

# St. James News

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## *Jesus Is with Us in the New Year*

**The Word of the Lord:** Matthew 28:20: *I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*

In the name of the Lord and Savior we once again enter the New Year. If we would select and inscribe a suitable and appropriate saying over the portals of the New Year, may it be the words from Matthew 28:20: "*I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*" Our Lord had just given His great commission to His Apostles, and they were to go out into all the world and preach the gospel to every nation, an incredible undertaking, from which they might have shrunk. For them, the few helpless, powerless men that they were, to enter into such an enterprise was enough to discourage them, but Jesus promises that He will always be with His chosen ones.

Are we anxious about what the future holds for us? Wrapped in misty vapors, the year lies before us, its future is distant and uncertain. What the future holds for us, whether luxuriant and fertile valleys with prosperity and success, or unfruitful, sterile deserts of dismal misfortune, He is the omniscient One. God alone knows and has graciously concealed it from our eyes. If we ever wonder whether we walk the dark corridors of the future alone then we need to hear the words of Jesus, "*I am with you always.*"

Jesus is the everlasting God, and all His promises are certain. Such is the character of Christ who gives the assuring promise of His divine presence. Now, it is true, God is everywhere and with everybody, be they Christian or not. It is one of His attributes, omnipresence. That is not what is meant here but rather a special presence, a paternal presence, a provident and protecting presence. We must not think of God as far off in some distant and unapproachable space, but we are to understand His presence as if encompassed our footsteps, is with us in all places, in the living room, in the church, in our places of business, the office, the factory, the workshop in which we toil, wherever life's calling and duties will carry us. We can be assured of this, as we are of the fact that we exist, that the presence of our Lord is with us always. The Christian knows that 'chance' does not rule the future. Neither is the future ruled by accidental or natural law, or human agency or Satan's power. Only God rules the future and the Almighty rules the future for the good of every Christian. No matter what those events are whether tragic or joyful, His hand is over them, governs and directs them, so that a sparrow falls from the housetop nor a hair from our head without God knowing and controlling the occurrence.

What is true of every believer is also true of the whole church of Christ and of our church. God's presence will again be with us. The world's work and unbelief will seek to hurt the

church, and at times conditions for the church may seem less prosperous. But even the gates of hell will not prevail against the word of God. Let us be strong, then, not in our strength, but in the strength of God. There is no reason to fear because we have the presence of Him who loved, who died, and who cares for us. Have faith in Jesus in this coming year.

Therefore, let us enter into the New Year with devout trust in God. Keep the eye of faith fixed upon Him as the guiding star, and our souls rooted deep in the promise of Matthew 28:20: "*I am with you always.*" Allow the words to sink down into your minds and hearts. Every morning may it find you commending yourselves, body and soul, and all that you have, into His hands. As you go about your occupation and calling, may this thought be with you throughout the New Year. Then will the coming 365 days be truly happy days.

Pastor Nirva

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## OUR CHURCH RECORDS

### Church Attendance

Wednesday, November 25	150
Thanksgiving, November 26	216
Sunday, November 29	125 & 178
Wednesday, December 2	140 & 58
Sunday, December 6	278 & 162
Wednesday, December 9	124 & 29
Sunday, December 13	205 & 176
Wednesday, December 16	186 & 299
Sunday, December 20	137 & 328
Christmas Eve, December 24	398, 126 & 52
Christmas Day, December 25	69
Sunday, December 27	144 & 185

### Communion Attendance

Wednesday, December 2	38
Sunday, December 6	159
Sunday, December 13	75
Sunday, December 20	112
Sunday, December 27	83

### Baptism

Matthew Ray Narum infant son of Mark and Bridget Narum on December 13, 2009 by Pastor Schoenfeld.

### Wedding

Wayne Johnson and Annaliese Power on December 12, 2009 by Pastor Nirva.

### Funeral

Shane Niesen on December 5, 2009. He had died on November 27, 2009 at the age of 31 years, 8 months and 11 days.



