



December 2022



The Disciple's Connection

Wait, It's Christmas Again?



Thanksgiving has come and gone, so I guess it's on to Christmas full steam ahead. To me, [and maybe you as well] it's sad to see people jump right from Thanksgiving & the end of the church year immediately into Christmas. Some radio stations have gone all Christmas music all the time already. Even Christian radio is guilty of skipping Advent. Z88.3 from Orlando, which I listen to online while at my desk, began sprinkling in Christmas music on their airwaves some days before Thanksgiving. The good news for me is they have streaming options. You can stream the Christmas music they are playing over the air, or you can stream non-Christmas favorites. I wonder, which stream I'm listening to right now? I also wonder, has Advent disappeared? It sure seems like it has, right? The good news is no, it hasn't. Advent still serves a purpose in the life of the church. It is a preparatory season. It gets us ready in mind, body, & soul to celebrate Christmas & Jesus' birth, while at the same time reminding us, He will return. In our Lutheran worship, there are many wonderful hymns that aid our preparations in Advent. I want to share some of these wonderful words with you. Read them, look them up in the hymnal, sing them if you want to, and reflect on them this Advent.

*Savior of the nations, come, Virgin's Son, make here your home
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth*

*Not by human flesh and blood, By the Spirit of our God
Was the Word of God made flesh—Woman's offspring, pure and fresh
[LSB 332 "Savior Of The Nations, Come"]*

We must begin Advent with a humble, heartfelt invitation to the Christ child. Come, make this humble earth your home. It is not by the will or decision of man that the Word of God was made flesh. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit. Yet he was still the offspring of a woman, just as you and I are.

*Come, Thou long expected Jesus, Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth Thou art
Dear desire of ev'ry nations, Joy of ev'ry longing heart
Born Thy people to deliver; Born a child and yet a king!
Born to reign in us forever, Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit Rule in all our hearts alone;*

WAIT, IT'S CHRISTMAS AGAIN? continued

By Thine all-sufficient merit Raise us to Thy glorious throne.
[LSB 338 "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"]

The Messiah was certainly long promised to the Israelites. It may have seemed to them like He would never come. But he did come to set people free, to reign in us forever, give the world hope. The irony of the Messiah is he was born as a simple, humble child yet he was also born a king who rules an eternal kingdom

*Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates! Behold the King of Glory waits.
The King of Kings is drawing near; The Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation he doth bring; Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.
To God the Father raise Your joyful songs of praise.* [LSB 341 "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"]

The Psalmist writes: "Lift up your heads, O You gates, be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of Glory may come in." May the King of Glory enter your heart as you prepare to celebrate His birth once again, as well as keep a watchful eye for His return.

In Christ
Pastor Sundbom

Christmas Eve Services

Please join us for our Christmas Eve Services
Saturday, December 24th
5:00 pm and 7:30

There will be no Bible studies or Sunday school on
Sunday, December 25th.



Week 1 (HOPE)
Candle name: **Prophet's Candle**
Remind us: **Jesus is coming**
• Advent is about faith and waiting.
What are you waiting on God for this year?

Week 2 (PEACE)
Candle name: **Bethlehem Candle**
Remind us: **To prepare the way of the Lord**
• Christ is the Prince of Peace. The world might not reflect it, but we can have peace in our hearts.

Week 3 (JOY)
Candle name: **Shepherd's Candle**
Remind us: **The Joy at the coming birth of Jesus**
• Joy is more substantial than happiness. It is deeper and in many ways, more subtle.

Week 4 (LOVE)
Candle name: **Angel's Candle**
Remind us: **God loves us enough to send His only Son**
• God is love. We've heard the phrase so much, but stop this week and really think about it. **God. Is. Love.**

Advent



Candle name: **Christ Candle**
Life of Christ that came into the world
(Light on Christmas Eve)



There's no theology like snow theology

by Tom Raabe

My pastor said this from the pulpit a few Sundays ago: “If you’ve never lived in a place where it snows, I pity you.” That statement conjured up images of sitting before a blazing fireplace sipping hot chocolate while listening to Perry Como and observing through a frosted windowpane harmless flakes float docilely to the ground. He continued: “If you live now in a place where it snows, I also pity you.” Which generated memories of scooping and scraping and bundling up. He got laughs with both comments.

