

# MISSION & MINISTRY CONNECTION

**Rejoicing** “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

*Philippians 4:4*

## A Word from Lay Ministry

### The Seekers

*After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’” Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”*

Matthew 2:1-8

As we turn from giving thanks to the first Sunday of Advent, my thoughts are on the Magi. I know from the perspective of a timeline; I have this backwards. It’s not even Christmas yet, much less Epiphany. I know the Magi do not come on the scene for months or even as much as a year later. But the truth is the Magi were seeking Jesus before our Lord was even born. Historians and Bible scholars note the Magi were not of any association with the children or the tribes of Israel. They were gentiles and astrologers. Yet, notice that they knew what was in the Book. They knew the prophecy. They knew what the star meant. The King of the Jews had been born.

When the Magi arrived on the scene after the birth of our Lord, they asked the question that had not crossed the minds of King Herod or even the chief priests and teachers of the law. “*Where is he who has been born King of the Jews?*” Perhaps the chief priests and teachers of the law knew exactly where the King of the Jews had been born but could not bring themselves to acknowledge it. The truth of who the humble Jesus is and the circumstances by which he came to earth does not fit their scenario of a victorious Messiah. Furthermore, why was all of Jerusalem disturbed by the question, “*Where is he who is born King of the Jews?*”? They know the Word. They know the prophecies. Undoubtedly the chief priests and teachers of the law also saw the same great star but

apparently had not made the connection or refused to make the connection. If they had truly been seekers of the Lord, they would have also come to worship him. It is ironic that the seekers of the Lord were not the leaders of the synagogue and teachers of the law but lowly shepherds and gentile astrologers from afar.

*After they (the Magi) had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Matthew 2:9-11.* The star led the Magi because they chose to believe in what the star represented. The star, once a landmark of the manger, is now a landmark of the house where our Lord and his mother dwell. This is because the star follows he who is the light of the World, Jesus. The chief priests, teachers of the law and all of Jerusalem saw the same star and yet how many of them sought out the Lord who was present right in their midst? Are we missing the Lord because our eyes are not fixed on him? The Word of God promises in Jeremiah 29:13, *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.* Additional admonition is found in Isaiah 55:6, *Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.*

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to the chief priests and teachers of the law and even the culture of Jerusalem at the birth of Christ is this: Once we meet Christ, he requires change. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. When we come into the presence of the Lord, we must submit to his will and to his guidance. We may even need to alter our course as the Lord warned the Magi in this dream. The Lord retunes us to think on eternal things, heavenly things, kingdom things as Paul admonishes in Colossians 3:2, *Set your minds on things above, not earthly things.*

Let us this Advent become seekers of the Lord. Let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets us. Let us not be blinded to the presence of the Lord right in our midst due to pride, or religious piety. Let us be as humble as shepherds. Let us be as wise as the Magi, not wise in our own eyes, but wise in who Jesus is and wise in who he creates us to be.

For His Glory,  
Craig Young, Chair of Lay Ministry

### **A Word from Deaconess Sarah Longmire**

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

November proved to be another busy, happy month in Preschool! Our classrooms are full and bustling. We are making friends, learning many different skills, and, of course, doing a lot of playing!

We had a very successful Book Fair in November – thank you to those who participated in this preschool fundraiser! We love books and especially appreciate that the church is always supportive of this event.

I had a get-together with some preschool moms. This was something that I had done before COVID and it was nice to bring it back! I will schedule one ‘moms’ morning’ each month continuing until the end of the school year.

We had a great Veterans’ Day celebration! One of our student’s moms is a Navy veteran; she came in and allowed us to see her uniforms and learn about what it means to be a soldier on a big ship! We also collected a lot of candy and made beautiful cards to send to LCMS chaplains around the world.

Additionally, we had a very successful food drive for Bethlehem Lutheran Church. THANK YOU for your partnership in this! We were able to collect food for 26 full meals and supply 80 pies!

Looking to December, we will sing in church on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, we will have Family Sunday School and an International Luncheon that day! Look in the bulletin in the coming weeks for more information about this! We will also have our preschool Christmas programs for parents and families to attend.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support of the Preschool!

In Jesus’ Love,  
Deaconess Sarah

### **A Message from Junior Kindergarten**

Hello, Everyone!

It has been a very busy couple of months in Junior Kindergarten! This year brings a whole new look to the Junior Kindergarten classroom. I am excited to say that the room is double in size and filled to the brim with so many learning opportunities and areas. The children love the new space and have quickly made it their home away from home by planting seeds, using their mailboxes and using centers for group and independent exploration. We are so thankful and blessed to have this additional space to spread out and provide the best possible learning environment.

