



## Peace Lutheran Church

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December, 2015

### Happy Holidays!

December 2015

If, after seeing the title for this article, you are still reading it, it must mean that you are not *too* upset. Other people might have seen the title and simply stopped reading. Many Christians today seem to be very upset at the greeting, "Happy Holidays!" It seems to be very generic and viewed by some to be unchristian or even anti-Christian. There is a loud insistence on Facebook and in other places that the only acceptable Christian greeting at this time of year is "Merry Christmas!"

I beg to differ.

The word, "holiday", is actually a contraction of two words: "holy day." It could be argued that "holiday" is actually a Christian term. Holidays are literally days which are to be set aside and kept holy.

Martin Luther has some interesting ideas about how to keep holidays as holy days. He writes about it in the section on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment in the Large Catechism. Why do we set aside dates such as Christmas (December 25<sup>th</sup>) as holidays (holy days)? Luther writes, "We keep holy days so that people may have time and opportunity, which otherwise would not be available, to participate in public worship, that is, that they may assemble to hear and discuss God's Word and then praise God with song and prayer." (LC, 84) As much as the holiday of Christmas has been commercialized and turned into a time of overeating, overdrinking, and over indulging in material gifts, we need to remember that it was originally intended to be a special time for people to assemble to hear God's Word about the birth of a Savior who would take our sins away and give us eternal life and to respond with the singing of Christmas hymns and carols and prayer.

How do we keep a day like Christmas "holy"? Luther writes, "What is meant by "keeping it holy"? Nothing else than to devote it to holy words, holy works, holy life. In itself the day needs no sanctification, for it was created holy. But God wants it to be holy to you. So it becomes holy or unholy on your account, according as you spend the day in doing holy or unholy things. How does this sanctifying take place? Not when we sit behind the stove and refrain from external work, or deck ourselves with garlands and dress up in our best clothes, but, as has been said, when we occupy ourselves with God's Word and exercise ourselves in it." (LC, 87-88)

Will you make Christmas a true "holiday" for you and your family this year? Will you "occupy [y]ourself with God's Word" on that day? The joy and peace and hope that you gain from making a holiday into a holy day through hearing the Word of God, meditating on its meaning, and responding with the singing of Christmas hymns and carols is more than you can get from any store-bought gift, any Christmas treat, or any Christmas party.

Of course, you don't need December 25<sup>th</sup> to do this, nor should you limit yourselves just to seasonal holidays. In fact, Luther says, "Indeed, we Christians should make every day a holy day and give ourselves only to holy activities—that is, occupy ourselves daily with God's Word and carry it in our hearts and on our lips." (LC, 89)

So, try wishing a fellow Christian, "Happy Holidays!" Post it on your Facebook page. See what kind of reaction you get. You might get a greater opportunity to witness to the meaning of Christmas than complaining about what kind of cup Starbucks is using or what Wal-Mart employees are allowed to say at this time of year. Teach people what a holiday really is.

Then celebrate Christmas as a holiday in the truest sense of the word in your home this year. Make Christmas Eve and Christmas Days "holy days" by gathering to hear the Word of God, to sing the Christmas songs, and to pray. That's what Christmas and all the other holidays are all about.

Happy Holidays!

Pastor Schlund

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TO**

**Everyone** who donated food during the Thanksgiving Day Worship Service for the Great Falls Rescue Mission.

**Everyone** who came to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration for Ed and Sarah Ostlund.

**Val Martin, Ruth Denning and Betsy Wirth** for preparing the meal for Mission Sunday.

**Gloria Creek and Val Martin** for playing the organ during our worship services.

**The choir** for enhancing our worship services.

**Val Martin and Elizabeth Allen** for leading and playing for the choir at Peace.

**Elsie Huss and Kevin Aguiar and all of the many hands** that prepared the food for the Thanksgiving Day meal here at Peace.

**All those who volunteer to teach Sunday school, Bible class, and midweek classes** on Sundays and Wednesdays.

**Idell Croskrey** for changing the banners and paraments.

**Angelika Fisher** for cleaning the church.

**Everyone on the Prayer Chain** for their time and prayers.

**Everyone** who has donated treats for our fellowship time.

**All of the men** who volunteer to usher.

**Everyone** who counts the offering.

**Cheri Magnuson** for cleaning the Communion linens.

This list is not inclusive. Please accept our apologies if we have missed giving you credit for serving the Lord in any fashion. We know that the Lord knows your service to Him.

## Advent Worship Services

**“The Places of Advent”** - During the season of Advent, we contemplate the coming of Jesus. But where do we find Jesus coming? Our Wednesday evening services during Advent will look at the places where Jesus comes. Join us for these special services at 7:00 PM on December 2, 9 and 16 with a soup supper preceding the services at 6:00 PM.