Such is the humor available to a pastor living in Phoenix, Arizona, in the justly named Valley of the Sun. If a mere hint of *Schadenfreude* seeped into his comments, I doubt the feelings of any of the native Upper Midwesterners sitting in the pews that December Sunday were hurt. Indeed, many were sitting there precisely because of snow — they were fleeing it.

I grew up in Milwaukee — no stranger to the white stuff is that fair city — and then lived for nine years in Grand Rapids, Mich., a town encased in a snow globe turned upside down every night and then set upright every morning. I know snow, too.

Snow is fine, in a theoretical sense, as a conjurer of memories, as an idea. But it's not that great when it's at the end of a shovel, or under the tires of your car, or blocking your driveway, or collapsing the roof of your garage, or coming at you sideways in the form of hard pellets pockmarking your face as you tramp through waist-deep drifts on your way to Grandmother's house.

Not that we who live in the desert are free and clear weather-wise. Dry heat or not, leaving your air-cooled

abode and striding into 110-degree temperatures is like walking into a furnace. I absolutely hated the heat for the first two years I lived here. The only positive about summer weather in Arizona that I could come up with was that the coffee I left in my car was as hot on the way home from church as it was on the way to church.

But in the theological metaphor department, heat is bad (see: *hell*) and snow is good. In fact, snow is arguably the most effective meteorological metaphor for the eternal truths of theology. Rain has some theological potential — the rain comes in, offers life-giving moisture, dissolves the smog, and washes the world clean. Wind is associated with the Holy Spirit (see Pentecost) and, likewise, good in moderation — it fills our lungs and drives out the pollution and all that.

But snow has it over any other meteorological phenomena for Gospel symbolism.

It falls, and the ugliness of an unsightly landscape disappears. Dirt, decay, dilapidation — all are erased by two or three inches of newly fallen snow. The repentant person in Isaiah or the Psalms is rendered pure, as sins that were scarlet are turned white as snow, erased by Jesus's sacrifice.

There is nothing so pure as the scene after an all-night, heavy-duty snow dump. The yard is pristine, the sidewalks unmarred, the street outside your house trackless, any sound of cars or trucks muffled, even silenced, possibly because the snow kept the noisemakers off the roads, possibly because the engine sounds cannot penetrate the thick canvas that settled overnight. If it's early enough, before the neighborhood awakens and the kids stream from their houses to start their snow days making snow angels and snow forts and snowmen, you can enter this world of stillness and allow the silence and the purity to sweep over you and cleanse your very being.

It is cathartic and joyous and, like the cleansing that God's forgiveness offers, it freshens your spirit, changes your outlook.

And if the sun's out, and you have to squint and shield your eyes just to look at the snowy tableau, you are reminded, too, of our Savior on the Mount of Transfiguration. There, Mark tells us, Jesus' "clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them" (Mark 9:3). You get a blinding glimpse, too, of what we also will look like when we join Jesus, as the three disciples did on Mount Herman, and are clad in eternal robes as white as snow.

On that day, we will see the Lord as John once saw Him in the book of Revelation, where Jesus' appearance is again described with an image of snow: "The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow" (Rev. 1:14).

So let it snow ... theologically speaking.

Tom Raabe is a member of Christ Church—Lutheran in Phoenix.



Life Quotes for December

December 4 “Christmas is also a time to contemplate the gift of mortal LIFE through the miracle of birth. Christmas is the gift of LOVE that moms and dads shower on their children by saying yes to life—sometimes under very difficult circumstances. Regardless of the challenges, God has a perfect plan for each life that He brings into the world, and His will for them is to out-sparkle and out-shine any ornament.” *Bradley Mattes, president of Life Issues Institute – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

December 11 “As sure as Christmas will come again on December 25, our Lord will come again. As we look forward to the Last Day, let’s dress for the occasion, putting on godliness and repentance. Let’s celebrate everything He did the first time He came to assure us of our home of righteousness. Let’s be spiritually awake and alert for His coming again, knowing that we will enjoy God’s perfect paradise, our eternal home.” *Rev. Peter Sulzle, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

