



ADVENT SERIES 2023

THE TRINITARIAN



THE NEWSLETTER OF
TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Pastor Donavon W. (Bill) Heithold, Jr.
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Bible Classes and Sunday School 9:00 AM
Divine Service 10:15 AM



DECEMBER 2023 -- VOLUME 61 No. 12

FROM THE PASTOR

Is. 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. ESV

We have the first amendment to the constitution that states: **Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion**, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Around this time every year we have those associated with the **Freedom FROM religion** come out against Christmas. There is a comment this year that all the singing of Christmas carols is somehow causing negative problems with people's spirits.

Now I know those of you who have gone with the church to people's homes to sing Christmas carols know how the people feel when we leave. Has there ever been a time when they slammed the door in our faces? Hardly. They look forward to having us come as it is uplifting to them to hear, once again, songs about things that help us to enjoy the season of the year that points to the greatest birth ever, the birth of Jesus, the Son of God who was sent to the world for us.

The freedom **from** religion foundation would like people to think that Christmas is a negative for them and the world. I know there is a little too much emphasis on presents and the like but when we look to the great gift of God, the baby Jesus, we can think of nothing negative in Him who came to live the perfect life and then pay for the sins of the whole world.

May they who seek to take Christ out of Christmas encourage us all the more to say, "Merry Christmas" and maybe even begin to hum or even sing those Christmas carols that lighten our hearts and the hearts of those we come in contact.

Pastor

ELDER'S MESSAGE

Did you venture out on Black Friday to secure the latest and greatest gifts at bargain prices?

How about the pre-Christmas sales that began at Halloween?

What about the Christmas office parties or other organizational parties that seem to occupy the weekends and evenings? Are you focused on the myriad of things that have to get done during this busy time of the year? Cooking the new dish for houseguests, oh yeah, the houseguests that come out of the woodwork when the weather back home gets downright miserably cold and dreary. Yes, you welcome them with open arms because they are family or old friends,

Christmas has always been about gathering family and friends together to celebrate the birth of JESUS CHRIST. It is so great to enjoy being in the company of the ones you love.

GOD also enjoys the company of his family. While HE is with us all the time, HE commands us to worship HIM by regular attendance at Trinity Lutheran Church. The Advent and Christmas services are the best way to praise GOD for giving us the GIFT of Salvation through the birth of His precious SON, JESUS CHRIST.

Let your attendance at the Advent and Christmas services be the beginning of your New Year's resolution to gather in HIS presence at Trinity Lutheran Church every Sunday in 2024.

Yours IN Christ
James R. Wilkes

FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT

YEAR-TO-DATE October 31, 2023

Total Income	\$156,579.47
Total Expenses	(\$143,348.76)
Transfer from savings	(\$ 16,561.50) Used to pay for the exterior repairs.
Profit/Loss	(\$ 7,979.64)

Bob Klose, Vice-President

EVANGELISM

Tract of the Month: December's booklet is "**A Biblical Response to Mormonism**". "Mormonism is one of the fastest-growing religions in the world – but how much do Christians really know about it? How can you share the Gospel with Mormons you encounter? This booklet tells about the major beliefs of Mormonism and how it differs from the freedom and grace of the Christian faith – even if some of the vocabulary seems the same. You will learn about the unique struggles of Mormons and be equipped to share how the true Jesus meets those needs." With the waning of the Covid epidemic, the Mormons are out and about again. This booklet "will give you the tools to witness to Christ in their language and to see them not as enemies but as people in need of the Gospel." Be sure to pick up a copy of this month's tract or any of the previous month's tracts to read! They are on the spinner rack in the Narthex.

The mission for November and December is Lutheran Heritage Foundation: Imagine trying to understand Scripture in all its richness without the benefit of Luther's *Small Catechism*. Or trying to teach young children about basic Bible stories without books like *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*.

