



## Share the Wonder

PASTOR JEFF BROWNING

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### *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year*

Andy Williams' iconic holiday song seems to get stuck in my head every year around this time. I blame our preferred radio station, who started with the Christmas music on Thanksgiving Day. Right now all of my car rides are filled with dreams of white Christmases, roasting chestnuts, and red-nosed reindeer.

But make no mistake, I don't mind at all. Right now is indeed, in my humble opinion, the most wonderful time of the year. I'm one of those sorts who loves pretty much everything about this season leading up to the celebration of Christmas. The music, the trees, the perpetual smell of evergreen, the decorations, the food, Christmas shows and Christmas films —"wonderful" seems to capture the mood for so many.

Of course as the church, we recognize the One who brings all of the wonder into this wonderful time of the year. As we light our Advent candles and sing, "O Come Emmanuel," we prepare our hearts and minds to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. God Himself came into our world to change everything. Jesus was born for an ultimate purpose. His destiny was to die and rise again, changing despair into hope, grief into joy, darkness into light and death to everlasting life.

We have so many opportunities for you and your families to share the wonder of Jesus Christ in the days ahead, including:

### *Night in Bethlehem*

For so many families in this part of the

world, Night in Bethlehem has become a highlight of the season, capturing the true meaning of Christmas. Plan to come out and be a part of the wonder on Friday, December 8 and Saturday, December 9. Bring your kids and your grandkids. Invite your friends and neighbors. Join us to experience the re-creation of that holy night when Jesus was born.

### *Christmas Worship*

Of course the culmination of the season takes place on Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24. Christmas worship gatherings always prove to be memorable and meaningful. We have worship services at 10 am, 3 pm, 5 pm, and 7 pm and a special bonus Christmas service on Saturday, December 23, at 5:30 pm. As always, our musicians and choirs are hard at work to capture that sense of wonder and awe as we gather in the presence of our Newborn King.

### *Give*

In response to all that Jesus has given and continues to give us, He instills in us a desire to give. If You're looking for special ways to give this season, consider volunteering at Night in Bethlehem, joining our **Christmas Caroling Group**, or helping with our **Sunday School Christmas pageant**. There are always myriad opportunities for you to get involved and give your time in service to the church.

As I mentioned last month, we continue to collect **Target Gift cards, nonperishable food items, and Christmas gifts** for children in our community. In addition, proceeds from our Christmas Card and greens and

*Please turn to page 2*



## Message from the President

LAURA BAUER

Christmas is nearing. I remember when I was little—maybe seven years old—Christmas seemed so far away each year, the wait was agonizing. I longed for it to be Christmas again, to have the Christmas tree, the special cookies, family gatherings, and of course—gifts.

After several decades of adulthood, Christmas seems to come faster each year. My Christmas memories now center more around church. The fun of Advent Night with my children—(it's back, plan to attend!), the anticipation of Advent, and of course the moving beauty of Christmas Eve services. The candles glowing along the aisles, the scented greens throughout the sanctuary, the very large trees adorned with Chrismons, and the celebratory stoles worn by Pastor and his helpers are all firmly stored in my heart and my mind.

The music of Christmas at Resurrection is both nostalgic and stirring, with the ringing of the bells, the voices of our choirs, and the talents of our musicians on display. Getting to sing familiar Christmas hymns, loudly with others so my voice can blend (be hidden?) with others, is another joy of Christmas.

Looking at these more recent memories, I realize these church-based memories are important to me and do not exist from my childhood. My family did not attend Christmas services until I decided I wanted to go--needed to go—about 25 years ago.

Marking the coming and arrival of Christmas through the church is so much more memorable than the shopping, the wrapping, and the card sending. Christmas reminds us that Jesus came to light our path, to be our guide, to serve us and to teach us to serve others. This is the gift that we celebrate at Christmas and that we should celebrate every day. I hope you will join us for Christmas worship this year!

## What Do You Want to Talk About?

JOHN KINGSTON



Lively conversation at November Men's Breakfast, (left to right around the table) Vicar Peter Burch, Dr. Georges Ramalanjaona, Rolf Lohse, Patrick Curry, Gerhardt Muller, Dave Schoenfeld, Diego Ortiz, Michael Altman, Peter Rudkin, and John Kingston.

