



F.A.Q.'S (Frequently Asked Questions)



Q: How did Christmas come to be celebrated on December 25? Is this the actual date of Christ's birth, or do we even know that?

A: One often reads that the pope placed Christmas on December 25 to replace the pagan mid-winter festival, but there really is little evidence to support this claim. The early church fathers report several conflicting date for Christ's birth including dates in November and May as well as the more accepted dates, December 25 and January 6. In the early church January 6 gained greater acceptance in the East and December 25 in the West. The church father Hippolytus of Rome, who lived in the early 200s, provides the first record we have of the December 25 date. December 25 seems to have become the established date at Rome by the mid-300s. In the late 300s Chrysostom, who lived in the East, argued for the date of December 25 on the basis of a careful analysis of the chronological data concerning Luke 1. His comments make it clear that although this date was fairly new in the East, it was long established in the West.

One commentator explains:

If you read the first chapter of Luke. You'll learn that Zechariah was of the priestly order of Abijah. We know the dates when he would have his turn in the temple. He was there in late September. Nine months later has John born in late June. Interestingly, the Church has celebrated the Nativity of St. John on June 24 since antiquity.

Also of note is that Luke tells us Mary was visited by Gabriel six months later, which would be late March. Interestingly, the Church has celebrated the Annunciation of our Lord on March 25 since antiquity.

Finally, note what happens nine months after March 25.

The tradition of a mid-winter birth is strongly supported in tradition. Previously existing mid-winter festivals may have influenced the church in its choice of a specific day, but it is just as likely that God placed Christ's birth at midwinter, the time when the light returned. All of the festivals of Israel were determined by the astronomical turning points of the year. That is why Easter is tied to the coming of spring. God placed the Passover and therefore also Easter at the coming of spring. The Jewish festival of lights, Hannukah, was already on the 25th of the midwinter month at the time of Jesus. This was certainly an appropriate date for the coming of the Light of the World.

We do not know the date of Christ's birth with certainty, but there is little to support the notion that the date is simply the appropriation of a heathen festival. Questions of biblical dating are discussed in detail in *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* by Jack Finegan.

There are many books on the customs and history of Christmas. *First Christmas* by Paul Maier is one that focuses on the background of the first Christmas.

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*That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ,
the Son of God, and that by believing
you may have life in His name. —John 20:31*

Messiah Lutheran Church & School
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

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Church Office: (817) 431-2345

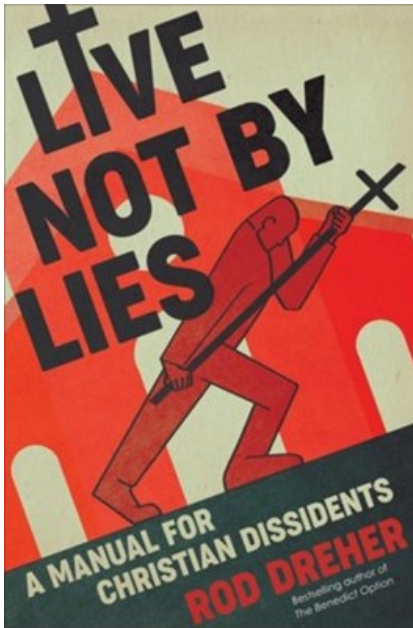
Academy Office: (817) 431-5486

Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Thomas Chryst, Pastor

Rev. Jeremy McDonald, Vicar



Live Not By Lies ~ A Manual for Christian Discipleship by Rod Dreher

Christians in America today are confounded by the rapid changes in the foundational pillars of our culture. Simply clinging to our views as “old fashioned” but preferable to secularism is not adequate in the least. Author Rod Dreher has long contemplated the changes we are observing, and has set forth ideas for an effective Christian response.

