

St. John's Lutheran Church



St. John's
Lutheran Church
& School

December 2019 Eagle Newsletter



The Miracle of Christmas

Matthew 1:20-21

²⁰ "...that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

From the Pastor: Each month we will be reading a chapter of the Bible together in our official meetings at St. John's. The congregation is also invited to join in the readings in your own personal devotions. The aim of this practice is to get back to the basics of Scripture, and hear its words in context and in larger chunks than the typical verse or two proof passages.

As you read, simply listen and reflect, without any other commentary. At the end of the month in my Eagle newsletter article, I will offer up a brief reflection of my own.

Reflections on Galatians 5

Freedom is the goal of Christ's redemptive work. "For freedom Christ has set us free," St. Paul writes. But as the Israelites continued to look back longingly to their captivity in Egypt, so we also are inclined to look back to the slavery of the Law with rose-colored glasses. Freedom can be frightening; Law provides security. But the security of the Law is a mist. It evaporates and reveals itself to be an oppressor. This is not because of a deficiency in the Law, but a deficiency in ourselves.

This is why St. Paul warns us not to let freedom be an opportunity for the flesh. Licentiousness is as cruel an oppressor as legalism. The problem on both ends is our human flesh, which remains sinful and inclined to sin even after conversion, new life, and the forgiveness of sins.

Ironically, this is seen most pointedly among God's people. "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another." Ouch!

In the end, the forgiveness of sins is not simply to free us from the Law or its curse, but to bring us into a new life in the Spirit. Paul records a laundry list of works of the flesh. But in contrast to these inward-focused attitudes are the fruits of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

The Law has no restriction for a person who lives by the Spirit.

Pastor Ehrhard

Holiday Schedule:

December 4th at 4:30PM: Advent Evening Prayer

7PM 3rd-8th grade Christmas program

December 11th at 4:30PM: Advent Evening Prayer

7PM Preschool-2nd grade Christmas program

December 18th at 4:30PM: Advent Evening Prayer

7PM Choral Vespers

A brief Midweek Eucharist will follow the 4:30PM services in Advent for any who wish to receive the Lord's Supper.

December 24th at 4:30PM and 11PM: Christmas Eve Services

December 25th at 9:30AM: Christmas Day Service

December 31st at 6PM: New Year's Eve Service



*From the
Pastor's
Desk*

What's Up in Worship?

A Service of Light

One of the oldest hymns of the Christian Church, other than the hymns found in Scripture itself, is called the *Phos Hilaron*. It is mentioned in the fourth century, but likely existed long before that time. It was a hymn for the evening, as the Christians lit their candles and lamps at sunset and remembered that Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome, as the Gospel for Christmas says (John 1:5).

The hymn was originally in the Greek language, but is found in two different English translations in *Lutheran Service Book*. The first is in the service of Evening Prayer—"Joyous light of glory." We will use this service for our Advent services at 4:30 p.m. this Advent season.

The second place is hymn #888.

*O gladsome Light, O Grace
Of God the Father's face,
Eternal splendor wearing:
Celestial, holy, blest,
Our Savior Jesus Christ,
Joyful in Thine appearing!*

*As daylight turns to night,
We see the fading light,
Our evening hymn outpouring,
Father of might unknown,
Thee, His incarnate Son,
And Holy Ghost adoring.*

*To Thee of right belongs
All praise of holy songs,
O Son of God, Lifegiver;
Thee, therefore, O Most High,
The world doth glorify
And shall exalt forever.*



In the old hymnal (TLH, 1941) this hymn was in the Christmas section. While it is an appropriate hymn for any time of the year, Christmas is when it really shines. This year, we will use this hymn in a ceremonial candle-lighting for the Christmas Eve candle-light service along with some responses for Christmas and a prayer of thanksgiving for light before we close with Silent Night. I think it will be a very poignant moment, and I hope you feel the same way!

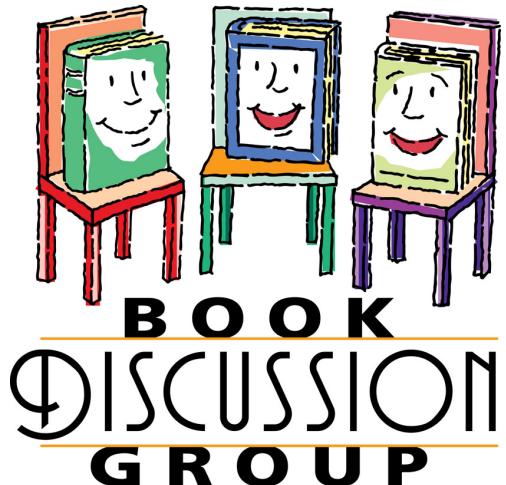
To familiarize yourself with this hymn, you can listen on Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ha4nxRlqqOE>

(Make sure that you have the right tune - O Gladsome Light Nunc Dimittis)

Pastor Ehrhard

Ladies Book Club: The Ladies Book Club will not be meeting in December because our meeting night falls on Christmas Eve. We will, however, be reading Chicago: A Novel by David Mamet. This book is a page turner about a reporter in Chicago during the 1920s who falls in love with an Irish girl. After she is killed, he investigates the mob to find her killer.

