Christmas Eve
On Thursday, December 24, Christmas Eve, we will gather for one service at 7:30 p.m. The service will include readings, carols, candlelight, a story for children and lots of music. All are welcome!

Poinsettias We will decorate the chancel of our church with Poinsettias for the Christmas season. If you would like to donate a cost of a Poinsettia, please send $15 to the church office (check payable to NLUC with poinsettia in the memo line), and if it is given in honor or memory of a loved one, please include the name(s). The names will be printed in the orders of service on Christmas Eve. Those donating poinsettias may take them home after worship on Dec. 24.

Christmas Eve Offering
At the Christmas Eve service we will receive a special offering to support Juneau’s Front Street Community Health Center, and the refugee resettlement program of Church World Service, the national, ecumenical organization with which our denominations work.

The Front Street Health Center provides essential medical services in Juneau for homeless persons and others with in our community with limited income. This fall, our congregation offered a $50,000 matching grant for Front Street and our Christmas offering will provide another opportunity for us to help Front Street maintain and expand its services for our most vulnerable neighbors.

Officials of both the United Methodist and Presbyterian denominations have added their voices to the chorus of interfaith leaders who are calling upon our government to allow Syrian refugees into our United States as the flee the war in their country. Church World Service coordinates refugee resettlement at home as well as providing aid to those waiting in refugee camps abroad.

Our Christmas offering serve our neighbors in need who are close by and across the globe. Thank you for your support.

Special points of interest:
♦ Youth News - p. 2
♦ Taize Service - p. 2
♦ Phil’s Thoughts - p. 3 & 9
♦ Heifer Living Giving Market - p. 4
♦ Christmas Bags for Lemon Creek Correctional Center - p. 5
♦ New Members Received - p. 7
♦ Holiday Bazaar Success - p. 8
♦ Christmas Pageant - p. 10

The mission of our church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, through God-centered worship and people-centered ministry.
Youth News

We are selling direct and fair trade coffee!

After worship and at various church functions, the teens committed to the mission to be with the people of Costa Rica will be selling coffee. This coffee is shade grown at 4,500 feet above sea level on the slopes of Volcano Pass in Costa Rica. It has been traded directly with Marcos (the farmer). Each one of your purchases will support Strong Missions (the mission we are working with in Costa Rica) and the efforts of the Cooperative Youth Group for the mission trip.

What’s available? (8 different kinds!)

- 350g/12.4 oz bags of medium or dark roast ground or whole bean for $15.00
- 500g/17.6 oz bags of medium or dark roast ground or whole bean for $20.00

We ask for your Alaska Air miles!

Do you travel for business and travel? Have your Alaska Air miles been accumulating? This mission trip to Costa Rica, round trip, will be 35,000 air miles per person. Do you have some miles to donate? If you do, please contact Melissa at pastor.engel.ak@gmail.com with your name and phone number so she can follow-up with you.

The Mission Team

Look for these teens and adults in your congregation who will be selling coffee, collecting air miles, and raising further awareness about our mission trip to Costa Rica in June 2016:

- Holy Trinity Episcopal Church: Allena Valentine
- Aldersgate UMC: Max Suzuki, Shafer Suzuki, Chloe McAdams
- Northern Light United Church: Laura Barnhill, Summer Putman, Jamie Barnhill (Junior Counselor)
- Douglas Community United Methodist Church: Andyn Mulgrew-Truitt, Rev. Melissa Engel (Adult Sponsor), Michael Engel (Adult Sponsor)
- St. Brendan’s Episcopal Church: Jonathan Funk, Nicole Funk, Pat Funk (Adult Sponsor)

Christmas Blessings,
Melissa Engel

Taize Worship Sunday, December 6, 7:00

Deepen your Advent journey by joining us for a special Taizé worship service, Sunday, December 6, 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Taizé worship features meditative music, readings, candlelight, and silence. It quiets the mind, opens the heart, and feeds the soul a great experience for Advent! The service music and readings will draw upon the Magnificat, Mary’s song of liberation and praise that is recorded in the first chapter of Luke’s gospel.
Phil’s Thoughts

