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O Come Let Us Adore HIM

PASTOR JEFF BROWNING

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

The month of December is truly a special time in and around the church. These weeks we bring out the Advent candles, put up and decorate our massive Christmas trees, hang the evergreen wreaths, and set up our nativity set. The church looks (and smells) so festive. We focus on the true meaning of this season. We prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, because His birth marked the moment when everything changed. God Himself took on flesh and came into our world with an ultimate purpose. Jesus was destined to die and rise again, changing despair into hope, darkness into light, and death into everlasting life. That, to utilize the great cliché, is what Christmas is truly all about. We have so many opportunities for you and your family to focus on the truth of all truths and the true meaning of Christmas at your church this season. Some of the highlights:

Night in Bethlehem

Our big community event of the season is scheduled for **Friday and Saturday, Dec. 12 and 13, 7-9 p.m.** For so many families in this part of the world, Night in Bethlehem has become one of the highlights of the season. Come out, bring your kids and your grandkids, invite your friends

and neighbors to experience the recreation of the night Jesus was born.

Christmas Caroling and Potluck

We're assembling a team of Christmas carolers to go out into the neighborhood and share the joy of Jesus through song. We're meeting at the church on **Sunday, Dec. 14, at 12 p.m.** (right after the church service). Our visits will focus on families who are homebound and/or might be in need of an extra boost of joy this season. Singers of all ages and levels and are welcome to be a part of our caroling group. Following our caroling adventure, we will assemble back at the church for a potluck dinner.

Christmas Pageant

Every single year, our Sunday School children stage my favorite production of the year. They put on costumes and present the Biblical story of Jesus' birth, as recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. This year's Christmas pageant will happen on **Dec. 21, during the 11 a.m. worship service.**

Christmas Worship

The culmination of our season takes place on **Wed., Dec. 24. We have Christmas Eve worship services at 1, 3, 5, and 7 p.m.** On Christmas Day, **Thurs., Dec. 25, we have a worship service at 10 a.m.** As always, our musicians and choirs are working hard to put an exclamation point on this meaningful season.



Managing Holiday Stress with Help from the Bible

Message from the President

LAURA BAUER

Change. We all experience it. Looking back over my life, I see many changes.

In Pastor's class we are studying the Reformation. I sometimes wonder how the people living during those times of immense change made sense of it. And depending on the time and place, that change could be a matter of life and death, as the church was intertwined with secular political power, capable of inflicting punishment against perceived heresy, like hearing God's Word in one's native language.

Not long ago I was in Zurich and visited one of their older churches, overlooking the river. I have been in many old European churches, and they always amaze with the beautiful windows, carvings and other artwork. This time I was not stunned by the opulence but by the barrenness. Gray walls everywhere. No ornamentation. Just the ghosts of rectangular paintings that had been removed centuries ago from columns throughout the church. Seeing this now, knowing the historical context, was disturbing and made me sad. But imagine the thoughts and feelings of those who had attended this church at the time. Maybe they were elated the "idolatrous images" were removed. Maybe they were heartsick. Maybe they were afraid—for if the church can be altered in this way, what can they do to me? What does that mean for my faith? Do I need to change or abandon it?

One wonders how people can be made to change or alter their faith at the command of those with power. Yet it is important to remember that throughout history, one thing has not changed and is the basis for our faith. Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, came into this world, was crucified, died and was raised from the dead to save us all from our sins. This is what cannot change and what we celebrate.

"Come unto Me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

Most times, we are joyful as Christmas approaches, but we can become filled with anxiety. Pressure builds within us as we attempt to create the "perfect" holiday. Shopping, card-writing, cooking, baking, decorating, parties, family gatherings, work obligations, and many other things can leave us feeling overwhelmed.

Let's consider a few Bible verses which will guide us during this season.

"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

When we are stressed, we think of our problems. When we are grateful, we are reminded of our blessings. Each day think of several things you are thankful for and be reminded that God is good.

"So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially those who are of the household of faith." Galatians 6:10

Studies have shown that being kind and caring lowers cortisol (the stress hormone), helping people to feel calmer. Our church gives us opportunities to reach out. We can donate to the food pantry. We can cook for Meal-a-Month. We can buy gifts for someone who would not receive any. In our daily lives, we can show kindness. Even


small actions make a big difference; hold the door—let someone go before you in the checkout line—show courtesy when driving.

