



## Peace Lutheran Church

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December, 2011

### It's All About You!

December 2011

Many people think that the Christmas season is the most selfish time of the year. Children are constantly talking about what they want to get for Christmas. Even some adults do that. Advertisers tell us all the things we just *have* to have in order to be happy. Somehow, retailers have convinced many people that it is a good idea to go shopping at 4:00 AM (or earlier) on the day after Thanksgiving (and even a necessary strategy if you want to get all the high ticket items their hearts desire for the cheapest prices.)

Christians respond by decrying selfishness, materialism, and consumerism during the Christmas holiday. We will say that Christmas should be about giving and not getting. Christmas should be about others and not about ourselves. Christmas should be about Jesus and not about us. Those ideas and sentiments are all right.....to a point. Let me shock you and say that I believe that Christmas – the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, not all the pagan traditions associated with it – *is* all about you and all about getting, not giving.

The reason Jesus Christ was born on Christmas in the first place is all about you. It is not as if God decided to provide us with a winter holiday through this birth. Adam and Eve gave in to Satan's temptation in the Garden of Eden and sinned. God immediately promised that the Seed of the woman would crush Satan's head. This sin infected all people who were ever born in this world, including you and me (Rom. 5:19). This resulted in the condemnation to death and hell for all people (Rom. 5:18). Jesus came to the stable in Bethlehem because of you and for you.

The world which can't wait to have Christmas with earlier and earlier decorations, shopping and special music also can't wait for it to be over. Trees and decorations start to come down on December 26<sup>th</sup>, it seems. But, for Christians, Christmas is a beginning, not an end. The Baby of Bethlehem eventually left the stable, grew up, and faced a cross. There He would be placed, along with all the sins of all people for all time. There He would be rejected by His Father in heaven and experience the torments of hell which all people deserved. There He would die the death required for the sin of the world. From there He would be removed to a nearby tomb where He would overcome death and rise to life again.

He did all these things *for you*. He was born *for you*. He lived a perfect life *for you*. He died a sacrificial death *for you*. He rose victoriously from death to life *for you*. His entire life was all about you!

He did all of this so that He might give gifts *to you*. He gives forgiveness for all of your failures, transgressions, trespasses, and sins *to you*. He gives His holiness *to you*. He gives life everlasting, freedom in a place specifically prepared by Him *for you*. You get all of these gifts which are beyond what any advertiser can promise and any retailer can deliver absolutely free by God's grace through faith.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) Christmas is about us because it is about Jesus. Christmas is all about getting because God has given. In a bit of “sanctified selfishness”, enjoy Christmas to the fullest. It's all about you!

In Christ, our newborn King,

Pastor Steven R. Schlund

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TO

**Everyone** who donated food for the Great Falls Food Bank.

**Ladies of LWML** for sponsoring the first Advent soup supper.

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

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

**Jill Keil, and Karen Schaefer** for organizing and leading 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.

**Everyone** who has beautified our worship service by placing flowers on the altar.

**Angelika Fisher and Lorene Gotta** 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.

**Cindy Greenwood** for decorating the bulletin boards.

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 Stories of Advent* is the theme of our Wednesday evening Advent services in 2011. On each evening, we will hear the story of one of the characters in the Advent story. Our first service was on Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup> and we considered *Advent Expectations: The Story of Elizabeth*. Join us to contemplate the coming of the Christ Child.

Take some time from your busy holiday schedule to contemplate “the reason for the season”. Each Wednesday will begin with a soup supper at 6:00 PM. Worship begins at 7:00 PM. (There is no worship on Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>.)

Wednesday, December 7, 2011      Advent Faith: The Story of Mary

Wednesday, December 14, 2011      Advent Action: The Story of Joseph

## Christmas Worship Services

*Children’s Christmas Service* will be on Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. The theme is “Light a Candle.” This service will be interpreted for the deaf members of Christ for the Deaf.

*A Candlelight Service* will be on Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 PM. This will be a special service. We will sing familiar Christmas carols and the choir will enhance our worship with special music as we bask in candlelight and contemplate the birth of our Savior.

*Divine Service Setting One* will be on Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 AM. We will celebrate Holy Communion. Seminarian Andrew Schlund will preach. 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.