For Lutheran churches around the world, these situations are reality. They don't have the basic books, so vital to understanding the Lutheran faith, because no one has translated them into their languages. *Through the mission gifts of people like you, LHF translates, publishes, distributes and introduces books that are Bible-based, Christ-centered and Reformation-driven*. In more than 90 countries and 145 languages, thousands of people have come to faith in Christ because they've been able to read books like *The Good News About Jesus* or Luther's *Small Catechism* in their own languages. LHF has published the catechism in more than 110 languages with dozens more requested. In the past decade, LHF has published and distributed over 1,300 titles and 3 million Lutheran books to pastors, seminary students, missionaries, and churches – all at no cost to them.

"The Chosen": The next showing of "*The Chosen*" will be on December 10th. Since the November showing was cancelled, the featured episode from season 2 will be Spirit. In this episode Jesus, Simon Peter, Andrew, and Phillip meet with John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin. Jesus speaks with John privately, where John tells Jesus of his plans to confront King Herod. John asks Jesus why he's taking so long to begin His public ministry. Please plan to join us after the church service, in the Bible Study room.

Missions For 2024: Our 2024 Missions are as follows:

Jan & Feb will be Ysletta Mission Care, El Paso with 21 votes,

Mar & Apr will be Lutheran Hispanic Missionary Institute, El Paso with 17 votes,

May & June will be The Lutheran Heritage Foundation with 16 votes,

July & Aug will be LCMS Joint Seminary Fund with 14 votes,

Sept & Oct will be LCMS Disaster Response (the time of year they usually need it most) with 18 votes,

Nov & Dec will be Lutheran Classical College with 13 votes,

Other missions receiving votes were LCMS Seminary Student Financial Aid Fund & Lutheran Bible Translators each with 10 votes, Lutheran Indian Ministries with 7 votes, Crossway & Faith Come By Hearing (Military Bible Sticks) & Lutheran Braille Workers each with 4 votes, We Raise Foundation (formerly Wheat Ridge Ministries) with 3 votes, and Global Seminary Initiative (GSI) with 1 vote).

The Next Evangelism Committee meeting will be Monday January 8th at 5:30pm. We welcome anyone that may wish to attend.

In Closing I would like to quote Luke 2: 12-14 "And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!'" May you have a Blessed Christmas!

Yours in Christ,
Cheryl Sandenaw, Evangelism Chairman

EDUCATION

Education Committee Report November 13, 2023: The meeting opened with a prayer and three committee members were in attendance.

Old Business: Children's Sunday School taught at the end of church has been going good and so the committee decided to continue it for the rest of this school year. The Thanksgiving Break Activity Day is scheduled for Wednesday, November 22nd from 1:00--3:30 pm with Abby Anderson leading it. It is open to children in our church family and to children in the community surrounding the church, ages 4 years old through fifth grade. Posters made by Stacey Johnson will be hung up in local businesses and a sign will be put up in the front of the church advertising the event. Parents will be asked to fill out a short registration form when they bring their child/children. This form will be used to mail out reminders of our future activity days and possibly used to send out Sunday school lessons to local families not attending services.

The Children's Christmas Program for this year will be held on Sunday, December 24th at 6:00 pm. We have an individual who volunteered to be in charge of the program earlier and we need to confirm she is still willing to do it. Jill Clark) Nora Sotak and the LWML ladies are making little angel ornaments for the children participating in the program as well as purchasing a book for each one of them.

The subject of the luminarias put out for the Christmas eve service was discussed. More information to come after Thanksgiving about how and when it will be done this year.

Sue Kelly volunteered to put together the lessons and crafts for Sunday School for the rest of November and December.

New Business: Starting in January we will be using the lessons from the Enduring Faith curriculum in Sunday School and for the lessons to be mailed to those on our mailing list not able to attend. The tentative dates for the next two Activity Days during the school's Christmas break will be Friday, December 22nd and Friday, December 29th. The dress rehearsal for the Children's Christmas may also be on Friday, December 22nd so we will feed all the children participating lunch. More details will be put in the December Trinitarian and church bulletin after the November activity day. Vacation Bible School planning for the summer of 2024 will begin at the meeting in January.