In 1980 I was a 26 year old seminary dropout living Tulsa, OK and running a neighborhood ministry in an economically disadvantaged part of the city. During this time I was asked by the congregation where Teresa and I were members to attend a community-wide information meeting about resettlement of the second wave of refugees from Southeast Asia after the Vietnam War. The heads of the Community Service Council and the Metropolitan Ministry convened the meeting. As it was drawing to a close, the Community Service Council exec. asked me to head up the task force that would coordinate the city’s refugee resettlement effort. I felt ill-equipped for the job. I had neither the experience nor the expertise to organize, administer, and promote such a large undertaking. The complex array needs and tasks seemed beyond my capabilities. If truth be known, not only did I feel unqualified; I wasn’t all that interested. It is not that I was opposed to opening our community to new residents. Additionally, I believed our country bore some responsibility for the turmoil and chaos in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia that the war had wrought. I knew the refugees needed help. But I was involved with other pressing issues – racial justice, anti-poverty initiatives, providing services for youth in “at risk” situations, and so on. I feared that the emphasis on refugee resettlement would divert attention and resources away from pressing needs already present in the city.

Despite my reservations about my qualifications and my hesitancy about the impact on other important efforts, I accepted the assignment. I felt like I was called, and sometimes we are called to do that which we would not otherwise choose. Or maybe my taking this on was an example of fools rushing in where angels fear to tread. But whatever the case, I realized we don’t get to choose who needs our help. I jumped in and by the time I left Tulsa to return to seminary a year later, the refugee resettlement initiative was up and running. We had hired staff to run the citywide response, and our congregation was among the many that sponsored a refugee family. Racial justice, anti-poverty, and youth empowerment work continued alongside the resettlement work.

I didn’t work alone, of course; it was a collective effort. My successor as chair of the refugee resettlement task force was a wise laywoman, herself an immigrant from Switzerland who would probably been a better choice for chair in the first place. And, able colleagues in the other efforts in which I was involved carried forth in new and important ways. Matters of faith and social justice are never solitary endeavors.

As you might have already guessed, I have been reminded of the work I was involved with in Tulsa years ago because of the growing crisis for millions of refugees fleeing war, violence and mayhem in Syria. In the decades since the resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees, many have been welcomed from many areas of the world, and much has changed on the global scene, even as some things remain constant. Wars and rumors of wars that have abounded since ancient times are still with us and terrorism and rumors of terrorism are new dimensions of
Heifer Living Gift Market on Dec. 6

The Sunday School classes invite you to come and shop at their Heifer International Living Gift Market during Fellowship Time on Sunday, Dec. 6. Heifer International is an ecumenical sustainable agriculture ministry with projects in over 50 countries that provides livestock including cows, goats, sheep, and chickens and training so that impoverished families around the world can provide food for themselves and their communities. You can participate in this important work by purchasing "shares" of animals in honor of your family and friends. Come to the Living Gift Market, visit the Sunday School class booths, make your purchases, and pick up cards to inform family and friends of your gift. Join the Sunday School students in giving the gifts of hope and opportunity this Christmas!

Advent Lunch Thursday December 17

Come join us for Cooperative Church Council’s Advent Luncheon Thursday, December 17 at noon in the Fellowship Hall. The theme is “Wait, Wait….Tell me! The Good News Game Show.”

Prepare for the Celebration of Jesus’ birth with an Advent wreath candle lighting and carols. In Latin, the word Advent means coming. It is a season of faithful watching, waiting and worshiping.

Homemade soups, breads, and cookies for lunch. Free will donations for lunch go to the Glory Hole.

Harmony Singing Workshop Dec. 20

Singing Christmas Carols together

On Sunday, December 20 after worship, John Palmes will lead a workshop to help participants learn how to sing harmony parts. As John explains, “the melody can be hard to sing because some pitches are out of our vocal range, so we just can’t hope to sing that high or low.” The solution is to sing harmony that might be only one or two notes. “If you sing something that is not the melody, and it fits with the key, you are doing it, you are singing harmony.”

Using Christmas Carols as his examples, John will teach how to be “improvising harmonizers” so that all can “learn how to sing together and support each other.”

After learning some harmony, the group will sing Christmas Carols. If the weather cooperates, we can go caroling in the neighborhood. Come and join the fun!
**Christmas Bags for Lemon Creek Correctional Center**

Each December, we at Northern Light and other Juneau churches join to provide Christmas bags for the residents at the Lemon Creek Correctional Center (LCCC). The bags contain writing material - pencils, pens, note paper, stamped envelopes, small New Testament, assorted candies and other items. Some of these bags will be the only Christmas gifts these residents will receive this Christmas.

