Kirkkopulletiini

OF FINNISH LUTHERAN CHURCH

November - December 2026

Armo kantaa eteenpain arjessa ja juhlassa

Elämme jälleen syksyn juhlakautta. Olemme viettäneet All Hallows' Evea – Halloweenia ja Pyhäinpäivää. Edessä on Kiitospäivä – Thanksgivingday ja joulu. Kaikissa näissä juhla-ajoissa on tapana kokoontua perheen, suvun tai ystävien kesken viettämään juhlaa ja syömään yhdessä. Voisikin sanoa, että ihminen on elämässä todellisesti rikas, jos hänellä on ympärillään ihmisiä, joiden kanssa viettää aikaa, valmistella juhlia ja kokea hyviä hetkiä.

Kuitenkin juhlien vietto voi herättää monenlaisia, ristiriitaisiakin tunteita. Joskus menneisyyden haavat, toteutumattomat odotukset ja toiveet tai muunlaiset pettymykset tuovat raskautta ja huolta juhlien taustalle. Toisaalta menetykset, jonkun ihmisen tai perheenjäsenen puuttuminen joukosta tuntuu erityisen kipeältä iloisen juhlan keskellä.

Kun menee huonosti tai on surua, näkee helposti sen, mitä kaikkea olisi voinut tehdä toisin, jos olisi ymmärtänyt etukäteen. Itsesyytösten voima voi olla kova, kun joutuu tekemään isoja päätöksiä tai luopumaan itselle arvokkaista asioista. Kipeän ja surun keskella pitää olla tilaa myos armahdukselle. Muita tai itseä syyttelemällä vie tilaa uuden kasvulta. Kun onnistuu loytämään armoa, voi alkaa rakentaa uudenlaista elämää. Armo antaa mahdollisuuden uusiin alkuihin. Elämässä voi olla vielä paljon arvokasta ja kaunista, sitä kohti kannattaa katsoa ja kulkea. Vanhan testamentin profeetta Jesaja tuo Jumalalta viestin meillekin: "Älkää enää menneitä muistelko, älkää muinaisia miettikö! Katso: minä luon uutta. Nyt se puhkeaa esiin – ettekö huomaa? Minä teen tien autiomaahan ja joet kuivuuden keskelle." (Jes. 43:18-19)

Armollista ja siunattua joulun odotusta sinulle ja läheisillesi! —pastori Marita Toivonen—

Grace sustains us in everyday life and during celebrations

We are once again in the midst of the autumn festive season. We have observed All Hallows' Eve—Halloween—and All Saints' Day. Ahead lie Thanksgiving and Christmas. During these festive times, it is customary to gather with family, relatives, or friends to celebrate and share a meal. One could truly say that a person is rich in life if they are surrounded by others with whom they can spend time, prepare for celebrations, and share good moments.

However, celebrating can also evoke a wide range of emotions—sometimes even conflicting ones. At times, wounds from the past, unfulfilled expectations, or other forms of disappointment cast a shadow of heaviness and worry over the festivities. Furthermore, the experience of loss—the absence of a loved one or family member—can feel especially painful amidst a joyful celebration.

When things are going poorly or when one is grieving, it is easy to dwell on what could have been done differently, had one only known beforehand. The weight of self-reproach can be intense, especially when faced with major decisions or the need to let go of things that are deeply valued. Amidst pain and sorrow, there must also be room for grace. Blaming others—or oneself—leaves no space for new growth. When one manages to find grace, it becomes possible to begin building a new kind of life. Grace offers the opportunity for new beginnings. There can still be much that is valuable and beautiful in life; it is worth looking toward it and moving in that direction. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah brings a message from God for us, too: "Do not dwell on the past, nor think about things of old! See: I am doing something new. Now it springs forth—do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the dry wasteland." (Isa. 43:18-19)

Wishing you and your loved ones a grace-filled and blessed season of waiting for Christmas! —Pastor Marita Toivonen—

The FLC Fall



The FLC Retreat was in September at Gwinwood Retreat Center in Lacey. We had beautiful weather and we were able to enjoy the beautiful retreat center nature with walks, Bible meditation, and bonfire both evenings. We had Finnish style nuotiomakkara – sausages with Finnish mustard and American style S'mores.

We also sang Finnish hymns and songs from the Finnish Heritage Hymn Book which has Englaish translations of every song in the book. We were really happy with the translation because they were easy to sing in familiar tunes and now everyone can know what we are singing.

Sunday Service and Holy Communion were at the lakeside. The nature was our sanctuary and everyone helped to make the altar beautiful with the gifts of the nature.



FLC celebrated Kantelemessu – Kantele Mass on October 25th with Livakat Evergreen Kantele Ensemble and leader Satu Mikkola. Kantelemessu is composed by Finnish church musician and composer Jarkko Yli-Annala. Lyrics are made by a famous Finnish poet and writer Anna-Mari Kaskinen. Kantelemessu is made specifically for Livakat Evergreen Kantele Ensemble. The kantele ensemble was established 26 years ago in the Pacific Northwest by Satu Mikkola, a Finnish American music enthusiast. The ensemble continues to play and practice both in person and on Zoom with a professional kantele instructor from Finland.

November and December 2026 at FLC

NOVEMBER

1st Sunday 10 am **Service: All Saints Sunday** with Marita Toivonen and Maria Männistö

5th Thursday **Museum Visit: Northwest African American Museum NAAM at 1 PM**
Address: 2300 South Massachusetts Street, Seattle, WA 98144
Price: 10 USD adults, 8 USD seniors (55+) and students

8th Sunday 10 am **Service**: 24th Sunday after Pentecost with Marita Toivonen, Maria Männistö and Church Choir. Swedish language in hymns and Bible texts celebrating Swedish-Finnish Heritage Day.