December 18 “Unlike Christmas ornaments, each baby is a unique life never to be replicated in all of history. Each life brutally snuffed out by abortion will leave the world a lesser place for it.” *Bradley Mattes, president of Life Issues Institute – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

December 25 “There is no more clear-pointed, rest-giving demonstration of the love of God for you than the gift of His Son.” *Paul Tripp, pastor, author, and conference speaker – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

Announcements

Giving Tree



The St. Paul's Giving Tree is back! Once again, we will be collecting new items which will be made available to those in need locally.

We are looking for new hats, gloves, mittens, scarves and socks for children and adults. These will be collected through Sunday January 1st.

Adopt-a-Family

St. Paul's will once again be adopting several families for Christmas. The Adopt-A-Family Donation board will be available the weekend of Dec 3rd. Purchased donations will need to be brought back to the church unwrapped by the 11th of December. These donations go to families in need, given to us from University Hospitals Family Services. Donations are also for Project Hope residents.



Order Your Poinsettias Now!!!

Poinsettias will again be used to decorate the altar for Christmas. As in the past you will be able take them home after Christmas. The cost for each is \$6.25. The colors available this year are:



- ☼ Red ☼ Pink ☼ White
- ☼ Marble (pink & white) ☼ Jingle Bells (red & white)

The order sheet has been posted on the double doors at the back of the church. Please place your check in the offering plate, marked "Poinsettias". **The last day to order is Sunday, December 4th.**

Outreach Movie Matinee Series

Mark your calendars for the final four episodes of the series "2000 Years of Christianity".

- December 4th @ 2 pm—Episode 9 & 10**
- December 11th @ 2 pm—Episode 11 & 12**

As always, refreshments will be available.



Christmas Card Sets are Here!!!



Sets of 12 cards are \$7.00 each

Sets of 20 cards are \$8.00 each.

They are located next to the Friendship Circle table.

Please use the modified offering envelopes on the top row of the card rack to submit your payments. Place your payment in the envelope provided and add it to the offering plate.



Don't forget to support the other greeting cards in the rack. There are Birthday, Anniversary, Get Well, Sympathy, Blank Inside and many others to purchasing for friends or family members who are having a special event. Each individual card is only 50 cents a piece. The boxed sets are priced as marked, All proceeds will go toward building an Outreach budget for future Outreach event expenses. Please place your payment in an offering envelope supplied on the greeting card rack and add it in the Offering plate during church service.

Handel's Messiah

Join the Messiah Chorus of Lake County for their 72nd presentation of "The Messiah" by G. F. Handel, conducted by Kevin Donahue. Listen to a 100-voice choir from throughout Northeast Ohio along with professional soloists, a string orchestra, piano, organ, harpsichord and trumpet. The concert takes place Sunday, December 4th at 4:00 pm at St. John Vianney Church, 7575 Bellflower Rd., Mentor, Ohio. A free will offering will be accepted.



Christmas Shop

Shop 'til you drop! Come and have fun shopping around at Zion Lutheran Church on Saturday, December 3rd. There will be tables with gently used clothes and household items. Save big – **the items are free**. The shop is open from 9:00 until noon at 508 Mentor Ave, in Painesville. The event will take place in the gym. Walk in through the welcome entrance by the parking lot and follow the signs. There will be caroling and Christmas cookies!! Questions? Call the church office at 440-357-5174



