

Hope Ev. Lutheran Church

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▼ THE HOPE LUTHERAN **▼**

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Advent and Christmas

The secular and commercial worlds have already begun their "Christmas" celebrations. Television and radio ads already plug the great deals of "Black Friday" (when people get a jump on their Christmas shopping, thus putting the retailers' accounting books "in the black").

The Church celebrates Christmas much differently! In the Church we prepare for the Christmas celebration—the festivities of our Lord's Incarnation and Birth—with the four-week season of "Advent." Where did this season come from and what is its purpose and focus? Luther D. Reed explains:

Advent as a season of preparation for the Festival of the Nativity originated in France. Its observance was quite general by the time of the Council of Tours, 563. In some places six or seven Sundays were included. When Rome accepted the Gallican [French] innovation she limited the period to four Sundays. It was probably not until the thirteenth century that Advent was universally recognized as beginning the Christian year, which up to that time had begun with the Festival of the Anunciation [sic] in March or, in some places, with Christmas. While Advent never attained the severely penitential character of Lent, it has always been regarded as a season of solemn anticipation and of spiritual preparation and purification. Lossius, the friend of Melancthon and the editor of a famous Reformation Cantionale, speaks of a threefold Advent-His Coming in the flesh, His return to Judgment, and His daily Coming in the ministrations of the Word and the Sacraments (The Lutheran Liturgy, p. 438).

Beginning on the Sunday closest to St. Andrew's Day (November 30), Advent prepares us for the grand celebration of our Lord's Incarnation and Birth. It's much like the time of preparation we

use to clean the house and cook the meal before guests arrive for dinner. Such proper preparation makes the celebration that much more meaningful and grand.

Then comes the grand celebration itself as Christmas officially begins (in Church time, that is) on December 24 and 25. Reed gives this brief historical and thematic sketch of the Christmas festival:

The festival of Christmas is of later observance than the festivals of Easter and Whitsunday [Pentecost]. We do not know the date of our Lord's birth. The admittedly inexact calculations of Hippolytus (c. A.D. 220) determined March 25 as the date of the crucifixion. On an unfounded assumption that our Lord's earthly life must have included an exact number of years, fractions being imperfections, Hippolytus named December 25 as the date of the Nativity. By the fourth century this date was generally accepted and observed in the West. In the East the calculations of the Montanist sect fixed January 6 as the date of Christ's birth and this date was observed as a Feast, celebrating both the birth and the baptism of our Lord.

In Rome also, December 25 was celebrated as a Festival of the Sun and in recognition of the winter solstice. Church leaders took advantage of this deeply rooted observance and gave it Christian direction by celebrating the birth of the Sun of Righteousness on this date (*The Lutheran Liturgy*, p. 442).

May our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh (John 1:14), grant all of us a blessed Advent preparation and a joyous celebration of His Incarnation and Nativity. May we "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires" (Romans 13:14) and thus be ready to hear the great Christmas Day news: "When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy" (Titus 3:4-5).

Called at Home as Husband and Wife

We continue our series looking at Luther's "Table of Duties" in the *Small Catechism*. This month we continue the theme of being called at home, specifically in the holy callings of husband and wife.

Luther assembles these Bible verses:

To Husbands

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. (1 Peter 3:7)

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. (Colossians 3:19)

To Wives

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. (Ephesians 5:22)

They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. (1 Peter 3:5-6)

Today God's gift of marriage is assaulted on all fronts. So many marriages end in divorce, though the actual percentages are debated. Many in our society want to redefine marriage to include the homosexual "lifestyle." In 2010 the Pew Research Center claimed that 4 out of 10 Americans – 40%! – think marriage is obsolete. Add to this the problems of infidelity (both actual-physical and virtual via the Internet), abusive relationships, and just plain old, everyday conflict between spouses.

