



St. John's
Lutheran Church
& School

December 2023 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:

Body Ethics

How do you treat your own body? While our affluent Western culture encourages habits that are not particularly good for bodies, most people think it's important to take care of their bodies. Some people go to great lengths to tune their bodies for optimum performance. They eat right, they exercise regularly. The rest of us, though, still want to keep our bodies in decent health. We all want what's best for our bodies, right?

But that desire extends only to the surface of our bodies. We treat ourselves and our bodies well, but often at the expense of others. As we envision ourselves as encapsulated in our bodies, the rest of the world becomes objects for us to use to build ourselves up. This can happen in crass and cruel ways, such as throwing your litter on the ground for someone else to pick up, cheating someone out of their money, physically assaulting someone else. But acts of altruism can also mask exploitation. Giving to charity may be to assuage the guilt of questionable business practices. Feeding the homeless may be a cover for ignoring your own family.

All of us are like this. The good we do is ultimately for our own benefit, to improve the situation within the boundaries of our own bodies. But all that changed when the Son of God took on a body of His own. He gave Himself fully and completely without remainder into an infant body. He grew in wisdom and stature in the body and when the time came, He gave that body over as a sacrifice.

But in giving Himself over into a body, He elevated that body to a divine life. As we participate in His body by eating the bread and drinking the cup, we become part of His body. And other people also participate in the same body and become a part of it as well. That means that the good we do for others who are members of the body is good for our own bodies. For "we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (Rom. 12:5).

To treat your body right doesn't only mean to eat well and get the proper exercise; it also means to do good for the other members of the body. Especially for the weakest and most insignificant members. That's what being part of a body is all about.

In Christ,
under the cross,
Pastor Ehrhard



*From the
Pastor's
Desk*

Ladies Book Club: In December The Ladies Book Club will be reading Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt. This heartwarming story delves into family and community told through the eyes of Marcellus the Octopus. The Ladies Book Club continues to meet via ZOOM on the last Tuesday of the month at 7:30PM. Please contact Betty Carey if you would like to be included.



From the Principal: I am not quite sure how it happened, but December is here and 2023 is coming to an end. December always seems to bring so much excitement with it as we busily prepare for the Christmas season.

The PTL is excited to host A Very, Merry Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, December 2nd from 8AM - Noon. Please join us for pancakes, live entertainment and more. Our students are excited for you to join them in worship at our Christmas programs on Sunday, December 10th at 2PM (PS3 - 2nd Grade) and 4PM (3rd-8th Grade).

Most importantly, we pray that as you enjoy the excitement of this season, you remember what 2 Corinthians 9:15 reminds us about Christmas - Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift! What a special gift we have received from our loving Heavenly Father when He sent us His Son.

We are very thankful for the gift of His Son and the opportunity we have to share that gift with our students and their families each and every day. We are thankful for the different gifts and abilities that our faculty and staff bring to St. John's as they joyfully work with the students. We are thankful for the gifts that the HK Endowment Fund provides for our school as they support our teachers, offer scholarships to our students and fund different projects around the building. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and pray for God's richest blessings into the New Year!

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. - Isaiah 9:6

2023–2024 Advent-Christmas-Epiphany Schedule:

Advent Midweek Evening Prayer: Wednesdays, Dec. 6th, 13th, 20th at 7PM

Those who cannot or do not wish to attend an evening service are invited to join us in the morning for school chapel on Dec. 6th, 13th and 21st (note that the final morning service will be on Thursday) at 8:45AM. School chapel will follow the same Advent Midweek themes, where we will commemorate St. Nicholas, St. Lucia, and Katarina von Bora Luther, and explore Christmas themes related to their lives of faith.

Advent 4 Divine Service: Sunday, Dec. 24th at 9AM

Christmas Eve: Sunday, Dec. 24th at 4:30PM

Christmas Midnight: Sunday, Dec. 24th at 11PM

The Nativity of Our Lord: Monday, Dec. 25th at 9AM

First Sunday after Christmas: Sunday, Dec. 31st at 9AM

New Year's Eve: Sunday, Dec. 31st at 6PM

The Epiphany of Our Lord: Saturday, Jan. 6th at 6PM

The Baptism of Our Lord Sunday, Jan. 7th at 9AM (No evening service on Jan. 7th)



Poinsettias

In order to enhance the beauty of the chancel for Christmas, Poinsettia orders are now being taken. These plants will be delivered to church, placed in the chancel, and may be picked up after the last service on Christmas morning.

(Plants may be picked up the following week in the office.)

The cost of one plant is \$15.00. If you wish to place an order, please fill out the form below and return it to the office or the Altar Guild window in the narthex.

Given by: _____
 In Memory of: _____
 In Honor of: _____
 Will pick up: yes ____ no ____
 Phone # _____
 Paid? ____yes ____Cash ____Check # _____





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 Van Tilburg

December 2nd

Kent Faust & Kyla McLemore

December 3rd

Brittany Potts

December 4th

Anna Ehrhard

December 5th

Valentine Peters

December 8th

Judith 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 17th

William Brackett

December 19th

Robert Deahl

December 24th

Margie Walk-Faust

December 25th

Decker Clemente

December 26th

Patricia Eggert

December 27th

Alexander Diaz & Emily Diaz

December 29th

Amanda Przybylski

December 30th

Larry Fasshauer

December 31st

Bradley Eggert

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.