Wednesday, December 2, 2015      *“The Garden”*

Wednesday, December 9, 2015      *“The Manger”*

Wednesday, December 16, 2015      *“The Clouds”*

## Christmas Worship Services

**Children’s Christmas Service** will be on **Sunday, December 20 at 7:00 PM**. The theme is “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing”. **Note the Date Change!!!**

**A Candlelight Service** will be on Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. **Note The Time Change!! NOTE – There will NOT be an 11:00 PM service on Christmas Eve!!**

**A Service of Carols and Communion** will be on Christmas Day, Friday, December 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM. We will celebrate Holy Communion. Join us for any or all of these opportunities to hear and sing of the birth of Jesus during this most precious time of year.

**New Year’s Eve Service** – We will have a Communion Worship Service on New Year’s Eve, Thursday, December 31, 2015. Following the service there will be a party with games and snacks for all. Bring a snack to share and come and join the fun!

## Christmas Choir Concert at Trinity

Members of Peace and Trinity’s choirs invite you to come and enjoy a **Christmas Choir Concert at Trinity on Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM**. Prior to the concert, at 5:00 PM, there will be a Spuds & Splits meal with a free will offering as a fund raiser for the remodel of their kitchen. Spuds & Splits is a baked potato bar with a banana split bar for dessert! Feel free to come and enjoy an evening with our friends from Trinity and enjoy some fellowship, food and song as we anticipate the birth of our Savior!

# Ladies Bible study schedule

With all the commercialization of the pre Christmas Day season, how refreshing and enriching are our Advent services. Make a special effort to attend them all, as we focus on God's gift to mankind, our Savior Jesus Christ.

FRIDAY LADIES BIBLE CLASS will continue their study of I CORINTHIANS December 4th and 18th from 1-3 p.m. at the home of Ann Nimmick, 2327 15th Ave So. There is an extra chair, a study booklet, and a cup of tea or coffee waiting for you! Always feel welcome!

Assisted Living Ministry with hymn singing and a devotion will meet at 11 a.m. at Bee Hive Home #2, 2816 15th Ave So. on Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>. On Friday, December 11th at 11:45 a.m. the group will gather for a no host lunch at The Prime Cut Restaurant, 3219 10th Ave So. After lunch many will go to Highgate House, 3000 11th Ave So. How these residents love to sing Christmas carols! Come and join in the true meaning of Christmas!

## LWML

- ♥ **The Gift of Love Tree will be up soon!** Tags on the tree this year are from Quality Life Concepts. These are people with special needs. Take a tag and purchase the item. Bring it back wrapped with the tag on it by **Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>**. We will be taking the gifts to Quality Life Concepts on Monday, December 21.

Thank you, **Elsie Huss**, for organizing the tree.



- ♥ **The ladies of LWML are sponsoring the first Advent Soup Supper on December 2.** If you would like to help in anyway, please contact Elsie Huss or Linda Aguiar. .

- ♥ **Sunday, December 13** we will go caroling. We will meet at the church at 3 p.m., carol to various nursing homes, shut-ins and people's homes, then meet back at the church for a potluck meal. Please join us!!

- ♥ **During the month of January**, we will have a Baby Shower for Denice Combs who gives baby layettes to the mothers at Benefis who have babies but have no clothes to put on them. You may bring new or clean, gently used baby items and place them in the box provided. We will also be making fleece blankets that will be given to Denise Combs.
- ♥ **Our next meeting will be Saturday, January 9 at 10 a.m. with a Bible study. Please note the day and time change!!** All ladies of Peace are invited and encouraged to come and join us! Remember your Mite boxes!
- ♥ **Remember to bring your new soap for Soap Sunday on the second Sunday of each month.** Soap collected will go to Lutheran World Relief. Thanks for your continued support.

## “Life Quotes” from Lutherans for Life

“Why was God’s Son in a manger, a feeding trough for animals? Because He is the Bread of Life, spiritual food for starving mankind. So the True Bread from Heaven is first encountered by humble shepherds in a place where food is placed for animals, in Bethlehem, which means ‘House of Bread.’ What’s more, the Good Shepherd was found by the shepherds!” *James M. Kushiner, the Fellowship of St. James – A “Life Quote” from Lutherans For Life* • [www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org)





## December Anniversaries

Dec. 18 Ed and Sarah Ostlund  
 Dec. 30 Emich and Sieglinde Steinke

## Baptismal Anniversaries

December 4 Garry Denning  
 6 David Greenwood  
 14 Bill Lowden  
 19 Kristen Jacobsen  
 22 Ganetta Ryster  
 23 Donnalene McPartlin  
 26 Mackenzie Smelser  
 27 Joddie Naeseth  
 27 Chisholm Naeseth  
 29 Ernie VanVleet  
 29 Reilly Jacobsen  
 30 Nicholas Birkholz



**INCLUDE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS:**  
 The following people are experiencing health problems:

**John Birkholz**  
**Tami Birkholz**, John's sister-in-law who is battling a rare skin tissue disorder  
**June Foard**, June Meier's daughter  
**Jane Hering**  
**Rick Johnsten**, recovering from heart surgery  
**Bill and Dorothy Neuman**

Our members who are away serving in the military are **Kurt Mueller and Michael Lewis**.