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## \*\*\*SCRIPTURE QUIZ\*\*\*

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(answers below)

1. What did the Ten Commandments, a pot of manna and Aaron's rod have in common?
2. Which was the oldest original complete manuscript of a Bible book found among the Dead Sea Scrolls?
3. In what book, chapter and verse in the Bible is the word "Heaven" first mentioned?
4. What did a non-Israelite have to do if he wanted to take part in the Passover?
5. What town, once destroyed in the Old Testament, was within 7 miles of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls?

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Answers: 1. They were all contained in the Ark of the Covenant. (Hebrews 9:4) 2. Isaiah 3. Genesis 1:1 4. Have all his household circumcised (Exodus 12:48) 5. Jericho

## Lutheran Women's Missionary League

Going to see the play "Away in the Basement" by the church basement ladies at the Plymouth Playhouse on Wednesday, December 2 was a great time. It gave us a chance to laugh at all the traditions and preparations that we fret over every year. Christmas comes no matter what we do or how we do it. The most important thing is that we stop all our hustle and bustle to worship and give God the glory as we celebrate Jesus' birth.

Happy Birthday to the following St. James Seniors in January: Clayton Helinske (2), Lloyd Glessing (7), Erma Hechsel (12), Lois Engel (15), Wayne Diers (16), Eldon Glessing (19), Esther Kelly (27), Marvin Klugow and Romeo Oestreich (28).

Please contact the church office if a birthday is ever omitted or lists the wrong date. The computer is only as certain as the person who runs it.

[Cartoon]

Man and woman eating breakfast:

"I thought I'd surprise you with something different this morning...John the Baptist Oatmeal! I've wanted to make it for some time, but you wouldn't believe how hard it is to find locusts."

# The Year of Bible Study

*“Do not let this book of the law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”* Joshua 1:8

Happy New Year! The start of a new year can be an exciting time. It is a time when we get a fresh start. This year of 2010 I pray that it will be a year of renewed interest and excitement in your study of the Bible. Many of you have faithfully participated in Bible classes here at St. James and in your own private devotional time at home.

Others have perhaps neglected this very important aspect of our Christian life. It is my prayer this year that you will renew your interest and participation in the Bible studies St. James offers and that likewise you would strive to let this be a year where you are daily having your

own devotional time reading from the Bible. In recent months at St. James there have been a number of Bible study opportunities that have been offered for you to participate in. You will hear more about these in the weeks ahead. Let God the Holy Spirit motivate you to step forward and become involved in at least one of these Bible studies and to daily read your Bibles at home.

Why is this an important thing for us to do? It is important for a number of reasons. I will simply let the Scriptures speak for themselves. Consider why God wants you to study His Divine Word on a regular basis in the following Bible verses:

- *“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.”* John 20:31
- *“You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me.”* John 5:39

- *“From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* 2 Timothy 3:15-17
- *“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”* Romans 10:17
- *“For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”* 2 Peter 1:21
- *“Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”* Luke 11:28

This is but a sampling of the reasons God gives us to study the Bible. Through the Word of God our Lord gives and strengthens our faith in Christ. In the Bible God teaches us about what He has done for us. He teaches us how Jesus has come into this world in order to bring us the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. In the Bible God teaches us how this salvation is something that is given to us as a gift through faith in Jesus. Furthermore, God has promised to bless us through the study of the word and train us in righteousness so that we may be prepared for every good work the Lord puts before us. The Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God and so it is His letter, His instructions, His promises to us. We can base our life and our eternity upon them. In Bible study you also have an opportunity to visit with other Christians and encourage one another in the Christian faith just as our Lord wants us to do (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

With so many good reasons given to us to study the Bible, I encourage you to look for those opportunities that are put before you to participate in a Bible study at St. James and make it a goal to daily study your Bible throughout the year. I also encourage you to invite a friend, a neighbor, a co-worker, a family member, or anyone else you can think of to join you and participate in Bible study together. In the weeks ahead you will receive more information and encouragement in this important area of our Christian life together.

May God richly bless you in the year 2010 and may He make this be a year of Bible study for you.

Pastor Schoenfeld

# Who Are the Wise Men?

- Seeking Three Wise Men.  
Apply at church office.