There was no other new business so the meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

The next Education meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 4th at 5:30 p.m.

Susan Kelly Education Chair

LWML NOTES

THE LWML GIFT TREE is up in the back of the church. Please feel free to choose 1 or more paper ornaments to bring a gift for a child in our town. Ages, sizes for clothing items, and toy suggestions are on the ornaments. Please have gifts wrapped and put in the tubs across from the pastor's office by Monday, December 18th. If you have any questions please see Sue Kelly or call her at 575-430-2100.

PLEASE SAVE YOUR COINS: Next month we will begin the 2024 Baby Bottle Campaign to raise funds for Pregnancy Resources Plus. Please start saving your coins for this event. Let's make it better than 2023! Thanks! Hannah

THANK YOU: Thank you for your generous donations for the Thanksgiving food baskets. We were able to give several boxes of food and an \$40.00 gift card to five families. Cheryl Richey and Beverly Van Duyn

ADVENT SERIES 2023 PEACE CAME TO EARTH

Peace is our common pursuit. As Advent leads us to Christmas, we are especially seeking a distinct season of peace. We need a quiet place to rest during this restless time. Year after year, with each Advent season, we wonder if this year will bring a peace that endures. We crave the reassurance that God knows all our needs and will provide for them, not just for these short weeks but for every season.

Often, we grow impatient as we seek peace. Despite knowing the promises of God to provide for us, we might try to find peace on our own. We then define peace according to the ways we seek it. We might imagine that peace comes when we finally have enough of all the things we plan to buy. Or we might look for the perfect place where peace is an undisturbed solitude, the cabin beside a still lake. We might seek peace by escaping memories of the past. Or peace might be an elusive future where everyone does exactly what they should. These are our many ways of defining peace, but sadly, each of these directions could go on and on without ever being fulfilled.

To illustrate both our pursuit of peace and God's plan for us, our Advent series this year uses a five-point star for each sermon and children's message. Each message will emphasize a different point of the star. Overall, the star reminds us of the Christmas star of Matthew 2 and that wonderful light that guided the Wise Men to find Jesus. Their long journey ended with the blessing of a lasting peace. Just as the Wise Men followed the star, so we will go to each point in this Advent star. This won't be a useless journey that never ends. We will find that God meets us at each point of the star, knowing our needs and bringing us the peace we are seeking.

Since the five-point star will guide our journey, picture yourself drawing such a star. Start in the bottom left corner and draw up to the top center point. Stop and draw downward to the bottom right corner, then upward to the middle of the left side. Draw across to the right, and back to the bottom left corner, eventually reaching each point. Every point goes a certain distance but then is stopped. In the same way, each of our paths to peace could go on and on, never being fulfilled. There won't be enough possessions or perfectly calm places to give us lasting peace. But as we seek peace in these many ways, God intersects us with a peace that both passes our understanding and yet meets our needs. God knows the many ways and directions by

which we seek peace. As we journey, God meets us, halts our endless pursuits, and gives us a new understanding of His gift of peace. That peace comes always through the birth of Jesus, the Word become flesh who steps into the world and fulfills our desire for peace. General Introduction Peace Came to Earth © 2023 Concordia Publishing House. Scripture: ESV®. Permission granted to purchaser to reproduce this page for use in congregational setting. All other rights reserved. - 4 - In the end, we find our lasting peace and treasure. God's peace doesn't send us on an impossible search. God's peace is not an invisible needle buried in a haystack. God's peace is a treasure laid in the straw of the manger. God's peace is the priceless Son of God, born in the stable and laid in plain view for us all. He is the diamond found in the manger's straw. As the Prince of Peace, He is the peace that we seek.

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

If you want an Advent daily devotional for our Advent series (Peace Came to Earth) please pick one up from the credenza below the mail boxes.