God's holy estate of marriage certainly suffers from our sin and this broken world. We need a new perspective that's truly as old as creation. Marriage is much more than a social convention; it's God's creation and gift from before the Fall into sin. After God created Eve from Adam's rib, we read: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). God instituted marriage so that man and woman may live together in love and faithfulness their whole life long.

Since sin has marred this precious gift from God, the passages Luther cites in the "Table of Duties" have a corrective quality and exhort us in what to do and what not to do. Husbands are to serve their wives, and wives are to serve their husbands. Husbands are *not* to lord it over their wives, and wives are *not* to usurp the God-given headship of their husbands.

The notion of submitting may cause some to balk, but let's look at the whole picture. When St. Paul tells wives to *submit* to their husbands, he also, in the "same breath," tells husbands to *love* their wives. See Ephesians 5:22, 25 and Colossians 3:18-19. The word Paul uses for "love" is *agape*, the word for "sacrificial, self-giving love." Husbands are to lay down their lives for their wives, just as Christ laid down His life for the Church (Eph. 5:25).

Pastor Peter Kurowski calls it "double submission." His book, *The Lifelines of Love*, diagnoses the problem as "the omission of double submission."

The omission of double submission is one of the biggest problems in marriages today. The call for **both** mates of the marriage to serve one another is rarely heard. Actually, it is an ancient problem as well as a modern-day malady. It began when Adam and Eve first refused to submit themselves to God's good orders. Since that day we have had in every generation an ongoing war of the tyrant husband and the rebel wife grabbing for power and control (p. 95).

Pastor Kurowski then discusses a more excellent way in the submission of God's Son Jesus. Our Lord submits Himself to the Father and dies on a cross for us (see Philippians 2:5-11). This forgiving Gospel changes our view of "submission."

In the New Testament, the words "submit" and "headship" are great words. Through the Gospel, they become privileges that flow from faith in Him who submitted to the cross for us and placed Himself under the headship of the Father. It is the way in which things work best. Certainly, these orders as they relate to marriage can become perverted by sin. When a husband refuses to use [his] headship to serve his wife, you have the omission of double submission. When a wife uses her freedom to toss away her Christ-like role to submit, she too perverts God's good order for marriage. When both husband and wife submit to the Gospel call to servanthood, you have a win-win situation. When only one seeks to submit, you have a win-lose situation. When neither submits, you have a lose-lose sitation. (The Lifelines of Love, p. 102).

> ₱ Pastor Randy Asburry email: rasburry@hopelutheranstl.org Blog: http://rasburrypatch.blogspot.com Hope's Website: http://www.hopelutheranstl.org On Facebook: www.facebook.com/hopelutheranstl

Notes from the Kantor

UNWRAPPING THE CHRISTMAS "GIFT"

We all love a gift. Some love giving, some love receiving. I'm terrible at giving gifts, but I'm ever grateful for those that I receive. I invite you to unwrap the entire Christmas season this year in worship.

In a recent Kantorei rehearsal we were working on an anthem. We spoke through the text to fully understand what we were singing about. The text clearly starts as a Christmas text and morphs into mentions of Easter and the Resurrection. That lead to a conversation of how our celebration of Jesus' birth (Christmas) is just a birthday party without His resurrection. Conversely, Easter is just a day for eggs and bunny rabbits without Christmas. Everything is connected! In our conversation we decided (and rightly so) that we could never sing just part of the anthem...we needed the whole thing to correctly share the Gospel.

I mention this to encourage you to embrace the entire season of Christmas. From Advent as we prepare for both Jesus' first and second comings to the major celebration of His birth at Christmas and finally onto both the Feast and season of Epiphany where Christ is revealed to us. Unpack the entire gift of the season.

We all have our seasonal favorite hymns that we love to sing. I encourage you to embrace those that are less well-known to you. Again, unpack the entire gift. Unwrap the entire meaning of the season and keep it all in context. Without context Christmas is just a day to overeat and spend money.

Please join us for all of our worship services during the Christmas season to fully receive the entire gift.