November Meeting Notes

- 1) Pastor's Report: Pastor reported making 19 calls and performed 2 funerals (plus subbed for Pastor Schroeder), Thanksgiving Eve and Christmas Eve services will be with communion- no Advent services, but Diane Wayner suggested 1 Advent get-together and Jenn suggested Bible study in lieu of services. Will bring up at Semi-Annual Meeting.
- 2) President's Report: Eric will write a letter to the congregation concerning our financial situation and he talked to Russ about using funds from either Building Fund or Youth Gathering funds to pay for organ repairs.
- 3) Vice-President's Report: Brian is in contact with Morley Mowers about snowplowing. Jeff has raised his rate from \$700 to \$800 per month. Star suggested Brian finalize contract for 4 months (Nov. 15-Mar 15) @ \$800/month and pay as needed after 3/15.
- 4) Treasurer's Report: Russ reported that our cash situation is down \$5,822 and accounts payable is up \$2,094 the 1st 4 months; Offerings are up \$6,874 and expenses are up \$1,630 from last year, mainly due to organ repair and utilities.
- 5) Education Report: Erin reported Oct's average attendance for Sunday school & Adult Bible was 19, Children's class will sing during an Advent Sunday service, and she will work with Star to do an Adopt-a-Family Christmas project. Will decide on Sunday school on Christmas Day.
- 6) Preschool report: Star reported Popcorn fundraiser had \$1100 profit AED pads were replaced, each classroom has a Church Shut-in member, thanks to all who supported a successful Donation Board, Bible Buddies will need to replace Bibles for next year, and that Grandparents' Day will be Nov, 16/17 and Preschool Christmas Program will be Dec. 15 @ 9:30am church members are invited.
- 7) Elders Report: Dale reported they have completed guidelines be minimum attendance of 6 services to be active members, but will consider exemptions case by case.
- 8) Outreach Report: Kristi reported Movie matinee will continue thru Dec. 11 showing "2000 Years of Christianity", Trunk-or-Treat was a great success with nearly 300 attending (105 kids), will break on other activities until after New Year.
- 9) Building & Grounds Report: Craig reported several light bulbs have been replaced in classrooms and that a kitchen fixture needs ballast bypassed, work on kid's fountain drain and parsonage fence and source of moisture in wall of Amy's classroom all need further work, and outside trim on front stained-glass windows has been painted and installed with thanks to and assistance from Dennis and Terry.
- 10) Contribution Secretary Report: Dennis reported that contributions thru 44 weeks are up \$147.84, but October donations were down \$1088 from last year. Number of contributors were down to 27 vs. 30 last year.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES *continued***OLD BUSINESS:**

- 1) Dennis asked about By-Law changes, and Pastor mentioned District needed the whole re-write not just the changes. Sending shortly.
- 2) Eric said he will bring up Emergency Response Team at Semi-Annual Meeting

NEW BUSINES:

- 1) Semi-Annual Meeting: Sunday, Nov. 20 following 10:45 service (10:50). Reports and Agenda items due before 11/10.
- 2) Thanksgiving Eve service, Wednesday, Nov. 23 @ 7pm with communion.
- 3) Christmas Eve services, Saturday, Dec. 24 @ 5 & 7:30pm with communion.
- 4) Pastor reported a change in congregation's voting for Synod President and 1st Vice-President. Voting will now be on-line with Pastor and a lay member (Star has volunteered) to submit our vote in early June that must be verified by 2 church officers.



From the Preschool

Preschool Christmas Program



St. Paul's congregation is cordially invited to the preschool Christmas program. The program be held on Thursday, December 15th at 9:00 am. Hope to see you there!



December Birthdays

Daniel Greig	3rd
Henry West	4th
Diana Kiel	5th
Dale Kerver	7th
Marlyss Sekki	13th
Kathy Emrich	20th
Jacob Chaffe	21st
Russ Walton	24th



December Anniversaries

Jay & Laura Harris	31 years on Dec 07
Matt & Madeline West	8 years on Dec 28

Altar Flowers

Is there a date or event you would like to celebrate or a special someone you would like to honor. Donating altar flowers is a great way to do that! All you have to do is sign up next to the appropriate weekend, add the occasion or person being honored and who the flowers are from. Be sure to print clearly. The Altar Flower Chart is posted on the wall in between the double doors leading out of the sanctuary. Altar flowers are \$40.00. The cash or check can be placed in an envelope labeled "Altar Flowers" with the date of the weekend and place it in the collection plate.