We are still taking advantage of our outdoor learning classroom as well. In addition to our classroom tree that we use for continued scientific observations, we made some bird feeders that hang right outside our window. These were made during our unit on families and the children love to watch all the different birds visit and enjoy them. The outdoor learning area gives the kids different sensory input and atmosphere, as well as, much needed gross motor activity. It’s a fantastic spot to read a book, write in our math or science journals and do a lot of discovering.

Getting ready for kindergarten is the name of the game for this class and we hit the ground running by having each child create a book about themselves. This book incorporated numerous review skills in writing, literacy and math while detailing their names, addresses, birthdays and their likes and dislikes. Every day within each unit we continue to touch on core skills in math, science, language arts, social emotional and social studies. We are a play based classroom that allows us to learn through hands on techniques. We build books throughout the year touching on different topics and adding new concepts each time.

We just learned about the first Thanksgiving and what Thanksgiving means to us today. They wrote and illustrated their own books to retell this story taking pride in their hard work. Each day we created a new page of the book by reading, writing, cutting, gluing, painting, drawing and using various other methods of art and literacy to make these masterpieces all while learning history, geography, economics and culture.

Incorporating math into this learning is made fun and easy by asking critical thinking questions that they vote on, count and add together each day. In addition, we use our thematic manipulatives to count, measure, sort and create number sense. Math is also a part of our daily job board as the “Counter” uses the ten frames board to count, add and subtract to ten. This is all part of the bigger picture of counting to 100 each day by ones and by tens.

Not only is this a big year academically for these kids as they will begin to read and write but socially and emotionally as well. We have already become a team by creating our classroom name – the Panthers! This unity assists in friendship, cooperative and collaborative learning, as well as, independence and confidence. They have the creativity and magic that makes learning so fun and easy. My goal for these kids is to keep the magic alive and the learning fun as long as possible. I want them to grow into confident and secure learners and people. We are so lucky to have the support of, not only our Preschool family to make this happen, but also our church family. We appreciate all the love and support you have given us to make our classroom a success.

Deb Meert  
Junior Kindergarten Teacher

### **LCMS Stewardship Ministry**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the great physician of both body and soul, healed a man with dropsy by His Word on the Sabbath (Luke 14:1–6). Dropsy is a paradoxical ailment, with an unquenchable craving for drink even though the body is over inflated with fluid, a craving that, when indulged, served not to ease but to feed the disease.

And so, if a man drinks a great deal but is never filled, he sees a doctor to inquire about what ails him, what is wrong with his body, and how to remedy it. For that is not thirst but a disease (Seneca, *Consolation to His Mother Helvia*, 11.3).

But if the owner of five couches goes looking for 10, or the owner of 10 tables buys up as many again, and even though he has plenty of land and money, he remains unsatisfied and desires yet more, losing sleep and always in discontent, does he not also require a physician to diagnose the cause of this distress?

For this is not want or lack, it's a disease (Aristippus, quoted in Plutarch, *Love of Wealth*, 524b). As St. Augustine of Hippo wrote, "we may rightly compare the dropsical man to a covetous rich man: For the more the one is swollen with excess of water, the more he thirsts; so also the other: The more he abounds in riches ... the more eagerly he desires them" (*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, 4:135). Both require physicians. Both require diagnosis and medicine applied from the outside to the inward being. For these are not desires to be fulfilled but diseases to be cured.

This is why our Lord instructs us to not to be consumed by money. "No one can serve two masters ... You cannot serve God and money" (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13). Our desire for money, like the disease dropsy, is never satisfied. We always desire more. We think, "If I just had this much then I would be happy."

But even when that much comes, which God gladly gives, happiness evades us. The desire for more is never satisfied. It demands our constant energy, either in procuring more or protecting what we already have. When this happens, God, in His mercy, shows us that the money that He has given is no longer serving us, but we it. We have another master.

To overcome this, we need a physician's diagnosis and a physician's remedy. And our Lord Jesus Christ, our great physician of both body and soul, applies His Word to us as He did to the man healed of dropsy. He shows us how we have put our fear, love, and trust in our money and not feared, loved, and trusted in Him above all things.

In essence, He says, "Stop chasing after these fleeting things. They are vanity. They are the things that moth and rust destroy. You cannot have two masters. Repent!" And in seeing our great error, we are sorry that we have not fully feared, loved, and trusted in God above all things. And, in the mercy and grace that He earned for us on the cross, He takes away this sin, restores us to health, and bids us to live.

But then what? What do we do with this healing balm and care that our great physician has given? Do we simply go back to our old ways? "By no means!" St. Paul says (Rom. 3:31; 6:2). We do not just go back to the old ways, the ways that lead us to death. No, we live a new life, a life filled with the grace, mercy and love of God toward us. And God's great mercy, grace, and love toward us is so abundant that it overflows and pours out onto those around us.

