

Trinity



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An Advent/Christmas Encouragement

The following is a monthly pastoral letter of Pastor Rolf Preus to his congregations of Trinity Lutheran Church, Sidney, Montana and St. John's Lutheran Church of Fairview, Montana, for December 2015.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

What can you do with Christmas? I suppose you could market it and make some money. Or, you could use it to schedule get-togethers with family and friends. Maybe you could use it to try out new recipes or to buy clothes you need for the winter. There are all sorts of things you can do with Christmas!

But maybe the idea of doing something with Christmas is what keeps us from understanding what Christmas is all about. After all, Christmas is not something you do. Christmas is something done to you, for you, and in you.

Consider Mary. What did she say in response to Gabriel's announcement that she would be the mother of God? She said, "Let it be to me according to

your word." She didn't do anything with Christmas. Christmas was given to her. God showed her his favor. God gave her a Baby. God dwelled inside of her and became her Child. We honor Mary, not for what Mary did,



but for what Mary received. That's faith, brothers and sisters in Christ. Faith is receiving. It doesn't do. It is done to. It doesn't use this or that this way or that way. It doesn't give. It gets. Christmas is all about faith. It is all about Jesus.

Oh, but we're so busy! We have so much to do. We don't have the time to get it done. Our business leaves no time to

receive. Christmas becomes our work instead of God's work. But the whole point of Christmas is that it is God's doing! "With God nothing shall be impossible," said Gabriel to Mary. Then the Virgin conceived and bore a son and called his name Immanuel, that is, God with us.

Immanuel is still Immanuel. The God who joined the human race within Mary's womb remains with us. As the hymnist wrote:

God is man, man to deliver;
His dear Son now is one
With our blood forever!

Where is he? At the shopping center? At the game? On the road? At work? He's everywhere! But how do we receive him? Where does our faith receive what he has to give? Where his holy word is proclaimed and his holy sacraments are administered! In church! That's where we receive grace upon grace, gift after gift, and the Child of Christmas deigns to come to where we are and make his home with us. He who labored

under the heavy burden of our sin comes to us to take our burden away and give us peace.

Don't neglect the services of God's house during this holy season. We keep Christ in Christmas, not by doing something with Christmas, but by having the Christ of Christmas give Himself to us.

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!

Pastor Preus/*Pastor Newman*

Birthdays

Ken Meier	12/1
Mallory Swain	12/1
Sylvia Herrell	12/4
Mary Ellett	12/5

Ellen Propst	1/8
Eli Ramer	1/10

Baptisms

Tom Clemens	12/1
Keith Wornson	12/5
Diane Schmidt	12/6
Bill Moore	12/9
Anthony Propst	12/10
Zackery Schmidt	12/11
Ken Meier	12/12
Andy Starkebaum	12/12
Sullivan Korondi	12/12
Erma Altis	12/13
Jessica Blunk	12/15
Sarian Blunk	12/15
Mallory Swain	12/17
Lois Edmiston	12/18
Sylvia Herrell	12/19
Julie O'Neal	12/19



Helen Buchlinger	12/8
Gretchen Mayes	12/8
Norm Sowell	12/11
Lisa Starkebaum	12/11
Penny Harris	12/15
Dorothy Riley	12/16
Linda Newman	12/16
Natalie Jackson	12/20
Debra Rhea	12/22
June Lueckert	12/25
Christi Fent	12/31
Jonah Korondi	1/3
Carlee Luppess	1/6

Shirley Kueck	12/21
Kay Sowell	12/22
Gretchen Mayes	12/25
Colleen Jackson	12/29
Nancy Oldag	1/1
Mark Young	1/1
Leslie Young	1/1
Natalie Jackson	1/1
Lisa Starkebaum	1/2
Tanner Mayes	1/5
Dorothy Riley	1/8
Linda Newman	1/8
Matthew Cuba	1/8

Anniversaries

Craig & Shari Schley	1/1/2011
Jeremy & Angel Harms	1/9/1999
Bill & Karen Wersinger	1/14/1995
Ian & Blythe Larson	12/11/2004
David & Deann Benningfield	12/20/1986
Ken & Brenda Meier	12/26/1970
Stacy & Nanette Stout	12/27/1997
Ryan & Laura Schmidt	12/27/2003

Elders

Vic Edwards
Larry Goodroad
Ken Meier
Dallas Hoffman
Peter Korondi
Bill Moore, Jr.

