



St. John's
Lutheran Church
& School

December 2022 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."



Christmas for 12 Days:

In the world of commerce, the Christmas season begins sometime around when the leaves begin to change color and the first products hit the shelves to remind you to buy more stuff for Christmas. As a cultural celebration, Christmas begins the day after Thanksgiving (though sometimes a little earlier if the weather's nice enough to put out the lights and decorations the week before).

The Church, though, waits. There is an Advent season, after all. For the Church, the Christmas season begins on Christmas and lasts 12 days. While it isn't wrong to shop early or to start singing carols over Thanksgiving leftovers or to put up the lights before the deep of winter, it's also good to remember that Christmas continues even after everyone's put away their Christmas jammies.

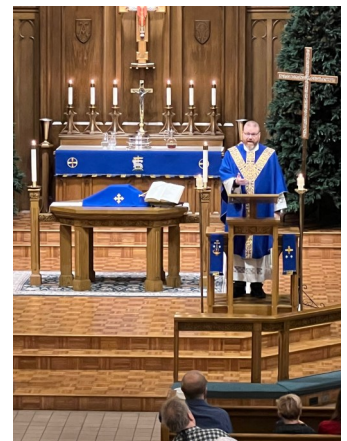
This year, Christmas falls on a Sunday, which means its Octave also falls on a Sunday. An Octave is the 8 days that follows a festival in the Church Year. There are Octaves of Easter and Pentecost, too. The Octave of Christmas is New Year's Day, but in the church it's the Feast of the Circumcision and Name of Jesus. These are the high points during the 12 days of Christmas and celebrations of the Chief Festivals of Christ.

Because the holidays also fall on Sundays, our evening services for both weeks will transfer to Saturday. Christmas Eve services will be on Saturday, December 24th at 4:30PM and 11PM. New Year's Eve services (or, the Eve of the Circumcision and Name of Jesus) will be on Saturday, December 31st at 6 p.m. (our regular weekend evening service time).

Don't let Christmas end early! Celebrate the whole season and worship the newborn King on the first day and the eighth day.

And while I'm at it, I'll make an early plug for the Epiphany on Friday, January 6th at 7 p.m. (our week-night evening service time).

In Christ,
under the cross,
Pastor Ehrhard



Ladies Book Club: In December The Ladies Book Club will be reading A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles. This beautifully written novel is set during the Bolshevik revolution and the years that follow. In 1922 Count Alexander Rostov is sentenced by a tribunal to house arrest at the Metropol, a grand hotel near the Kremlin. He must now live in an attic room during one the tumultuous periods of Russian history. He becomes friends with a young girl which ends up changing his life. The Ladies Book Club is still meeting via ZOOM on the last Tuesday of the month at 7:30PM. Contact Betty Carey if you would like to join us.



From the Principal: The month of December is filled with many different activities at St. John's. St. John's PTL is hosting an all you can eat pancake and sausage breakfast from 8AM – 12PM (noon) on Saturday, December 3rd. Some St. John's students will showcase their musical talents during the breakfast and there will also be a craft fair. Please consider joining us for the breakfast.

Pastor Ehrhard will be conducting Advent Services during our regular chapel time of 8:45AM. Congregation members are welcome to attend with the school children as we prepare our hearts once again for Christmas. Please consider joining the school children for chapel on Wednesdays beginning November 30th.

The St. John's School Christmas Programs will be held on Sunday, December 11th. There will be two services with one beginning at 3PM and the second beginning at 6PM. I invite you to join us as the children once again share the story of our Savior's birth.

Thank you for your prayers and support!

Principal Green





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.



PHOTOS: 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.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
MISSOURI SYNOD

PHOTO: LCMS COMMUNICATIONS/ERIK M. LUNSFORD

December 1st

Alexander Sobiek
Katie VanTilburg

December 2nd

Kent Faust
Kyla McLemore

December 4th

Anna Ehrhard

December 5th

Valentine Peters

December 8th

Judy Knueppel
Lisa O'Hara
Lori Pahlke
Amanda Yamate

December 10th

Cheryl Fasshauer
Debbie O'Connor

December 11th

George Bowman
Patrick Stinar

December 12th

Anita Roderich
Anna Wier

December 14th

Claudia Castro

December 17th

William Brackett
Susan Green

December 19th

Robert Deahl

December 20th

Gloria Clarke

December 22nd

Evan Foley

December 23rd

Caleb Bohus

December 24th

Margie Walk-Faust

December 25th

Decker Clemente

December 26th

Patricia Eggert

December 27th

Alexander Diaz
Emily Diaz

December 29th

Amanda Przybylski

December 31st

Bradley Eggert

Happy
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.

