



Peace Lutheran Church

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Foolish Men Are Still Saved by Him

January 2015

It's a popular slogan at this time of year. You've probably seen it on a poster, in an email, or on Facebook. There's a picture of the star of Bethlehem and the Magi. The caption says, *Wise men still seek Him!* The saying seems to imply that if you are truly wise, then you will seek Jesus out. Is it true that only wise people seek after Jesus? Is there no hope for foolish people?

Many people believe that they must contribute something to their salvation. Some think that, by their good behavior, they merit salvation. Others, who recognize their sinfulness, think that they cannot merit their own salvation, but still must do something to be saved. They might choose the Wise Men of the Christmas story as their example. The Wise Men were learned men who studied the stars, figured out that this new star was a sign of the birth of the King of the Jews, and made the conscious decision to come to Jesus, believe in Jesus, and worship Jesus. If the Wise Men can do it, many will say, then I can do it, too.

But this is not what the Scriptures say about either the nature of humanity or the nature of salvation. The Scriptures say that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23). Sin is more than a few inappropriate choices. Sin is who we are. It is our very nature. St. Paul says, "For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature." (Romans 7:18). Not only can we not merit salvation by being good enough, we aren't smart enough to find Jesus or wise enough to follow Jesus because of that sin. The things of God seem too foolish to believe or follow. The Bible says, "The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit." (1 Cor. 2:14) We can't figure out Jesus, decide to follow Jesus, or come to faith in Jesus on our own no matter how wise we might be.

But, you may say, what about the Magi? Didn't they figure out how to find Jesus on their own by studying and following the star? Not really. Their own efforts in following the star led them to a dead end: the palace of Herod in Jerusalem. They could not find Jesus on their own. It was only when the priests and teachers consulted the Word of God were they able to find out that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. It was the Word of God that ultimately led the Magi to Jesus.

It is the same for us today. We cannot find Jesus on our own. All our efforts finish in dead ends. It is only the Word of God which leads us to Jesus and faith in Him. St. Paul makes this point in addressing young Timothy and said, "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 3:14-15)

So, in a sense, the slogan is true. Wise Men DO seek Him. But it is not people who are wise in and of themselves, but people who have been made wise through the Holy Scriptures. There is hope for anyone and everyone. You don't have to be good enough. You don't have to be smart enough. You don't have to be religious enough. By being in the Word of God, the Holy Spirit has not only led you to Jesus, but will lead you to follow Him always.

In Christ, our Wisdom,

Pastor Steven R. Schlund

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All of the adults who stayed and played with the kids during the ski/swim retreat weekend.
Everyone who helped decorate the church for the Christmas season.
Everyone who went caroling.
Everyone who donated items for the Gift of Love Tree.
Members of Christ for the Deaf, LWML, and the TOPS group for sponsoring the soup suppers during Advent.
The children for their Christmas Eve service.
Val Martin and Becky Schlund for organizing and leading the Children's Service.
The adult choirs of Peace and Trinity and Trinity's bell choir for a lovely concert.
Val Martin and Judy Boyce for leading the adult choirs.
Val Martin, Gloria Creek and Karen Schaefer for playing the organ and piano during all of our worship services.
All those who volunteer to teach Sunday school and Bible class on Sundays.
Idell Croskrey for changing the banners and paraments.
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.

Ladies Bible study schedule

The FRIDAY LADIES BIBLE CLASS will not meet for Bible study during January.

God's blessings to you as we begin another year in His grace! A new year always brings thoughts of new beginnings, promise, and hope. God provides all these for us in His Word and sacrament. May we keep our lives focused on Christ in 2015.

Assisted Living Ministry with hymn singing and a devotion will gather at the following locations. On Tuesday, January 13th at 11 a.m. they will be at Bee Hive Home #1, 2816 15th Av So. Ladies and gentlemen will meet for a no host lunch on Friday, January 23rd at 11:45 a.m. at 5 Loaves Bakery and Coffeehouse, 4117 2nd Av No. Then many will go to Highgate House, 3000 11th Ave. So. Winter months are more confining for residents of the Bee Hive and Highgate. Come and join the group to brighten the residents with your smile and your presence. God blesses our time together!

Mission Speaker coming in January

Mission Speaker Pastor David Warner from Sidney, MT, who has recently accepted a call to serve as missionary to Spain, will be our guest preacher on January 11th. He will also speak about his exciting new area of ministry in the Adult Bible Class on that day.

Finances

The following is a rundown of our giving for the year 2014:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Fourth Quarter (October – December) | |
| October – Given: \$9,437.75 | Expenses: \$11,441.44 |
| November – Given: \$12,602.43 | Expenses: \$10,235.84 |

Family Night resumes

Family Night will start up again on January 7th. We will have a sandwich bar themed potluck at 6:00 PM. Bible Study for all ages will follow at 6:30 PM. Join us for food, fun, and spiritual growth!