So we no longer hoard money and possessions. We no longer scrape and crawl our way to amass more. We give to those around us, as God in Christ has given to us. We press our money and possessions into service for those who need it: our family, our society and our church. For money is God's gift to us to serve us and others. Not the other way around. It serves us because it is a gift from our Father in heaven.

**December Circle of Concern Needs**

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| Cereal  | Moisturizing Shampoo    |
| Jelly   | Women's 3+Blade Razors  |
| Condiments  | Incontinence Pads 4-5-6 |
| Dinner Helpers  |                         |
| Dry Potatoes & Rice   |                         |
| Dry Soup  |                         |
| Ready-to-eat Canned Soup  |                         |
| Canned Beans (Such as baked beans, black beans, garbanzo beans) |                         |

Please bring your items and place them in the barrel. Thank you for your support!

**December Baptism Birthdays**

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|-----------------|-------------|
| Alissa Holthe   | December 1  |
| John Reed       | December 1  |
| Jim Schlegel    | December 3  |
| Sue Andrew      | December 6  |
| Colin Bossi     | December 9  |
| Ian Bossi       | December 9  |
| Jackie Schamber | December 11 |
| Janet Kammeyer  | December 14 |
| Joe Mowczko     | December 19 |
| Justin Langrehr | December 20 |
| Donna Juergens  | December 23 |
| Gloria Marx     | December 23 |
| Regan Reed      | December 23 |
| Laura May       | December 28 |
| Debbie Schelp   | December 29 |
| Erica Suchland  | December 29 |

**December Birthdays**

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|------------------------|-------------|
| Justin Langrehr        | December 1  |
| Sue Andrew             | December 5  |
| Donnie May             | December 8  |
| Ed Liebig              | December 9  |
| Tammy Schamber         | December 9  |
| Erica Suchland         | December 9  |
| Tyler Tampow           | December 10 |
| Brian Tampow           | December 12 |
| Patty Tampow           | December 13 |
| Sheila Ziegler         | December 14 |
| Krista Reed            | December 17 |
| Julie Mowczko          | December 18 |
| Ann Pancoast           | December 20 |
| Milton Fehrenbach, Jr. | December 23 |
| Kristie Nolan          | December 24 |
| Steve Mueller          | December 28 |
| Mary Churchill         | December 31 |

**December Wedding Anniversaries**

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|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Tom & Sheila Ziegler        | December 4  |
| Don & Kathryn Ann Scheller  | December 12 |
| Mark & Linda Androff        | December 22 |
| Ravi Sidhu & Donna Juergens | December 24 |
| Bill & Mary Churchill       | December 27 |

**Altar Guild**

Month of December

Sandy Faeth  
 Janet Kammeyer  
 Debbie Schelp  
 Charlene Valett

**Serving Teams**

Dec. 5	8:00	Teams 7 & 11
	10:30	Teams 4 & 9
Dec. 12	8:00	Teams 1 & 2
	10:30	Team 8
Dec. 19	8:00	Team 5
	10:30	Team 6
Dec. 24	4:00	Teams 7 & 11
	7:00	Team 8
Dec. 25	10:00	Teams 1 & 2
Dec. 26	8:00	Team 3
	10:30	Teams 4 & 9

**Counting Teams**

Dec. 5	Sue Andrew Jean Urban
Dec. 12	Richard Barigela Joe Delmore
Dec. 19	Peggy Krause Gene Valett
Dec. 26	Daryl Hagstrom Jim Weiss

**Lay Readers**

Dec. 1	7:00	Sharon Delmore
Dec. 5	8:00	Mark Bossi
	10:30	Bob Finley
Dec. 8	7:00	Kristie Nolan
Dec. 12	8:00	Diane Wolf
	10:30	Mark Androff
Dec. 15	7:00	Mollie Oakeley
Dec. 19	8:00	Janet Kammeyer
	10:30	Sharon Delmore
Dec. 22	7:00	Megan Clasen
Dec. 24	4:00	Bob Finley
	7:00	Sharon Delmore
Dec. 25	10:00	Janet Kammeyer
Dec. 26	8:00	Mark Bossi
	10:00	Kristie Nolan

**Lay Ministers**

Dec. 5	8:00	Justin Langrehr
	10:30	Nehemiah Langness
Dec. 12	8:00	Craig Young
	10:30	Brian Andrew
Dec. 19	8:00	Mark Kammeyer
	10:30	Joe Delmore
Dec. 24	4:00	Donnie May
	7:00	Joe Delmore
Dec. 25		Mark Kammeyer
Dec. 26	8:00	Craig Young
	10:30	Craig Young