



# THE COMMUNITY CHURCH

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Ingrid C. A. Rasmussen, Angela T. Khabebe, and Doug Mork, Pastors

## OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

I needed a place in which to warm up after spending hours looking around Chicago’s Christkindlmarkt’s many shops. Glittering stars, jolly carolers, and even the glühwein could not shoo away the icy fingers reaching from Lake Michigan into all the corners of the city. Walking into a nearby church I accidentally walked into a service, and I noticed a bulletin inviting me into a Service for the Longest Night. Having never experienced anything like it, I was intrigued and settled into the wooden bench on that Winter Solstice. Soon, hymns full of measured hope accompanied by readings which named the beauty and pain of being human warmed me up. I sat transfixed in that sacred moment within Lady Darkness into which I had stumbled.

It has been said, and I agree, that leading Christian narratives have equated darkness with sin which has led us (within this racialized society in which we live) to consciously and subconsciously think of hues of skin in this way, too. For those of us who revel in our melanin-rich skin spanning warm cinnamon to life-giving ebony, this simply does not make sense. And so we find ways by which to speak out against that which calls darkness bad, knowing that there is deep wisdom held within caramel hands carrying us into charcoal midnight. I invite you, then, into the fecundity of Darkness.

On 12 December 1531, Mary, the Mother of God, appeared miraculously in the frozen mountainsides of Mexico. She revealed herself as a brown-skinned person to a man who was a part of a conquered people. The indigenous people of Mexico had been subjugated under the Crown and Cross of Spain and had literally experienced an apocalypse. There would never be a turning back to a previous life. They could only hope to imagine a new future. And so, Our Lady of Guadalupe (Mary with warm-brown skin) joined them and carried them into a new day. It was in darkness and within the arms of a dark-skinned woman that new life was brought forth.

Today we perhaps find ourselves a bit confused and anxious as the holiday season rolls in. It may seem that there is nothing which can shoo away the coldness of what this year has brought – not even the strings of lights we hang and the candles we burn. I invite you to lean into the darkness around us and to continue to wrap yourselves and your loved ones in warm clothes as we wait. And it is my prayer that you will also stumble into sacred spaces and holy moments when you least expect them. That you will find that, although we can never go back to a previous way of being, there is certainly a new day coming. As we wait in this liminal space, we have those who cheer us on including our brown-skinned Lady of Guadalupe, Mary, who points us to Jesus. There is beauty, growth, and new life which springs from Lady Darkness. Take hope!

Con cariño,  
Deacon David

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### READINGS

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55;  
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

### ADULT FORUM

**\*NEW TIME DURING ADVENT: WEDNESDAY, 7:30 PM\***

Login at zoom.us or call 312-626-6799 or click [here](#)

Meeting ID: 863 5329 7771 / Password: 693691

#### DECEMBER 16 Adult Forum with Matt Skinner, Part 2

Join Luther Seminary’s Matt Skinner for this adult forum—the second in a two-part series. Professor Skinner will be looking at our Advent theme of “Belonging” through the lens of Acts 10:1-11:18. The first session focused on the Acts story and about what it means that “God shows no partiality.” This session will be discussion-based, exploring implications for our understanding of belonging today.

*If you wish to review Part 1 of this 2-part class, click [here](#).*

**SUNDAY ADULT FORUMS RESUME ON DECEMBER 20**

**\*\*\*DIFFERENT START TIME FOR DECEMBER 20\*\*\***

**SUNDAY, 10:00 AM**

Login at zoom.us or call 312-626-6799 or click [here](#)

Meeting ID: 858 5687 1594 / Password: 317879

#### DECEMBER 20 “Advent Hymn Sing” at 10:00 a.m. David Sims, Cantor

So many hymns, so little time! We’ll use the forum hour to get in a few more Advent hymns before the season is over. David will collect hymns for Advent around a particular theme for us to sing and think about together—some familiar, some obscure, some brand new.

### YEAR-END GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

Every year Holy Trinity anticipates and relies on a year-end increase in offerings that helps support the ministry of this church. This Christmas season, please consider making an additional contribution to Holy Trinity, or to our special appeals, ELCA World Hunger, Seminary Support Fund, and Wilderness Canoe Base. To donate from your bank account online, click [here](#). To donate with a credit card, click [here](#). **Please remember: Contributions must be received or post-marked by December 31, 2020, to be counted as a 2020 donation. Thank you!**

## PARISH INFORMATION

### PIÑATAS WITH DEACON DAVID CONTINUES

We will craft piñatas together on Tuesday, December 15, from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. The Zoom sessions will be live for those who can make it and recorded for those who cannot.