***“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem...wise men from the east came to Jerusalem.”*** Matthew 2 contains the only account of the Magi. We know very little about these foreigners—these Gentiles. The new Lutheran Study Bible only suggests who they were and why they sought Jesus. We don’t even know the exact size of their caravan.

- Crowns available – adjustable for heads of all sizes.

***“Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?”*** Tradition says the Magi were kings from the Orient. As they made their inquiry, we realize they were not native to the Jewish lands, but we know they were quite educated and had studied the prophecies of the Old Testament.

- Needed: gold, frankincense, and myrrh

***“The star...went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him.”***

The gifts they brought were fit for a king, not the child of a carpenter. They recognized that his was no ordinary birth.

Hearing the Christmas story annually reminds us of the humble beginnings of God in human flesh. But we must remember that the

story only begins on December 25. As the year progresses, we ought to be like the Wise Men: studying the Scriptures and seeking our Messiah, following the Epiphany star, and worshiping Him with our very best gifts and talents.

May God bless you in this journey,

Board of Evangelism

# Report from the Benevolence Fund

In November our Christian Benevolence Fund **fulfilled** these requests:

- 3 rent payments (eviction notices to a mom with 3 boys, a mom with 2 boys, a single lady),
- 1 dental payment
- 7 gas bills
- transportation to Dr., jobs and job interviews

Lack of funds made it necessary to **deny** these requests:

- 2 rent payments (eviction notices to a couple and a mom with 3 daughters)
- 2 gas bills
- transportation to Dr.
- inquiries about Christmas gifts

Our opportunity to help the unfortunate among us has never been greater. Let us keep them in our thoughts and prayers especially during this time of the year. THANK YOU and GOD BLESS YOU for caring and sharing!

# Sunday School

The Sunday School Christmas program was a wonderful presentation of the Christmas story done by the children at the 10:30 AM service on December 20. The Christmas Carols and recitations were done very well. We thank everyone who helped and organized the service.

Hearing the Christmas story again in Sunday School has been great for the children and teachers. Each year we learn more about Jesus' birth and just like Mary keep it alive and growing in our hearts not only at Christmas time but throughout the year.

All children ages 3 to high school are welcome to join us every Sunday morning from 9:15 to 10:15 AM in the school.

# From Our Parish Nurse

*This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites.* Leviticus 16:34 NIV

In the Chinese culture, the New Year is the time dedicated to finish with the old and to start with the new. Their traditions include visiting friends and family to re-establish relationships, cleaning the house to prepare for the coming year, stocking cupboards with household provisions, settling all old debts, and putting forth their best behavior. All of these activities are to make the new year better and healthier.

What are you going to do for your health this year? Are you going to keep all of your old habits and ignore healthier ones? For example have you considered limiting your meals at fast-food restaurants? Can you develop healthier choices at the grocery store? Will you improve your exercise habits by

walking or joining a health club? Have you considered the health benefits of practicing self-care and a well-balanced lifestyle? Any and all of these will guide you to a healthier life.

Once you decide to make an improvement, you must first choose what area to change then make the commitment to see that change occur. Many of us take the first step of making the promise to change our behavior or habit but find it difficult to take the actual steps and then follow through on the lifestyle change. To be successful when making the commitment to alter behavior you need to have dedication, strategy, and action. Until you have a plan and begin to follow it, change is only a verbal statement.

## Goals for The New Year

The New Year is a good time to look at your life and determine what you need to change or improve.

*“You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.”* Isaiah 26:3 NIV

What pain or baggage is holding you hostage? Many cultures promote forgiveness as a way to begin the New Year. Research shows that forgiving others makes you healthier by lowering blood pressure, stress, hostility, anxiety, and chronic pain. “Letting go” also gives you a

sense of well-being that translates into healthier relationships and less illness.

It is not easy but with God’s help you can make the choice to take control and keep the hurt from ruling your emotions or actions. Forgiveness takes time. Give it your energy and by Christmas of 2010 see what changes have been made in your life. (Source: Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco).

