized as the patron saint of mothers. Her faith and dedication to motherhood played a pivotal role in the spiritual formation of one of the most brilliant philosophers and well-known saints of all time - Saint Augustine, her son. VLC has a long running ministry to new parents in her name. Carolyn Fiuza is our coordinator.

St. Monica's Circle (SMC) is a collection of volunteers who work together to provide a caring meal (for three days) to new parents after birth or adoption of a child. All St. Monica's Circle volunteers will get the announcement and specifications (special requests, family size, allergies, etc..) to see if their schedule allows. Volunteers either take a certain date or pass for the next time.

Not on the volunteer list? Send us your name, email and phone number and we will add you to the Volunteer list.



Recently an attic cleanout turned out items that are unneeded but had value. Rather than wait for the annual tag sale, Pastor Hartwell and Maureen Mannion, our afternoon receptionist, created a Poshmark Closet with all proceeds benefiting future youth mission trips. The

Three-month trial has already seen a profit. If you would like to see our Poshmark Closet go to <https://posh.mk/eTzsnkACODb>. Haven't tried Poshmark yet? Sign up with code "VLCTCS" and get \$10.

STEWARSHIP NEWS

New Year's is a time of reflection. It's a time to think of the happenings of the past year and look forward to life ahead. While you're in a contemplative mood, make updating your estate plan a primary New Year's Resolution.

The past year may have dealt you some major life events. Births, deaths, marriages and divorces could all lead to changes in your estate planning documents. Even buying or selling real estate or a business could alter your estate value to the point where you need to revise or create trusts, for example.

Maybe a loved family member now needs special care. Or you or your spouse are facing a serious illness. Long-term care planning or a special needs trust might be a consideration.

Even if you feel nothing major has transpired in the past year, it's still best to review your estate plan documents. Special attention should be given to the beneficiaries, trustees, and agents you've named. Are these people still available and willing to serve? Do you need to make new designations?

For further information, please contact Planned Giving Officer, William O'Doherty at 1-800-838-1159 or William.Odoherty@Thrivent.com

Please let us know if you provide for our church, so we can welcome you into our Halter Legacy Circle OR Contact Pastor Hartwell at RHartwell@VLC-NY.org or Kim Zwisdak in the Development Office at KZwisdak@TheChapelSchool.org to learn more.

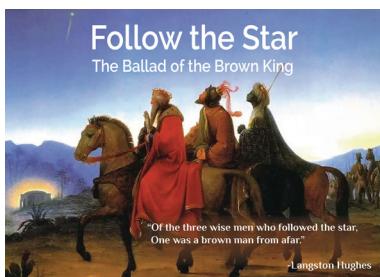
We appreciate the thoughtfulness of those who have left bequests to Village Lutheran Church. These gifts help us to build a solid foundation for future generations.

To leave a gift in your will, simply share this sentence with your attorney or financial planner: *"I bequeath \$____ or ____% of my estate to Village Lutheran Church, 172 White Plains Road, Bronxville, NY 10708."*

Simple Gifts: A series of devotions on stewardship can be found at www.LCMS.org/Stewardship

FOCUS ON WORSHIP

Hymn Stories By Deborah Reiss



At a concert in December, my uncle's chorus sang "The Ballad of the Brown King." It is a setting of poetry by Langston Hughes, composed by an African American woman, Margaret Bonds, based on the Epiphany legend of The Three Kings. This prompted a consideration of how the tradition got started.

Matthew's Gospel identifies "wise men" or "magi" from the East. We don't know how many, they were most likely astrologers or possibly Zoroastrian priests (not kings), and they probably all came from the same country. However, such details were added to the story very early in church history, so that tradition holds there were three kings, each from a different land and each bearing one of the famous gifts.

They even had names (Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar), with Balthazar having dark skin. One part of the Hughes poem asks where this king might have come from, and concludes "I do not know just who he was but...one was dark like me and I'm so glad that he was there our little Christ to see."

