



## Peace Lutheran Church

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**December, 2019**

### “A Strange Celebration”

There many ways to celebrate the birthday. This is one of the strangest ways I've ever heard of. A young man was having a birthday and planned a great party at his house to celebrate. He invited everyone in his family to attend. He prepared a delicious meal for the occasion. He even went out and purchased expensive gifts for his guests out of love for them. The big day arrived and do you know what happened? His family didn't show up for the birthday party. They stayed at home, ate their own food. and bought gifts for each other. What a strange way to celebrate someone else's birthday!

Obviously, this is a not too thinly veiled parable about Christmas and how Christians choose to celebrate it. Despite our culture's view of Christmas as an opportunity to indulge and overindulge our material desires: more shopping, more gifts, more food, more drink, and so on, Christmas is and remains the date chosen to commemorate Jesus' birth.

God has prepared a great party to joyfully celebrate that event. As the angel proclaimed to the shepherds, “I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.” This “good news of great joy” was not about yet one more Black Friday sale, more shiny wrapped presents, nor of a stupendous after Christmas sale. It is news of far greater worth: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10-11)

Instead of expecting us to bring gifts for His Son's birthday (after all, what do you get for somebody who not only has everything, but made everything?), God gives us the greatest gift of all. As the familiar Bible verse says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) The gifts which we give and receive at this time of year can only make our lives happier for a short time. The Gift whom God gives, His Son Jesus Christ, gives us life. It is a life free from the suffering and death caused by sin which plagues our present life. It is a life that lasts forever.

Instead of preparing a meal of the finest food and drink which this world has to offer, God gives us the greatest meal of all on the day of Jesus' birth. He gives us to eat the very body of His Son which was sacrificed on the cross for us and the very blood of His Son which was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. Instead of a meal which satisfies our cravings only for a short time and may leave us feeling bloated or drunk, this “medicine of immortality” gives us unending joy in an everlasting life.

Many Christians, who choose not to attend this party (which is so huge that it stretches out over two days), don't understand the big deal. Some have suggested even canceling one or more of the parties due to low attendance. It must be said that celebrations of Christmas worship are not commanded by God nor is it sin to not attend. However, that has never been the point. Your pastor is not trying to “guilt you” into attending. Rather, this is a matter of priorities and desires. The birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is one of the most important events for us. Our greatest desire is to joyfully celebrate that.

So, come to the party! Experience the unlimited and unending joy of the birth of our Savior in word and in song on Christmas Eve at a Christmas Candlelight Service at 7:00 PM. Come and enjoy His feast on Christmas Day at a Service of Carols & Communion at 10:00 AM. And this is only a taste of the feast to come in heaven! As the Christmas hymn says, “Let our gladness have no end, alleluia! For to earth did Christ descend, alleluia! On this day God gave us Christ, His Son to save us.” (LSB #381)

In Christ,  
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 and helped decorate the church for the holidays.

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

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

**Val Martin and Toni Nivens** for organizing and leading the choir at Peace.

**Everyone who helped** with the preparation of 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.

**Matt Schlund** 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 theme for our Advent worship will be, “*The Great O Antiphons.*” These seven ancient antiphons are part of the Church’s historical liturgy for the week preceding Christmas. The “*O Antiphons*” focus on names for Jesus found in the Old Testament. They form the basis for the great Advent hymn, *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*. In order to use them all, they will serve as the theme for the sermons for the three Wednesday evenings and the four Sunday mornings during Advent. These are the following themes.

O Wisdom:	Sunday, December 1
O Lord of Might:	Wednesday, December 4
O Branch of Jesse:	Sunday, December 8
O Key of David:	Wednesday, December 11
O Dayspring:	Sunday, December 15
O Desire of Nations:	Wednesday, December 18
O Emmanuel:	Sunday, December 22

## Christmas Schedule

**Christmas Eve:** 7:00 PM – Family Candlelight Service

**Christmas Day:** 10:00 AM – Carols & Communion Service

**New Year’s Eve:** 7:00 PM Worship with Holy Communion. There will be a New Year’s Eve Celebration in the Fellowship Hall immediately after worship until midnight with food, fun, and fellowship. Bring treats and games.