His most recent book, “Live not by Lies,” is a must-read for Christians who desire to preserve their souls and the soul of their families and churches in the coming onslaught of totalitarianism. Dreher acknowledges that the “cultural war” of the past few decades is over. The left has won that war by gaining and using the power centers of our culture to advance its agenda. The consolidation of the temporal victory is becoming a form of totalitarianism which he calls “soft totalitarianism.” Totalitarianism is much worse than simple dictatorship in that it is not satisfied with control of outward behavior, but seeks to

shape the minds and thoughts – the very soul – of every citizen.

This mind-control thought shaping campaign is already taking place through a massive propaganda effort (“political correctness”) accompanied by severe social penalties for those who resist. According to Dreher, the Christian Church in America has missed the mark by dressing up its message in the decadent cultural values of success, riches, and worldly glory.

So many “Christians” today are mere “Christ-admirers” but not “Christ-followers.” They surrender at the first sign of suffering or social loss. He is equally critical of churches who wish to fight the war through political action. This is a spiritual battle to be fought with spiritual weapons. Ultimately, totalitarianism is founded on lies and depends on propaganda. Those who submit to the lie against better knowledge endanger their very souls.

Partnership with the lie only enslaves, perverts, and eventually brainwashes the individual even as it supports the system. The best and most effective response to the lie is to live, speak, and act in accordance with the truth, and refuse to compromise the truth for convenience, comfort, or safety. Dreher shares many inspiring stories from those who opposed the brutal totalitarianism of Soviet Communism, and discerns from them the most successful methods of resistance.

The family unit and the Church were vital components of the defeat of the Soviet Communist system. Today, it is vital that we *See, Judge, and Act*. We can and must encourage and support one another, and teach our children, by word and example, to discern truth and the lie, to live in the freedom of the truth in Christ, and to refuse to submit to lies even at great temporal cost. This is what the totalitarian regime fears the most.

This is not a pleasant read, but it is an extremely helpful one.

Welcome Messiah's New Members

James McGarvey



Dale Addink



James Pinkston



John Pinkston



Vickie Krolczyk



*We are thankful you are
here at Messiah!*

The week before Thanksgiving break was a busy and fun-filled one at MLCA Preschool with the Thanksgiving Feast AND Turkey Trot. Below are pictures from the Preschoolers participating in the Turkey Trot! They had so much fun!



Below are pictures from the Thanksgiving Feast. The parents joined and the Preschoolers sang songs! We are SO THANKFUL for our wonderful families, who share their sweet children with us! Our hearts are full!





THE MID-WEEK ADVENT SERIES has started has begun followed by The Office of Evening Prayer at 7:00 in the Sanctuary. This year we are taking a closer look at the angel Gabriel's words to Mary about her Son who was to be born as recorded in Luke's Gospel:

We also started back up our Tradition of the Wednesday Evening Meals at 6:00pm in the Fellowship Hall.

On December 8th: "He will be called the Son of the Most High." (Luke 1:32). The Altar the Guild is hosting this dinner with soups and desserts.

December 15th: "The Lord God will give to Him the throne of his father David." (Luke 1:32). The Messiah Youth is hosting this meal with spaghetti and lasagna.



THE MESSIAH YOUTH will meet up for a hike on Saturday, December 4th. Make sure to bring a sack lunch. We will carpool to hiking trail and bring money for ice cream on the way home!

The Youth are hosting the Advent dinner on Wednesday, Dec 15th with spaghetti and lasagna. Text David Lee for more details at (817) 233-4258.

YOUNG ADULTS—THERE ARE TWO PRO-LIFE EVENTS COMING UP in January. The first one is a conference "From Fertilization to Forever" that will be held at Memorial Lutheran Church in Houston. For more information on this event contact Pr. Ian Pacey at ipacey@mlchouston.org.

The other Pro-Life event is the "Magnify Life Event" at the St. Paul Lutheran Church in Austin. This event also include a March to the Texas Capital and will take place on January 22nd & 23rd. For more information contact Vera Sweet at vsweet328@gmail.com.



Messiah's Upcoming Dates to Remember

December 10th at 6:30pm—MLCA's Annual Christmas Program.

December 25 at 10am—Christmas Divine Service 10am

December 15th at 9:30am— MLCA Preschool Christmas Program.