If you missed the *first* session from December 1, (or if you want to see it again), click [here](#). If you missed the *second* session from December 8 (or if you want to see it again), click [here](#).

To join the *third* and final session Tuesday at 4:00 p.m., click [here](#) (or login to Zoom.us, or dial 312-626-6799, and enter Meeting ID: 819 9097 3231/Passcode: 253344).

### ADVENT (EVENING) PRAYER SERVICES CONTINUE

Tonight is our last Advent Wednesday worship service. You'll receive via email the worship link for a recorded worship service of Holden Evening Prayer and a reflection by Lydia Belusa-Niesen and Linnea Krig. This year, Holden will be accompanied by slides of astronomical images. In the Holden Evening Hymn we sing, "You who made the heaven's splendor, every dancing star of night, make us shine with gentle justice, let us each reflect your light." We're invited to watch and wait, sing, pray, breathe, and reflect the light of the One who has been there from the beginning. To see last week's Advent Prayer service, click [here](#).

### LET YOUR CHRISTMAS EVE LIGHT SHINE!

We would like to include photos of you or you and your family holding lighted candles for the Christmas Eve worship video. Use the Christmas Eve candles you received in the Advent box last month. Ask a friend or neighbor to take a photo of you on your porch or front stairs around twilight (4:30-5:00 p.m. in Minneapolis) so that the setting sun can still provide some ambient light but the glow from the candles will light up your faces! Be sure to take the photo in landscape format (hold camera sideways). If you'd like someone to come and take your photo, contact Ann Schrooten ([aschrooten@htlcmpls.org](mailto:aschrooten@htlcmpls.org)). Photos need to be emailed to Anna Kleven ([akleven@htlcmpls.org](mailto:akleven@htlcmpls.org)) by **December 18**.

### COMMUNITIES OF CALLING REFLECTION BY KAREN KUNZE

I thrive on being busy and being social. So when I signed up for the Yoga/Mindfulness group this fall, I was more excited about the chance to get some exercise and see people from church than I was to spend time in silence focusing on my breathing. As it turns out, both aspects were what I needed. Each of the four weeks I found myself coming to Zoom class feeling overwhelmed by the stress of work, COVID, the election, etc. After spending an hour+ with Gretchen guiding us through yoga moves and meditation, I left with a renewed sense of hope. It was good to take the time to focus on my breathing, release my worries, and to be reminded of God's presence. I can—we can—get through this next day, week, month, one breath at a time.



### WORSHIP LINK FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

The worship video for Sunday, December 13, can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/490204477>. We invite you to find bread or crackers, wine or grape juice (or any morsel of food and sip of liquid) in your house and celebrate Holy Communion with us.

### STEPPING OUT IN FAITH UPDATE

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Stepping Out in Faith congregational town hall meeting last Thursday evening. There were 58 households that tuned in by computer and phone! The task force presented a summary of its process and its recommendation for the distribution of funds, and there was a good discussion that followed. If you were unable to join (or you would like to watch again), click [here](#) to access the meeting recording. The Church Council will review the proposal at their meeting on December 21. You are invited to participate in the Adult Forum on Sunday, January 17, for a discussion of the final recommendations, after which the proposal will come to the congregation for a vote at the Annual Meeting on January 31. If you have questions or feedback for the task force, you can send them by email to [steppingout@htlcmpls.org](mailto:steppingout@htlcmpls.org).

### 2020 THRIVENT CHOICE® DOLLARS EXPIRE MARCH 31, 2021

Since 2010, over \$370 million has been distributed to thousands of churches, schools, and other nonprofits through Thrivent Choice®. Through this program, eligible members can recommend where Thrivent donates millions of charitable outreach dollars each year. Please consider recommending Holy Trinity for your Thrivent Choice Dollars. If you need help with Thrivent's website, click [here](#) for a step-by-step tutorial that Pam Blomgren has put together.

### PHOTOS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

Do you have a favorite Advent/Christmas tradition that can be shared in a photograph? Perhaps a beloved creche/nativity scene that you set up every year, a special decoration on your tree, or in your home? If you can send us a photograph, we would love to share it on HTLC's social media during the Christmas season. Send photos to Pam in the office: [pwetterlund@htlcmpls.org](mailto:pwetterlund@htlcmpls.org).

### CONCERNING PEOPLE

**Carolyn Schurr and June Prange's** joint memorial service was held (via Zoom) this past Saturday. To view a recording of the service, click [here](#).

**Please don't hesitate to contact us with pastoral care emergencies** (Church Office: 612.729.8358; Pastor Ingrid: 612.875.6679; Pastor Doug: 612.310.5752; or Pastor Angela: 612.248.9121 ). We will do our best to care for you from a distance.