For composer and poet, the idea of a brown king offers the opportunity to step inside the Epiphany story from their own cultural perspective and heritage. This is a meaningful approach for any reflection on Jesus' incarnation. From another cultural perspective, this is why I really like the hymn *As With Gladness Men of Old* (LSB 397). Rather than tell a story about who the magi were, the first three verses encourage us to follow their example: As they were led by a star, we are led by our Lord; as they honored the infant King, we come into God's presence for worship; as they brought expensive gifts, we offer the best we have. The hymn then looks forward to the heavenly city, where there is no need of created light, and where we forever "sing Alleluias to our King."

Since the choral concert was in a chapel, we had a wonderful time examining all of the nativity sets on display in order to see which ones had a "brown king." We can all put ourselves in the Epiphany story, with all of our individual backgrounds, by looking for Jesus wherever we go and sharing the journey with those around us.

VLC MUSIC MINISTRY



Many thanks to all of our choirs and instrumentalists for the beautiful music of the season. **After the break, Thursday rehearsals will resume on 1/11, Village Bells on Wednesday 1/17, and High School Choir on Sunday 1/21.**

Deborah Reiss: Chancel Choir, FaithWalk, Village Bells
914-337-0207, x1018 · DReiss@VLC-NY.org

George Heath: Youth Choir, HS Choir, Village Brass
914-337-0207, x1012 · GHeath@VLC-NY.org

Thank You!



Chaplain Drege picks up 31 satchels to be given to seafarers in NYC harbor who celebrate Christmas far from home. VLC has partnered with Seafarers International House for many years in donating ready to distribute satchels containing a shirt, sweatshirt, socks, warm cap and a Christmas treat and card. These items help Seafarers in their work of hospitality and care to "lend an ear, offer council, meet spiritual needs, and advocate on behalf of seafarers regardless of faith or nationality." We are thankful to partner with Seafarers with the Christmas at Sea initiative!

<https://www.sihnyc.org/christmas-at-sea>

VLC YOUTH

VOYAGERS Grades 3–6

Voyagers is open to all incoming students in Grades 3–6 and friends are always welcome. **We will meet on Thursdays 1/4, 1/11 and 1/18 from 6:00–7:00 p.m.** At the end of the Thursday meetings, Youth going to choir will be dropped off there and everyone else will be escorted to the school doors and dismissed to their cars. If you have any questions, please email Erika Schultz at tyandbash@aol.com.

LIFERS Grades 7–8

Confirmation classes for 7th and 8th grade families continue on Sunday mornings and select Thursday nights. Confirmation is a two-year program that equips our youth to understand and live out their Christian faith. If you would like to register your child for the program, please go to <https://www.vlc-ny.org/confirmation-form> or call the church office for more information. All Village Lutheran members, Chapel School students and community youth are welcome. New 8th graders are also welcome (we will catch you up!). If you have any questions please contact our Director of Youth and Family Ministries Pastor Mark Budenholzer (MBudenholzer@VLC-NY.ORG).

CRUSADERS Grades 9–12

This year we will dive deeper into WHY we do what we do. Are our actions PURPOSEFUL MOVEMENT? VLC Bible verse is Isaiah 40:31 "**they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.**" Isaiah describes each movement with conviction and unwavering faith. How can we purposefully move with intention, passion and keep Jesus at the center? Let's discuss!



Donuts and Discussions

Calling all 9-12 graders! Please join us **after the 9 a.m. service on Sundays 1/7, 1/21 and 1/28 in Room 209.** (Classroom above the church)

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Join us every week for Sunday School at our 9a.m. service! For more information, feel free to contact our Director of Youth and Ministries Pastor Mark Budenholzer (MBudenholzer@VLC-NY.ORG) or our Sunday School Superintendent Sarah Gleason (christnysarah@netscape.net).

SAVE THE DATES 1st COMMUNION INSTRUCTION

This class is open to youth in the 5th grade and above who have not had their 1st Holy Communion. Classes meet Wednesdays during Lent from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. **Class dates for 2024 are Wednesdays 2/28, 3/6 and 3/13.** There will also be Early First Communion Lock-in on Friday 3/1 from 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. 1st Holy Communion will be at a special Service on St. Patrick's Day (Sunday, March 17, 2024 at 10:45 a.m.). The 1st Communion Registration is online at www.VLC-NY.ORG under the Forms tab. If you have any questions, please feel free to call 914-337-0207 x1003.