**A**t Men's Ministry, we talk about a lot of things. We talk about why people don't go to church as much anymore. We talk about what was the best day in our lives, and what was the worst. We talked a lot about Martin Luther during the 500-year anniversary of the 95 Theses.

And we find time to talk about the Mets, and can you believe what this one guy did, and let me tell you a story about.... You get the idea.

The underlying theme will always be leading a Christian life and how we can all do better at it. But that contains such a wide range of topics that we never run out of things to say when we gather once a month, almost always on the first Saturday at 8:30 a.m.

We always want to hear new voices. We

are probably the most relaxed group of guys you are ever going to want to meet. The proof of that? The level of sharing we do with one another about our walk with Christ. It's the type of thing that occurs only if there is trust and fellowship and camaraderie. We have that.

There is so much social commentary today on people's lack of human connections. It is a serious problem. The Resurrection Men's Ministry is one tiny piece of the battle against that.

And if you come down and don't feel the same thing that the regular attendees feel, the thing that keeps bringing them back, well, at least you got a free bacon, egg and cheese sandwich out of it, and maybe a Dunkin' Munchkin also. Or two. But we think if you do come down, you'll like it and come back again. Please give us a try. 

## Share the Wonder

*Continued from page 1*

poinsettia sale go directly toward our **Christian Concern Fund**. This fund is used solely for the purpose of helping people who are struggling with basic living expenses. As we enter the cold months, such assistance proves to be a great blessing. You can also always make a donation directly to the Christian Concern Fund. All of the gift cards, the food donations, the gifts, and the funds go directly to those who are

in great need. Whatever and however you can contribute, you are helping make this season feel a bit more like the most wonderful time of the year for someone in need.

I'm looking forward to sharing the true Wonder of the season in the weeks ahead.

Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas to all of you. 

## Chances for Children: Hope for Haiti Mission Update

ROXANNE OELLRICH, Board Member, C4C

*“Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial.”*

*James 1:12*

**D**espite ongoing gang violence, kidnapping, political instability and rampant inflation, Chances for



Children enjoy a meal at C4C's Model site.

Children (C4C) continues its work there successfully. Chances for Children is a Christian organization committed to providing hope for the children and people of Haiti, the poorest

country in the western hemisphere. Chances for Children's painstakingly selected Haitian staff of over 160 provide skillfully, lovingly, and safely-run programs with minimal day-to-day oversight from American staff. American assistants remain unable to safely travel there since my last visit to hire Haitian doctors and nurses to continue our medical work there nearly 18 months ago.

C4C continues to lead Haitian communities from survival to stability and ultimately sustainability through orphan care, feeding programs, medical/dental care, education, church/community development, agriculture, and economic programs. Working in collaboration with Feed My Starving Children, C4C's staff courageously picks up food from the dockyards of the capital, Port Au Prince

and then distributes the food via motorcycle on back roads. Currently 8,036 children are being fed through C4C, which for many is the only meal they will eat that day, via distribution at its 15 rural church sites and through 10 partner organizations.

Resurrection's generosity supports the feeding of 510 children in Model, a church community where they are fed three days a week while learning of God's love. Local workers are employed to transport and cook the food.

Sharon Meyer, Resurrection's mission chair, and I visited this site in 2019 and witnessed the poverty and need firsthand, but as Pastor Bourdeau (Model) reported in a recent communication, the need is even greater of late as families fight to feed their children. Due to the gang violence and political unrest C4C has not been able to establish agriculture and economic programs in Model designed to lead to sustainability, however it has successfully done so in four other remote villages despite the deteriorating conditions.



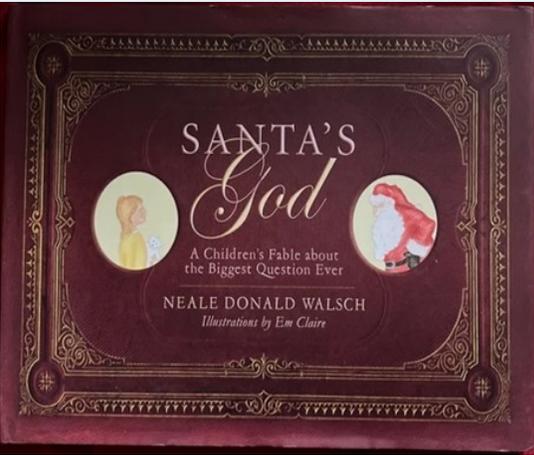
Roxanne (left) and Sharon serve food to the children at Model (2019).

