



HOPE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

5218 Neosho Street
St. Louis, MO 63109



DATED MATERIAL
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

(Mailing label)

Advent-Christmas-Epiphany 2023-24

Sunday December 3: Advent 1

9:00 a.m. – Divine Service

Wednesday December 6: Advent 1 Midweek

7:00 p.m. – Evening Prayer

Sunday December 10: Advent 2

9:00 a.m. – Divine Service

Wednesday December 13: Advent 2 Midweek

7:00 p.m. – Evening Prayer

Saturday December 16

10:30 a.m. – Christmas Decorating

Sunday December 17: Advent 3

9:00 a.m. – Divine Service

Wednesday December 20: Advent 3 Midweek

7:00 p.m. – Evening Prayer with Sunday School

Sunday December 24: Advent 4

9:00 a.m. – Divine Service

Sunday December 24: Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m. – Festal Divine Service

Sunday December 25: Christmas Day

9:30 a.m. – Festal Divine Service

Sunday December 31: First Sunday after Christmas

9:00 a.m. – Divine Service

Sunday December 31: New Year's Eve

4:00 p.m. – Divine Service

Saturday January 6: Epiphany of Our Lord

7:00 p.m. Festal Divine Service

Reception following



Hope Ev. Lutheran Church

5218 Neosho St, St. Louis, MO 63109 • 314-352-0014

www.hopelutheranstl.org



✠ THE HOPE LUTHERAN ✠

Vol. 100, No. 10

Share life and hope in our Savior Jesus. December 2023 – January 2024

Communing With the Coming Christ

The Coming Christ

Regarding Advent, the Rev. Fred Lindemann says:

The dominant idea of Advent is the thought of the Lord's Coming. The Propers of the Liturgy [the assigned Scripture readings for each Sunday] recognize a threefold Coming: The Coming in the Flesh, the Coming in Glory, and the Coming in Grace. In Advent the Liturgy prepares for a worthy and proper commemoration of our Lord's First Advent, the historical event that lies in the past. However, the Church is not content to remind her children of a past event that can be called to remembrance but cannot be experienced. In the First Coming she sees a picture of *the invisible Coming in Grace, which can be and is experienced in the present*, and of the visible Coming in Glory, which will be experienced in the future... (*The Sermon and the Propers*, vol. I, p. 29, emphasis added).

Advent is certainly much more than a time of frantic, frenzied busy-ness and gorging ourselves on holiday treats as we stress out over getting closer to Christmas. Advent is a time to step out of the world's holiday hustle and bustle and into the peaceful presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. After all, He is **still coming!**

Lindemann further explains:

Liturgy is a matter of the present and of reality. The past is only a likeness or picture of present pardon and grace. The future is symbol and motive for the present. The Liturgy is intended to minister grace to us in the present. The references to the past and also to the future serve the present (p. 30, emphasis added).

Yes, something actually happens in our Liturgy. It's no mere show or entertaining exercise; it's where we actually meet Jesus and receive our life from Him.

When we gather around the font, the pulpit, and the altar, we get to be in the presence of Almighty God Himself! Worship at church is no two-dimensional screen broadcasting an entertaining but irrelevant story. In the sanctuary, we get to be in the presence of true, genuine, eternal greatness: Jesus Christ who died and rose for us and still comes to give us His blessed eternal life. We also get to be present with our fellow Christians and enjoy

CALLING ALL MEN AND BOYS OF HOPE:

You are cordially invited to join Elders and Pastor for a time of warm Christian fellowship, devotion, planning and LUNCH here at church on Saturday, February 3, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm.

Our simple aim is to do some informal brainstorming on potential future men's events at Hope. Single or married, father or son — please mark your calendars now and send an RSVP email to our Elders Chairman, Kevin Robson, at kevindrobson@gmail.com with names and number attending.

the sights, sounds, and smells of salvation together. This is what Advent is all about. Jesus actually comes to us in His Word proclaimed, read, and sung. He actually comes to be with us in His Body and Blood that comes from the altar. This is Jesus' "Constant Coming."

