

St. James News

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Love Came Down at Christmas

The Word of the Lord: Luke 2:11-12, *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you: He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths lying in a manger.*

Christmas is the story of love in action. The most important event that happened in Bethlehem that night was the birth of a baby in a stable. Christmas with all its decorations and gifts is meaningless unless we know what this celebration is all about. The word Christmas consists of two parts: "Christ" and "mas" (or mass) which means service Christmas, then, is Christ-service, How can there be Christ-service if Christ is not put at the center of our Christmas?

Ronnie could hardly wait for the sharing period at kindergarten. He had brought his much-prized manger scene to show to others. As he put each piece in its place, he would comment: "This is a wise man." "This is a shepherd." But the children kept asking, "Where is the Baby Jesus?" He set the last piece in place, it was a sheep. Tearfully, he said to the teacher, "I've lost the Baby Jesus." Unfortunately, many other people will have lost Jesus as well by not keeping Him as the focal point of their celebration.

Christmas reminds us that at the center of our lives stands God's own Son, Jesus Christ. Through His life and atoning death, our sins are forgiven. That manger holds the only hope of the world. Here is God coming to save His people. St. Augustine once said, "The Son of God became the Son of Man, that the sons of men might become the children of God.

Christmas opened the gate of heaven for sinners, for it projected the everlasting love of God. Christmas means that God found the only way to meet humanity's deepest need, the need

for salvation. The blessings of Christmas are for this world and for the world to come. They become the perfect joys of eternal life.

At the entrance to St. Mary's Church in Cambridge, England, there is a doormat with the inscription: "Think-Thank." We cannot properly honor Christ at Christmas time unless our hearts are overflowing with gratitude. A Savior was born two thousand years ago and that is reason enough to be thankful. Christmas without thanksgiving is not Christmas at all.

A little girl who had never attended Sunday School or received any religious training in her home, was sick in the hospital. At Christmas, the nativity story was read in the children's ward. The little girl was enchanted. After the service she turned to her grim-looking nurse and said: "Have you ever heard that story before?" "Oh, yes," answered the nurse, "many times." "Well," said the little girl, "You certainly don't look like it!" If we have heard the story of Christ and His love it should make a difference in our lives. If God has come down to us, spoken to us, and put His hand upon us, then we are changed. If, through the grace of Christ, we are given a new name, we ought to have a new look - a Christian look.

For two thousand years Christmas has been the inspiration of the Christian church. We are amazed when we think of the love of God. Love means giving. The Father gave His Son, and the Son gave His life as a ransom. In the middle of the business of Christmas arrangements we may sometimes forget this. We need only to go to church to hear that truth spoken any Sunday. When we think about the true meaning of the birth of Christ, we cannot help but be awe struck that love came down at Christmas.

May the hope of that first Christmas be renewed in you this holiday season; may the joy of Christmas be with you throughout the year; may the love of Christmas live and grow in your heart to be shared with others; and may the peace that only God can give abide in you today and always. Amen.

Pastor Nirva



OUR CHURCH RECORDS

Church Attendance

Wednesday, October 28	17	
Sunday, November 1	242 & 100	
Wednesday, November 4	40	
Sunday, November 8	160 & 142	
Wednesday, November 11	29	
Sunday, November 15		160 & 223
Wednesday, November 18		25
Sunday, November 22		185 & 197

Communion Attendance

Sunday, November 1	188
Wednesday, November 4	30
Sunday, November 8	69
Sunday, November 15	144
Sunday, November 22	102

Baptisms

Abigail Rose Jones-Heins infant daughter of Crystal Jones and Brian Heins on November 4, 2009 by Pastor Schoenfeld.

Max Bradley Schlagel, infant son of Neil and Susan Schlagel on November 15, 2009 by Pastor Nirva.

Funeral

Helen (Thompson) Brose on November 17, 2009. She had died on November 14, 2009 at the age of 80 years, 6 months and 5 days.