It is also a good time to update or establish your Advanced Directives or Living Wills. I do have the forms for this important document in your life, don’t hesitate to ask for them.

Wishing you our Lord’s blessings in the New Year,  
Your Parish Nurse,  
Darlene Lind

*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the father of the heavenly lights....*  
James 1:17 NIV

Please note that **Rachel Rolf** no longer has a Post Office Box. Her mailing address is:  
1111 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Apt. 1W  
Howard Lake, Minnesota 55349

## A.S.A.P.

Have you ever wondered about the abbreviation A.S.A.P.? Generally, we think of it in terms of even more hurry and stress in our lives. Maybe if we think of this abbreviation in a different manner, we will begin to find a new way to deal with those rough days along the way.

There’s work to do, deadlines to meet;  
You’ve got no time to spare,  
But as you hurry and scurry-  
A.S.A.P. - ALWAYS SAY A PRAYER

In the midst of family chaos,  
“Quality time” is rare.  
Do your best; let God do the rest-  
A.S.A.P. - ALWAYS SAY A PRAYER

It may seem like your worries  
Are more than you can bear.  
Slow down and take a breather-  
A.S.A.P. - ALWAYS SAY A PRAYER  
God to ease our cares,  
And He’ll respond to all your needs  
A.S.A.P. - ALWAYS SAY A PRAYER

# School News

I Corinthians 13:4, Here we find the Apostle Paul's HYMN OF LOVE. We could easily substitute the name Jesus for the word "love."

We could then say "Jesus is patient, Jesus is kind, Jesus does not envy, Jesus does not boast, Jesus is not proud."

In faith we see the loveliness of Jesus. He leads us also to exhibit love to one another.

Love is *patient*,  
love is *kind*.  
It does not *envy*,  
It does not *boast*,  
It is not *proud*.

1 Corinthians 13:4

Love is the Church's most effective weapon. All the good we could and can do in this world is of no value if we do not have the Spirit of Christian love.

Just as the Lord has patience with sinners, with the weaknesses of His saints here on earth, just as He is good and kind, and has shown His kindness and love in sending His Son as our Savior, so also should all Christians be found exhibiting and doing those some virtues.

Paul presents Christian love in a personal way. Love is not "RUDE" it is not ill-mannered. Good manners are more than etiquette; they are ways of showing respect for the feelings of others. Love always seeks the welfare of others. It is not "touchy." It does not flare up every time our pride is hurt or injured. And love does not keep score of all the bad things others say about us or do to us - we do not repay evil for evil.

How do we measure up? How thankful we should be, knowing that the Lord loves each and every one of us - despite who we are and what we have done. Put love into action, you will be amazed what a positive reaction you will experience.

## What a wonderful and exciting December we had!

In our classrooms, we practiced our parts and songs for the Christmas programs. What a great time we had sharing our faith and joy over the Savior's birth. We also continued our love for learning in each classroom, doing a variety of activities that bring us together both spiritually and educationally.

\* The **Kindergartners** made an advent wreath and discussed the meaning of the colored candles. They made ornaments for their Christmas

tree and presents for their parents. In Math, they colored their books for the *12 Days of Christmas*. They had fun singing the song and using their books to follow along. In Reading the popcorn words were I, see, is, the, it, my, here, we, can, and have. The Kindergartners also reviewed the beginning sounds for s, m, and r, and read the book *I See*.

\* The **1<sup>st</sup>** graders made ornaments for their tree, and when they were finished, it was all done in white. In Reading they have started their 4<sup>th</sup> book and are continuing to develop strong reading skills each and every day. In writing, they used journals to develop their skills applying spelling words and their chapel talks as subjects.

\* The **2<sup>nd</sup>** graders have been working on renaming using math problems, pronouns in English, and, in Social Studies, they have been talking about wants and needs.

\* The **3<sup>rd</sup>** graders have been studying Government Branches in Social Studies, the water cycle in Science and will begin a new chapter in Math on measurements.

\* The **4<sup>th</sup>** graders have started long division in their Math class, and in Reading they are focusing on Genre Plays.