Enjoy both the giving and the sharing,

Kantor Janssen

YEAR-END SUPPORT

As our year comes to a close, I encourage you to consider supporting our *Music in a Sacred Space* series. We have several events in the first half of 2022. You can support the series by inviting friends and family to attend and by attending yourself. You can support the series with a year-end financial gift which helps support the mission and ministry of the series. Bringing in guest musicians and administrative costs take money. It's not a huge budget, but your gift can help.

UPCOMING MUSIC IN A SACRED SPACE EVENTS

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY Thursday, January 6 | 7:00 pm

Join the choirs and instrumentalists of Hope as we celebrate the Epiphany in grand style within the context of the Divine Service. Special music and hymn settings will enliven our worship as we celebrate the full 12 days of Christmas. A reception following the service caps off our celebration.

LAUDAMUS OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY Sunday, April 3 | 4:00 pm

Join us for the spring "home concert" of the *Laudamus* of Concordia Seminary. The choir is made up of men studying for the pastoral ministry.

HYMN FESTIVAL FOR HOLY TRINITY Sunday, June 12 | 4:00 pm

Join the choirs of Hope and Kantor Kevin Hildebrand at the organ for a hymn festival in celebration of the Holy Trinity. Years in the making, we are excited to finally welcome Kantor Hildebrand. He serves as Kantor at Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne.

LCMS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter article – December 2021

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the great physician of both body and soul, healed a man with dropsy by His Word on the Sabbath (Luke 14:1-6). Dropsy is a paradoxical ailment, with an unquenchable craving for drink even though the body is over inflated with fluid, a craving that, when indulged, served not to ease but to feed the disease.

And so, if a man drinks a great deal but is never filled, he sees a doctor to inquire about what ails him, what is wrong with his body, and how to remedy it. For that is not thirst but a disease (Seneca, *Consolation to His Mother Helvia*, 11.3).

But if the owner of five couches goes looking for 10, or the owner of 10 tables buys up as many again, and even though he has plenty of land and money, he remains unsatisfied and desires yet more, losing sleep and always in discontent, does he not also require a physician to diagnose the cause of this distress?

For this is not want or lack, it's a disease (Aristippus, quoted in Plutarch, *Love of Wealth*, 524b). As St. Augustine of Hippo wrote, "we may rightly compare the dropsical man to a covetous rich man: For the more the one is swollen with excess of water, the more he thirsts; so also the other: The more he abounds in riches ... the more eagerly he desires them" (*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, 4:135). Both require physicians. Both require diagnosis and medicine applied from the outside to the inward being. For these are not desires to be fulfilled but diseases to be cured.

This is why our Lord instructs us to not to be consumed by money. "No one can serve two masters.... You cannot serve God and money" (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13). Our desire for money, like the disease dropsy, is never satisfied. We always desire more. We think, "If I just had this much then I would be happy."

But even when that much comes, which God gladly gives, happiness evades us. The desire for more is never satisfied. It demands our constant energy, either in procuring more or protecting what we already have. When this happens, God, in His mercy, shows us that the money that He has given is no longer serving us, but we it. We have another master.

To overcome this, we need a physician's diagnosis and a physician's remedy. And our Lord Jesus Christ, our great physician of both body and soul, applies His Word to us as He did to the man healed of dropsy. He shows us how we have put our fear, love, and trust in our money and not feared, loved, and trusted in Him above all things.

In essence, He says, "Stop chasing after these fleeting things. They are vanity. They are the things that moth and rust destroy. You cannot have two masters. Repent!" And in seeing our great error, we are sorry that we have not fully feared, loved, and trusted in God above all things. And, in the mercy and grace that He earned for us on the cross, He takes away this sin, restores us to health, and bids us to live.

But then what? What do we do with this healing balm and care that our great physician has given? Do we simply go back to our old ways? "By no means!" St. Paul says (Rom. 3:31; 6:2). We do not just go back to the old ways, the ways that lead us to death. No, we live a new life, a life filled with the grace, mercy and love of God toward us. And God's great mercy, grace, and love toward is so abundant that it overflows and pours out onto those around us.