December 25—Christmas Dinner immediately following the 10am service. See page 8 for details.

December 24 at 5pm & 7pm—Lessons & Carols-Candlelight 5pm

January 1—Happy 2022 New Year!!!!

THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who generously supported this years MLCA 19th Annual Turkey Trot Walk-A-Thon! We raised **over \$8000.00 (unofficial count)** to support the continued growth of the MLCA Athletic Department and other facility updates. We have such generous donors!



MLCA DATES TO REMEMBER



MLCA's Annual Christmas Program— Friday, December 10th at 6:30pm.

MLCA's Preschool Christmas Program—Thursday, December 16th at 10:15am.

Class Christmas Parties—Thursday, December 16th and Early Dismissal for Christmas Break

School Resumes—January 4th

No School—January 17th

No School—PRESCHOOL ONLY—January 20th & Friday January 21st

Support the MLCA Lions Basketball Games:

Next Games: Thursday, December 9th—at Newman Mansfield [Time TBD]

Monday, December 13th—at Crown of Life—4:30pm Girls/5:30pm Boys



Library books, especially school library books, have become a hot-button issue, and for good reason. Once your child begins reading on his/her own, you face a conundrum: How do you foster a love of reading and let your child feel the delight in browsing freely through the shelves in a library, and finding just the right book?

We have a library here at Messiah, to which you, as a church member, have full access. It is located on the second floor in the Academy wing, right at the front of the building. At present, we have around 9,000 volumes. Of course, theology is well covered, from toddler to seminary student. Need a Bible story book for your preschooler? We have several. Are you interested in reading the Book of Concord

or the writings of Luther, Walther, or Chemnitz to up your Lutheran theology game? We have them, too.

It is not all theology, though. In addition, the adult non-fiction section has biographies, books on parenting, history, art, education, philosophy, science, and modern culture. New books include Rod Dreher's *Live Not By Lies* and *Irreversible Damage* by Abigail Shrier. We also have a fine adult fiction section. Check out a classic, like *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Count of Monte Christo*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, or *1984*, or peruse the more modern fiction of Jeffrey Shaara, Francine Rivers, Jan Karon, and others.

Toddlers through second graders can enjoy the wealth of good picture books and early reading books, both fiction and non-fiction. (Actually, one can never really outgrow a beautifully illustrated picture book!)

Our "J" section, for kids reading on their own, and the "YA" section for middle grades and up, have shelves of non-fiction books on history, science, animals, dinosaurs, sports, music, art, etc., plus, biographies of famous and not-so-famous people, as well as devotions and Bible stories. The fiction section is full of new and old good books, telling good stories. Some of these books are considered "Christian fiction" and many are not. Your child can go back into history, experience a different culture, visit with other families, travel to another planet, become adventurers or sleuths, and overcome difficult circumstances. Some books will make them laugh, some will make them cry, some will do both, and others will challenge them to think. **What none of them will do, however, is undermine your child's faith.**

To take a book home, fill out the card located in the front of the book, with your name and the check-out date. Place the card in the black box, located on the library desk, where it hits the wall. Books can be returned in two places: drop them in the slot on the library desk, or in the book return container by the elevator.

Come, check out YOUR library!



Christmas Dinner For Singles or Families

Please join us for Christmas Dinner

after the 10am service
on Saturday, December 25th.

We will be serving a traditional Christmas dinner menu!

IF YOU LIKE, please bring a dish to share.

IF YOU LIKE, we would love your help decorating, serving and cleaning up.

IF YOU LIKE, optional games after dinner for young and old. Just come! We would like to spend time with you!

Please make reservations to attend at this link ~

<https://forms.gle/yHnNWF8yspNhpmPr6>.

For more details, email Pastor McDonald at Jeremy.McDonald@ctsfw.edu.

Thank you!

Thank you to all who helped put in the beautiful new landscape out front and new drain.
Be on the look out for the new manger scene that was recently cut and painted!
Thank you to all who made this possible!

