



In the Hands of the Refiner

## Spiritual Acuity for 2020

When I hear "2020", I think of my eyesight. Which is not 20/20. I wish it was. It's pretty poor. When you think of eyesight, you think in terms of visual acuity. Therefore, what is 20/20 vision?

20/20 vision is a term used to express normal visual acuity (the clarity or sharpness of vision) measured at a distance of 20 feet. If you have 20/20 vision, you can see clearly at 20 feet what should normally be seen at that distance. If you have 20/100 vision, it means that you must be as close as 20 feet to see what a person with normal vision can see at 100 feet. Some people can see well at a distance but are unable to bring nearer objects into focus. This condition can be caused by *farsightedness* or *loss of focusing ability*. Others can see items that are close but cannot see those far away. This condition may be caused by *nearsightedness*.

Last year, the first time I met with our church council, I laid out a five-year plan: 1<sup>st</sup> year: Preparation for Discovery; 2<sup>nd</sup> year - Recovering our Vision; 3<sup>rd</sup> year - Discovering New Paths for Outreach; 4<sup>th</sup> year - Equipping to reach our community for Christ; and 5<sup>th</sup> year - Learning How to be Missional in a Post-Church Culture.

Our first year was the process of discovery; for me, it has been discovering who you were individually and as a congregation; and for you, it has been discovering who I am as your pastor and getting to know Sue and me. There have been adjustments made; challenges met; and a period of growth that hasn't been seen in numbers specifically. By growth, I mean that you are in the midst of recovery from loss, conflicts, and change. You are growing toward spiritual maturity. You have turned to God for His rescue, relief, and restoration. Now as we embark upon a new decade and a new year, we look to God to recover the vision for Christ Lutheran Church.

Remember, 20/20 vision only indicates the sharpness or clarity of vision at a distance. We must look ahead, however, we must not neglect where we are at present.

There are important aspects of vision which include, 1) peripheral vision; 2) eye coordination; 3) depth perception; 4) focusing ability; and 5) color vision. All of these contribute to the overall mission of Christ Lutheran Church.

Peripheral vision. We must be able to see spiritually all around us here at Christ Lutheran Church. We must not be caught unaware or blindsided by things. We must go to God and ask for spiritual discernment and awareness.

Eye coordination. This is the ability to see with both eyes in the same direction. Once again, it is my desire to know that every member of Christ Lutheran Church is on the same page, regarding the Christian faith, God's Word, the Sacraments, and the Lutheran confessions. It is very important to know what we believe and why we believe it.

Depth perception. Jesus said, "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?" Luke 6:39 (ESV) We must be able to walk upon the path of righteousness that our Lord leads us. We must open our eyes to His guidance and direction, both from His Word and the Holy Spirit. We must take care of our depth perception, so we do not fall.

Focusing ability. Our mission is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. We must be willing and able to give the Gospel away, leaving these four walls and risk giving ourselves and the Gospel to others. We must guard ourselves from becoming nearsighted, unable to see ahead. We must guard ourselves from becoming farsighted, unable to see what is right in front of us. We must be able to focus on our mission. (cont. p. 3)

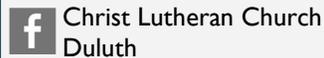
**Christ Lutheran Church**

2415 Ensign St.  
Duluth, MN 55811  
clcduluth.org

Pastor Gary DeSha  
320-237-7448  
pastor@clcduluth.org  
218-727-2076

Church Office:  
218-722-7537  
church@clcduluth.org

Website: clcduluth.org



President: Ouitdee Carson  
V.P.: Carolyn Lofald  
Treasurer: Sandy Carlson

Every Month:

Join us for prayer  
Every Tuesday at Noon

Every Wed. at 6:30 PM  
Adult Bible Study

Mary Circle  
First Thursday of each month  
at 9:30 AM

Esther Circle  
First Thursday of each month  
at 6:30 PM

Dorcas Circle  
Second Monday of each  
month at 1:00 PM

Lutherans for Life  
Second Sunday of each month  
at 6:30 PM

Council Meeting  
Second Thursday of each  
month at 6:30 PM

January 2020 Serving Schedule

Ushers & Greeters

January 5

**Ushers:** Keith Youngren, Mark Youngren, Jim & Gayle Maruska  
**Greeter:** Norma Johnson & Marge Youngren

January 12

**Ushers:** Ouitdee Carson; Zach Carson; Mike & Wendy Pickar  
**Greeter:** Chuck & Lowaine Morris

January 19

**Ushers:** Bill & Jan Arezzo; Jim Carlson; David Wood  
**Greeter:** Grace Wells

January 26

**Ushers:** Gary & Carolyn Lofald; Grace Wells; Jim Carlson  
**Greeter:** Gary & Carolyn Lofald

February 2

**Ushers:** Bill & Jan Arezzo; Mike & Wendy Pickar  
**Greeter:** Gary & Carolyn Lofald

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Coffee Servers:

**January 5:** Band of Brothers

**January 19:** Dorcas Circle

**January 12:** CLC Lighthouse

**January 26:** Council 1

Don't Forget!  
The first Sunday of  
each month is FOOD  
SHELF SUNDAY!  
Please bring an item  
or two to help those  
in need.  
Cash donations are  
also appreciated.  
**Our last donation  
was 17 pounds**

*Happy Birthday!*

<b>Jean Clark</b> January 4	<b>Wendy Pickar</b> January 17
<b>Barb Johnson</b> January 7	<b>Courtney Carson</b> January 19
<b>Dale Lund</b> January 14	<b>Gabe Wiita</b> January 22
<b>Mike Pickar</b> January 15	<b>Shirley Kern</b> January 29

(cont. from p.1)

Color Vision. To perceive color requires light. What does that mean for Christ Lutheran Church? Matthew 6:22-23 (NRSV) helps us understand, "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"

Jesus quotes a common Jewish proverb and comments on it. When He says, "if your eye is healthy," He is talking about being generous. When your eye is "unhealthy" it means you are stingy in heart; in other words, you are unwilling to give money, time, and resources for the sake of Gospel.

This interpretation is confirmed by the context. Greed and anxiety about money is the topic in both verses 21 and 24. So, without light in the eye, the brain cannot perceive color. There is only darkness, black or grey. If we are unwilling to give of our resources, time, and money to our mission, we will become unhealthy and darkness will overcome us. If we are healthy, we will bring light to darkness to those around us, and they will be able to perceive the colorful riches of the glory of Jesus Christ and His salvation.

Our mission statement is "To know Christ and make Him known." As your pastor, my objective is to lead and guide you to accomplish that mission.

My vision for Christ Lutheran Church is the vision I saw before I even accepted the call – to be a beacon of light shining the Gospel to Duluth, Minnesota. I still have that vision and I challenge you to grasp that vision and walk with me in it.

We, as the Body of Christ, must come together as one, continually growing in faith, trusting in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. We are to submit to Christ's Lordship in the power of the Holy Spirit, building up one another in love.

We, as the Body of Christ, must come together as one, reaching out, taking risks for the sake of the Gospel, and make Him known to those who are lost in Duluth, Minnesota.

Therefore, let's march forward together, hand in hand, standing firm for the sake of the Gospel, winning souls, growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, with a keen vision that is clear and sharp for our mission, and operate with spiritual vision that is 20/20 for the year 2020 and beyond!

May God bless you and Christ Lutheran Church this New Year!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Gary

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Dear Saints at Christ Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your generous gift to Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry! Your support helps us share the gospel of our Lord with the students, faculty, staff, and administration on our local university campuses. We are sincerely grateful for your partnership with us! May the Lord richly bless you this Advent season!

Your partners in the Gospel,  
Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry



Dear Christ Lutheran Church friends,

Thank you for gift card for Christmas! How very thoughtful of you. Looking forward to serving Christ with you in 2020!