As a Christ-centered organization, land has been purchased to build another church and many of our church sites report new members. The large church in Kenscoff where our compound

containing the creche

and medical/dental clinic is located, reported 27 new members and 10 weddings over the most recent 4 months alone.

Thanks be to God that through Resurrection's ongoing support so many children are able to continue to persevere as C4C shares the hope and love of Christ throughout rural Haiti. 



### Santa's God by Neale Donald Walsch

In my closet of Christmas decoration boxes, is a box of Christmas storybooks I've collected over the years. A newer-ish book I've added is *Santa's God*, by Neale Donald Walsch, the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Conversations with God*.

This fable tells the story of eight-year old Melinda, who desperately wants to meet Santa Claus. She tries to stay up on Christmas Eve every year, but always falls asleep. However, this year she is determined to meet him, and she does.

When she is face-to-face with Santa, she has many questions. She tells Santa about the kids in her class and how they are different religions and pray to different gods like Allah, Yahweh, Jehovah, and the Lord. She asks him, "Which God do you pray to, Santa? Who is the real God?"

Santa tenderly answers her question but in doing so delivers a message that is heartwarming and full of insight for both Melinda and the reader.

I haven't re-read this book in a few years, but plan to make it the first one we pull from the Christmas box this year.

And, I just ordered a copy on Amazon that I am donating to the church library, in case anyone would like to borrow it. Merry Christmas!

*Review by Kimberly Murphy*

Teaching Kids to Help Others

JEANNE BICE, Pre-K Teacher, Blue Group

As Christmas approaches, the Blue Group children love to talk about toys they hope Santa will bring them. Some are hoping for Barbies, some for Legos, and some for cars.

Although the class might not agree on which is the best toy, they all believe that every child should have a toy. For the past few years, Melissa Katinas (Assistant Teacher, Pre-K Blue Group) and I select a charity for the class to support. Once again, we chose the Hance Family Foundation Toy Drive. This foundation is close to Melissa and her family’s heart.

Warren and Jackie Hance started their foundation after the tragic deaths of their three young daughters, Emma, Alyson and Kate. Their charity honors their daughters’ memories by helping children. One of their events is their annual Toy Drive. Toys collected will be distributed to children in events in NYC and Long Island. Visit [hancefamilyfoundation.org](http://hancefamilyfoundation.org) to learn more.

A large wrapped box was placed by the preschool entrance. The preschool children carefully placed their donations in the box. Many thanks to Ms. Jean Diettrick, preschool teachers, families and especially Mr. Pat for their help with our Toy Drive.

Below is a photo of the Blue Group with some of the collected donations.



Prayers for Healing

DIANA AUER

As we enter the holiday season, now, perhaps more than ever, we are aware of the abundant needs of our neighbors. We hear the Salvation Army bell tolling when we enter department stores. We see the Toys for Tots boxes situated near the exits of our grocery stores. We see flyers posted in the church lobby with lists of the most needed nonperishable items.

We read heart-wrenching pleas on social media for those who have been tragically swept up in the political conflicts of warring nations. At times, these cries for help feel both deafening and as though they fall on deaf ears. Sometimes, the need feels truly overwhelming.

Yet, what about those, desperately in need, that no one talks about, or posts about, or creates a flyer about? What about all of the people who don’t have anyone advocating on their behalf? What about the people who don’t have anyone to ask to pray for them?

The Psalmist speaks to this feeling of loneliness and abandonment in Psalm 13: “How long, Lord? Will you forget

me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts...?” Thankfully, we can provide an answer of hope.

This season, let us pray for the forgotten. Those who have been discarded, written off, erased by society, friends, family or faith.

Let us pray for those who never make the prayer guide, because there is no one in their lives to add them to the list. Let us pray for those who don’t grab our attention, who remain faceless and nameless.

Let “all those we name before You in our hearts now” include those who may not be in anyone else’s hearts. Let us create a space for them, a home for them in our prayers, where we tell them that they do matter, they aren’t forgotten, and they belong with us, among the communion of saints.