Acolytes

Dec. 2	Gabriel Sowell
Dec. 6	Ben Starkebaum
Dec. 9	Andrew Swain
Dec. 13	Simon Korondi
Dec. 16	Joe Goodroad
Dec. 20	Tom Goodroad
Dec. 25	Colton Harris
Dec. 27	Conner Jackson
Jan. 3	Simon Korondi
Jan. 10	Eli Ramer
Jan. 17	Gabriel Sowell
Jan. 24	Ben Starkebaum
Jan. 31	Andrew Swain

Ushers

December 2
Bob Marchert, Rob Stone
December 6

Keith Wornson, Bob Marchert
December 9 & 16

Tim Brammeier, John Diaz
December 13

John Barth, Don Mayes
December 20 & 24

Darrin Abend, Tony Alshouse
December 25

John Barth, Mark Young
December 27

Rob Stone, Mark Young
January 3 & 10

Darrin Abend, Tony Alshouse
January 17 & 24

John Barth, Chris Blunk
January 31

John Bosky, Tim Brammeier

Greeters

December 2

Nelson Hayes, Penny Harris
December 6

Dallas & Dee Hoffman
December 9

Sylvia Herrell, Martha Jenkins
December 13

Bob & Marlo Howard
December 16

Mike & Colleen Jackson
December 20

John & Jamie Luppess
December 24

June Lueckert, Doris Mann
December 25

Jeff & Joyce Lehning
December 27

Pete & Deanna Korondi
January 3

Bob & Dawn Marchert
January 10

Gwen & Don Mayes
January 17

Scott & Lacey Mayes
January 24

Don & Sharon McCubbin

January 31

Cheryl McClain, Janet Miller

Altar Guild

December 2, 9, 16

Pat Owens

December 6, December 25,

January 3, January 24

Pat Owens, Mary Ellett

December 13, January 10

D. Korondi & K. Goodroad

December 20

L. Young, S. McCubbin

December 24

Phyllis Clemens, Dee Hoffman

December 25

Pat Owens, Mary Ellett

December 27, January 31

June Ramer, Phyllis Clemens,

Tara Altis

January 17

Dee Hoffman, Mallory Swain,

Leslie Young

Christmas Worship Schedule

The Christmas Week Schedule is as follows. Wednesday Advent services will be held each week at 7:15. Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service will be at 7:00 PM, and Christmas Day Service will be at 10:00 so that you will have an opportunity to do your Christmas morning activities with your family and still have time to come to Church.

We will have no Wednesday Bible Studies, worship services, or Midweek Classes on December 23, 30, or January 6. Our normal schedule will resume the following week.

Christmas Music Concert

Please join us on Sunday, December 13 at 3:00 for a Christmas Music Concert and Songfest put on by our congregations vocal and handbell choirs. We are making early enough in the day that it will still be light at the close of the event so that those who prefer not to go out after dark can join us. Following the event itself we will have hors d'oeuvres and time to visit before heading home.

Children's Christmas Program

This year's Children's Christmas Program, "Joy to the World!" will be held on Sunday, December 20, at 6:00. Please join us to support the young people of our congregation and make this a part of your family's preparations for the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Family Fellowship

Andy and Lisa Starkebaum will host the Christmas Party/White Elephant Exchange on December 19, beginning at 5:30 PM in the fellowship hall. For everyone planning to participate in the gift exchange, please bring a wrapped gift (kids are also welcome to participate). Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share. Drinks will be provided. Any questions, please contact Lisa, 509-1232.

Annual Epiphany Open House

Pastor and Linda would like to invite you to join them for their annual Open House on Sunday afternoon, January 10, from 2:00 to 5:00. We will have drinks and snacks and lots of time to visit. Everyone is invited. We hope you can be with us!