Your secretary,  
Juliana Morgan

**PLEASE PRAY FOR....**

*Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. James 5:14*

The family of Jane Sommerfeld  
Our Pastor & the Leadership of the Church  
CLC Lighthouse & CLC Clubhouse- kids & leaders  
All of our students from pre-school to college  
Open Arms Daycare

Mission of the Month: The AALC  
Our Country, Military & Police  
The teachers and students at all schools  
Persecuted Christians throughout the world  
Piedmont Elementary

**THOSE WITH HEALTH NEEDS:**

Vi Boder	Bill & Jane McLean	Ruth Peterson	Mark Malander
Bob Johnson	Jean Sundstrom	Russell & Carol Schramm	Diane Malander
Mary Jenny	Katie Lund	Ruth Dahl	Barb Hanson
Lorna McLean	Susan Johnson	Florence Kubiak	Melanie Saeland
Marlene Stauber	Judy Stocke	Evelyn Johnson	Darlene Saaf
Shirley Kern	Carol Johnson	Bryan Goepfinger	Brian McDonald
Dennis Peterson	Carol Blair		

*If there are any people who have been accidently overlooked, please contact the church office. We apologize for any oversights.*

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- **January Mission of the Month** is The American Association of Lutheran Churches.
- **Adult Bible Study** meets Sunday at 11:15 AM.
- **Join us for prayer** every Tuesday at 12:00 in the Fireside Room.
- **CLC LIGHTHOUSE** - Youth Bible study will resume January 8, 2020.
- **Confirmation class** meets Thursdays at 6:30 PM
- **CLC Band of Brothers** - details for January's meeting coming soon.
- **Father/Daughter Ball** - Saturday, February 1 & 8 at the DECC
- **Husband & Wife Valentine Ball** - Friday, February 14 at Proctor Blackwoods

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**Ministry to Piedmont Elementary:**

- † Winter jackets, snow pants and mittens (sizes 5/6, 7/8, 10/12, 14/16) for boys and girls
- † Winter boots (all children's sizes)
- † Non perishable snacks (i.e. fruit snacks, crackers, granola bars, etc.)
- † Sweatpants for boys and girls (small, medium and large)
- † Sweatshirts for boys and girls

## CLC LIGHTHOUSE JANUARY 2020

Dearly Beloved CLC Family,

It's quiet and misty the day after Christmas...what a beautiful Christmas Eve we enjoyed together with the Lord and each other. We were also remembering those who weren't with us this Christmas; some traveling to be with family, others enjoying warmer and gentler climates, and especially our dear ones who are now with the Lord.

Earlier this fall I was discouraged about the loss of families with children and feeling like I had failed somehow. Not anymore though. I sense the Holy Spirit in our midst in a fresh way. Love and joy in Christ is bubbling over. The month of December found us worshipping on Sundays and on Wednesdays for Advent, visiting Piedmont to share your gifts and teaching at the Good News Club, reading and singing with Mary Jo and the children at Open Arms Daycare, praising the Lord and sharing God's Word with Teen Challenge, visiting home-bound church family members, baking cookies, encouraging the sick, comforting the grieving...falling in love with you and our neighbors. I have felt the Lord with us so strongly. God is challenging Pastor and I to go deeper in prayer and His word, and to seek him more urgently on your behalf in many ways.

**PLANNING TOGETHER** We have two families with school age students; the Wiita's and the Carson's. We also have some young adults in our church (Lund, Wiita, DeRocher families). In January Pastor and I would like to meet with these families for dinner and a round table of prayer and discussion to seek the Lord for ways to grow in grace, love each other, and reach out to serve our community!

**CLC LIGHTHOUSE BIBLE STUDY** We will resume our study on *Identity & Purpose in Christ* on Wednesday, January 8th at 6:30pm (from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day our Wed. nights were either a holiday or an Advent service.)

### SECOND SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP

Youth will continue to host fellowship and coffee once a month.