## Finances

The year to date budgeted amount through October 31, 2011 is **\$132,960.52**. What was given through October 31, 2011 is **\$114,869.99**. **We are short \$18,090.53**. Our Mission Commitment to the District is short by \$5,063.98. The amount in **Lutheran Church Extension Fund** as of October 31, 2011 is **\$26,029.74**. **LCEF loan balance as of October 31, 2011 is \$88,029.74**.

## Ladies Bible study schedule

The FRIDAY LADIES BIBLE CLASS is studying the books of JEREMIAH and LAMENTATIONS. Bible study will be held December 2nd and 9th from 1:15 - 3:15 pm at the home of Marge Johnsten, 3000 8th Ave So. The Old Testament history we're learning about the times of Jeremiah is very interesting, and Jeremiah's message speaks to our present generation in the 21st century.

Assisted Living Ministry with a devotion and hymn singing will be at the following locations. Tuesday, December 13th at 11 am ladies will be at Bee Hive Home #1 at 2320 15th Av S.

On December 16th at 11:45 AM there will be a no host lunch at Maple Gardens, 5401 9th Av So. After lunch the group will go to Highgate House, 3000 11th Ave So. How these residents love to sing Christmas carols! Come and spread the Christmas joy!

## LWML

- ♥ **The Gift of Love Tree is up!** Please feel free to take a tag, buy a gift, wrap it and bring it back with the tag, by December 18<sup>th</sup>. Thank you, **Elsie Huss**, for organizing the tree.
- ♥ **The ladies of LWML sponsored the first Advent Soup Supper on November 30.** Thank you to everyone who helped with preparing, serving and cleaning up on that day. Thanks to **Janet Kempf** for organizing the meal. .
- ♥ **During the month of January, we will have a Baby Shower for Life Way Pregnancy Services here in Great Falls.** 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, who hands out baby items to women who have babies at the hospital and have nothing to dress their babies in to take them home.
- ♥ **Our next meeting will be Tuesday, January 10 at 6:30 p.m. with a Bible study.** All ladies of Peace are invited and encouraged to come and join us! Don't forget 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.



## Christmas Decorating

All members of Peace are invited to join us as we decorate our church for the Christmas holiday! On Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> we will gather at 10 a.m. to set up the Christmas tree, decorate it and the entire church. Many hands make light work! The more the merrier! Come one, come all, to help us decorate for the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

## “Life Quotes” from Lutherans for Life

“As Christmas looms with recurrent images of Baby Jesus, as Life Sunday reminds some of the babies they never held, let us speak and act tenderly with those who endure the pain of sexual abuse and abortion. God’s Truth is the Gospel: ‘The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit’ Psalm 34:18; ‘[A]s far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.’” Psalm 103:12.” *Kristin Wassilak, deaconess at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church and School, Brookfield, Illinois* –[www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org) / 888-364-LIFE.

## Reformation DVD available

If you were unable to attend the Central Circuit Reformation Service at Trinity Lutheran and would like to see it, there is a DVD of the service in the church office for your use. If you would like to take it home and watch it, please contact Ruth.





## December Anniversaries

- Dec. 14 John and Terri Sivumaki
- Dec. 18 Ed and Sarah Ostlund
- Dec. 26 Brandi and John Holefelder
- Dec. 28 Richard & Sharon Panask
- Dec. 30 Emich and Sieglinde Steinke

## Baptismal Anniversaries

- December 2 Bill Southard
- 4 Garry Denning
- 4 Jacob Meierhoff
- 6 David Greenwood
- 8 Terri Sivumaki
- 9 Brandon Anderson
- 10 Fran Davidson
- 14 Bill Lowden
- 16 Brandon Arensmeyer
- 19 Kristen Jacobsen
- 23 Donnalene McPartlin
- 24 Andrea Holzheimer
- 25 Vern Pankratz
- 26 Cianna Schofield
- 26 Tanner Rubino
- 27 Rustin Kraenzel Sr.
- 29 Ernie VanVleet
- 29 Reilly Jacobsen

## Children's Christmas Eve Service practice

Children's Christmas Eve Service practice will be Saturday December 17th at 11:00 AM. A lunch will be provided. Val Martin is in need of 16 white candles of various sizes and shapes for the Children's Service. If you have a white candle we could use, please bring it to Val by December 18.