Stewardship Notes

We want to thank the Trinity Board which over the past year has managed to hold our expenses in check, especially since we have not been making our budget target for much of the past year. Because of their diligent oversight we have been able to meet all our expenses in spite of the budget shortfall. However, in spite of their diligence there have been some things that needed to be done that were not able to be done because we simply haven't had the funds to do them. We are all painfully aware that everyone is stretched tight because of the economy and rising personal and family expenses, but if may be so bold as to ask each of you to please pray about this matter and see if the Lord isn't leading and enabling you to do what you can to help make up the current shortfall and get us started on the right path next year. Thanks!

Youth UnConference

Our Youth Group will be sponsoring a Higher Things UnCon-

ference, "We Confess," on Saturday, January 2nd here at Trinity from 3:00 to 9:30.

We call it an "UnConference" because it's going to be held in Chicago with a live webcast, which we will follow here at Trinity. The focus of this event is the Six Chief Parts of the Small Catechism. We will start with a Vespers Service at 3:00, followed by six sessions of live streaming, dinner and Q&A, then closing with Evening Prayer.

Meals and snacks will be provided. A signup sheet has been placed on the Kiosk upstairs as we would like to be sure to have enough food and materials for everyone who would like to attend. We are encouraging all who are currently in the Youth Group to attend, as well as those who are in Confirmation and Pre-Confirmation Classes (Old and New Testament Classes). This will be time well spent.

Adults are also welcome to attend if you would like to join us to learn and interact with our Youth and the Youth from other congregations in our Circuit.

LWML News

The LWML, in lieu of its December meeting, will be getting together at JJ's Restaurant in the shopping center just West of Highway 35 on December 14th at 11:00. The ladies of the congregation are invited to join us.

From Pastor Preus Family In The Dominican Republic

Sing to the Lord a New Song!
Every time we hear the Christmas message our hearts light up as though we had heard it for the first time. How appropriate is the psalm appointed for Christmas Day: "Oh sing unto the Lord a new song, For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory" (Psalm 98:1)!

With the birth of Jesus comes a whole new creation. The old Adam had failed, and we failed with him. Now the new Adam has come, and He has succeeded. The Child born to Mary is Immanuel, God in human flesh, God our brother. He has delivered us from Satan's dominion. The war is over. The old is gone. Everything is new!

Have you ever noticed how the psalm refers to all of these new things as if they've already taken place? Do we intend to say that the Child in the manger has already gained our salvation? How? When? David composed the new song 1,000 years before Jesus' birth. The Lord God told the woman in the garden: your Seed will crush the serpent's head (Genesis 3:16). Isaiah prophesied the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son (Isaiah 7:14). Gabriel told Joseph to name Mary's Child "Jesus" for He will save his peo-

ple from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

But here we sing with the saints of old: "The Lord has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations. He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God" (Psalm 98:2-3).

The Word of God is so certain that the things it says are as good as done even before they happen. So it is with the Word that was made flesh for us. When the time had fully come God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem us who were under the law (Galatians 4:4). Born a weak little baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, He committed his entire life to God's will. Born an innocent little Lamb, He offered himself a perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world. The Word made flesh on Christmas is the risen glorious Word who promises forgiveness, life and salvation to everybody everywhere every day. What a comfort it is to know that our new song is a true song! And we may be certain that our mission to the Dominican Republic will be as successful as our Lord Himself because, indeed, the nations have seen the salvation of our God! "Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth; Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises" (Psalm 98:4).

Board of Directors

November 9, 2015

Members present: Connie Brammeier, Mark Fairhurst, Dan Goodroad, Larry Goodroad, Nelson Hayes, Dee Hoffman, Bob Marchert, Pastor, and Leslie Young.

Bob called the meeting to order. Pastor opened with prayer.

Kaleb, Megan and Ava Blankenship transferred their membership to Immanuel Lutheran Church in Fairview, Texas.

Mark moved we accept last month's minutes, Nelson seconded.

Pastor: Nothing new to report.

VP: Went over the updated Building Use Agreement and Kitchen Use policy.

Treasurer: Mark moved to receive the report, Dan seconded.

Elders: Talked about visits.

Properties: Norm Sowell, Melvin Altis, Bob Marchert, and Bob Howard met with Dry Basement and are waiting to hear an approval on putting the sump pump in the mechanical room instead of the Cry Room. The construction date goal is November 24th.