In January, we will be reading Sleeping Murder by Agatha Christie. This is a murder mystery where Miss Marple solves the "perfect crime" committed many years earlier in an old home newly purchased by a young couple.



Please join us on Tuesday, January 28th at 7PM in St. John's Conference Room for some refreshments and good conversation.

From the Principal: Did you know that St. John's students serve others throughout the school year? As I write this, St. John's students will be setting up the gym for the Thanksgiving Dinner. The students will also serve by once again presenting the story of the birth of Jesus during the first two weeks of Advent. Please join us on December 4th and 11th at 7PM.

Dan Green – Principal

The Dorcas Society: Thank you to everyone who purchased crafts and treats from our bake sale. We hope you enjoyed them. If you would like to join us for our Christmas party on Tuesday, December 3rd, please contact Debbie Wheeler or any other member of Dorcas. We meet at 6:30PM in the Fellowship Room - sing, eat, and make merry.

Our Annual Children's Bazaar is Friday, December 13th. The school children pick out Christmas gifts from 25 cents to 10 dollars for their family, teachers, and friends.

We wish you and your families a Blessed and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Youth Group: November Open Gym and Game Night was a success - Pastor even had a few magic card tricks up his sleeve.

December Youth will be hosting Caroling on Sunday, December 15th, 2019 - see our flyer included in this Eagle.

Watch the Youth announcements for exciting things happening in 2020.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from our Youth and Youth Board.



Here We Come A-Caroling

Hosted by Youth Group

EVERYONE is invited to our Caroling Event

SUNDAY, December 15, 2019

Meet in the Fellowship Room at 3:00 p.m.

Caroling in the neighborhood
will begin at 3:15

Return to St. John's for Treats
and Hot Chocolate

For More Information Contact Kathi Deahl at 312-217-1219 by text
or email kathi.reardon.deahl@gmail.com



BREAKFAST *with* SANTA

**8:00AM TO 11:AM
DECEMBER 7, 2019
ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL
4939 W MONTROSE AVE
CHICAGO, IL 60641**

\$8 for adults and \$6 for kids for all you can eat pancakes!
Come and join us.

St. John's Lutheran
Church Annual

Cookie Walk

& Gift Bazaar

December 11, 2019

**3:00 pm to 6:00 pm
& 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm**

**4939 W Montrose Ave
www.stjohnschicago.org**



DECEMBER

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

Pray For Us Calendar

ADVENT: THE SECOND COMING — DECEMBER 1–15

Advent means coming. We anticipate the promised return of Christ as the judge of the world. We look with hope to the day of the resurrection of all flesh, when those who believe in Christ will rise to everlasting life.

The Church waits for the Second Coming in repentance, hope and faith. For the following, we pray "Lord, have mercy."

1. For hearts that imitate the generosity and graciousness of Jesus. Pray that God's people would be eager to show forth the love of God through their good works for their neighbor.

2. That the Lord would preserve His Word and Sacraments in our midst, so that we may be kept strong in the one, true faith until Christ's return.

3. That the people of God would be faithful in their attendance of the Divine Service, where God

strengthens our faith toward Him and our steadfast love for one another.

4. That all people would fear God and find hope in His gracious forgiveness through Christ.

5. For all who do not believe in Jesus, that they might hear the Gospel and believe.

6. For all Christians, that we might repent of our sins and prepare for Christ's return.

7. For steadfast faith as the world writhes and groans in anticipation of the day of judgment.

8. For the ministers of the Word, that they would be faithful to their calling.

9. For the Church's missionaries, that through them the Word would go forth into the world with power.

10. For our government, that we might live peaceable and quiet lives.

11. For parents, that they would see their role in raising children as a holy calling from God in these last days.

12. For patience, as we wait for Christ's coming, that we might believe God is not slow in keeping promises, but patient.

13. For those who mourn the loss of loved ones, that the promise of the resurrection may be their hope.

14. For those who are dying, that they may entrust their whole lives unto God who keeps them.

15. For the coming of Christ. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.



PHOTO: LCMS COMMUNICATIONS/ERIK M. LUNSFORD

DECEMBER Pray For Us Calendar

ADVENT: THE INCARNATION — DECEMBER 16–31

During Advent we rejoice that God sent His Son to be the redeemer of the world. We gather with all Christians to celebrate this gracious gift from our heavenly Father. We trust in Christ alone as our Savior.

The Church gathers to thank God and ask for faith to trust in His gift of a Savior. For the following, we pray "Lord, have mercy."

16. For faithful reading of Old Testament, that all who read may see Jesus as the promised Savior.

17. For opportunities to proclaim the Gospel in this season. When the world is open to hearing the story of Christmas, may we be unashamed in our witness.

18. That all Christians might see the needs of their neighbor and love with the love of Christ.

19. For those who only attend worship at Christmas, that the Spirit would work faith through the hearing of the Word.

20. That we may believe the truth of the two natures of Christ.

21. For St. Thomas, apostle. That with him we might believe and confess that Jesus is Lord and God.

22. For faithful readings of the New Testament. That all the words of the apostles and evangelists may result in faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

23. For pastors who serve as Christ's under-shepherds in our midst. That they might proclaim the truth of the Good News of Christmas.