## Annual Memorial Christmas Tree Lighting

On December 4, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. the community Beautification Association will honor the memories of deceased loved ones with our Annual memorial Christmas Tree Lighting at Broadwater overlook. The lighting is free to the public. Call 727-1316 and ask for Jodie for more information.



## INCLUDE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS:

The following people are experiencing health problems:

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**John Birkholz**

**Patsy Zvara**

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

## 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 parsonage on **Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup> from 7:00 – 10:00 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 18. 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!

## Join the choir!

The choir is still in need of voices. If you are interested in joining them, they meet on Tuesdays at 5:15 p.m. here at the church. For more information, contact Jill Keil.

## Seminarian fund raiser

On Sunday, December 11, 2011 after Bible study, there will be a potluck meal followed by a Christmas cookie/dessert auction to raise funds for our seminarian Andrew Schlund. People are encouraged to bake Christmas desserts of any kind, bring them for the auction and we can all buy our Christmas desserts while making some money for Andrew! Andrew and Kelsey will not be here for the fund raiser, but he will preach on Christmas Day!



## Pictorial Directory pictures taken in January

On January 11-14, 2012 we will be taking pictures for our new pictorial directory. On Sunday, December 11, Arnie Gidlow will be available to take pictures of the groups in our congregation (i.e. Board of Directors, LWML, Board of Elders, etc.) for the pictorial directory. A schedule of times for pictures of each group is as follows:

Schedule for picture taking on December 11, 2011:

Choir and with One Voice	10:45 AM
Sunday School and youth	11 AM
Board of Directors	12:30 PM
Board of Elders	12:40 PM
Board of Trustees	12:50 PM
LWML ladies	1 PM
TOPS group	1:10 PM
Quilters group	1:20 PM

We will begin signing up for picture taking with Olan Mills on Wednesday, December 14, 2011 before and after the Advent Worship Service. Sign up will continue on Sunday December 18 and January 1, 2012. Calls will be made the week of January 2 – 6, 2012 to members who have not signed up to have their picture taken. Contact Loretta Walker or Char Schottey with any questions.

## Voters' top 7 choices for Thrivent Choice Dollars

At the last Voter's meeting in November, the Thrivent Advocates took a survey and asked Peace members their top 7 priorities for projects using Thrivent Choice Dollars. Here are the top 7 results of that survey:

1. New refrigerator
2. Ceiling fans, electrical to the west entrance of the building, new light fixture in the banner closet, and electrical to the marquee out front.
3. \$2,000 per year to organ and speaker fund
4. Parking lot maintenance/resurface parking lot
5. \$1,000 per year to Daniels' scholarship fund
6. Green paraments
7. Establish a matching fund account so we have it when needs arise

Using this information, the 3 Thrivent Advocates, Amy Dorr, Diann Stevens, and Ruth Denning, and the Board of Directors will work closely to consider this list when appropriating the funds. Thank you to everyone who donates their Thrivent Choice Dollars to Peace Lutheran Church. If you have any questions or concerns about how to donate your funds, please contact one of us.

## What is the Lutheran Malaria Initiative?

The Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI) is a partnership of Lutheran World relief and The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod to mobilize U.S. Lutherans in the global effort to eliminate malaria deaths in Africa by 2015. LMI is made possible through support from the United Nations Foundation.

### **What We Do**

The most effective methods currently being used to control malaria include proper diagnosis and prompt medical treatment, proper use of insecticide-treated bed nets and indoor residual spraying. To be successful these strategies require education about malaria and how to prevent and treat it. The Lutheran Malaria Initiative works through local partners to educate families on malaria, increase access to treatment, and provide prevention tools such as bed nets

### **Where We Help**

We work in communities where we already have strong relationships, such as those with our Lutheran partner churches and other local, community organizations. These long-standing partnerships make the ideal platform for introducing malaria programming. Already, the work of the Lutheran Malaria Initiative is making an impact. To date, LMI has reached 2.4 million people through malaria projects in Tanzania, Mali, Uganda, and Kenya. With increased funding, LMI will expand to Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Nigeria, Guinea, Niger and Ghana.

**You will hear more about the Lutheran Malaria Initiative in the coming months.**

**Be watching for information on how you can help.**