So we no longer hoard money and possessions. We no longer scrape and crawl our way to amass more. We give to those around us, as God in Christ has given to us. We press our money and possessions into service for those who need it: our family, our society and our church. For money is God's gift to us to serve us and others. Not the other way around. It serves us because it is a gift from our Father in heaven.

LCMS Stewardship Ministry lcms.org/stewardship In the Sunday **Divine Service** God Himself comes in our midst to serve us through His Word and Sacrament. The *Augsburg Confession* makes this simple and profound statement about our worship: "*All ceremonies should serve the purpose of teaching the people what they need to know about Christ*" (AC, 24:3). The month of December, of course, turns our hearts and minds to Christmas, the celebration of God the Son becoming Man to bring us back to God. The Advent season is designed to be a season of repentance and preparation before the "big feast" of Christmas. We celebrate Christmas for 12 days from December 25 to January 5. Then, beginning January 6, we continue the celebration with the Epiphany season. This is the time when we see how God reveals Himself in Jesus Christ. Here's the shape of our worship for the months of December and January:

Date	Day in Church Year	Gospel Reading	Gospel Focus (Theme of the Day)			
December 5	2 nd Sunday in Advent	Luke 21:25-36	The Coming Redeemer - Jesus prepares us for His coming, both in history and in the future: <i>Lift up your heads, your redemption draws near.</i>			
December 12	3 rd Sunday in Advent	Matthew 11:2-11	The Lord's Forerunner – John the Baptizer prepares for the coming King and proclaims: <i>Prepare the way of the Lord.</i> John saw the salvation of the Lord, and so do we.			
December 19	4 th Sunday in Advent	Luke 1:39-56	The Approaching Joy – Mary, the mother of Jesus, is a picture of the Church as she faithfully sings: <i>My soul magnifies the Lord</i> .			
December 24/25	The Nativity of Our Lord	Luke 2:1-20 & John 1:1-18	The Birth of Our Lord - The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The familiar Christmas story is anything but normal: God takes on our human flesh to save us.			
December 26	First Sunday After Christmas	Luke 2:22-40	Old Simeon - Simeon stands on the threshold of the Old and the New. He sees the Christ Child and sings that God's promises of salvation and consolation have been fulfilled in Him. His song becomes our song.			
January 2	Second Sunday after Christmas	Matthew 2:13-23	In God's Protection-The Holy Family must flee before the wrath of the world, but is guided by God's providence and the protection of His holy angels.			
January 9	Baptism of Our Lord	Matthew 3:13-17	Jesus reveals Himself as the only Son of the Father. God comes as a true human being among men, as the member of an earthly family, as a member of God's people on earth, and yet at the same time as the only-begotten Son of the Father.			
January 16	2 nd Sunday after Epiphany	John 2:1-11	Jesus reveals Himself as the Lord of Gladness. Jesus was born of an earthly mother, subjected to man's laws and ordinances, but He established a new order by which these earthly orders are changed and abrogated.			
January 23	3 rd Sunday after Epiphany	Matthew 8:1-13	Jesus reveals Himself as the Savior of the Nations. He accepts those who do not yet belong to the chosen people and announces that God's new people will be from all nations.			
January 30	4 th Sunday after Epiphany	Matthew 8:23-27	Jesus reveals Himself as the Lord of Nature. Not only the world of humans but also the world of nature (groaning and subject to vanity because of man's sin) is included in His salvation.			

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR for December 18 at 9:00am to come help decorate the sanctuary at Hope. Let's get the church ready for Christmas! Many hands make light work. If you have any questions, contact Rachel Asburry at 314-369-6661.



POINSETTIA PLANTS will be placed in the altar area during the Christmas season. If you wish to place a plant in honor or memory of someone, please pick up an envelope from the narthex or call Carol, 752-0525 or 691-3619, **before December 15**. Poinsettias are \$6.50 each and are yours to take home anytime during the Christmas season.



SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Wednesday, December 15 at 7:00 p.m. our Sunday School children of all ages will take part in a Christmas service. Please join us!



2022 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE CLOAKROOM. PLEASE PICK UP YOUR BOX. PLEASE DO NOT USE THESE ENVELOPES UNTIL AFTER JANUARY 1, 2022.





GIVING TREE: A "Giving Tree" has been set up in our church narthex. Cards on the tree have a name and a gift suggestion. Please take a card or two, shop and bring the gifts back to Hope Church by Sunday, December 12. Gifts are not to be wrapped, as they are given to the mothers who wrap them and give them to their children on Christmas. Two charities have been selected for this year:- Our Little Haven supports which foster children (www.ourlittlehaven.org) and Lydia's House which supports abused women and their children (www.lydiashouse.org).

MR. & MRS. CLUB

Our group gathered on Thursday, November 4, in the church basement for a brown bag lunch and fellowship with each other. It was good to see people we hadn't seen for at least 6 months or longer. We could all find something to talk about. At least 12 people from our group were able to gather that day. Some were unable because of prior commitments and health. We plan to do this again after the first of the year and hopefully more will be able to make it and we can start doing it more often. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and blessings in the New Year.



TIMOTHY LUTHERAN CHURCH will again host their traditional Christmas Market called WEIHNACHTSMARKT on December 4, 2021 from 11 AM – 6 PM at 6704 Fyler Ave. Browse the market for unique gifts, sip on mulled cider, and enjoy traditional Christmas cheer. There will be food, home-brewed beer, firepits and much more. Call (314)781-8673 to learn more.

DR. ROBERT KOLB TO SPEAK AT GERMAN CHRISTMAS SERVICE

The Rev. Dr. Robert Kolb, Professor at Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis, will preach at the German Christmas Vesper on Sunday, December 12, 2:15 pm at Peace Lutheran Church, 737 Barracksview Road.

He will be accompanied by music from the Liederkranz, Men's Chorus and Frauenchor (Ladies' Choir) of the St. Louis German Cultural Society. They will render seasonal numbers in the German language.

Peace Lutheran Choristers, under the direction of Mrs. Alexia Arensmeier, will sing carols in the vernacular. Kendra Ruesler will be the organist. The festive setting, including congregational singing, will be in German; however, English helps will be provided. Fellowship and ethnic refreshments follow.



CHRISTIAN FRIENDS OF NEW AMERICANS WOULD LIKE TO HELP YOU WITH CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS!

A baby tab blanket, a pretty purse, an oven mitt...now is a great time to support and encourage our Afghan ladies by ordering handmade items for family and friends. They will serve as a daily reminder to pray for our refugee sisters and their families. With the assistance of great volunteers who come like manna from Heaven and helpful translation Afghan ladies sew apps, our Wednesday. There is lots of talking and laughing as the women acquire a skill, earn some money, learn English, socialize, and discuss life in St. Louis. Of greatest importance is the time of sharing the story of God's love by using the Jesus Film in their own language. See our catalog of sewing items and order blank by opening this link online. Email, call, or text to order items! A Catalog and order forms are in the coffee hour area in the basement also for you to shop this morning! For more details, contact carolbuckman316@gmail.com or (314) 517-8513.

CHRISTMAS AT THE CHAPEL



Lutheran South's "Christmas at the Chapel" will take place on Sunday, December 12, 2021 at 4:00 pm. The concert will be held in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus on the campus of Concordia Seminary Featuring a mix of traditional Clayton. repertoire and seasonal music, the concert will include the Jazz Band, LuSo Choir, Concert Band, and the Wind Symphony. Selections will include Flourish for Wind Band and Folk Song Suite by Ralph Vaughn Williams, The Sound of Music, Silent Night, Fantasy of Carols by Jay Bocook, Big Band Holiday, A Christmas Singa-long, and the annual presentation of Sleigh Ride by Leroy Anderson. The bands are under the direction of Matthew Janssen and Evan Sanft, the choirs are directed by Natalie Mayor. An offering will be collected in support of the spring music tour to Kansas City and Jefferson City.