Parent Community Nights are an opportunity for parents of any age children to come together for Christian community, food, and discussion on topics of faith and family. **Our next one will be on Thursday 1/18 from 6-7p.m.** in the Friendship Room. Bring some food to share or just come along to enjoy food, community, and discussion.

THE CHAPEL SCHOOL NEWS

By Principal Michael Schultz

2024 Vision ... Hope in the Lord @ TCS!

1. I resolve to support NEW Initiatives at The Chapel School by:
 - A. Praying for Aven Spiciarich and her upcoming project for Food Bank for NYC in January, and for Liam Uhrlass, Joseph Miller and Christopher Taylor and their upcoming project for The Water Project in May/June!
 - B. Praying for TCS Students who will be proposing charitable organizations for Service Learning and TCS Offerings for 2024-2025.
 - C. Praying for 2024 Lutheran School's Week Festivities in March!
 - D. Praying for our EXCITING TECH UPGRADES to continue to enhance TCS Students' Experience!
 - E. Praying for continued student progress in Math and Reading with our NEW i-Ready Platform!
 - F. Praying for our NLSA and Middle States Re-Accreditation Visit from February 12-14, 2024!
 - G. Praying for the work of TCS Advisory Committee and the Equity, Marketing/Retention and Family Connections Subcommittees!



2. I resolve to support our **wonderful volunteers** in their selfless efforts to raise money for VLC/TCS and all of our wonderful programs by:
 - A. Attending the 2024 Gathering of Friends "Le Jardin des Reves (The Garden of Dreams) GALA on March 15, 2024 and supporting the tireless efforts of our Gala Co-chairs Maura Condolff and Kate Marino ... and their many sub-committee members!
 - B. Participating in the 2024 TCS Golf Outing as it returns to Siwanoy Country Club on June 3, 2024, enjoying the company of VLC/TCS Friends on the links at this beautiful venue and raising money for scholarships for deserving TCS students!
3. I resolve to pray for the ministry and families of Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School, that God might continue to bless my daily efforts to help others "To Know, Live and Share the LOVE of Christ!"

The Chapel School Offering Recipients

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES NEWS

By Deacon Anton DeRosa

Many of you have noticed the children from Lutheran Social Services (LSS) who visit us on the first Sunday of every month. However, you may not be aware of all the other things that LSS is doing. First, I want to give a special shout-out to the youth of the VLC and their fearless leader Amy Heath for hosting our visitors and providing basketball, volleyball, crafts, and donuts. In addition, the VLC has supplied bibles in Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian, as well as rosary beads. Furthermore, with the support of VLC and Chapel School parents, we have helped get a library started.

But LSS is much more than just these initiatives. Here are some highlights of their work this year:

- Residential Services opened Seneca House, a 75-family shelter in the Bronx, and also opened additional housing for 225 families.
- Early Life received over \$500,000 in grant funding to support the administration of services.
- Community Services at New Life Center donated and distributed 150,000 lbs of food, 250 coats (thanks to Thrivent), 500 backpacks, and 120 layettes. They also provided immigration legal services to more than 1500 immigrants and launched a legal support center for asylum seekers.
- Family Children Network transitioned 175 children to kindergarten and expanded their services to all five boroughs. Children's services awarded a contract to operate the Family Enrichment Center and doubled the number of children served.

Thank you to everyone who has supported this ministry.

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Gathering of Friends March 15, 2024 Lake Isle Country Club



Our planning is actively underway and we would love your help bringing our theme to life. There are many ways you can participate and help the Gala to be a success:

- * Consider donating a gift certificate or a bottle of wine.
- * Reach out to businesses you frequent to see if they are willing to donate an item, certificate or purchase a sponsorship package.
- * Do you, a friend or employer have a vacation home you can offer for a weekend getaway?
- * Think about your network of family and friends... anyone have access to tickets to a show or sporting event?
- * Consider purchasing a Sponsorship. This early support is crucial to the Gathering of Friends.