LONG-TERM PRAYERS

Sofia Banks, Hunter Bednorz, Eric Bell, Brian Byrosovich, Janet Buckman, Michael Burger, Arlene Calixto, Red Chesbro, Chuck Collins, Mike Debaar, Christopher Douglas, Ashton Flaco, Safi Harnet, Darwin Haslid, **Cyndi Heithold**, Emma Heithold, Rocky Hett, Wayne Holmes, Scout Hughes, **Kristi and John Humphrey**, Shannon Jones, Pastor Khron, Jake Koller, Margo Lindsey, Ron Linn, Maria Martin, Susan McWilliams, **Tom Macon**, Brody Mahlendorf, Betsy Miller, Molly Miller, Emiclio Mutis, Dennis Nuemberger, Cindy Oberling, Mary Palmos, Pastor Chris Patterson, Karen Rawlings, Dick Richey, Margaret Romero, David Sanderson, Kyrie Selph, Jessie Sharrett, Lynn Skinner, **Pete Simank**, Marilyn Spain, Robert Spain, Mike and Sharon Taylor, Dora Torres, Justin Tice, Marlea Trunbull, Guy Warden, Pastor Glen Weber, Betty Wilkes, Ron Wilkes

SOUP & SANDWICH SUPPERS

There will be a soup & sandwich supper before each Advent service beginning on Wednesday, December 6th at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Advent service at 7:00 p.m. There is a sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board for providing soup or sandwiches. Just sign up your name and what you plan to bring for whichever advent service you wish to provide soup for.

NURINBERG '45

A Chaplain's Most Memorable Christmas

Right in the heart of the '45 Christmas season I had the pleasure of bringing the Advent Gospel to the defendants in the Nurnberg prison chapel. There were 13 of the defendants in the little two-cell chapel. Seated at the organ was a former Lieutenant Colonel in the SS *Polizei*, playing Christmas melodies and carols. It was so quiet in the big prison that evening; the stillness was almost painful. We sang Christmas hymns, read the Gospel from Luke Two, and I gave a short sermon. The Holy Spirit touched the hearts of some men that night as never before. As one man put it: "We never took the time to really appreciate the meaning of Christmas in its Biblical teaching. This evening we are stripped of all material gifts, and away from our people. We have the story of Luke Two. That's all we really need, isn't it?"

At the close of the service, the organist once more went into the spirit of Christmas carols. We sat in silent meditation. Although the singing went off well enough, here and there was a man sitting, looking into the hymnal but not uttering a word. His thoughts were elsewhere. As the organist softly glided into "Stille Nacht," the men began humming, and some sang. After the third stanza the benediction was pronounced.

We sat in silence for at least five minutes. You see, every man was thinking of his loved ones, his children. They had much to think about in terms of what had happened during the previous years. At least some of the men in that small group of thirteen had helped along in the planning the war that took millions of lives and brought misery to the whole world. I am firmly convinced that some of those men were much ashamed of what they had brought upon the world. Now they saw their big cities and their own homes destroyed and their loved ones killed as a result of something they had started. I thought of the words "Pride goeth before a fall."

How the mighty went down! How the great men of the German *Reich* went down! Here they sat mumbling their own prayers, some asking God's forgiveness in the name of the onetime Babe of Bethlehem. In the face of the trial going on they knew their lives and deeds were being weighed in the scales of justice. At the close of that simple service, as I wished each man the peace of Christmas, the peace that comes over a person when Jesus comes into his penitent heart, almost to a man their expressions were: "This may be our last Christmas."