The cost per bag has been around $5.00. This year we expect to fill at least 225 bags at an approximate cost of $1,125.00 or more. The people of Northern Light have been the major contributor to this endeavor each year. The religious volunteers really appreciate this and we know the residents are happy to know that people “out there” care.

If you want to help pay for these gifts, please put your check or money in a pew envelope separate from regular offerings. Make your check to NLUC and note “LCCC” in the memo line. Place it in the offering plate December 14. If you miss getting it to the offering, drop it by the church office during regular office hours as soon as possible before December 15. We will collect the funds given for LCCC on December 15 in order to purchase the things that will go into the bags.

Each year we fill the bags at Northern Light.
This year we will fill the bags from 8:30 AM to noon on Saturday, December 19. Please come and participate. Many hands make quick work and you will be blessed.

Dick Haight

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**Deacons at Your Service**

As the days get colder and the nights longer, we often think more about how we can help our neighbors in need. The Deacons Fund, made up of gifts from congregation members and others, is a resource for people in Juneau who need emergency help with things like rent, utilities, baby needs (diapers, formula), medication, and other basic needs. If you or someone you know needs financial assistance with these sorts of essentials, call the church office to request assistance or for more information.

The Deacons will be hosting a training for people who would like to visit with congregation members who are not able to join us for worship and other church events. This is a great way to share your time and help lift up someone who, due to illness, age, disability, or other reason, is limited to their home or other facility. Stay tuned for details, or contact Kate Burkhart at 586-5993 for more information.

Thanks!!
**Deadline for 2015 Giving**

Northern Light is blessed with generous financial support from the congregation. It is an on-going source of gratitude for which I again say, “Thank You.”

In case it is important that gifts are recognized by Northern Light as having been given during 2015, please remember that we can vouch for their being given in 2015 only if:

- We (a church representative) actually have the gift physically in our possession no later than December 31;
- If the gift is mailed, the postmark on the envelope is no later than December 31; or
- If the gift is made over the internet, the transaction is finalized not later than December 31.

Northern Light gladly receives gifts at our worship services, delivered to the church office (400 West 11th Street), via US mail (400 West 11th Street, Juneau 99801), or online (northernlightchurch.org).

- Jim Alter, Treasurer

**Pledges and Surveys Still Needed**

If you haven’t returned either your pledge of giving to Northern Light for 2016 or 2016 time-and-talent survey, PLEASE DO SO NOW! These two documents are important to what we do as a congregation next year.

Thanks! you to all who have returned either your pledge card or time-and-talent survey. To date we have received 50 pledges.

However, last year we received 57 pledges and the year before that 62. We can do (and have done) better than 50! Help us improve our return level this year by submitting your pledge for your planned giving for next year now.

Any type of communication (pledge card, note, phone call, or email) telling us your pledge would be really helpful. It can be submitted to the church office (400 West 11th Street, Juneau 99801; 907-586-3131; or nluc@ak.net) or at a worship service.

Knowing the total amount pledged for next year is critically important to formulating next year’s operational budget. The more pledge cards received, the more accurately future revenue can be predicted. The amount pledged determines what commitments for program and support to others can be made. Uncertainty as to the amount of revenue we will receive means we cannot undertake new programmatic initiatives or must only tentatively support ones we want to continue. Ultimately, our outreach, support of others, and movement toward justice for all are weakened.

Thanks for making your response a priority.
New Members Received

On November 22, we received three new members into the life of the church: Steve Zimmerman, Tim Lash and Bonnie Lash. They offer the following as an introduction.

Steve, a former longtime Juneau resident who moved to Washington state has become our first online member. He shares: “Helena and I moved from Juneau to Gig Harbor in May, 2013. Since that time I have tried attending three local churches but I have not felt any connection with them. In the meantime, I have continued to receive the monthly Northern Light United Church News. It always contains reports of good things that Northern Light United Church is doing in Juneau that reach out to me. When I read about causes that need help like the Front Street Health Center, or the cost overruns on the roof, or the need to balance monthly budgets I sometimes send in contributions. Doing so makes me feel still connected to a church far away but still in my heart. I also try to watch the Sunday services online. The services are spiritually uplifting for me even if the phone rings sometimes and I don’t know the words to the hymns. Pastor Phil’s opening welcome to all, and hearing the Congregation sing, “This is the day that the Lord has made,” draw me in. I am glad to be an online member.”