Profession of Faith

Ruth (Mrs. David) Oestreich on November 16, 2009



SCRIPTURE QUIZ

(answers below)

1. What is the name of the angel who told Zechariah he would have a son and also told Mary she would give birth to the Son of God?
2. Fill in the following blank with one word: "For unto you is born this day in the city of _____ a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."
3. Who kept all these things and pondered them in her heart?
4. Who did the Holy Spirit reveal that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ?
5. Who said the following, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him?"

Answers: 1. Gabriel (Luke 1:19 & 26. 2. David (Luke 2:11) 3. Mary (Luke 2:19) 4. Simeon (Luke 2:25). 5. The wise men or Magi (Matthew 2:2).

Lutheran Women's Missionary League

Viann opened our evening with devotions: *Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart*. We then each made a turkey from a plastic glove, candy, and popcorn to remind us to give thanks

Our November meeting featured a guest speaker who had been on a mission trip to Panama with several other couples. She gave a very interesting presentation with pictures of the work they were doing in that country. What an uplifting experience!

Election of officers was held with Norma Koosman our new President, Kathy Lutter our new Treasurer, and Karen Schmiege and Marcella Yager elected to the Executive Board. We are thankful for these willing workers. Our December meeting will not be our "normal" Christmas smorgasbord. Instead we are going to the Plymouth Playhouse to see "**Away in the Basement**." This should be a very enjoyable evening. We hope many of you signed up to go with us.

May each of you have a Christ-filled Christmas and a Blessed New Year. We hope many of you will join us in the coming year as we will have many exciting things happening.

Happy Birthday to the following St. James Seniors in December: Eliza Haag (2), Kathryn Lutter (11), Helen Eckhoff (14), Dorothy Gruenhagen (15), Syrrillis Reek (24), Vernon Engel (27), Helen Zander (28) and Malvina Dalbec (29).

The Ultimate Hunter

Come share your hunting stories and pictures.

Enjoy coffee, donuts, laughs, and a brief devotion at St. James Lutheran School

Saturday, December 5 at 10:00 AM

Immanuel

The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel – which means, ‘God with us.’ Matthew 1:23

It is part of our sinful human nature to take others for granted. A husband and wife will have a tendency to take their spouse for granted. A parent and child may take one another for granted. Our friendships and relationships are blessings that we often take for granted. Sadly, however, we may treat our relationship with God in this manner as well.

This Advent and Christmas season, however, I invite you to consider anew how truly we are blessed to have a relationship with God. The prophet Isaiah had foretold the good news that God would come to be with us (Isaiah 7:14). When the announcement was made to Mary and Joseph there was great excitement. God was going to be with this couple in a very special way. Mary would give physical birth to the Divine Son of God. Joseph would raise, as his son, the very Son of God. **Immanuel** – God would be with this family. What excitement and challenges must have filled their hearts and lives. Throughout the ages of the Christian Church, Christians have often times shared this excitement that God was with His people. God had come in human flesh to walk this earth. God had been with humanity in our sin, not by committing transgressions, but by carrying our guilt to the cross. God had even been with us in death as Jesus went to the tomb. However, our Lord has also risen from the dead. Because Jesus has risen to new life we know that God is our **Immanuel** still today – for our Lord lives.

Does the message of God coming to you in order to be part of your family still excite you? Or are you someone who has heard the story so many times that you have a tendency to take it for granted? This Advent and Christmas season the Lord invites you to consider again what **Immanuel** means. God invites you to consider again the joy and the truth that Jesus comes to be with you and your family in a very special way. He has come into this world in human flesh. He has written you a book, the Bible, where He speaks to you. He comes to be with you in the sacrament of Holy

Communion where He gives you His very body and blood shed for the forgiveness of your sins.