"O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure." Isaiah 25:1

Taking time to praise God for His wonderful gift reduces stress. Spending time in prayer and devotion, reading Scripture, attending worship services, singing in the choir, playing bells, etc. Each of these helps us focus on the peace that passes all understanding, rather than pressure and anxiety.

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." 1 Peter 5:7

When we are overwhelmed, we need to ask for God to renew us. We can help, too, by caring for our bodies, getting enough sleep, eating healthy foods, getting exercise, and taking a break occasionally.

Jesus is the reason for the season. This is not a Bible verse, but these words help us to focus on God's greatest gift. This thought gives us peace and hope. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men." Luke 2:14 



Linda Wardley
is Resurrection's Parish Nurse
and Minister of Christian Care.



The Midnight Library

By: Matt Haig

Nora Seed has died and is now standing in the middle of *The Midnight Library*. In this library, the bookshelves span far and wide and are filled only with books about her life, or rather, alternate lives. Each book on the shelf represents a different life rooted in alternate decisions Nora could have made in her life. Nora has the opportunity to visit her alternate lives by selecting decisions she made from her Book of Regrets. If she had made a different decision, her life would have taken a completely different path. And now, Nora can choose which regret she is curious to explore and visit the life she could have lived. If Nora then decides she wants to live that life, she may have the option to do so. Which decisions does she regret and decide to revisit?

My book club recently read this book, and our discussion led to each of us thinking back to alternate decisions we could have made in our life. Which regret would we choose to change if we had the opportunity? Some were big and some were small, but each would have changed our path. As we look ahead to the new year, *The Midnight Library* sparks thoughts about the choices we have made in our lives, where those decisions have led us, and the impact those decisions still have on our lives now.

The Midnight Library is a New York Times Bestseller, Goodreads Choice Award for Fiction, and a Good Morning America Bookclub Pick. If you haven't had the chance to read this book yet, it is the perfect book to curl up with over the holiday season and reflect on which life you would visit if you could. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Review by Kim Murphy



Volunteer at Resurrection

Share God's love, Get involved,
Bring Resurrection Hope to Life!

As we prepare to bring the village of Bethlehem to life, we are in special need of **ADULT VOLUNTEERS** to help make this night truly memorable.

From greeting travelers at the Census, to assisting in bustling marketplace shops, or simply helping set up or clean up, your presence and helping hands create the warm, welcoming atmosphere our guests will experience.

Go to our website, www.resgc.org/nib, to sign up. Middle School and High School students and families with children under 10 years of age who would like to participate should email Michelle.Kollmeier@resgc.org directly.

Epic Fail

If you've spent any time on social media around the holidays, you would have surely stumbled upon the #epicfail phenomenon. This public confession utilizes social media to advertise burnt casseroles, collapsed cakes, and gingerbread houses that appear to have survived a minor earthquake.

While presents and Christmas lights and decorating the tree are typically at the heart of the Christmas season, more often than not, our celebrations come back to food.

The holidays have a way of always drawing our attention back to the dinner table. Recipes are entrenched in tradition. Serving dishes become family heirlooms, and just the smell of grandma's "famous" apple pie can conjure up childhood memories. And yet, in all that nostalgia, things go wrong.

New recipes rebel, timing gets away from us, and that one dish that looked incredible (and completely attainable) in the video tutorial, completely betrays us. Yet hopefully, filled with the holiday spirit, we can laugh it off, and write it off as an #epicfail.

But Christmas, in its truest light, was never meant to be about the things that fall apart, scorch, or fail. The heart of the season is not contingent upon flawless menus or meticulously executed traditions.


Christmas is the proclamation that God chose to step into our world—our imperfect, uneven, often burned-around-the-edges world—and bring redemption that doesn't depend on our ability to "get it right". The miracle in the manger did not arrive because humanity finally perfected anything, quite the opposite. It arrived

because God loves us, despite our shortcomings.

So, while our holiday tables may occasionally descend into chaos, the true reason we are gathered together to celebrate stands firm.

Our Savior was born not into a spotless kitchen but into a humble stall. The angels did not sing because the world had achieved perfection, but because perfect love entered a world that desperately needed it.

And that truth echoes most clearly at another table—the Communion table. Unlike our Christmas feasts, the Communion meal never goes wrong. Its power does not depend on our culinary skill, our mood, or the condition of our entrees. This meal is a promise: Christ's body given for us, Christ's blood poured out for us, grace extended to us without hesitation or condition. Where our recipes falter, this gift remains flawless. Where our efforts waver, this covenant stands unbroken.