The guards in the rear of our small chapel seemed a little more tender as they escorted the men back to their cells. It was Christmas Eve. It was Holy Night.,

By Henry F. Gerecke, *This Day Magazine*, December 1951

DECEMBER 2023 STEWARDS FOR CHRIST

FLOWERS

Dec. 3 Dick & Jan Dommers
Dec. 10 Ray & Sandy Kruger
Dec. 17 Bob & Sandy Klose
Dec. 24 Pastor & Cyndi Heithold
Dec. 31 Robyn Luevano

HOSTS

Dec. 3 Megan & James Bowman
Dec. 10
Dec. 17 Marvin & Joyce Bunker
Dec. 24 Allen & Belinda Burmeister
Dec. 31 Pastor Kerry & Ruth Buttke

DECEMBER ALTAR COMMITTEE

Christine Schlehuser & Beverly Van Duyn

DECEMBER ATTENDANCE

Hannah Keeler

DECEMBER 2023 STEWARDS FOR CHRIST CONTINUED

ELDERS

Dec. 3 Jim Wilkes
Dec. 6 Jim Wilkes (Wed. Advent)
Dec. 10 Robert Rentschler
Dec. 13 Jim Wilkes (Wed. Advent)
Dec. 17 Matt Anderson
Dec. 20 Jim Wilkes (Wed. Advent)
Dec. 24 Jim Wilkes
Dec. 24 Jim Wilkes (Christmas Eve)
Dec. 25 Jim Wilkes (Christmas Day)
Dec. 31 Robert Rentschler
Dec. 31 ??(New's Eve)

READERS

Dec. 3 Lola Ableidinger & Susan Kelly
Dec. 6 Vicki Leonard & Hannah Keeler
(Wed. Advent)
Dec. 10 Shirley Enyeart & Lewis Thomas
Dec. 13 Yvonne Steeby & Cheryl Sandenaw
(Wed. Advent)
Dec. 17 Ruth Wilkes & Kelly Thomas
Dec. 20 Cheryl Sandenaw & Yvonne Steeby
(Wed. Advent)
Dec. 24 Jill Clark & Hannah Keeler
Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve Program)
Dec. 25 Gerald Moore & Dick Dommers
(Christmas Day)
Dec. 31 Vicki Leonard & Shirley Enyeart
Dec. 31 ??(New's Eve)

MUSIC

Dec. 3 Lola Ableidinger
Dec. 6 Cyndi Heithold (Wed. Advent)
Dec. 10 Lola Ableidinger
Dec. 13 Cyndi Heithold (Wed. Advent)
Dec. 17 Lisa Cramm
Dec. 20 Cyndi Heithold (Wed. Advent)
Dec. 24 Lola Heithold
Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve)
Dec. 25 (Christmas Day)
Dec. 31
Dec. 31 (New's Eve)

USHERS

Dec. 5 Tom Blackmon, Jim Fladhammer
Larry & Beverly Van Duyn
Dec. 12 Marvin Bunker, Susan Kelly
Glen & Christine Schlehuser
Dec. 19 Robert & Trey Johnson
Bob & Tammy Thede
Dec. 26 Bob & Sandy Klose
Gerald Moore & Irvin Torres
Dec. 31 Volunteers

SOUND TECH

Dec. 3 Ben Clark
Dec. 6 Ben Clark(Wed. Advent)
Dec. 10 Bob Klose
Dec. 13 Bob Klose (Wed. Advent)
Dec. 17 Matt Anderson
Dec. 20 Matt Anderson (Wed. Advent)
Dec. 24 Jim Kline
Dec. 24 Jim Kline (Christmas Eve)
Dec. 25 Ben Clark(Christmas Day)
Dec. 31 Bob Klose
Dec. 31 Bob Klose (New's Eve)

TELLERS

Dec. 3 Joyce Macon & Bob Klose
Dec. 6 Yvonne Steeby & Becky Worley
(Wed. Advent)
Dec. 10 Shirley Enyeart & Vicki Leonard
Dec. 13 Dick Dommers & Megan Bowman
(Wed. Advent)
Dec. 17 Cheryl Sandenaw & Linde Van Cleave
Dec. 20 Lola Ableidinger & Nora Sotak
(Wed. Advent)
Dec. 24 Sandy Klose & Susan Kelly
Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve) no offering
Dec. 25 Joyce Macon & Bob Klose
(Christmas Day)
Dec. 31 Yvonne Steeby & Becky Worley
Dec. 31 Shirley Enyeart & Vicki Leonard
(New's Eve)