Evangelism: Nothing new to report.

Education: Working on the children's program and deciding when to start rehearsal.

Stewardship: Continuing to work on articles.

Youth: They will be hosting the dinner before Hanging of the Greens.

Public Relations: Nothing new to report.

Planning: N/A

Services: Preparing the baby basket for Sam and Dana Goodroad and a baptismal gift for Riley.

Unfinished Business: N/A

New Business: Worked on the agenda for the upcoming Voter's Meeting.

Dan moved we adjourn, Nelson seconded. Pastor closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Emily Goodroad

Lutherans For Life

The Northland Chapter meets the quarterly at the home of Fran and Marsha Szarejko. If you have any questions, please contact Kimberly Murphy, 628-6815. Everyone is invited to join us at these meetings.

Trinity Care Group

Do you need assistance because of illness, birth of a baby, death, hospitalization, etc.? Trinity Care Group can help. We would be happy to arrange for providing meals, doing errands, visiting with the family, etc. Please contact Dee Hoffman at 320-2490.

Top Of The Hill

The Top Of The Hill Group will meet Tuesday, December 8, in the Fellowship Hall for a lunch

of pizza, salad and a great dessert. We will be singing Christmas carols during our get-together. Please join us for lots of fun, fellowship and great food!

LWML

November 9, 2015

Call to Order: Dianne Mischlich

Opening Hymn: "Entrust Your Days and Burdens", #754

Opening Prayer: Pastor Newman led in prayer and LWML Pledge was recited.

Attendance: Dianne Mischlich, Judy Goodwin, Marlo Howard, June Lueckert, Mary Wornson, Penny Harris, Janis Bozarth, Dee Hoffman, Diane Schmidt, Pastor Newman.

Minutes: October minutes were read and approved.

Treasurer's Report: A balance as of 10/12 was \$3,330.39. A free will offering was taken.

Mission Grant Story was read: "Cancer Care Package – Phil's Friends"

Quilting Report: The quilt silent auction was a great success. Proceeds were \$1,285. A motion was made by Judy Goodwin and seconded by Diane Schmidt that we hold this auction every other year.

Unfinished Business: Ronald McDonald House volunteer schedule was discussed. June Lueckert, Penny Harris and Mary Wornson will serve 11/19. We will discuss volunteers for 12/17 next meeting.

Discussion was held regarding what to purchase for the church kitchen. Some suggestions were paper towel holder, knife sharpener, wall soap dispenser, spaghetti pots, medium skillet and remodel of the convection oven stand. Marlo Howard and Mary Wornson will get prices for these items.

New Business: LUMA request from Pat Enomoto for potatoes for LUMA store. A motion was made and seconded that we make request to congregation for donation of potatoes for LUMA store. (I did not make note of who made and seconded this motion.)

A motion was made by June Lueckert and seconded by Dee Hoffman that we use money from 3rd Sunday Treats from October and November for donation to Kearney Food Pantry.

A motion was made by Mary Wornson and seconded by Marlo Howard that we give \$1,000 from quilt auction to Kearney Family Foundation, \$200 to LUMA and publish open request to congregation for potatoes for LUMA.

Discussion was had regarding request from Jackie Augur for help to serve her daughter's wedding Memorial Day weekend, Saturday, 5/28/16. Dianne Mischlich will get details.

A letter was read from Defenbaugh stating that they will no longer issue rebates for recyclables. We will ask that bins be

removed from church property.

Diane Schmidt made a motion and Mary Wornson seconded that we hold December meeting JJ's at Kearney on 12/14 at 11:00.

It was requested that we remember Alpha Wiese on her birthday 11/22 by sending cards.

Third Sunday Treats: December 20: Marlo Howard, Joyce Lehning, Dianne Mischlich; January 17: Janis Bozarth, Penny Harris, Dianne Mischlich ; February 21: Marlo Howard, Joyce Lehning, Dianne Mischlich.

Next meeting will be Monday, December 14, 11:00 at JJ's in Kearney.

Business meeting was adjourned with prayer and prayer requests led by Pastor Newman.

Refreshments were served by hostess Judy Goodwin.

No quilt meeting was held.

Respectfully submitted,
Janis Bozarth, Secretary