Tim writes: “Hi! I moved to Juneau from New York City in February, 2012. I’m the lucky nephew of Margie Weaver Thomson, a longtime member of the church. I’m one of 11 kids and enjoy hanging out with young people, including volunteering currently with the high school Sunday school class. It’s a pleasure to become an official part of Northern Light. Thanks for welcoming me into this beautiful congregation.”

And, from Bonnie: “Thank you all for the warm welcome! After attending here regularly for about a year, it feels great to finally join Northern Light. I look forward to getting to know you all better and getting more involved. When I’m not at Northern Light, you might find me working at Southeast Medical Clinic as a Nurse Practitioner, making ceramics at the Canvas, skating with the Juneau Rollergirls or camping. Juneau has been my home since 2012 when I moved here from the East Coast. It’s a joy to be here!”

If you are interested in joining or finding out more about membership, Contact Pastor Phil at nlucpastor@ak.net or 586-3131.

“How to Read the Bible” Study Continues

The study of John Dominic Crossan’s, How to Read the Bible & Still Be a Christian, will conclude Wednesdays, Dec 9, and 16, 6:30 p.m. in the Skuse Room. We will wrap up the last two chapters that focus on the letters of Paul, and we’ll address the implications for our faith and life on the contemporary scene. Whether or not you have been a part of the study, you are welcome to join us! The book is available in e-book formats and one copy is still available at church. Questions? Contact Phil, nlucpastor@ak.net, 586-3131.
A preliminary tally indicates we made just over $7,000 at the Bazaar. This is truly a blessing. We will announce a CCW meeting in the near future to discuss how to distribute these funds. Our focus is serving the needs of women and children in Juneau, other areas of Alaska and worldwide. If you have suggestions for projects meeting this criteria, please contact either Carol Barril (586-1002) or Judy Knight (586-9562); we really would like to hear from you. Again, THANK YOU AND GUNALCHEESH to all.

**Holiday Bazaar Success**

The annual Holiday Bazaar held last month was a wonderful success, due to all the many people who gave of their time and talent. A big Thank You and Gunalchees to you all.

Many hands were involved in the success of our event. We thank those individuals who made the stained glass crosses for sale. To those who made soup, bread and pie for the lunch. To those who made handcrafts including the beautiful turned wooden bowls by Don. And for the bakery—all those who made bread, pie, candy, jam, jelly, cookies, stollen and coffee cake. To those who donated items for attic treasures, and to those who labored prior to the Saturday sale to sort and price the items.

Much gratitude goes to all who "manned" the various booths.

- To Marion Gotschall, Karen Lipson, Andi Story and Don Gotschall to took care of the crafts tables.
- To Judy Knight, Denise Carroll, Debbie Reifenstein, Loren Heine and Ginny Palmer at Attic Treasures.
- To Linda Miller, Melody Millard, Teresa Campbell and Katherine Hope at the SERRV table.
- And in the kitchen Susan Bus, Olga Lipson, Andi Story and Carol Barril.
- To Janet Kussart, Sue Lium, Marianne Mills, Margaret MacKinnon and Myra Munson who took care of the Bakery.
- Also integral were those who sold (and bought) lunch tickets and who put up posters to advertise our event.

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**November Giving Slightly Under Budget**

Congregational giving in support of Northern Light’s operational budget was about $500 under budget during November. This deficit, combined with the cumulative effect of the year’s giving, means that, coming into December our annual budget is about 1% ($3100) under budget.

To all who have given to the operational budget: Thank You!

Depending on what the giving pattern is for December, it is entirely possible that our total giving for 2015 will still be “on-budget”. Making up this year’s current 1% shortfall during the last 8% of the year is certainly feasible. Moreover, in the past we have made up bigger gaps than this.
**Phil’s Thoughts continued**

consideration amid the current refugee crisis. On other fronts, issues of racial justice, opportunities for economically disadvantaged persons, and youth empowerment are as needed as ever.

