

MISSION & MINISTRY CONNECTION

IT'S *STILL* ALL ABOUT JESUS (especially this month)

God did not spin the wheel of fortune when He sent His Son to earth. When Jesus was born, nothing happened by chance. Not by some roll of the dice was he conceived without a human father. For as Adam had only God as his Father, so it was with the new Adam, come to be the head of a new humanity. Not by accident was He born in David's hometown, for He is the Son of David, come to reign forever over the kingdom of God. And so also it wasn't just "bad luck" that a tyrant king named Herod wanted this baby boy dead. For in Jesus, history repeats itself. More than that: history is repeated and completed in Him. Recall, O Christian, what happened to our forefathers in Egypt. To save his own political neck, that tyrant king called Pharaoh ordered the murder of every baby Israelite boy. Their infant lungs were engulfed by the waters of the Nile. Ripped from the breast, they were fed to the river. All but the son of Amram and Jochebed. He was delivered from the tyrant's hand, this babe named Moses, for by his hand God would deliver His people from Egypt. And so He did, in His own time. Moses was reared by the princess but fled Egypt at age forty when Pharaoh sought to kill him.

Until the age of eighty, he lived the life of a shepherd, until those who had sought his life were dead. Then he returned to the land of captivity—returned as God's agent of deliverance, returned to lead the Israelites out of death through the waters of the Red Sea, as he himself had been saved from the waters in the days of his infancy. And so it came to pass, in the fullness of time, that God sent forth His son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem you who were enslaved in an Egypt far worse than the Egypt of old. For as hardhearted as Pharaoh was, he was nothing compared to the tyrant of hell under whose rule you were born. As cruel as the slavery of our fathers in Egypt was, it is no match for the cruel shackles of transgression and shame, guilt and death that tightly chain our souls. To set you free from this Egypt of sin ruled by the satanic Pharaoh, God sent a new and better Moses.

But as it was for the son of Amram and Jochebed, so it was for the Son of Mary. To save his own political neck, Herod wanted Him dead. So Herod sent his soldiers to Bethlehem, to turn the streets into another Nile River, another infant graveyard. But one child was delivered from this tyrant's hand, for by that infant's hand God was to deliver you. To Egypt Jesus was carried by His mother and her husband, they're biding His time, as did Moses of old, until those who sought His life were dead. Then He returned—returned as God's ultimate agent of deliverance, returned to lead you out of death through the waters of the font, a Red Sea made crimson on the Friday we call Good. For you, the Israel of God, Jesus repeated and completed the life of Moses. For all you have repeated is the rebellion of Adam, and all you have completed is the consumption of that fruit of which Eve took the first bite. You have kept on that mask of outward goodness so long, you no longer even remember the real you—the real ugliness—that lurks underneath.

But God sees. You have tucked away those shameful sins so deeply in your conscience that only occasionally now do they creep upward. But God sees. You have gotten so used to comparing yourself to others—and thereby excusing your actions—that you have forgotten that

God doesn't care how you stack up next to others. His only concern is whether you've kept His law, perfectly, perpetually. And you haven't. And God sees. Repent. It is you whom Jesus has come to deliver. Though He sees the real you, though He sees very well all the ugliness you try so hard to hide from Him, from others, and even from yourself—though He sees all this, most of all He sees the one He loves, His child captive in the Egypt of sin, you, His beloved one. For you this new and better Moses was born. For you He fled from the sword of Herod. For you He was called out of Egypt. For you He was called to the cross. For you He suffered the whips, the thorns, the nails, the bleeding and the dying. For you He was called back to life. For you He held in His hands the shackles of sin and death that once bound you, shattered by His grace. You He carries out of Egypt, across the font of the Red Sea, and to the promised land. You He feeds with manna from on high, gives you crimson drink from the rock of His flesh. History is not only repeated and completed in Him; it is done with your salvation in view. That is what matters to God. That is what He wants most. He wants you. And you He has. Thanks be to God.

It's Still All About Jesus - and only JESUS
Pastor Below

A Note from our Director of Music and Worship

The liturgical cycle begins with preparing our hearts for the newborn King during Advent. This season, we will be using a series called "God with Us," and each week will focus on a different word picture of the coming Christ found in the poetic and prophetic words of Isaiah. The theme verse for the entire series is: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel (which means, God with us): (Matthew 1:23).