Amazon Wishlist:

<https://tinyurl.com/2024wish>

Purchase Tickets or Benefactor Tickets

<https://www.gathering-of-friends.com>

If you are interested and able to volunteer on a committee please contact the Development Office at

KZwisdak@TheChapelSchool.org or
(914) 337-0207 x1040



**Join us for our Senior
Lunch Bunch Luncheon**

**SAVE THE
DATE!**



Music by Local Artist Jeannie Claire

**Tuesday
March 12, 2024**

**Arrive at 11:30 AM
Lunch at Noon**

**RSVP by March 10th
914-337-0207x1003
KRAPILLO@VLC-NY.ORG**



JOIN TEAM CHAPEL ARTS 2024 UNITED AIRLINES NYC HALF MARATHON

The Chapel School has five guaranteed entries into the 2024 United Airlines New York City Half Marathon.

"Team Chapel – Arts" is recruiting runners to raise awareness and funds for the art & drama programs of The Chapel School.

If you are interested in joining the team, contact Kim Z. in the Development Office 914-337-3202 (1040) or KZwisdak@TheChapelSchool.org

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- GUARANTEED HALF MARATHON SPOT
- PERSONAL FUNDRAISING PAGE
- TEAM CHAPEL GEAR
- PRE-RACE & RACE DAY SUPPORT



Prospective runners should be willing to run 13.1 miles, commit to a \$1,750 fundraising goal and be available on Sunday, March 17, 2024.



HAPPY WORK ANNIVERSARY



Thank you to the following VLC/TCS team members who are celebrating an anniversary of their total work history in December. We are blessed by their dedication and support and honor the work that they do and the gifts that they bring to our church and school.

Joan Kennedy, Gr 8 Teacher Math/ MS Team Leader,
26 years

Danielle DiCuio, Kindergarten Teacher, 24 years

Gail Janeczek, Teacher Aide, 21 years

Donna Accatino, Business Office Assistant, 19 years

Miriam Mathew, Substitute Teacher, 5 years

Samantha Napiza, Gr1 Teacher, 4 years

Eleni Kinas, Substitute Teacher Aide, 2 years

Brianna Hartman, PT Receptionist, 1 year

Village Lutheran Church &
The Chapel School
172 White Plains Road
Bronxville, NY 10708

VLC-NY.org
TheChapelSchool.org

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**TO KNOW, LIVE AND SHARE
THE LOVE OF CHRIST**

Under the blessing of God, the mission of Village Lutheran Church is a ministry of the Word and Sacraments. This ministry gives opportunities for mission, witness, nurture, fellowship, stewardship and service. It focuses on the specific needs of individuals and groups within the congregation and extends to the church-at-large, the community and the world.

The Chapel School is an integral part of the congregation's ministry directed specifically to children. It provides a distinctive Christian education enabling children to evidence a Christian lifestyle and to achieve academic success.

TO GOD ALONE BE GLORY

MEMORIAL/HONORED VOICES

Gifts were received from:

Theresa Eaton
In Memory of Her Beloved Husband,
John Waters Eaton

The Forlano Family
In Thankfulness for Alpha

Kathy Coffey
In Memory of William Messner's
24th Anniversary of His Passing

Anonymous
In Thankfulness for the
Fellowship and Ministry of Alpha

Kathy Coffey
In Thankfulness for
75 years of Blessings

Louise Lantelme
In Memory of Mary Jane Murano

Thomas A. Biele
In Memory of Eric Weatherhogg

Anonymous
In Memory of Dr. John D. Cahill

Anonymous
In Memory of Dr. Kevin Cahill

Thomas A. Biele
In Memory of Helen A. Biele

Linda McBride
In Memory of Charles McBride

Anonymous
In Honor of The Carney Family

The Reinikainen Family
In Thankfulness for
God's Blessings this Christmas