### CLC CLUBHOUSE

We don't currently have any children in grades 1-6, but we have a number of grandchildren who attend at different times with their grandparents. Please let me know if you have plans to bring grandchildren and I will happily prepare for them.

### GOOD NEWS CLUB & PIEDMONT ELEMENTARY

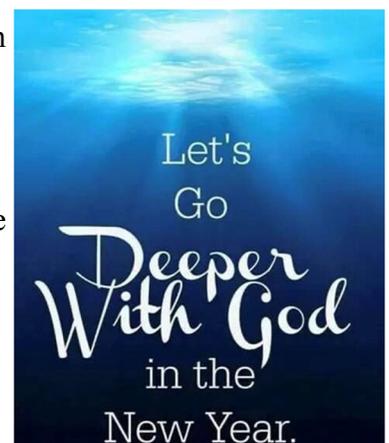
I am volunteering for the Good News Club with Carol Zeimer each week at Piedmont Elementary. For further outreach, I plan to apply as a sub for the Duluth School District and also begin volunteering at Piedmont starting in January 2020.

### CLC PLAYHOUSE

I continue to visit Open Arms Daycare each week to read, sing, and pray with the children. Pastor also visits Open Arms each Tuesday to play drums and more with the children. It has been a great pleasure to develop a friendship with Mary Jo!

**CHURCH MUSIC & SERVING THE TAALC** As you know, I am very involved with music for the church and will also be serving our region on two committees: Parish Education and the Commission on Women. I will keep you posted on these areas of service going forward as well.

Jesus, our Savior, is Born! Hallelujah!  
Sue DeSha  
320-815-1561 / suedesha@gmail.com



# Everyday is a blessing at Open Arms!



Happy New Year Everyone!

The new year is always a time of excitement and new beginnings. We hope you all had a wonderful time with family and friends celebrating Jesus birth. What a privilege it is that we can do just that. We are so very blessed.

James 1:17 *Every good and perfect gift is from above.*

We are starting out the new year with a new little friend. We are so excited to have Peter join us!

Our preschool children will be learning some new Bible verses this month. Our January verses are 1 John 4:19 *We love because he first loved us.* 1 Corinthians 10:31 *Whatever you do, do everything to the glory of God.*

Sweet little Addy has chosen a particular baby doll that she calls her baby Jesus. She sits on her princess throne and holds him so carefully and gently kisses him on his head. It is so adorable. She was sharing with the other children how to take care of him because he is a baby. One of the children told her that he wasn't a baby anymore. Now he is our King!

One of our littlest ones who is just learning to talk and only says a few words has been humming *Jesus loves me.*

*You Are My Sunshine* and *Shine Jesus Shine* are a couple of our favorite songs to sing right now.

Psalm 95:1 *O come let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.*

Special thanks to Pastor Gary for bringing us bell and splash cymbals to add to our collection of musical instruments. We love praising the Lord through beautiful music, Thank you Pastor for being so generous and teaching us how to play all the fun instruments .

Thank you Sue for reading to us each week. It's been fun to hear the stories from books you read to your children. It is a big blessing to have you spend special time with us at daycare. We look forward to your visits each week.

Since it's been so cold and snowy we are going to pretend we are taking warm weather vacations. We will have a beach week, we'll go camping, visit a tropical island and do many other fun sunny day activities .It will be great to think about warmer days during these chilly winter months.

Psalm 107:1 *Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His love endures forever.* Psalm 105:2 *Sing to him. Sing praises to him. Tell of all his wondrous works.*

Blessings to all of you!

Thank you for all your prayers and support.

Mary Jo

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## FINANCIAL UPDATE:

2019 Annual Budget: \$230,899; Weekly \$4,440; YTD Need \$217,560

	<u>Offering</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Daycare</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>12/08/19</b>	\$3,753	\$630	\$1,724	\$6,107
<b>YTD</b>	\$131,058	\$9,039	\$46,715	\$186,812

Full Financial reports are posted in the Narthex after each council meeting.

Collection for November Mission of the Month: TAALC \$815.00

*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:21*