Sunday 1, December 2, and Midweek 1, December 5; God with Us: Our Potter. (Isaiah 64:8) God is with us as our Potter, who shapes according to His will.

Sunday 2, December 9, and Midweek 2, December 12; God with Us: Our Shepherd. (Isaiah 40:11) God is with us as our Shepherd, who carries us close to His heart.

Sunday 3, December 16, and Midweek 3, December 19; God with Us: Our Living Branch. (Isaiah 11:1) God is with us as our Living Branch, who died and rose to give us eternal life.

Sunday 4, December 23; God with Us: Our Guide. (Isaiah 2:3) God is with us as our Guide, who leads us according to His Word.

Christmas Eve Family, December 24: The Night before Jesus. A new book in the style of the familiar poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas."

Christmas Eve Candlelight, December 24: God with Us: A Great Light. Our Great light has dawned: Jesus Christ is born!

Christmas Day, December 25: God with Us: Immanuel Has Come. Our Savior has indeed come to be with us in human flesh and swaddling clothes to dwell with us forever.

December 2, 9, and 16 we will have the usual two worship services, but on December 23 and December 30 we will just have one, at 10:00am. Midweek services will begin at 7:00pm. The Christmas Eve Family service begins at 4:00pm, and the Christmas Eve Candlelight service begins at 11:00pm. Christmas Day service begins at 10:00am. Please plan to join us in worship!

Elin Gomez

Lay Ministry

Advent and the birth of our Savior. What a great month December is. We will also have “Return to Bethlehem” to remind us how life was lived at the time of His birth and what was on the mind of those in Bethlehem at that time. Hopefully your family and friends will spend the time to return to Bethlehem. When you are there you may hear and see those who “Missed Christmas”. There are at least six ways scripture tells us how Christmas can be missed.

- 1) Ignorant Preoccupation
- 2) Jealous Fear
- 3) Prideful Indifference
- 4) Religious Ritual
- 5) Idolatry
- 6) Over Familiarization

Ignorant Preoccupation. Luke 2:7 says, “Mary gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” The first person who missed Christmas was the innkeeper. Apparently he was indifferent to Mary and Joseph’s plight because there is no indication from Scripture that he tried to help them. Whatever hospitality Mary and Joseph hoped to find, they found none and were turned away. Why did the innkeeper miss Christmas? Preoccupation. The inn was full. The innkeeper wasn’t hostile and unsympathetic just busy.

Jealous Fear. Matthew 2 tells us about Herod. Herod faked a desire to worship Jesus, but in reality he was fearful because there was one who had been born who was King of the Jews. Herod panicked. He was afraid of another King. Herod missed Christmas because of jealous fear. Many do not want to come to Jesus because He will cramp their style.

Prideful Indifference. We learn in Matthew 2:4-6 that once Herod learned from the wise men that the King of the Jews would be born, he gathered all the chief priests and scribes to inquire of them where the Messiah was to be born. Those two groups knew where the Messiah was to be born because they knew Micah had prophesied that Bethlehem was to be His place of birth. The Jewish nation is still looking for the Messiah. Why did they miss Christmas? Indifference. They didn’t care. They had all the facts but they didn’t need a Messiah because they were self-righteous and saw themselves as perfect keepers of the law and were full of pride. They were unwilling to travel a few miles to find out if this baby might be the Messiah.

Religious Ritual. Luke 2 indicates another group of people who missed Christmas. This scripture tells us about the shepherds. Out of all the people in Jerusalem God singled out shepherds to receive the great news about the birth of Christ. Shepherds were a despised group of people. They couldn't follow all the ceremonies, rituals, and religious activities because they were too busy tending sheep. Yet no one else from Bethlehem came to see the Christ child except these "unclean" shepherds. Most of the people in Jerusalem missed Christmas. Why? Religion. They were too busy with the rituals of their religion that they missed the reality of the Messiah's birth.

Idolatry. Despite all their interactions with Christ the Romans missed Christmas. They had their own gods including emperor worship. They had the true God in their midst but they missed Him. Today the world is full of people who worship their own gods and they may miss Christmas too.

Over Familiarization. In Luke Chapters 2 and 4 it tells us that the people of Nazareth missed Christmas because of over familiarity. They knew Jesus as Joseph's son and they didn't view that as anything special. After Jesus finishes speaking in the synagogue the people "got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down a cliff. But passing through their midst, He went His way" (Luke 4:29-30). In some, over familiarity with Christmas truth can breed a hard heart.