Communing with the Coming Christ

Ignatius, a disciple of the Apostle John, was a bishop of Antioch in Syria and was martyred for the faith about the year 115. As he traveled to Rome for his execution, Ignatius wrote letters to several churches along the way. In his letter to the Trallian Christians, Ignatius wrote these startling words: "The one who is within the sanctuary is clean, but the one who is outside the sanctuary is not clean" (7:2). He understood that in the sanctuary, that is, in the Divine Service in church, Christ actually and truly comes to cleanse and redeem His people.

In his letter to the Philadelphian Christians (a city called Philadelphia in the country we now know as Turkey), Ignatius gives another look at the very real presence of Jesus in the Sunday service: "Take care, therefore, to participate in one Eucharist (for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup which leads to unity through his blood...)" (4:1). How could the flesh and cup of Jesus unify Christians if He were not actually there, in His Body and Blood?

Ignatius was restating what St. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17: *"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."* We find our unity and blessing from Jesus in "the cup" of His Blood and "the bread" of His Body. In the Lord's Supper the Coming Christ joins us to Himself. He lives in us and we live in Him (Galatians 2:20 & John 15:1-7).

Christians through the centuries have confessed and delighted in the truth that Jesus comes—really comes!—in the Divine Service.

Communing with Christ in Our Time

Let's apply this Advent and Christmas theme of communing with the Coming Christ to our life together now, in our time.

First, consider the chalice (common cup) at the Lord's Table. Based on what Jesus says in the Words of Institution, what St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10 (above), and what Church fathers such as Ignatius said, our Lord Jesus gives us the one cup of His Blood to unify us Christians. (Is the Blood in the "individual cups" still Jesus' Blood? Of course, and there's still forgiveness in that Blood.) The chalice—the one cup—gives and reinforces something that we 21st century Christians desperately need: oneness in Christ and oneness with each other. This Advent and Christmas season, may our Lord give us a greater appreciation for the unity and life that come from "the cup" of His Blood.

Second, consider the promises we all make when we are confirmed or come into the congregation by profession of faith. We promise that we intend "to hear the Word of God and receive the Lord's Supper faithfully." Then we promise to "live according to the Word of God, and in faith, word, and deed to remain true to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, even to death." We also promise "to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it" (*LSB*, 273). In other words, we promise to be faithfully present in worship and commune with the Coming Christ for the rest of our lives.

Third, consider our Lord's "Constant Coming" during this Advent season. Yes, we are tempted to "go, go, go" and "shop, shop, shop" and "eat, eat, eat" in these weeks leading up to Christmas. But remember that Advent is the Church's time to focus on Christ's real and constant coming in the Divine Service. It's time to turn our eyes away from the world's rat race and lift them to Jesus and His coming to bring peace.

We can control the worldly hustle and bustle in our own lives, especially by coming to the Lord's House. After all, here, in the sanctuary, we will find true and lasting peace, because *"your King is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he"* (Zechariah 9:9).

✠ Pastor Randy Asbury

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Hope's Website: <http://www.hopelutheranstl.org>

On Facebook: www.facebook.com/hopelutheranstl

Notes from the Kantor...

Sounds of the Season

As we approach the greater season of Christmastide many of us look expectantly to the sounds of the season. Of course, in the liturgical realm this means more than listening to Mariah Carey and Bing Crosby croon those secular classics. In the liturgical church we look forward to the hymns of the season! Would the season of Advent even begin correctly if we didn't sing "Wake, Awake for Night is Flying" (LSB 516) on the first Sunday of Advent? Or how about "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (LSB 357) on the fourth Sunday of Advent? Could it even be Christmas without singing "Of the Father's Love Begotten" (LSB 384), "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (LSB 379), or all fifteen stanzas of Martin Luther's "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" (LSB 358)? What about Epiphany without the Queen of Chorales, "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright" (LSB 395) or The Baptism of Our Lord without one of the many settings of "To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord" (LSB 406/407). Finally, could you celebrate the Transfiguration of Our Lord without singing "'Tis Good, Lord, to Be Here" (LSB 414)?