Immanuel – God with us. This Christmas God again comes to be with you. Rejoice in this good news. Celebrate that the Lord is with you now in your life. Celebrate the fact that through faith in Jesus you will be with the Lord for all eternity in heavenly glory. Ponder anew what God has done for you. He has come in human flesh to be **Immanuel**. Furthermore, God being with us was not just a one-time event. Jesus still lives and He continues to be with you in your life so that you may be with Him for eternity. This Advent and Christmas season may God arouse great excitement about what it means for you that God is with you.

Pastor Schoenfeld

Missionary

Jacob Gillard

to speak at St. James Lutheran Church
Monday, December 7 at 1:00 PM

This is a special event to which all
St. James members are invited to hear
Pastor Gillard tell of his work and lead
a special Christmas chapel service.

Sharing God's Love

Hungry for More?

There seems to be an increasing hunger to read and talk about the Word of God. With a regular intake of Scripture, we are feeding our faith with Jesus Christ as the Son of God. As we hear God talk to us through the Word, we will be energized to let good works flow through our lives. Renewal in Scripture study will give us the strength to serve others, and to reduce the risk of becoming overwhelmed as we fulfill God's will in our lives.

Martin Luther wrote, "The Word of God always comes first. After it follows faith; after faith, love; then love does every good work, for it is the fulfilling of the law." The more we dig into the Word of God, the more we will be nourished with new life in Jesus' name. Feeding on God's Word means feeding our faith with the power of the Holy Spirit. Are you hungry for more?

God's Word comes to us not only in words, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. I Thessalonians 1:5.

In Christ's love,
Evangelism Committee

Youth News

Advent Desserts

The Junior and Senior Youth will be serving desserts and beverages after evening Advent services on December 2nd, 9th and the 16th. Come to the church office basement for fellowship and goodies. A free will offering will be accepted.

Shoe Box Gifts

Thank you to everyone for the generous donations for our Samaritans Purse Shoe Box Gift Collection. We collected **61** boxes and took them to the drop site in Hutchinson.

God bless you all during this
Blessed Season!

Food Collection Report

Thanks to everyone who brought food items and cash for our Thanksgiving Food Collection on Sunday, November 22. Social Ministry was able to fill 20 baskets of food and include a turkey with each for those in need. \$957.35 was received in cash to purchase the turkeys. Thrivent will be matching \$600 of that total to be used for purchasing food throughout the year.

Thank you to all of you for being so generous. A big thank you to the Kucks of Glenn's Super Valu, Winsted for their donation toward the turkey purchases.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving!

From Our Parish Nurse

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the father of the heavenly lights...

James 1:17 NIV

A harried woman and her children were ending their day of holiday shopping. To express her frustration and stress, she stated that whoever created Christmas should be strung up and shot. A bystander brought to her attention that someone had already crucified him.

Before you get caught up with your tasks, lists, and expectations, put them into perspective. Ask yourself what you should be celebrating: the hectic, stress-laden, financially burdened holiday season, or the gift of our Savior and the gift of Peace and Hope!

Even though God gives us all we need for a healthy, happy life, we tend to disturb it by “spending” and “observing” the holiday on human terms. Look at the holiday traps that take up your time.

Categorize your holiday tasks as:

- **need to do**
- **should do**
- **want to do**
- **expected to do**

Which ones really address the Christmas spirit? Just because you are invited to attend an event or have habitually participated in an activity doesn't mean you have to continue that activity. Prioritize all of your activities. By weeding out those that distract you from the true meaning of Christmas, you will find less stress and more enjoyment from your choices.

Advent is a time for hope, peace, joy, and love, not mounds of gifts, chaotic rounds of parties, or copious amounts of food. Consider what has real meaning for you. Is it the Christmas story you heard as a child or its impact on you as an adult? Think about the music of the holiday and how a stirring rendition of “JOY TO THE WORLD” or a quiet performance of ‘SILENT NIGHT’ displays love and peace in a harried world.

