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Advent and Christmas Services

December 2 at 7:00 pm – Clinton High A'Cappella Choir

December 6 – Second Sunday in Advent, *Holy Communion*

December 9 at 1:30 and 7:00 pm – Advent Service
refreshments after the service

December 13 – Third Sunday in Advent

December 16 at 1:30 and 7:00 pm – Advent Service
refreshments after the service

December 20 – Fourth Sunday in Advent, *Holy Communion*

December 24 at 6:30 pm – Christmas Eve Children's Program

December 24 at 11:00 pm – Christmas Eve Candlelight
Service

December 25 at 9:00 am – Christmas Day Divine Service,
Holy Communion

THOSE WHO SERVE IN DECEMBER

Early

Elders: Jim Schnitzmeyer
Kurt Flathers

Ushers: Gene Mess
Calvin Lange
Ken Decker
Jay Mueller

Nursery Attendants (Late)

6 – Peter & Tara Sirna

13 – Carol Stuedemann &
Lenee Andresen

20 – Kristi & Brad LaShelle

27 – Megan & Sheryl Jindrich

Late

Elders: David Becker
Virtus Meyermann

Ushers: Bryce Petersen
Randy Housenga
Harlan Dell
Kevin Dell

Acolyte Schedule

6-Early – Lenee Andresen

6-Late – Emily Eggers

13-Early – Ryan Clement

13-Late – Danna Dyer

20-Early – Elder

20-Late – Aubrey Gluesing

27-Early – Lewis Meyermann

27-Late – Tyler Powell

The Philosophy of Philippians

Pastor Pool will be teaching a new Adult Sunday Morning Bible Study beginning Sunday January 10th. This will be an ongoing class, continuing through the spring. This class will begin by looking at how we, as Missouri-Synod Lutherans, read the Bible. We will then take these principles and put them to work studying Philippians. Join us Sunday Mornings at 9 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. There is no cost, handouts will be provided, and please bring your Bible.

A Note from Pastor Pool:

How to Listen to a Sermon

I remember before one of my first sermons here at St. John, our ushers and elders came to me and said that they were going to grade my sermon. They threatened to hold up score cards at the end of the service, just like one of those dancing shows on television. Thankfully, they left the score cards at home. But let's face it, we do evaluate the sermon on Sunday morning. Was it interesting? Did I agree with the Pastor? How did it make me feel? Did I stay awake?

Although this might surprise you, I do want you to evaluate my sermons. But your evaluation should be so much more than your emotional response. The Scriptures offer us standards for the proclamation of His Word.

My vocation, and God given office, is to proclaim the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), both God's Law (all His commands) and His Gospel which is the good news of forgiveness of sins found exclusively in Christ. The sermon is primarily about Jesus. The Pastor is commanded to "preach Christ crucified" (1 Corinthians 1:23). And as the Pastor preaches faithfully, the Word of God does what it says. His words are performative speech: declaring us holy, giving us faith, and forgiving our sins. "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

Allow me to suggest a series of questions for you to ask as you evaluate a sermon. The first question is my own and speaks to the importance of the sermon originating with the Prophets and the Apostles in Holy Scripture (2 Peter 3:2). The following three are from LCMS Pastor Todd Wilken, host of the radio broadcast *Issues Etc.* (www.issuesetc.org).

- (1) Does the sermon come from the Biblical text?
- (2) How central is Jesus to the sermon?
- (3) Is Jesus the subject of the verbs in the sermon?
- (4) What are those verbs?

With this evaluation tool in mind, critique my sermons! Let me know how I am doing! As you listen, remember that our faithful God will make you alive and strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ.

Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes will be on the table in the fellowship hall beginning December 13. A sign-up sheet will be available for anyone who did not receive envelopes and would like them.

Help Wanted: Office Manager

After 30 years of service, Carol Stuedemann, our Church Secretary, will be retiring. The congregation will begin looking in January to hire and train a new Office Manager to fill her position. The new position will be part-time, approximately 25 hours per week. We are looking to hire a member of St. John Lutheran Church. A Job Description and Application are available at the Church Office. Interviews will begin in early January, and we hope to fill the position early in the New Year. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Pool.

Christmas Program Rehearsals



All Sunday School students from preschool through the Youth Bible Class who will be participating in the St. John Christmas Eve service are asked to attend rehearsal sessions.

The rehearsals will be held during the Sunday School hour from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. on November 29, December 6, 13, and 20. The Dress Rehearsal is on Sunday, December 20 at 2:00 p.m.



A'Cappella Choir

The Clinton High School A'Cappella Choir will present an Advent Concert of Sacred Music on Wednesday, December 2, at 7:00 p.m. at St. John. We will want to have a good attendance for the many students who give of their time to come and sing for us.

Advent Serving Schedule

Each year the congregation is divided into groups according to the church directory for Advent and Lent Services with one group serving after each service. The A'Cappella Choir Advent Service refreshments will be served on December 2 by those in the church directory from Robert Hammer to Thomas Judd.