In the Janssen household we try to leave our Christmas décor up until Epiphany to celebrate the

Twelve Days of Christmas. I've often joked that we should just leave everything up until Transfiguration Sunday as it could be thought of as the last Sunday of Christmastide, right before the three pre-Lent Sundays in Gesima-tide. All to help continue the Christmas celebrations.

This year we will host an Organ Vespers service, as part of the *Music in a Sacred Space* series, to celebrate the Transfiguration of Our Lord. We will gather on Sunday, January 21 at 3:00 pm to be lead in Vespers by guest organist Justin Knabach. Justin is a St. Louis native who studied organ and church music at Concordia University Chicago and currently serves as Music Minister at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Sappington. He will lead hymnody from the Parson, op. 49 pipe organ as well as provide special music for the occasion. A reception will follow in the church auditorium. Make plans to keep the Christmas festivities going well into the new year.

Expectant Advent, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and Blessed Epiphany!

Together in Christ,
Kantor Janssen



Hope Ev. Lutheran
St. Louis, MO

Sunday, January 21
3:00 pm



Organ Vespers for the Transfiguration
Justin Knabach, organist

*Featuring music, hymnody, and preaching for the occasion
Reception to follow in the auditorium*

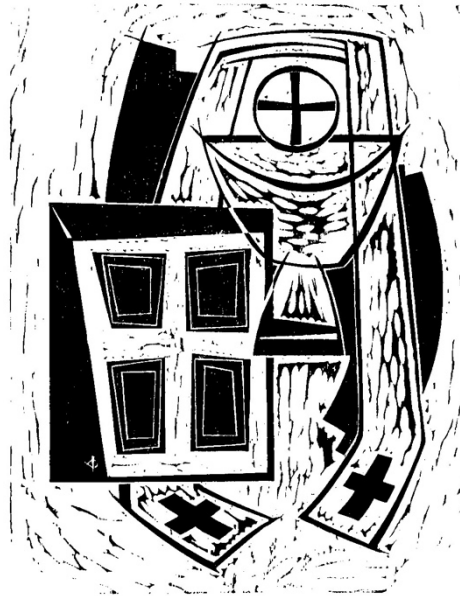
The Measure of Our Generosity

If you open up the Small Catechism, you'll find a shortened version of the Third Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." But if you look up the list of the Ten Commandments in Exodus, you'll find the full version:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Ex. 20:8-11)

Why did Luther shorten this commandment for the Small Catechism? Was it so that the kids wouldn't have so much to memorize? No, it was because Luther knew that all the details of the Third Commandment were part of the "shadow" of the Old Testament (Col. 2:16). Or as St. Paul puts it, there is "letter" in the Old Testament law and "spirit" (2 Cor. 3:6). The details of not working on Saturday were fulfilled by Christ. That part of the Sabbath regulation no longer applies. But the spirit of the law does remain: We need to dedicate sufficient time each week to hearing God's Word and giving it honor and respect. Or as Luther sums it up in the Small Catechism's explanation to the Third

Commandment: "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it."



The same sort of analysis applies to our giving. In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to give a tenth of their income to the Levites so that those men could dedicate their lives to serving in God's house, teaching the people, conducting worship, etc. In the New Testament, there is not a rigid requirement listed about handing in your tax forms to church to make sure you've given enough. But the mandate to have a full-time ministry, which is the spirit of

that law concerning tithing to the Levites, is right there in 1 Corinthians 9:14: "The Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel."

The New Testament church's job is significantly larger than the job of Old Testament Israel. We are commanded to preach the Gospel to all nations. There was only the temple to maintain in the Old Testament, but we have churches, schools, universities and seminaries, plus missionaries everywhere. So you tell me: Can we really undertake the work of the ministry if our giving doesn't even measure up to Old Testament levels of generosity?