During the Christmas season see if you encounter any of these ways people are missing Christmas. Maybe you can let them know that the greatest gift of Christmas is Christ Himself. How wonderful it would have been to be in Bethlehem at the time of His birth. Hopefully we wouldn't have been too preoccupied with the census! I guess the best we can do in 2018 is to "Return to Bethlehem".

Lay Ministry at Lord of Life wishes your family and friends a wonderful Christmas season!

Preschool & Kids' Day Out

The first full week of November was busy with our Annual Scholastic Book Fair. Many members of the congregation donated books to classrooms and purchased books for Prayer Partners. Thank you for your support!

We celebrated our school on the 12th and 13th by wearing our purple Lord of Life Lutheran Preschool and Kids' Day Out T-shirts. The children enjoyed special purple snacks – purple frosting on graham crackers and purple grapes. Pastor Below inflated enough helium balloons daily for each child to take one home. The children attended chapel on our School Spirit Days and it was fun to see our preschool united not only in worship of our Savior, but also by our purple shirts!

The children and their families donated food to the 2018 Thanks for Giving food drive for Circle of Concern. They also brought in food that they dropped into the collection barrel prior to our chapel service. We have very generous families in our preschool!

On Monday, November 19, Preschool and Kids' Day Out students dressed as pilgrims and Native Americans and gathered in the fellowship hall for our Annual Thanksgiving Sharing Feast. The menu was not what the people ate at the first Thanksgiving. It was more kid friendly – chicken nuggets, carrots with Ranch dressing, grapes, mini muffins, and cookies. However, I think that the children, teachers and parents present were just as thankful for the many blessings God has given them as the pilgrims and Native Americans!

We look forward to joining the Lord of Life Lutheran Church congregation in December (Wednesday the 12th & Sunday the 16th) when the children will sing during services. Please join us on Tuesday, December 18, at 11 am for our Annual Preschool Christmas Program and Birthday Party for Jesus! Merry Christmas!

Ann Uschold

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Throughout his epistles and his preaching recorded in the Book of Acts, St. Paul refers, in one way or another, to thanksgiving and thankfulness nearly 50 times. Whether vertically toward God, or horizontally toward the neighbor, thanksgiving is a major theme within St. Paul's body of work.

What does this mean? It means thankfulness is intrinsic to the life of those baptized into Christ. In other words, giving thanks is what Christians do as they live out their lives in this world.

The problem is that we often forget this. Consider your average, run-of-the-mill, normal day. When you get home, and your parents, your spouse or your children ask about your day, what first comes to your mind? After 99 percent of things went right, went exactly as planned, were enjoyable and blessings, we tend to focus on and remember the 1 percent of things that went poorly, that didn't go as planned, and that were nuisances.

We remember the bad things. We focus on discontent. And we fail to give thanks in all circumstances for everything (Eph. 5:20) and to rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4).

Thankfulness and contentment go together. We are content with things for which we are thankful. St. Paul could be content with having plenty or when in need because He gave thanks to the Lord for all things. He thanked the Lord for those who had prayed for him and listened to his proclamation of the Gospel. He gave thanks for their good works in and for the Church of Christ. He gave thanks for the grace of God in Christ Jesus and found that God's grace was sufficient for him.

So, give thanks for all things and in all circumstances dear brothers and sisters in Christ. For you have been saved from sin, death, and hell by the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. You have been added to the very family of God in an adoption of grace through Holy Baptism. God is your Father. Our Lord, Jesus Christ is your brother.

But He not only provides for your spiritual well-being, He cares also for this body and life. Your Father in heaven provides food and clothes, house and home, husband, wife, and children. He gives you reason and all your senses. He has given you the raw talents that you have developed into careers. Everything you are and everything that you have is a gift from His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in you.

Give thanks for these things. Make a list – every morning if you must. Say them out loud. Sing about them within the congregation of the saints. And remember this: God has given you these things so that you may be of service to those around you – your family, your neighbors, your brothers and sisters in Christ. For to whom much is given; much shall be required (Luke 12:48).