Each family serving is asked to bring a plate of sandwiches or three dozen cookies or a pan of bars or a suggested donation of \$5.00 to purchase punch and coffee. Donations may be left in the marked container in the church kitchen. Information cards will be placed in the bulletin slots of this group the Sunday before they serve.

After all advent worship services this year there will be cookies, punch and coffee. On December 9, Ladies Aid will provide service for refreshments after both services, and on December 16, Mary Martha will provide service. Thank you to both of these groups who are serving extra this year.

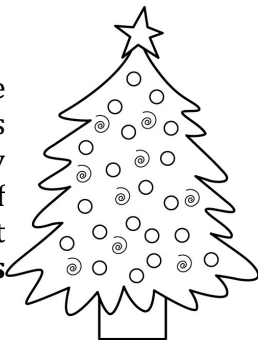
New In Our Library for Christmas

For Children:

Fear Not, Joseph! Teaches children ages 5 and up about the faith of Joseph as he followed God's instructions and became the earthly father to a baby who was Jesus, the Savior of the world.

The true meaning of Christmas shines brighter than all the world's decorations and dazzling lights. **We Believe in Christmas** is for ages 4—7.

Papa Bear and the cubs set out to find the perfect Christmas tree only to discover there's an animal living in each one they choose! They surely don't want to cut down the homes of their animal friends. Does this mean they can't get a tree? **The Berenstain Bears' Christmas Tree** is for ages 4—7.



The **READ and SHARE DVD Bible** makes the joy and wonder of Christmas come alive in 3D animation as it presents the Christmas story for very young children.

VeggieTales brings us **Saint Nicholas**, a story of joyful giving at Christmas and throughout the year.

For Adults:

Will is troubled. Can he find it in his heart to forgive his father who abandoned him 16 years ago when he was only 6 years old? Is he ready to marry Karen or still having second thoughts? **White Christmas Pie** is a heartwarming Christmas romance.

Join the people in the small New England town of Cape Light as they get ready to celebrate another Christmas. **A Wish for Christmas** is by Thomas Kinkade. (In LARGE PRINT)

An Amish Christmas takes you to Lancaster County in December for three Amish Christmas novellas.



Christmas Activities

Fellowship Club Potluck

Tuesday, December 1, 6:30 p.m.

Bring food to share & gift(s) for the Iowa City Hospitals.

The beverages and table service will be furnished.

Mixed Bowling League

Sunday, December 20, 6:30 p.m.

Please bring snacks to share.

Women's Groups Christmas Activities

Ladies Aid Christmas Dinner

Friday, December 4 at 12:00 p.m.

Please bring a guest, a dish to share, and a white elephant gift for a prize.

Please bring two dozen cookies *without nuts* to share with shut-ins.

Mary Martha Christmas Potluck

Tuesday, December 8 at 6:00 p.m.

Please bring a dish to share, a wrapped prize, a table decoration, item(s) for the Victory Center, and a cash donation for charities.

Turkey, ham, beverages, and table services provided.

Deanna Petersen will provide a program with music.

Sewing Circle Christmas Dinner

Friday, December 18 at 12:00 p.m.

There will be no **Quilting Bee** in December.



The Deaconess Den

The word advent comes from the Latin and means, “coming” or “arrival.” We are remembering how the Jewish people were waiting for the coming of the Messiah, who was promised to Adam and Eve. God did indeed become flesh; Jesus was the Messiah they were waiting for.

In our Christmas Eve Children's Program this year, the hymn, “Savior of the Nations Come” is sung throughout the service. The program reminds us that God does not save just one people group, but all who believe. The apostle Paul's mission was to the Gentiles. He writes in Romans, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew and then for the Gentile.” God does not show favorites because of our background, but shows mercy because of the work Christ did for us.

Our neighbor may or may not have a similar background to ours. They quite possibly have a different religion. Whatever the case may be, God wants us to show them love, as we have been shown the love of Christ, so that they might also come to know Christ's love!

While we wait for the coming of Christmas, remember the Jewish people who waited for the Messiah, and remember that Jesus died for the whole world, which means He died so that YOU could spend eternity with Him.

Deaconess Intern, Sarah Barkley

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

CONGRATULATIONS!

Happy Birthday to:

Jeanetta Schepler, who will be 85 on December 3.

Lucille Bethel, who will be 86 on December 5.

Ruth Hesemann, who will be 88 on December 9.

Gerhart Kopf, who will be 90 on December 29.

Jim Kophamer, who will be 81 on December 31.



Happy Anniversary to:

Thomas & Sharon Brown, 45th Wedding Anniversary on Dec. 5.

Jeff & Linda Chapman, 20th Wedding Anniversary on Dec. 16.

Ken & Vicki White, 50th Wedding Anniversary on Dec. 19.

Douglas & Sharon Martensen, 20th Wedding Anniversary on Dec. 30.

We list birthdays 80 and above and anniversaries for year one and every five years thereafter unless we receive a request not to do so.

Private Communion Calls

Pastor Pool will be making private communion calls on December 15, 16 and 18. All our members in nursing homes are automatically visited and receive communion every month. Those at home who would like to receive communion are asked to call the church office, 242-5588, to schedule a convenient time.