– 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 3	1 st Sunday in Advent	Matthew 21:1-9	The Lord who Comes – The Lord Jesus enters Jerusalem to shouts of joy: <i>Behold, your King comes; He is just and having salvation.</i>
December 10	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 17	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 24/25	The Nativity of Our Lord	Luke 2:1-20 & John 1:1-18	The Birth of Our Lord – <i>The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.</i> The familiar Christmas story is anything but normal: God takes on our human flesh to save us.
December 31	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 6	Epiphany of Our Lord	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 7	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 14	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 21	Transfiguration	Matthew 8:1-13	Jesus reveals Himself as the Savior of the Nations. 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.
January 28	Septuagesima (“About 70 Days”)	Matthew 20:1-16	Wages and Grace – The laborers in the vineyard and the grace of the Father, who calls unworthy sinners and makes them rich. The “wages” of those in the vineyard is but a gift of <i>grace</i> , not of their own earning.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR for December 16 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 Asbury 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 at 691-3619, **before December 17**. Poinsettias are \$8.00 each and are yours to take home anytime during the Christmas season.



SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Wednesday, December 20 at 7p.m. our Sunday School children of all ages will take part in a Christmas service. Please join us!

2024 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE CLOAKROOM. PLEASE PICK UP YOUR BOX. PLEASE DO NOT USE THESE ENVELOPES UNTIL AFTER JANUARY 1, 2024.

HOPE'S NEW BANNERS

The development of new liturgical banners for the church year is close to wrapping up. We will soon have a banner set for each season of the church year. Be on the lookout in the church bulletin at the beginning of each season for a description and explanation of the designs developed/chosen for each banner. The Altar Guild has been working with the artist, Tim Bergmann from Bergmann Graphics who developed our pelican logo years ago. Tim

developed the banner designs that the Altar Guild chose and the company, Ad Crucem produced the banners.

ANNUAL MARCH FOR LIFE

Each January we remember the lives lost to abortion since 1973. The number of babies killed by abortion in the United States since then is about 65 million. One of the ways this horrific loss is marked is with the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. The 51st March for Life will be held on January 19, 2024. The rally begins at 12:00 noon and the march begins at 1:00pm. The starting point will be between 12th and 14th Streets and continue on Constitution Avenue to the U.S. Capitol Building. The theme announced for this year is "With every woman, for every child." This theme encourages the work of pregnancy resource centers that help pregnant women and their children. It's a reminder to support these life-affirming organizations. The LCMS will have more information soon about joining in this march.

Hope Lutheran helps with one of the local pregnancy resource centers, Thrive, each week. Their Parent University program meets each Thursday night at Hope. Mothers come for Bible study and a parenting lesson. Their participation earns them points to redeem for supplies in the Thrive "store," like baby clothes, diapers, etc. Hope hosts the dinner on the second Thursday of the month. To volunteer, contact Judy Maichel.

SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE SUNDAY

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is set for January 21, 2024. Lutherans For Life has chosen the theme "Just as... I AM."

The theme is based on Ephesians 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). Lutherans For Life has resources to help congregations to encourage members to be involved in life-affirming activities.

God Has Become YOUR Brother!

From Martin Luther's sermon delivered on Christmas Day, 1534 (Sermons of Martin Luther: the House Postils, vol. 1, pp. 134-137):

You see, Adam was formed out of the soil of the ground, while Eve was formed out of Adam's rib. But Christ was even more closely related to us because he was born from the flesh and blood of his mother, the Virgin Mary, in the same way that other human beings are born, with this one exception: the Virgin Mary was single when the power of the Holy Spirit came over her and God's Son was conceived without sin, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Aside from that, he is just like we are, the son of a genuine, natural woman....

There is no reason for me to live in constant fear, because I have a brother who has become a human being just like me. Why he was willing to let this happen, and what he aimed to accomplish by it, namely to free us from sin and death, I shall not discuss in detail today. Right now I want to tell you only about the honor that has been bestowed on the entire human race, an honor of which we can rightfully boast and celebrate, namely, that the Son of God has become a human being. All people can boast of this honor. However, only Christians can boast of something that is even greater. They will be able to boast of this birth to all eternity. Down here on earth all people have the honor that God's Son has assumed their flesh and blood. But the spiritual and eternal fruit of this birth belongs only to Christians. That is the primary truth we should learn from this account.