So even if our own meals are tragically flawed, we are invited to turn our focus from the things that didn't work to the One who did all the work for us: our Savior who came, in complete humility, and set a table for us all—one where, despite all our failures, we are always welcome and embraced. 



Diana Rivkin
is Director of Youth & Family Ministry. She loves to sing, bake and spend time with her miniature schnauzer, Ollie

BUILDING BLOCKS

Stories & News from Resurrection Preschool

Helpful Ideas for Busy Holiday Activities

KRISTEN MCCORMICK, Four-year-olds Teacher

The holiday season brings excitement, gatherings, and celebrations, but it can also disrupt the routines that help young children feel secure and balanced. Maintaining consistency, even amid the festivities, can help families enjoy the season with more peace and less stress.

Start by keeping the essentials steady: regular mealtimes, naps, and bedtimes. While flexibility is sometimes necessary, children thrive when they know what to expect. Try to plan activities around their natural rhythms rather than forcing new ones. If late nights are unavoidable, schedule a quieter day afterward so they can rest and reset.



Create small daily rituals that reinforce stability, such as reading a bedtime story, saying a short prayer together, or lighting an Advent candle. These moments not only nurture faith but also help children feel grounded in what truly matters.

Remember that less can be more. It's okay to say no to certain events or commitments if they overwhelm your family. The most meaningful memories often come from unhurried time spent together, reflecting on the gift of Christ's birth.

By keeping routines and priorities rooted in faith and family, parents can help their children experience the joy of the holidays with calm hearts and thankful spirits.

The SymphoNYChorus to Perform at Resurrection

by RALPH BULLE

This February, the renowned SymphoNYChorus, under the direction of Henric Ideström, will present “An Evening with the SymphoNYChorus” at Resurrection immediately following our Saturday service.

The program will draw on the chorus’ broad repertoire of faith-based pieces across religious denominations and musical genres—gospel, classical, spirituals, traditional, Broadway, pop and more.

We will be inviting the community to join us for this special event. Admission is free. Please come and invite your neighbors and friends to join us.


With 35 vocalists and a supporting orchestra of 15, the chorus was founded in 2008 by Ideström to showcase the diversity of religious choral music. Emphasizing passionate authenticity, Ideström is intent on demonstrating that “God’s creation is not bland and nor should be our art.” Citing his Swedish background, Ideström knows that not all musical tastes, much like foods, are the same; a smorgasbord solves the problem.

The chorus presents two major concert series yearly, Christmas concerts and themed concerts in the spring.

The all-volunteer ensemble—including two members of Resurrection—taps into the extraordinary wealth of musical talent in New York, eager to showcase skills and passion. Coming from as far as California, Wyoming, Arizona

and Texas—many in pursuit of Broadway breakthroughs—and others with diverse academic and professional backgrounds, the group is a mix of religious affiliations, ages, ethnic and racial profiles and musical interests that carry over to their eclectic program compositions. The performers all have in common, under Ideström’s leadership, musical excellence combined with expressive enthusiasm.

The SymphoNYChorus performs at venues throughout the New York tri-state region, including public stages, churches, synagogues, and corporate sites.

The group has toured cities in the US, Canada and UK, and recently issued its most recent recording, *Live in the United Kingdom*, also available by streaming. For further information, including the group’s upcoming schedule, visit its website, thesymphonychorus.com. 



SymphoNYChorus with LCR members Evelyn Gan (3rd row, 6th from left) and Guan (far right)



© Chris Anderson

Henric Ideström Founder, Conductor, & Artistic Director

Henric came to New York after an eight-year tenure as Chair of the Arts at Rocky Mountain College in Calgary, Canada. While at RMC, he conducted numerous productions including *Night at the Oscars* and *Give My Regards to Broadway*. He also produced six recordings, two of which won SHAI Gospel Music Awards in 2007. He was then honored in 2008 with the Gospel Music Association's Covenant Award for Choir Album of the Year. Henric received his Masters in Conducting from Azusa Pacific University in California.

'Tis The Season



(above) 2025 Friendsgiving; (right) Pizza at Pastor's



This past month has been a particularly joyful one for youth and family ministry at Resurrection!

Friendsgiving

On Nov. 19, our annual Friendsgiving gathering brought together a wonderful group of middle and high school students, along with lots of laughter and tons of delicious food. We spent the evening reflecting on gratitude, giving thanks for one another, and recognizing all the amazing gifts that God has given to each of us.

Meal-a-Month

Our youth once again prepared a nutritious meal for our Meal-a-Month program, helping to provide a warm, comforting meal to over 100 community members in need. This ministry continues to be a really impactful way for our youth to directly support their community.