A SERVICE OF SACRED MUSIC FOR THE TIME OF CHRISTMAS

All are invited to St. Paul's Lutheran in Des Peres, MO for Christmas Music Services December 11 & 12. Saturday, December 11 the service is at 5:00pm and Sunday, December 12 the service is at 4:00pm.

Come away from the noise, the hectic pace, and the pressures of the season and be refreshed and renewed by the message of the heavenly angels: The Savior Jesus Christ was born for you. This divine proclamation will be presented by the choirs.

The congregation will have opportunities to sing familiar hymns and carols of the season. Our annual "Service of the Sacred Music for the Time of Christmas" is offered by Music at St. Paul's. Join us and invite your family and friends.

December 2021 Phone: 314-352-0014 www.hopelutheranstl.org Monday Wednesday **Thursday** Sunday Tuesday **Friday** Saturday Elder: **Altar Guild:** 1 2 3 4 Pastor's day off 5 - Chad Rolland 5 Spyers/Truebe 5:00 Kantorei 12 – Scot Kinnaman 12 Asburry/Bergdolt rehearsal 19 – Jim Frost 19 Brown/Patton 7:00pm Advent 26 – Scot Kinnaman 26 Keller/Janssen **Evening Prayer** 6 7 8 9 10 5 Advent 2 11 Pastor's day off 9:00 Divine Service 5:00 Kantorei 10:15 Coffee hour rehearsal 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 7:00pm Advent 11:30 Schola/Confirmation **Evening Prayer** 13 15 17 12 Advent 3 14 16 18 Pastor's day off 9:00 Divine Service 7:00 Board of Finance 5:00 Kantorei 10:15 Coffee hour rehearsal 10:30 Bible Class/SS 7:00pm Advent 11:30 Schola/Confirmation Evening Prayer with Sunday School 20 21 22 23 **24** Christmas Eve 25 Christmas Day 19 Advent 4 9:00 Divine Service 6:00--8:00 pm 10:15 Coffee hour choir rehearsal 4:00 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 9:30 Divine Service 11:30 Schola/Confirmation 26 St Stephen, First Martyr 27 28 29 30 31 New Year's Eve 9:00 Divine Service 10:15 Coffee hour NO Kantorei rehearsal 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 4:00 Divine Service NO Schola/Confirmation

Phone: 314-352-0014

January 2022

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Elder: 2 – Jim Frost 6 – Kevin Robson 9 – Scot Kinnaman 16 – Chad Rolland 23 – Scot Kinnaman	Elder: (cont.) 30 – Jim Frost	Altar Guild: 2 Spyers/Truebe 9 Asburry/Bergdolt 16 Brown/Patton 23 Keller/Janssen 30 TBD				1 Pastor's day off New Year's Day
2 Christmas 2 9:00 Divine Service 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class/ SS NO Schola/Confirmation	3	4	5 5:00 Kantorei rehearsal	6 Epiphany of Our Lord 7:00 Divine Service	7	8 Pastor's day off
9 Baptism of Our Lord 9:00 Divine Service 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class/SS 11:30 Schola/Confirmation	7:00 Church Council	11	12 5:00 Kantorei rehearsal	6:00 ThriVe Parent University	14	15 Pastor's day off
16 Epiphany 2 9:00 Divine Service 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:30 Schola/Confirmation	17	18	19 5:00 Kantorei rehearsal	20 6:00 ThriVe Parent University	21	22 Pastor's day off
23 Epiphany 3 9:00 Divine Service 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:30 Schola/Confirmation	24	25	26 NO Kantorei rehearsal	6:00 ThriVe Parent University	28	29 Pastor's day off
30 Epiphany 4 9:00 Divine Service 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:30 Schola/Confirmation	31					