Second, we should learn to follow this striking, divine example. For Christ, the Son of God, humbled himself the way he did, in order to transfer all his glory to destitute human beings, and on top of that also transferred to them his divine majesty before which the holy angels tremble in awe, while he himself lives like a poverty-stricken beggar. Up in heaven the angels worship him, while down here on earth he becomes our servant and beds himself in our slimy sins and sinfulness. Now I say, because the Son of God has done this, we should learn from him to gladly and humbly praise and glorify him and his Word, suffering every kind of sorrow in imitation of him, and so follow his example. For what harm can befall us or why should we be ashamed of suffering? After all, our dear Lord suffered cold and hunger and sorrow, but when he came down to earth, his life was especially filled with sorrow and poverty, as we have told you. In the stall there were no bedpans nor any privacy whatsoever, no pillow, no diapers, no bedding. He had to lie in a manger beneath the cows and oxen....

That is why we should learn our lesson well and earnestly ponder the great honor that has been bestowed on us by Christ's becoming a human being. For it is such a great honor, that even if one were an angel, you would do well to wish that you were a human being, so that you could boast: My own flesh and blood is greater than all the angels, and blessed is every creature that is a human being.



Phone: 314-352-0014

www.hopelutheranstl.org

December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Elder: 3 – Scot Kinnaman 10 – Jim Frost 17 – Scot Kinnaman 24 – (am) Kevin Robson (pm) Jim Frost	Elders (cont.): 25 – Mark Maichel 31 – (am) Scot Kinnaman 31 – (pm) Jim Frost	Altar Guild: 3 Spyers/Truebe 10 Asbury/Bergdolt 17 Brown/Patton 24 Keller/Janssen 31 Temme/Mussmann				1 2 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
3 <u>Advent 1</u> 9:00 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:30 Schola rehearsal	4	5	6 5:00 Kantorei Rehearsal 7pm Advent Evening Prayer	7	8	9 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
10 <u>Advent 2</u> 9:00 Divine Service 10:15 Special Voters Mtg 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:30 Schola rehearsal	11	12	13 5:00 Kantorei Rehearsal 7pm Advent Evening Prayer	14	15	16 <i>Pastor's day off</i> 9:30 Sunday School Program rehearsal 10:30 Church Decorating
17 <u>Advent 3</u> 9:00 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Class/SS 11:30 Schola rehearsal	18	19	20 NO Kantorei Rehearsal 7pm Advent Evening Prayer with Sunday School	21	22	23 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
24 <u>Advent 4</u> 9:00 Divine Service No Bible Class/Sun. School <u>Christmas Eve</u> 4:00 Divine Service	25 Christmas 9:30 Divine Service Church office closed	26	27 NO Kantorei Rehearsal	28	29	30 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
31 <u>1st Sun. after Christmas</u> 9:00 Divine Service No Bible Class/Sun. School <u>New Year's Eve</u> 4:00 Divine Service						

Phone: 314-352-0014

January 2024

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's Day Church office closed	2	3 NO Kantorei Rehearsal	4	5	6 Epiphany of Our Lord 7:00 Divine Service
7 <u>Baptism of Our Lord</u> 9:00 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Class/Sunday School 11:30 Choir rehearsal	8	9	10 5:00 Kantorei Rehearsal	11	12	13 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
14 <u>Epiphany 2</u> 9:00 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Class/ Sunday School 11:30 Choir rehearsal	15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Church office closed	16	17 5:00 Kantorei Rehearsal	18 6:00 ThnVe Parent University	19	20 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
21 <u>Transfiguration</u> 9:00 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Class/ Sunday School 11:30 Choir rehearsal 3:00 Oran Vashers	22	23	24 5:00 Kantorei Rehearsal	25 6:00 ThnVe Parent University	26	27 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
28 <u>Septuagesima</u> 9:00 Divine Service 10:30 Bible Class/ Sunday School 11:30 Choir rehearsal	29	30	31 5:00 Kantorei Rehearsal	Elder: 6 – Jim Frost 7 – Scot Kinnaman 14 – Mark Maichel 21 – Scot Kinnaman 28 – Jim Frost	Altar Guild: 7 Spyers/Truebe 14 Asbury/Bergdolt 21 Brown/Patton 28 Keller/Janssen	