LWML

♥ **Thank you to everyone who donated gifts for the Gift of Love Tree.** Thank you, **Elsie Huss**, for organizing the tree. Thank you, elders, for delivering the gifts.



♥ **Thank you to everyone who helped in any way at the soup supper.** The funds raised will go toward the purchase of new red/white reversible paraments.

♥ **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 no sew fleece blankets that will be given to Denice Combs.

♥ **Our next meeting will be Saturday, January 10 at 10 a.m. with a Bible study. Please note the day and time change!!** We will be making no sew fleece blankets for the layettes that Denice Combs makes for the hospital. If you want to make a fleece blanket, bring 1 and ¼ yards of any print fleece and we will show you how to make the blankets. There will also be Bible study and a business meeting. All ladies of Peace are invited and encouraged to 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.



January Anniversaries

Jan. 14 Garry and Ruth Denning

Baptismal Anniversaries

| | | |
|---------|----|-----------------|
| January | 1 | Jane Hering |
| | 1 | Jessica Eby |
| | 3 | Mitch Martin |
| | 4 | Dan Martin |
| | 4 | Dennis Martin |
| | 5 | Ann Schuman |
| | 6 | Jeanette Talley |
| | 11 | Gary Lux |
| | 15 | Bill Neuman |
| | 15 | Idell Croskrey |
| | 16 | James Onstad |
| | 19 | Shirley Smelser |
| | 19 | Deloris Brown |
| | 21 | Fisher McDaniel |
| | 22 | Ken Rubino |
| | 26 | Ken Meske |
| | 26 | Mikaela Grove |
| | 28 | Kaye Franczyk |



INCLUDE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS:

The following people are experiencing health problems:

John Birkholz
June Foard, June Meier's daughter
Jane Hering

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

Deacon for January is Bruce Clark

Ushers for January

| | |
|----|------------------------|
| 4 | Matt Schlund |
| | Dan Grove |
| 11 | Greg Franczyk |
| | Arnie Gidlow |
| 18 | Lyle Onstad |
| | Pat Lewis |
| 25 | Tom and Tommy Croskrey |

2015 Offering envelopes

Offering envelopes have been placed in your mailboxes for this year. Please let Richard Schotthey know if you want envelopes and haven't gotten them in the past, or if you receive them but don't want them anymore.



Applying Biblical Teachings

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31).

These words stand in sharp contrast to the ways of a self-centered sinful world. This world would tell us that the service of self is to be the primary motivation for all our actions. This world would tell us that self-serving kindness and charity will satisfy a guilty conscience. This world would tell us that striving to attain ideals that will change the world for our benefit is enough.

As believers, each of us is both saint and sinner at the same time. As sinners, we are often tempted to infuse the ways of this world into our lives. We are tempted to be self-serving. We say to ourselves, “My lifestyle keeps me extremely busy. I am always on the go doing what I need to do, but I do set aside an hour for the Lord each week.” “If asked, maybe once a year I volunteer to help a worthy cause and do my part.” “Let’s see, after everything is paid, what can I afford to give to the Lord’s work at Peace Lutheran Church? What are the tax implications?” Thus, the temptation is great to put self first and God a distant second.

The letter to the Hebrews gives this admonition: “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2). Through the Holy Spirit, we are brought to the realization at the foot of the cross that self-centeredness must be forgotten. We see that only with our eyes firmly fixed on Christ, who is seated in glory, can the promotion of God’s glory be the object of all that we do.

Through the work of the Holy Spirit, God is glorified in us. Christ’s love flows from our hearts so all that we do benefits our neighbor, glorifying the name of God. We glorify God in our daily living and exhibit our faith by the proper use of all that God has given us, including our time, abilities, wealth and money. By the power of the Gospel, we do this as an example for the “good of many, so that they may be saved” (1 Cor. 10:33).

As Christians, we pray that Christ’s love may more and more abound in our hearts. We pray that we may more and more use the perfect gifts — including our financial resources — God has given us to serve others and glorify His name. God help us to this end.

2015 Events Calendar available in the library

In an effort to help people in various groups involved in the church plan events without conflicting with other events, we have placed a large 2015 calendar in the library with events written on it for the coming year. If your group is planning something and wants to know if there is anything else planned for that day or weekend, please take a look at it and write your groups information on there. This calendar includes daily events for Peace Lutheran as well as events for the LCMS Montana District and LWML Montana District. Thanks so much for your help in the planning of serving the Lord here at Peace Lutheran!