December Circle of Concern Needs:

- Canned Fruit
- Canned Pasta
- Pasta Sauce
- Cereal
- Peanut Butter
- Canned Vegetables
- Canned Meals (chili, chicken, stew)
- Deodorant
- Dinner Helpers
- Snacks
- Canned Chicken

The Yellow Meal-A-Month Bags are on the Circle of Concern barrel in the entryway. Please take one, bring your items in those bags or a paper bag, and place them in the barrel. Circle has informed us that they can no longer reuse plastic grocery bags. They can only accept brown paper bags.

Our goal is 500+ cans each month. Thanks for your support!

Happy New (Church) Year!

December Baptism Birthdays:

- John Reed 12/1
- Jim Schlegel 12/3
- Patrick Quinn 12/4
- Sue Andrew 12/6
- Colin Bossi 12/9
- Ian Bossi 12/9
- Stephen May 12/9
- Audrey Fantroy 12/11
- Jackie Schamber 12/11
- Janet Kammeyer 12/14
- Bill Hofrichter 12/20
- Justin Langrehr 12/20
- Donna Juergens 12/23
- Gloria Marx 12/23
- Regan Reed 12/23
- Elin Gomez 12/25
- Ken Klindworth 12/26
- Laura May 12/28
- Debbie Schelp 12/29
- Erica Suchland 12/29
- Mary Scher 12/31

Happy Birthday To:

- Bill Hofrichter 12/1
- Justin Langrehr 12/1
- Sue Andrew 12/5
- Ginny Wells 12/5
- Donnie May 12/8
- Ed Liebig 12/9
- Tammy Schamber 12/9
- Erica Suchland 12/9
- Tyler Tampow 12/10
- Brian Tampow 12/12
- Oscar Fantroy 12/13
- Patty Tampow 12/13
- Sarah Strand 12/14
- Sheila Zeigler 12/14
- Renee Boesch 12/16
- Krista Reed 12/17
- Ann Pancoast 12/20
- Stephen Schelp 12/21
- Milton Fehrenbach 12/23
- Kristie Nolan 12/24
- Gary Kern 12/27
- Steve Mueller 12/28
- Alice Pragman 12/30
- Mary Churchill 12/31

December Wedding Anniversaries:

- Steve & Judy Newell 12/2
- Ravi Sidu & Donna Juergens 12/24
- Bill & Mary Churchill 12/27
- Nilo & Liane Figur 12/30

Serving Teams

Dec 2	8:00	Team 5
	10:30	Team 10
Dec 5	7:00	Team 8
Dec 9	8:00	Team 7-11
	10:30	Team 4
Dec 12	7:00	Team COGS
Dec 16	8:00	Team 2
	10:30	Team CAAN
Dec 19	7:00	Team 5
Dec 23	10:00	Team 1
Dec 24	11:00p	Team 6
Dec 25	10:00	Team 3
Dec 30	10:00	Team 4

Lay Readers

Dec 2	8:00	Janet Kammeyer
	10:30	Regan Reed
Dec 9	8:00	Mark Bossi
	10:30	Kristie Nolan
Dec 16	8:00	Zach Zeigler
	10:30	Carla May
Dec 23	10:00	Robbie Doebert
Dec 24	11:00p	Megan Clasen
Dec 25	10:00	Regan Reed
Dec 30	10:00	Mark Kammeyer

Altar Guild

Team #1
Carol DuMontier
Kristin Dye
Linda Rosemann

Nursery – 10:30

Dec 2 Barb Below
 Dec 9 Robbie Doebert
 Dec 16 Colleen Clasen
 Dec 23 Barb Below (10:00)
 Dec 30 Barb Below (10:00)

Lay Ministers

Dec 2 8:00 Ted Greer
 10:30 Joe Delmore
 Dec 5 7:00 Nehemiah Langness
 Dec 9 8:00 Mark Kammeyer
 10:30 Donnie May
 Dec 12 7:00 Donnie May
 Dec 16 8:00 Ken Rosemann
 10:30 Brian Andrew
 Dec 19 7:00 Joe Delmore
 Dec 23 10:00 Gene Valett
 Dec 24 4:00p Ted Greer
 11:00p Mark Kammeyer
 Dec 25 10:00 Ted Greer
 Dec 30 10:00 Mark Kammeyer

Counting Teams

Dec 2 Joe Delmore
 Yvette Hagstrom
 Dec 9 Ken Rosemann
 Marilyn Evensen
 Dec 16 Linda Rosemann
 Dennis Oneal
 Dec 23 Jean Urban
 Sue Andrew
 Dec 30 Elaine Robertson
 Jan Mantovani

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