In the midst of the current situation, some advocate closing our boards to Syrian refugees. They view the risk as too great. I am among those who disagree. I have signed local and national petitions calling upon our country to respond in love, not fear. As a congregation and a community, we may not feel equipped to take on refugee resettlement and there are other pressing issues that appropriately demand our time. But I believe that as a church and as people of goodwill, we are called to respond by opening our country to refugees, providing humanitarian aid to the millions languishing in refugee camps, and working through international channels to discover a negotiated end to the war in Syria. Love of neighbor knows no bounds.

There are legitimate concerns about refugee resettlement. Those applying for refugee status are thoroughly vetted, as they should be to satisfy understandable security concerns (if anything the vetting is too stringent in my view). The most vulnerable in our society should not bear the burden of providing assistance for new neighbors (although it is often the case that those with the least are the most willing to share).

Even if our country increases the number of Syrian refugees we allow, it is unknown whether any will relocate to Alaska. Whatever the case, we have an opportunity to demonstrate our support for Syrian neighbors even as we continue to engage in important, ongoing commitments – cooperative youth work, Native ministries, Glory Hole dinners, weekend food for Riverbend students, contributions for the Front Street Community Health Center – among others.

Luke’s gospel tells us that “from everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be asked” (Luke 12: 48). As a church, we have been blessed with an abundance of resources. We have the funds and the capacity to serve in many ways. I view this not as a burden, but an opportunity to live ever more so into the fullness of the people God is calling us to be.

Our Christmas Eve offering will be one expression of this opportunity as we receive gifts in equal measure to our denomination’s refugee resettlement work and to Front Street. In this Advent and Christmas season, may we continue to collaborate with our God to bear witness to God’s reign of love, compassion, justice and peace. Merry Christmas, everyone!

*Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love, show us how to serve the neighbors we have from you.*

- the chorus of the Ghanaian Folk Song, “Jesu, Jesu”
Birthdays

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Christmas Pageant slated for December 20

All children, youth, adults welcome to participate and/or help!

This year’s Christmas pageant will be Sunday, Dec. 20 during our 11 a.m. worship service. It will be a simple telling of the nativity story with children and adults joining in to create a manger scene. We will get organized during the 10 a.m. education hour on the 20th. All ages are welcome to participate! Questions? Call or email the church, 586-3131, nluc@ak.net.

Operation Christmas Child Report

Due to our combined efforts, 49 Operation Christmas Child boxes were delivered to Chapel by the Lake from the NLUC family. That means the almost 50 children in need, someplace in the world will receive a long distance hug from NLUC during this holiday season. What a wonderful gift to give. Many thanks to all who participated to make this another successful OCC year at NLUC.

Thank yous

Many people and groups are involved in making sure things happen at NLUC. Each month we would like to recognize some of those individuals and groups for their special services. Special thanks to:

*those who served as Liturgists: Margaret MacKinnon, Tom Perkins, Mary Becker, John Evans, Carol Barril

*those who served as Greeters/ushers: Carol Barril, Denise Carroll, Katherine Hope, Kelly Henriksen, Jane Ginter and Bob Coghill

*Tom Perkins, Jean Overstreet, Alan Akiyama, and Don and Jan Kussart who assembled the November newsletter

*Those who were refreshment hosts: Peggy & KJ Metcalf, Andi Story, Denise Carrol, Karen Dillon, Carol Barril

*Those who provided flowers: Kate Burkhart, Judith Maier, Denise Carroll, Judy Knight, Barbara Searls

*Those who served as Acolytes: Ferguson Paris-Wheeler, Madelyn and Dori Germain, Dominique Morley

*Those who offered Stewardship Moments: Jim Alter, Brandy Scott, and Margie Thomson

If you have a suggestion for a thank you, call Christina at the church office, 586-3131 or e-mail her at nluc@ak.net.
# December 2015

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Northern Light United Church
400 West Eleventh Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1512

Address Service Requested

Downtown at 11th and ‘A’ Street
T: (907) 586-3131
Email: nluc@ak.net
Pastor: Rev. Phil Campbell
E-mail: nlucpastor@ak.net
Intern: Melissa Engel
E-mail: mengel@iliff@edu
Now broadcasting Sunday Services at
Sermons, newsletters and Juneau Empire articles also can be found on our website:
northernlightchurch.org or you can find us on face book.

Christmas Eve Worship Service 7:30 pm - see front page for details

No matter who you are, no matter where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.