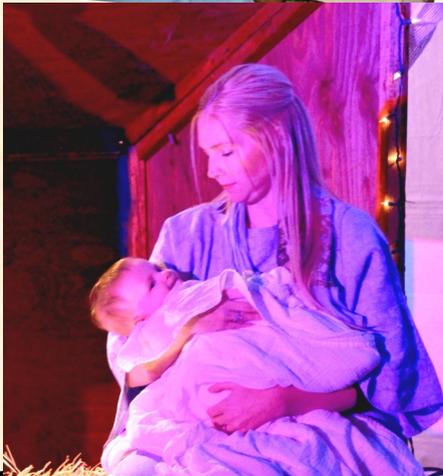
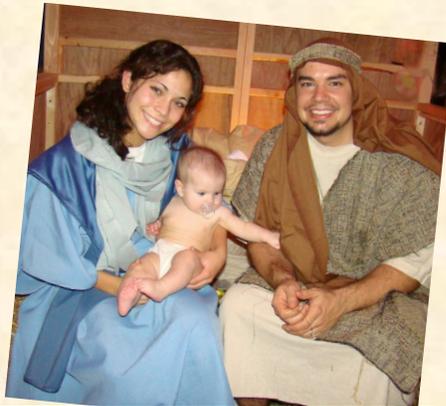


**Diana Auer** is Director of Youth & Family Ministry. She loves to sing, bake and spend time with her husband, Matt and their miniature schnauzer, Ollie.

In December 2008, Resurrection hosted its first “Night in Bethlehem”—an amazing “live” Christmas community outreach event. Since that first production, hundreds of volunteers have helped inhabit the village, cast in various roles. The main lead, of course, playing the part of Baby Jesus with the Holy Family, has been perfectly filled by a number of our youngest actors.

Be sure to come to “Bethlehem” this Dec. 8 and/or 9, and see who’s playing the star role this year.

*Photo credit: Christine Zimmerman*



## Always Thankful

**I**nspired by Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God,” our youth and family ministry program at Resurrection continues to gather with thankfulness in our hearts!

This past month, our youth and family ministry program has kept its focus squarely on being grateful and thankful, and on working toward ensuring that these sentiments continue well beyond the holiday season.

### Friendsgiving Feast

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, we had a fantastic “Friendsgiving” gathering for our middle and high school students. Each attendee was encouraged to bring a dish to share, so that we could all gather and have a bountiful meal together. There were all the fixin’s—cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, sweet potato casserole, cornbread, corn casserole, mac and cheese, roasted carrots, fresh corn, turkey, stuffing and more dessert than you could ever imagine!

We began our time together by discussing one of my favorite Bible stories, Jesus feeding the 5,000. We discussed the story, and talked about how God always provides. Afterwards, we each wrote a Thanksgiving card to someone special, to thank them for all they’ve done for us, and all the ways



Middle and High School youth share a festive Friendsgiving.

they’ve enriched our lives. Once we finished writing our cards, it was time to pray and eat! The kids had a great time, and it was so wonderful seeing so many of our youth gathered around the table.

### A Meaningful Christmas

We are looking forward to another meaningful Christmas season, as we, once again, partner with our friends at the New Life Center to help purchase Christmas gifts for children and adults with special needs. A 2020 survey found that 1 in 5 children in America wouldn’t receive any Christmas presents that year. Forecasts indicate that this number has only increased since then.

This year, we have agreed to provide gifts for over 85 individuals in need of some Christmas cheer. This wonderful program will help to ensure that all people, regardless of financial con-

straints, will have gifts to open on Christmas morning. The names and wish lists will be posted on the bulletin board outside of the copy room in time for Thanksgiving. All gifts must be wrapped, labeled, and returned to Resurrection by December 10<sup>th</sup> to ensure that they can be delivered to the New Life Center and distributed to the recipients in time for Christmas.

We also look forward to two wonderful Resurrection traditions for the Christmas season: Advent Night and Christmas caroling. We wel-

come back our “traditional” Advent Night potluck on Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30pm. All are invited to participate as we create a fun Advent-themed craft, and everyone is encouraged to bring a shareable dish for our potluck. Please sign up in the church lobby if you’d like to participate.

Then, on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 2pm, we will be visiting some of our homebound members to sing Christmas carols and spread the holiday cheer! It is such a great opportunity to bring the excitement of Christmas into the homes of our fellow members and remind them that they are loved by their Resurrection family! Holiday cheer is mandatory, Santa hats and jingle bells are optional!