Speaking of music—There are numerous health benefits linked with music, both listening and performing. Osteoarthritis is one example of how music can aid in the increased range of motion of the hands and significant decrease in arthritic discomfort. By playing for a few minutes a day on a touch-sensitive electronic keyboard the symptoms of this difficult condition can be relieved. Several studies have shown music helps reduce the labor pains without drugs.

Research has shown that singing enhances the ability to cope with stressful situations. It also has been shown to reduce depression.

Several scientific investigations demonstrate that music reduces agitated behaviors in those with dementia. The use of music is an effective strategy in managing behavioral situations. The beautiful Christmas season allows families to enjoy the many hymns and songs while we prepare for our times when we can be together. Also, singing along or playing the music will certainly remind us of the great gift we have been given. So, this holiday season, plan a family sing-along, get back to playing your favorite musical instrument, take advantage of the musical concerts offered, volunteer to sing in the choir, give someone the gift of a beautiful CD of Christian music or any other way you can reap the benefits of a good dose of health through music.

“Be sure to give to the Lord the best portions of the gifts given to you.” Numbers 18:29 NLT

The holidays are times of joy but also times of change. Children grow into adults with lives of their own. Families lose loved ones to death through illness, old age, or accidents. Young adults marry and move away from home, changing the comfortable family traditions of their youth. Your gift to your family is providing loving presence during the changes in your family's life, and helping them develop new traditions and relationships that incorporate the changes that have occurred. This season, remember the best gift you can give is yourself- be loving, be supportive, be present.

My wish for you is a blessed, healthy and Merry Christmas!

Your Parish Nurse,

Darlene Lind

Mission Presentation at St. James

Through the LCMS organization *Together in Missions* our church designates \$9,000 of our mission offerings to support the work of the Gillards in Uganda. Pastor Jacob will be in Minnesota for a short time in December and was able to fit us in his schedule. We will be his 4th stop of the day on Monday, December 7th at 1:00 PM.

Come hear how he is able to obey Christ's command of going into the world and preaching to all nations as our prayers and financial support are making this work possible.

Sunday School

Sunday School has been very busy in November. We learned about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego being thrown into the fiery furnace and how God saved them.

Daniel had a great faith too and was not eaten by the lions. How wonderful our God is by taking care of us and providing for us.

We look forward to Christmas and presenting our message at the 10:30 AM service on Sunday, December 20.

Sunday School

Christmas Program

Sunday, December 20

at 10:30 AM worship

Stewardship

“And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus...” is the way Luke’s account of the Christmas story begins in chapter two (KJV). That decree caused Mary and Joseph to travel to Bethlehem, the city of David, where Jesus was born according to ancient prophecy. God’s timing is perfect as He carries out His will. Galatians 4:4-5 reads, *“But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”* (NIV)

God’s promises are true and find their “amen” in Jesus. Throughout the Old Testament God inspired His prophets to write down many promises of a Savior. The faithful people of God believed His promises and were saved by that faith even though they had not seen the Savior with their own eyes. They lived before Christmas and we live after Christmas. We also have not seen Jesus with our own eyes and yet, by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, we believe that on that first Christmas Christ took on Himself our human form, kept the law perfectly for us, preached the good news of salvation, performed countless miracles and then offered Himself up as the precious Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, ours included!

Christmas is a very joyous occasion as we celebrate our Lord’s first coming into the world but we also know

that the shadow of the cross already hovered over the manger where the baby Jesus was laid. He was born to die in our place so that the door to heaven will be open to us and all who believe in Him as our only true Lord and Savior.

As Christian stewards we live in the light of the Gospel and freely and joyfully manage all of life and life’s resources for God’s purposes. God offered up His best for us and in response we strive to offer our best to Him. During this joyful Christmas season we have many opportunities to show our love for God by showing love to all the neighbors He has placed around us, especially those who have special needs of body, soul and spirit. May God help us to use our gifts of time, talents, skills and financial resources to His glory and the welfare of those around us. May He especially help us to be like the shepherds and spread the good news of salvation in Christ alone!