Pizza at Pastor's

On Nov. 23, we had another exciting evening of pizza at Pastor's. Our youth had a great time hanging out together, getting to know each other and engaging in a thrilling and suspenseful game led by Vicar Tyler.

Christmas Caroling

Looking ahead, we're excited for our annual Christmas caroling on Sunday, Dec. 14 from 12 to 2 p.m! We'll be traveling together to visit our homebound members, carrying

songs of hope and familiar melodies that brighten the season for those unable to be with us in person. When we return to church, everyone is invited to stay for an Advent potluck meal. This opportunity is open to everyone, regardless of whether you attend our caroling outing. To sign up to bring a dish, please email me or add your name to the sign-up sheet available in the church lobby.

In addition, we are grateful to share that, once again, our congregation has supported more than 100 community members by providing Christmas gifts for individuals and families who might otherwise go without. Your generosity year after year transforms lives in quiet, meaningful ways. Thank you for continuing to make this outreach ministry possible!

We're also looking forward to an exciting holiday celebration, as we combine two fan favorite events—our annual Youth Group White Elephant Gift Exchange and Cookie Exchange—with our monthly Pizza at Pastor's. This month's get together will take place on Sunday, Dec. 19, from 4:30 to 6 p.m. It promises to be a fun mash-up of silly gifts, delicious cookies, and a shared time of fellowship and friendship. Please RSVP to me or Pastor if your child would like to attend.

As we move closer to Christmas, may we carry with us this spirit of generosity and togetherness through our shared meals, acts of service and our continued commitment to others. As is true throughout the year, let us remember that we give in response to all that He has given us 🙏

Christmas Greens Sale Update

by CAROLYN ORLIK



A donation of \$1,350 was made to the Christian Concerns Fund so those in need may enjoy a happier Christmas. This is \$350 more than the amount raised and donated last year!

Out and About with the People of Resurrection

by KEN MEYN

Chang Guan plays cello with SymphoNY, a New York City faith-based choir and orchestra. Upcoming concerts are Saturday, December 6, from 7-8:30 pm and Sunday, December 7 from 5-6:30 pm. Both concerts will be held at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 308 West 46th Street, New York City. In addition, there is a Reunion Concert in Times Square on Monday, December 8. For information: thesymphonychorus.com

Deacon and Church Choir member Ellen Farber will sing a Festival of Lessons and Carols with an ecumenical choir on Sunday, December 14 at 4 pm. Location is St. Killian's Roman Catholic Church, 485

Conklin Street, Farmingdale. Free will offering. For information, contact Ellen at ellen@resgc.org

Alyssa Cherson plays cello with the North Shore Symphony Orchestra on Saturday, December 20 at 7:30 pm. Music will include Debussy's Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun and Stravinsky's Firebird Suite. Concert is at Adelphi University Performing Arts Center. For information, go to www.northshoresymphonyorch.org/

Kenneth Meyn

Director of Music and Handbell Choir
Director. He retired after 38 years at
The New York Times.



THE LAMPLIGHTER

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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.

*“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”*

Matthew 1:23

OPENING

Whenever I read these words, I can hear the alto soloist singing them in Handel's Messiah.

It's a masterpiece and I love to play it every year during Advent. You know the words that follow:

God with us. We can so easily take this phenomenon for granted but when you think about it, it's just amazing. The creator of the universe became one of us and lived with us. And still lives with us and in us. It's one of the best blessings of following

Jesus, that whatever we face day by day we do not go it alone. God is with us providing whatever we need to not only make it through but to become a victor over our circumstances.

THINK

What does “Immanuel, God with us” mean to you? Would you live your life differently if you remember He is present wherever you are?

PRAY

Thank you Lord for being who you

are. Thank you that you love us enough to live our daily lives with us, giving us your wisdom, peace, joy, and strength. Help us to live each day in the glorious truth of your living presence. Amen

DO

This Advent, rejoice in the blessed knowledge that God is indeed with us and in us, and share that joy with a world that needs it so desperately.

Blessings,

ELIZABETH BEZRUTCZYK

WORSHIP WITH US

Sundays, Traditional Worship

In-Person — 8:30, 9:45 & 11am

Online — 9:45am

Saturdays, Contemporary Service

In-Person — 5:30pm

COMING NEXT ISSUE

Our next newsletter will be our February publication, bringing feature articles and highlights of ministry and people of Resurrection—to inform, inspire and bless you.