24. Rejoice that Jesus is Immanuel. God is with us to save us.

25. Rejoice in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen His glory — glory as the only-begotten of God.

26. Thank God for St. Stephen, the first Christian



Martyr. That we might also serve God with our lives — thoughts, words and deeds.

27. That God would grant us faith to believe that He comes to us in the Means of Grace.

28. For all those who face depression and desperation at this time of year. That God's gift of love in Christ would gladden their hearts.

29. For all those who travel. That God would grant them safety.

30. That all would know and believe in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus for the world's salvation.

31. That the Lord would abundantly bless the efforts of the LCMS and its partners in the coming years. That the Gospel is the primary focus of all that is done and proclaimed.

Congregations and individuals are invited to copy these pages for newsletters or other distribution. Download at lcms.org/prayforus or call 888-843-5267 to request a copy.



PHOTO: LCMS COMMUNICATIONS/ERIK M. LUNSFORD

December 1st

Alexander Sobiek
 Katie Van Tilburg
 Brandi Wheeler

December 2nd

Kent Faust

December 5th

Tim Dunn

December 8th

Judith Knueppel
 Lisa O'Hara
 Lori Pahlke

December 10th

Caitlin Costello
 Cheryl Fasshauer
 Don Lauer
 Debbie O'Connor

December 11th

George Bowman
 Larry Fasshauer

December 12th

Shawn LaFleur
 Sean O'Hara
 Anita Roderich

December 14th

Claudia Castro

December 16th

Donald Hohl

December 17th

William Brackett
 Susan Green

December 18th

Joe Rivera

December 19th

Robert Deahl

December 20th

Gloria Clarke

December 22nd

Betty Cook

December 23rd

Caleb Bohus
 Bret Straszynski

December 24th

Joanne Holmes
 Henry Knueppel
 Margie Walk-Faust

December 26th

Patricia Eggert

December 27th

Alexander Diaz
 Emily Diaz

December 30th

Larry Fasshauer

December 31st

Bradley Eggert
 Frank Speciale



BLESSINGS
 ON YOUR
 BIRTHDAY

Stewardship Under the Cross, God's Word on How We Use His Gifts

by HR Curtis

Overcoming the Fear of Tithing

Your heart will always go where you put God's money.

Jesus said that where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. As the hymn verse has it: We give Thee but Thine own. God is the ultimate giver of our incomes: all these gifts come from him. To acknowledge this gift and our dependence on the Lord, God calls us to give a portion of our income back to Him for the maintenance of His Church. Indeed, the Scriptures are very clear: God calls His people to give at least a tithe of their income (10% of whatever "comes in") back to Him at their place of worship.

This calls for faith. Do we trust God's Word? Do we trust that what He says is for our benefit, not our harm? **If you have never tithed before, it can be a scary proposition. Give 10% of my income away!?** You've got to be kidding. But God doesn't ever kid us in His Word. Instead, He tells us how to live holy and blessed lives full of peace and contentment. Consider these Scriptures:

Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' In tithes and offerings.⁹ You are under a curse-- the whole nation of you-- because you are robbing me.¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it" (Malachi 3:8-10).

On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as each one of you may prosper (1 Corinthians 16:2).

But just as you excel in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us --see that you also excel in this grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:7).

The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work (2 Cor. 9:6-8).

We do not make God poor when we fail to give money to Him properly, but we *do* make ourselves poor if we do not give according to the standards He sets for us in His Word, the Bible. God does not need our money, but we need to give the way the Bible tells us to in order to overcome the negative influence money and the things of this world can have on us.

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God will never tell us to do something that will be to our harm – He loves us too much for that. Jesus gave His life on the cross for me. He loves me and knows what is best for me – so I can know that what He says about stewardship is meant for my benefit. He wants my heart to be with Him – and my heart will always follow where I put God's money. **Tithing is not easy: it is godly. It will change your life.** Stepping out in faith always does. You may have to change your lifestyle to accommodate following God's Word in this matter. But tithing will change your life in other ways too: it will give you a peace and contentment that can only come from actually putting yourself in the hands of the Lord.

So read through those Scriptures again. Pray through the questions on the next page. And step out in faith this year with giving that is in accord with God's Word. And just see if you are not blessed in it.



A blue short-sleeved t-shirt with "ST. JOHN'S" in a large, bold, black font, with "Eagles" in a smaller, italicized font below it.

A black zip-up hoodie with "ST. JOHN'S" printed vertically down the left side in a white, stylized font.

A black short-sleeved t-shirt with a circular logo on the front. The logo contains an eagle and the text "ST. JOHN'S" at the top and "EAGLES ESTABLISHED 1903" at the bottom.

The St. John's Clothing site is now open.
ST. JOHN'S SPIRIT WEAR

Place your order before December 8th for Christmas
https://www.waistup.com/saint_johns_eagles/shop/home.