For lo, the days have come to pass

By prophets seen of old,

When down into the circling years

Came Christ as was foretold.

His word of peace shall to the earth

God’s ancient promise bring,

And all who take this gift will hear

The song the angels sing.

(LSB, 366, verse 4)

THE LUTHERAN HOUR

Hear Reverend Ken Klaus on The Lutheran Hour each Sunday at 12:30 PM on KDUZ-1260 Hutchinson or at 7:30 AM on KRWC-1360 Buffalo.

The Lutheran Hour may also be heard at 6:05 AM Sunday mornings on WCCO-830. The Lutheran Hour is our church’s witness in the public market place. We can sponsor broadcasts on KDUZ in memory of loved ones or in honor of special occasions. Acknowledgments of these sponsors are given before and after each broadcast. **The cost for one program is \$89 in 2009.** Please contact Charles Jensen at 320-864-3579 to sign up for a date to sponsor the broadcast.

December 6-Nobody Tells Me What to Do-Half-hearted repentance is not really repentance at all. Jesus didn’t come into this world to live, suffer, die, and rise for those who think they are doing just fine on their own. (Luke 3:1-14)

December 13-Imagine No Religion-What would the world be like without religion? We don’t have to imagine. The evidence from history is clear. (Luke 7:18-19)

December 20-*Light for Our Loneliness*-Even as the Christmas angels brought a message of light and hope to lonely souls in Bethlehem long ago, the birth of our Savior is good news that brings light for our loneliness today. (John 1:9)

December 27-*To be announced*

Guest Speaker: Rev. Robert Bugbee

You can also listen to "The Lutheran Hour" on the Web at www.lutheranhour.org. Hear the broadcast available to our military at: www.lutheranhour.org/AFN/listen.htm. "The Lutheran Hour" is also on XM's Family Talk Radio 170 every Sunday at 1:00 p.m. (EST).

School News

November Highlights:

Field trips: The 6th Grade went to the Science Museum and was able to attend the Titanic exhibit. The 2nd Grade went to the Minnesota Zoo and was able to enjoy the wonder of God's creation.

Volleyball: The girls did well. The 5th and 6th Grade finished the year 8 and 1. The 7th and 8th Grade placed Consolation at the Mayer tournament.

Thanksgiving food collection: In addition to the food shelf offerings that all the school children bring monthly, the 6th Grade collected an ADDITIONAL 576 pounds of food. 300 pounds was given to the Waverly food shelf and the remainder benefited our congregation's food shelf.

Additional highlights: The 5th Grade wrote letters to veterans for Veteran's Day and mailed them.

Please keep saving your Campbell's Soup Labels.

December Anticipations:

Glad sounds can be heard within the walls of Saint James School. Three busy weeks of school are jam-packed full of preparations during this Adventide. Our school's athletes begin their basketball preparations and practices. Our players will be participating in a few early tournaments. Students have begun the memorization and mastering of Scripture and song in preparation for our Christmas programs and services. We look forward to a presentation by one of the missionaries our congregation supports. Rev. Gillard will speak to us December 7th at 1:00. Everyone is welcome.

Our human nature would lead us into unrealistic expectations during this busy time. We could be driven to produce the perfect Christmas program, the perfectly decorated classroom, the perfect gifts, and the list goes on and on... Sadly, our culture can push us into this frantic activity, and sadly, even the most well-intentioned of us can temporarily forget the real reason of Christmas.

Our prayer for you and for our students is that this busy time is not made into a time of meaningless and frenzied 'holiday' preparations. But rather, may these busy days be a time of sacred and contemplative preparations for our Christmas celebration. Our students hope to help make this time a little more special for you with the presentation of their Christmas services.

Grades K-4

The Customs of Christmas

Sunday,
December 13th at 2:00

Grades 5-8

He Is Coming

Wednesday,
December 16th at 1:30 & 7:00

Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior comes, The Savior promised long; Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne, And ev'ry voice a song. LSB 349