## Deacon for December:

**Kevin Aguiar**

## December ushers:

6 – Pat Lewis and Lyle Onstad  
 13 – Arnie Gidlow and Greg Franczyk  
 20 – Ed Ostlund and Jeff Blomgren  
 27 – Arnie Gidlow and Matt Schlund



# Finances

JANUARY 1 - OCTOBER 31, 2015		
CHURCH INCOME	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET
Regular Offerings	\$105,149.60	\$ 111,100.00
Other Income	\$ 5,091.98	\$ 900.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$110,241.58</b>	<b>\$ 112,000.00</b>
<b>Church Expenses</b>		
Personnel/Benefits	\$ 67,491.12	\$ 67,033.30
Administrative	\$ 6,113.61	\$ 7,175.00
Buildings & Grounds	\$ 18,256.92	\$ 20,125.10
Missions	\$ 9,064.45	\$ 9,583.30
Christian Education	\$ 3,321.36	\$ 4,375.10
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$104,247.46</b>	<b>\$ 108,291.80</b>
<b>Net Church Income</b>	<b>\$ 5,994.12</b>	<b>\$ 3,708.20</b>

## Christmas Open House

Pastor and Becky Schlund invite all members of Christ Lutheran Church for the Deaf and Peace Lutheran Church to a Christmas Open House at the Schlund's home, 2504 6<sup>th</sup> Street NE, on **Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 – 4:00 PM**. Join the pastor and his family for food, fun, and fellowship as we celebrate the joy of Christ's birth!

## Caroling

Any one interested in going caroling is asked to meet at the church at **3 PM on Sunday, December 13**. We will go caroling and then meet back at the church for a potluck meal and fellowship after caroling. Bring a dish to share and your best singing voice and come and join us!



## Applying Biblical Teachings

“ . . . just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us — see that you also excel in this grace of giving” (2 Cor. 8:7).

In this verse, the Apostle Paul framed the beginning of a convincing argument for Christian giving, an argument based on the power of the Gospel.

It would have been quite easy for the Apostle Paul, as God’s messenger, to command that people give. He did not do so. Rather, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he carefully and tactfully built a logical argument based on Christ as the example for not neglecting Christian giving.

He advised this church at Corinth to take a good hard look at itself. That self-study would cause those in this congregation to discover that they excelled in many things. They presented and applied the Gospel message in its truth. They were growing in knowledge and wisdom in the Word. They were diligent and enthusiastic in carrying out the will of God. They showed a special love and concern for those who preached and taught the Gospel message. In Christian liberty, they excelled in many ways.

With this background, the Apostle Paul asked, If you excel in all these things, how is it that there is some neglect in the area of Christian giving? He answers this question and concludes his argument by reminding them of Christ as the model and as the selfless giver: “I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means.”

How often is the grace of giving neglected in churches today. Many congregations excel in so many ways, and yet their treasuries are often on the verge of depletion. When that happens and the bills cannot be paid, there is the temptation to give speeches which command donations or to send emotional letters appealing for funds. Sometimes, when large sums of money are needed and the consensus is that the funds will not be given, congregations turn to gimmicks, marketing techniques and high-pressured fund raisers.

In his argument for giving, the Apostle Paul spells out clearly what should motivate our giving. Christ first loved us and gave Himself for us. “ . . . for your sakes, he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.” Because of His love for us which now resides and works in our hearts, we are to “finish the work” that God intends for us to do. And we will do so as we excel in everything — including the grace of giving — by the power of the Gospel.



## Youth Retreat Weekend!!

Save the Dates

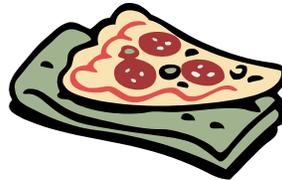
December 29 – 30, 2012

Friday through Sunday

Youth arrive at Peace on Friday with check in between 6:00-8:00 p.m. Dinner will be served and there will be Ice Breakers, games, devotion with Pastor and possibly Wii or Kinect Games on the big screen.



Saturday morning we will eat an early breakfast at church, then we will spend the day skiing up at Showdown . We will have sack lunches and will designate a time and place to meet at the end of the day. The ski day ends at around 4:00 p.m. After skiing we will head to White Sulphur Springs for pizza and then to the hot springs for a swim and a shower before heading back to Great Falls.



After a peaceful night's sleep on Saturday night, we will eat breakfast and attend worship and Sunday School Sunday morning and the retreat will end after that.

More detailed information and costs will be available soon!!