14th Saturday 10 am to 3 pm **Finnish Bazaar (Finnish Holiday Market)** at Leif Erikson Hall

15th Sunday 10 am **Service**: 25th Sunday after Pentecost with Marita Toivonen and Maria Männistö

22nd Sunday 10 am **Service**: Christ the King with Marita Toivonen and Maria Männistö

29th Sunday 10 am **Service and Holy Communion:** First Sunday of Advent with Marita Toivonen, Maria Männistö and Church Choir. Come and sing *Hoosianna!* to start the Christmas season.

DECEMBER

3rd Thursday **Museum Visit: Museum of History and Industry MOHAI at 5 PM**
Address: 860 Terry Ave N, Seattle, WA 98109
Price: Free on 3rd December from 5 to 8 pm

6th Sunday 10 am **Service**: Second Sunday of Advent with Marita Toivonen, Maria Männistö and Church Choir. Celebrating Finnish Independence Day.

13th Sunday **1 pm Kauneimmat joululaulut – The Most Beautiful Christmas Songs at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Bellevue.** Third Sunday of Advent with Maria Männistö, Sini-Tuulia Simmons, other musicians and Marita Toivonen.

20th Sunday 10 am **Serivce**: Fourth Sunday of Advent with Kristy Daniels and Maria Männistö.

25 th Friday 10 am **Christmas Day Service** with Kristy Daniels, Maria Männistö and Church Choir. Potluck Christmas coffee table.

In memory of Erica Presley



This photo is from October 28, 2018 after several days or workshops. Erica was playing kantele with Livakat-Evergreen Kanteles at that time. She is second from the right in this photo. Our kantele group performed with our teacher, Anu Alviola. This is where I first met her and we became friends. We had much in common since we worked with special needs students, loved the kantele and loved Finland and Finnish culture. After this week of workshops, we began emailing, and talking on the phone. We kept in touch for nine years.

I learned that Erica was highly educated, compassionate, and very talented. Erica was an avid reader and loved learning. She had a beautiful singing voice, and she sometimes sang solo with a kantele over Zoom for the church during the Pandemic. She often added Finnish to an email, and I learned that she had studied the language, and could speak it. She said it was a "hard won" accomplishment of over three years of study.

Erica always took an interest in my pets and asked about them. She wanted to see photos, which I happily sent. She loved animals, and remembered details about my horse Bliki and my dachshunds. We laughed about Bliki's antics when I told her stories fo how he could open gates and hay shed doors.

I missed our phone chats in recent years, and we kept in touch with emails from time to time. She shared her challenges and troubles, and I tried my best to give her helpful feedback, and to follow up with her. She spoke of people from the church who had been helping her, and she was grateful. I have warm memories of Erica, and I will always miss her.

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Volunteering in Bible reading and Coffee Time

We are looking for more people to volunteer on Sunday services. If you would like to bring your offering in music by playing or singing as prelude or postlude, please, let us know. Or if you would like read the Bible texts in services, sign up for readers' list or send an e-mail or message to pastor Marita. You can read the texts either in English or in Finnish, on Zoom or being present at the church. Pastor Marita will send you the right texts beforehands in your language.

Google Docs sign-up sheet for Coffee Time and Bible readers:
FLC Coffee Time and Bible Readers Sign-up Sheet - Google Sheets

Your Council in Action

-Survey: In September the council worked quite extensively on the results and presentation of the Survey. We thank Ina Darms for doing the final compilation and issuance of the results. Ina has been a very valuable resource in this task. The results of the survey were emailed to the congregation on September 23. The results are available here: Survey Summary

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GMg9APYvTjoFokcPt4Ubd8G7vdnkpSBP/view?usp=drive_link

-Work on roof drains and storm sewer: The council took in a second bid for repairing the broken storm drain pipe under the parking lot asphalt. The repair was done in October at a cost of about $4300. The company, Emerald City Sewer, will do a free check-up in 6 months.

-The council decided to acquire a wireless mike to facilitate the discussions in the meetings in the church sanctuary.

-The council acquired 3 additional Finnish Heritage Hymnbooks. These hymnbooks have been very much appreciated.

-Ilkka Lahdesmaki volunteered to study the options and cost of installing a new emergency exit door in the sanctuary. Thank you Ilkka! Bids indicate the cost would be up to $5000. The council decided to postpone that project until next year or later.

Meet pastor Marita

You can come to meet pastor at the church or if you would like to meet in some other place or pastor Marita to visit you, please let her know pastor@finnishlutheranchurch.org or call the church phone 206 789 0864.

Pastor Marita Toivonen will be returning to Finland in mid-December 2026. She had a leave of absence for two years from Pakila congregation in Helsinki and now she will return to continue work there. If you are travelling in Helsinki, please, come and say Hi! to her in Pakila at the Church of the Good Shepherd!

"I have loved to live, work and worship with you all here and get to know more of Finnish community and friends of Finland in Seattle area and PNW. This two years has been a blessed and lovely time for me and my two young adult children who have been living here with me or visiting me here. I would like to express my warmest and heartfelt thank you to everyone I have met here and the wonderful Finnish Lutheran Church community! May our Lord Jesus Christ bless you all!"

Finnish Lutheran Church

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Finnish Lutheran Church is located in Crown Hill, serving all the Finns in the Washington State area and people with any interest in Finnish language or culture. We have services both in **English** and in **Finnish** with Finnish Liturgy **every Sunday at 10 am,** everybody is welcome! Finnish music is presented with our numerous and gifted members and friends. You are welcome to stay for a coffee and refreshments after church and get to know new people!