## Christmas Open House

Pastor and Becky Schlund invite all members Peace Lutheran Church and Christ Lutheran Church for the Deaf to a Christmas Open House at their home on Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> from 2:00 – 5:00 PM. The address is 2504 6<sup>th</sup> St. NE. Come and join the pastor and his family for food, fun, and fellowship as we celebrate the joy of Christ’s birth!

# Ladies Bible study schedule

Advent with all of its festivities has arrived! Wednesdays will find different groups making delicious soups for our fellowship suppers before the Advent services. These special worship services are so enriching with the "real meaning" of Christmas. With all the commercialization of Christmas, these services help us remain focused on Christ, as the reason to celebrate.

No soup at the FRIDAY LADIES BIBLE CLASS, but there are some treats to go with the coffee and tea. They will finish their study of Jude in December and begin the study of Philippians. The group will meet for Bible study December 6th and 13th at the home of Marge Johnsten, 3000 8th Ave So.

The ladies and gentlemen who spread God's Christmas cheer through the Assisted Living Ministry will meet for hymn singing and a devotion at the following locations. On Tuesday, December 10th they will meet at 11:00 a.m. at Bee Hive Home #2, 2816 15th Ave So. The monthly no host lunch will be Friday, December 21st at 11:45 a.m. at Hardee's, 2615 10th Ave So. Many will later go to Highgate House, 3000 11th Ave So. Come and share your joy of this holy season joining in the Christmas carols with the residents!

## LWML

- ♥ **The ladies of LWML are sponsoring the first Advent Soup Supper on December 4.** If you would like to help in anyway, please contact Ruth Denning or Helen Lewis.
- ♥ **Thank you to everyone** who came to our November meeting and listened to our guest speaker, **Carley Tuss**, from St. Vincent DePaul. Thank you to Helen Lewis and all who brought refreshments for that day.
- ♥ **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 Denice Combs.
- ♥ **Our next meeting will be Saturday, January 11 at 10 a.m. with a Bible study. Please note the day and time change!!** If you want to make a no sew fleece blanket during our meeting, please bring a 1 ¼ yards of any fleece material with you and we will show you how! 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.



## December Anniversaries

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

## Baptismal Anniversaries

December 4 Garry Denning  
4 Jacob Meierhoff  
19 Kristen Jacobsen  
22 Ganetta Ryster  
23 Donnalene McPartlin  
29 Ernie VanVleet  
29 Reilly Jacobsen  
30 Nicholas Birkholz

### Deacon for December is Arnie Gidlow

#### Ushers for December

1 Lyle Onstad  
James Onstad  
8 Greg Franczyk  
Pat Lewis  
15 Mitch Martin  
Darrell Greensood  
22 Tyler Denning  
Kevin Aguiar  
29 Arnie Gidlow  
Dennis Nivens



#### INCLUDE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS:

The following people are experiencing health problems:

**Michael Drummond** – Lupus  
**Rev. Mark Grunst** of Billings who has Lewy Body disease  
**Connie Juden**  
**Rev. Erich Kaelberer** - ALS  
**Wallace Martin**, Mitch's brother under Hospice Care  
**Jane Nicolaus**, cancer  
**Sarah Ostlund**, in rehab for PT  
**Christine Wallace**, former LWML Montana District president, final stages of cancer

One member who is away serving in the military is **Michael Lewis**.

## Great gift idea

Dr. Rev. Mark Nicolaus has written another children's book in the Puppity Pup series and we have **one copy left!** "Puppity Pup Goes to the Woods" is his latest book and the cost is \$10 each. Some of that money goes back to Pastor Nicolaus. They make a great Christmas or birthday gift idea! See Ruth in the church office to buy a copy.

## Caroling

Anyone interested in going caroling is asked to meet at the church at 1 PM on Sunday, December 22. We will go caroling to some of the area nursing homes and member's homes. Come and join us!

## Paper Shredding available!

If you have papers with information on them that you don't want to get into the wrong hands, we have a shredder company that has placed a bin in our church to place your documents for shredding. Please be sure there are

**NO PLASTICS,  
CDs,  
DVDs,  
VHS,  
GLASS,  
BATTERIES,  
SPIRAL NOTEBOOKS,  
3 RING BINDERS,  
OR METAL OF ANY KIND  
put into the bin.**

**Staples or paper clips DO NOT need to be removed.** He will come and shred the items when we call and he will leave the bin for us for a little while. You may come during office hours Monday through Thursday from 9 AM to 1 PM or you may bring items with you to church to place them in the bin.