As we eagerly await the celebration of our Savior’s birth, let us continue to share our gratitude and thanks for all that He gives, and continues to provide. 

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**CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP**

**Sunday, December 24**

Family Service, 10am & 3pm  
 Candlelight & Carols, 5pm & 7pm

**Saturday, December 23**

Candlelight & Carols, 5:30pm

**LCMS-AD: Who Are We?**

**A**re you aware that as a member of Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, you also belong to the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)? So, "what does that mean to me, you might say. It means that we are part of something bigger and greater than ourselves.

The LCMS has 35 districts throughout the United States, partner congregations in 39 countries, and missionaries throughout the world. In our own Atlantic District, we have 92 congregations. In my next series, I will introduce you to the church at large and to our sister churches, here on Long Island and within New York state. They are worth getting to know.

Resurrection has just celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. You can see some of the history photos on the bulletin board in the CE lobby (the entrance by the offices). The LCMS celebrated a milestone also, with 175 years of ministry in the USA.

Fun fact: the oldest Lutheran congregation in North America is in our District. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Matthew was founded in 1643 by Dutch Lutheran immigrants. The congregation has moved several times over its 380-year existence. It is now located at the Cornerstone Center on 178 Bennett Ave., Manhattan.

Over the next year, I will also introduce you to our district and our Synod. In the meantime, I encourage you to learn more about Resurrection, who we are, what we have to offer, the programs and opportunities you can enjoy and participate in, and our missions and volunteerism.

We have turned 75, and with your help and interest, we will continue to grow. Please consider attending these upcoming opportunities:

- Men's Ministry Breakfast – Sat., Dec. 2
- Advent Potluck and Project Night – Sat., Dec. 2
- Night in Bethlehem – Fri. & Sat., Dec. 8 & 9
- Women's Ministry Christmas Party – Thu., Dec. 14
- SAIL Luncheon/Christmas Party – Fri, Dec. 15,
- Loss of a Loved One Shared – Sat., Dec. 16
- And our worship services each weekend.

May you have a blessed Christmas and a healthy New Year! 



**Ellen Farber**  
 Serves as a Deacon at Resurrection.



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The views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily held by the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection. If you have questions or comments about any content, please contact Pastor Browning.

*He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,.*

*Luke 1:32*

**OPENING:**

When the angel, Gabriel, visited Mary, he told her that she would give birth to a child. That child will be great and will be the Son of the Most High. What an awesome responsibility. When I was pregnant with both of my girls, I was very careful. However, when I was pregnant with our first born, Anastasia, I remember being extremely, extremely cautious. I did everything in my power to ensure a healthy environment for our baby. I followed a strict diet, exercised, and was very careful about ... well ... absolutely everything. Pastor and I joked that if he could have bubble-wrapped me to keep me safer, he would have done so. I can't imagine how Mary must

have been feeling about the critical importance of what she was asked to do. She must have felt so honored and anxious at the same time. Mary trusted God and did as He asked. Mary, along with her trust in God, is extraordinary.

**THINK:**

Throughout our lives we will likely have Mary moments. Moments where we are tasked with a situation that is important and possibly very stressful, one that makes us anxious. I ask you to remember Mary and consider that God specifically and carefully chose her. He knew that she would be up for the task. He believed in her. God chooses you, and God believes in you, too.

**PRAY:**

Dear God, We pray for the ability to accept your will for us. We know that through all situations you are with us and that you believe in us. Give us the courage and conviction to carry out the plans you have laid out for us. We ask everything in the name of Jesus, who is our friend. Amen.

**DO:**

Trust God. He has a plan and has carefully selected you to be a part of that plan. Even if that part seems overwhelming or unclear, trust God. God is always with you, every moment of every day.

AMBER BROWNING  
Deacon-in-Training

## WORSHIP WITH US

## COMING NEXT ISSUE

**Sundays, Traditional Worship**

In-Person — 8:30, 9:45 & 11am

Online — 9:45am

**Saturdays, Contemporary Service**

In-Person — 5:30pm

The next *Lamplighter* will be your February 2024 edition, bringing inspiring features on Resurrection's people and ministries, as well as news of upcoming opportunities to enrich your Christian journey.