\* The **5<sup>th</sup>** graders had **Dare Graduation** on Thursday, December 17, 2009. In the classroom, they have been studying the original 13 Colonies in Social Studies, and, in Reading, they have been learning about the stars. The fifth grade class is happy to welcome Kajsa Johnson to their classroom!

\* The **6<sup>th</sup>** graders have been studying capitalization and punctuation in English, and Latin America in History. They are also working on a project to make terrariums for a frog, monkey, iguana and a tarantula.

\* The **7<sup>th</sup>** graders are making steady progress working with fractions in Math. In Literature class, they are also reading and acting out plays which they enjoy very much. They will finish up the story *The Christmas Carol*.

\*The 8<sup>th</sup> graders are working through proportional reasoning and statistics in Algebra, settling the west in History, and Newton's Law of Motion in Science. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade class is happy to welcome new student Noelle Johnson to their classroom!

I ONLY KNOW THE NAMES OF TWO ANGELS:  
HARK AND HAROLD.

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## 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.

**January 3-***God's Resolution of Redemption*-Unlike us, God always keeps His resolutions. He resolved to redeem sinners and that's exactly what He did, in Christ. (Matthew 2:1-3)

**January 10-***The Sinning Hypocrite*-The world looks at the Church and sees the hypocrisy of Christians who preach one thing but do another. Do they also see the Savior whose blood forgives hypocrites and other sinners? (Romans 6:1-2)

**January 17-***They Needed Wine*-Why did Jesus miraculously change water into wine and save a wedding party from ruin? He did it, in part, because He wants us to come to Him with our problems, big and small. (John 2:1-5)

**January 24-***A Savior Almost Seen*- Many people mistook Jesus for someone He wasn't. It's still that way today. Jesus remains for many a Savior almost seen. (Luke 4:22)

**January 31-***Gifted*-Guest Speaker: Rev. Anthony Creeden-God's gifts are meant for giving away, not for showing off. Our guest speaker is the Rev. Anthony Creeden of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church, Livonia, Michigan. (1 Cor. 13:1-7)

You can also listen to "The Lutheran Hour" on the Web at [www.lutheranhour.org](http://www.lutheranhour.org). Hear the broadcast available to our military at: [www.lutheranhour.org/AFN/listen.htm](http://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).

# Stewardship

**Happy New Year!** Isn't it great to be able to start all over with a new year! It gives us the opportunity to put the troubles and failures of the past behind us and look forward to a new year with joyful anticipation. This is especially true for us as God's children. Jarsoslav Vajda, a noted Lutheran hymn writer, translated these words of a New Year's hymn:

*Now greet the swiftly changing year  
With joy and penitence sincere.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! With thanks embrace  
Another year of grace.*

*God, Father, Son, and Spirit, hear!  
To all our pleas incline Your ear;  
Upon our lives rich blessing trace  
In this new year of grace.* (LSB 896:1,7)

As God's stewards we are reminded that we don't get a fresh start only on the first day of a new year. Instead we get a fresh start every day knowing that in Christ all that is wrong has been forgiven and with the power of the Holy Spirit we are equipped to move forward in our free and joyous management of all of life and life's resources for God's purposes. What we include in all of life and life's resources is described by the hymn writer Frances Havergal with these memorable words:

*Take my life and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;  
Take my moments and my days,  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.*

*Take my silver and my gold,  
Not a mite would I withhold;  
Take my intellect and use  
Ev'ry power as Thou shalt choose.*

*Take my love, my Lord, I pour  
At Thy feet its treasure store;  
Take myself, and I will be  
Ever, only, all, for Thee.* (TLH 441 LSB 783::1,4,6)

These verses from that beloved hymn remind us that our whole life is to be dedicated to God so that we use our time, talents and financial resources in ways that bring honor to Him and produce many blessings for those around us.

As we begin this new year let us remember that we are God's redeemed stewards who, in cooperation with and encouragement from fellow redeemed stewards, freely and joyfully manage all of life and life's resources for God's purposes. Let's consider making this our resolution for 2010: ***"Maturing stewards do the right things for the right reasons and strive for excellence in all they do."***