December Word Search

Jesus is Born

L	Y	S	B	E	W	C	R	J	Q	L	P	D	P
G	X	T	H	G	J	C	D	O	M	M	A	R	Y
B	X	S	R	E	F	A	O	S	B	M	Q	C	Q
T	X	K	C	B	P	J	N	E	S	T	O	K	Z
G	Z	G	X	E	E	H	K	P	F	N	W	G	L
O	K	T	D	I	M	C	E	H	S	M	E	O	M
S	T	A	B	L	E	A	Y	R	M	I	A	L	A
G	K	D	H	E	U	B	G	Q	D	D	P	D	E
C	J	B	M	D	V	L	J	I	J	S	T	A	R
B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	P	E	A	A	E
M	A	N	G	E	R	M	S	P	K	R	S	Q	S
J	R	H	K	I	N	G	H	A	R	O	D	U	C
T	F	R	A	N	K	I	N	C	E	N	S	E	S
X	M	Y	R	R	H	V	P	H	W	L	C	J	O

JESUS
 MARY
 JOSEPH
 BETHLEHEM
 STAR
 MAGI
 GOLD
 FRANKINCENSE
 MYRRH
 DONKEY
 SHEPHERDS
 STABLE
 MANGER
 KING HAROD

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/4387856/jesus-is-born/>

Those Who Serve: December 2022

ELDERS:

6:00 P Saturday Aaron Lindrose
9:30 A Sunday Jeff Troutman

COUNTERS:

Jenn Drake, Ken Chaffe

LECTORS:

12-03-22 6:00 P Saturday Pastor Sundbom
12-04-22 9:30 A Sunday Jennifer Drake
12-10-22 6:00 P Saturday Dale Kerver
12-11-22 9:30 A Sunday Terry Wakelee
12-17-22 6:00 P Saturday Dave Murphy
12-18-22 9:30 A Sunday Jack Lelle
12-24-22 5:00 P Christmas Eve TBD
12-24-22 7:30 P Christmas Eve TBD
12-25-22 9:30 A Sunday TBD
12-31-22 6:00 P Saturday Dale Kerver
01-01-23 9:30 A Sunday Ken Chaffe

GREETERS:

6:00 P Saturday
9:30 A Sunday

**SIGN UP IN MARCH TO GREET
YOUR FELLOW DISCIPLES.**

**Sign-up sheet located on the
double doors at the back of the
Sanctuary.**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church and Preschool

250 Bowhall Road Painesville, OH 44077

(440)354-3000 | www.splcpainesville.org | office@splcpainesville.org

Staff

Paul D. Sundbom, Pastor
Marlyss Sekki, Director of Music
Peggy McDonnell, Admin Assistant

Worship Services

Saturday 6:00pm
Sunday 9:30am

Sunday Bible Study

Adult 8:30am & 10:45am
Children 10:45am

St. Paul's Preschool

Amy Marizek, Director
preschool@splcpainesville.org
www.stpaulspainesville.com

Also Supporting



250 Bowhall Road
Painesville, OH 44077
440-354-3000



508 Mentor Avenue
Painesville, OH 44077
440-357-7778

December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
 <p>COMMUNION SERVICE</p>		<p>WORSHIP SCHEDULE Saturdays - 6:00pm Sundays - 9:30am Sunday School - 10:45am Adult Bible Study—8:30am & 10:45am</p>		<p>Office Hours Monday-Friday 9:00am-12:00pm</p>	<p>7 pm Virtual Bible Study</p>	
			<p>Bulletin Announcements Due Wednesdays</p>			
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
National Cookie Day		Preschool-Chapel 7 pm Choir Practice		7 pm Virtual Bible Study		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
		Preschool-Morley Library Circuit Meeting 9:30 am 7 pm Choir Practice		Preschool-Christmas Program and Parties 7 pm Virtual Bible Study	Preschool Christmas Break	National Maple Syrup Day
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Preschool Christmas Break	Preschool Christmas Break 7 pm Choir Practice	Preschool Christmas Break 	Preschool Christmas Break	Preschool Christmas Break	  Candlelight Service 5 pm & 7:30 pm
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	Preschool Christmas Break	Pastor on Vacation Preschool Christmas Break 7 pm Choir Practice	Pastor on Vacation Preschool Christmas Break	Pastor on Vacation Preschool Christmas Break	Pastor on Vacation Preschool Christmas Break	Pastor on Vacation Preschool Christmas Break