

# Peace Lutheran Church

Volume 33 No. 12

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## GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY

<sup>8</sup> And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. <sup>10</sup> And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" <sup>15</sup> When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup> And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup> And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. Luke 2:8-20

Well, it was my hope that we will have by now returned to "normal." However, that is not the case. In this season, we celebrate something that had taken place that indeed was not "normal." What did take place is still not "normal," as the birth of the Christ-Child is as miraculous today as it was when it first began.

The account above has become "normal" as year after year it is read. Yet, that which is seemingly "normal" has an extraordinary impact every time that it is read. By the power of the Holy Spirit, it affirms the faith of believers and has the potential to draw unbelievers to faith. Faith is not "normal." It is a miracle afforded by God for the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of believers and unbelievers alike.

I cannot imagine the reaction of the shepherds when they received the news. A simple plain "normal" night turned upside down. No doubt they remembered the event throughout their earthly life. They were the first to receive the "Good News of Great Joy" and were the first to proclaim the "Good News of Great Joy."

What is the "Good News of Great Joy"? As the heralding angel proclaimed, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." The hope since the Garden of Eden has arrived. God in the flesh – the Savior for all!

Though "normal" may not yet be our experience, HOPE is always present. Take some time in this Advent-Christmas season to focus on that HOPE. Encourage one another and share it with others who may need to hear a word of HOPE.

Moreover, avail the opportunity to come and worship, to experience the HOPE in God's Means of Grace – His Word and Sacrament, and to rest secure in that HOPE. Don't the fear prevent you from hearing the Good News of Great Joy!"

To God, be the glory!

*Pastor Schroeder*

FROM  
THE  
PASTOR



### Joy:Fully Lutheran

When you think “Lutheran,” do you think joy? When you tell your neighbors and friends that you are a Lutheran, do they say that Lutherans are joyful people? When you go to worship on Sunday morning, do you go in joy, listen in joy, sing in joy, and leave with joy?

“Rejoice always” (1 Thess. 5:16). That is the whole verse, an easily memorized nugget from Scripture. Rejoice. Always. Because God loves you. Because Jesus died and rose for you. Because the Spirit has called you by the Gospel into this saving faith. Because God is faithful to His promises, and He will surely do it (1 Thess. 5:24).

“Joy:fully Lutheran” is the currently running theme for our LCMS. Being Joyfully Lutheran means that we live in response to God’s love for us, namely shown in the death and resurrection of Jesus. We live joyfully because God’s love is freely given to sinners through faith for Christ’s sake. We live joyfully because you and I do not and cannot work to earn God’s love & forgiveness. We simply receive it as a gift through faith in what Christ has done for us. Joyfully, we receive God’s Word & Sacraments as His means thru which He gives to us, His children, His love, and mercy in Christ. We live joyfully because, although we cannot believe by our own reason or strength, the Holy Spirit has called us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts, sanctifies us, and keeps us in the one true faith in Christ Jesus. We live joyfully because the Father invites us to pray to Him as children talk to their dear father. We live joyfully because Jesus has done it ALL for us.

Our joy is not generic happiness. We are not always happy people, but we are joyfully Lutheran. We live our lives trusting in the mercy and love of God. Our Savior suffered for us, and we know that our life in this world will be filled with trials and suffering, yet we live in the joy that our promised resurrection brings. Joy does not mean that we ignore the realities of our lives. Faith in Christ does not remove us from the trials and temptations that befall people in this fallen world. Faith in Christ does not mean that we cannot suffer or sin, for our sins are many daily. Faith in Christ points us to the hope we have in the midst of the difficulties of this life. Christ, Himself, is our joy.

The cross is the most prominent symbol of Christianity. We proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes. With our Lord, we know that suffering and pain is inherent in our lives as we dwell in this sinful world. With our Lord, we do not expect sinners to embrace the Kingdom, but we trust that it is through suffering and death that the Kingdom comes among us. With the Lord, we bear our own crosses and rejoice in the will of our loving Heavenly Father, even when He seems hidden from our view. The Christ on the cross is the Christ who conquered death and the grave. We rejoice because our sins have been removed from us. We rejoice that death no longer has the final word over our lives. We rejoice that our Savior is coming again. We rejoice in the promises of life with Him forever. We rejoice that He is with us in His Word, Sacraments, and Church.

I, a poor miserable sinner, am Joyfully Lutheran because of Jesus. God’s love in Christ is the reason for joy. Grace, faith, forgiveness, suffering, learning, repenting, washing, eating, drinking, loving, fellowshiping, mercying — all joys we share in our lives when we are ‘plugged’ into Jesus Christ.

Let us begin this new year of the Church in Joy. Rejoice always. Pray continually. Give thanks in all circumstances. For Christ has made sure your sins would be forgiven and saved you for eternity. This is why it is always in Jesus’ Holy name we pray. Amen.

*Pastor Josiah J. Fitch*

If you’re interested in learning more about our LCMS Joy:Fuly Lutheran Theme, please visit <https://joyfullylutheran.org/> The website has articles, Bible Studies, Devotions, and more!!!

## **THE JESSE TREE IS THE JESUS TREE!**

***“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.” Isaiah 11:1***



Tis the Advent season—a time to reflect, pray, and worship the Christ who came, who comes, and who will come again. Imagine the world some 2000 years ago in the weeks before the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem. People were busy doing whatever it was that defined their lives at that moment.

For some, it was struggling against hunger, fear, and desperation. For others, it was enjoying their wealth and ease. For yet others, it was simply dealing with the pressures of their lives. But for all, the weeks we call “Advent” were just days and nights lived in darkness. And indeed, it is a dark world.

God had created the world to live in union with Him. He had breathed life into the father of our race, Adam, a creature of dust. He had formed Eve from the side of Adam and had joined the two together and to Himself. How bright the world must have been as Eden lived in harmony with the Creator. But darkness came.

Those created and loved by God rebelled against Him, bringing a darkness that permeated all creation. Death had entered through sin, and as the children of Adam filled the world, they took with them the darkness of that dreadful day in Eden when sin and death entered the world. It was a world of darkness cut off from the source of all light, the Creator. Yet a light was breaking into the world.

A young girl carried in her virgin womb a Son. This daughter of Eve was about to give birth to the One who would be the light of the world. This infant would reverse forever the horror of humanity’s fall into sin, death, and darkness. This was the miracle of miracles: our human sister Mary became, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the mother of God, the bearer of the Savior of the world. No human eye could perceive it that night. All that could be seen was a child. Yet this child would forever destroy the darkness, for He brought life into death, and His light was to be the light of the world.

Every force of Satan would seek to put that light out. Herod would attempt to destroy Him by killing every male infant. Scribes and Pharisees would seek to silence Him as He spoke words of life. Failing to silence Him, they would seek to kill Him. Some thirty-three years after the first Christmas, the Babe of Bethlehem would be nailed to a cross. But this is what He came to do. The Advent story, including the culminating Christmas story, is about a baby who had been born to die—yet not just to die but to be placed in the utter darkness of a tomb and on Easter morning to burst forth from the tomb. When the child of Mary rose from the grave, the light that began at Bethlehem shone so brightly that no one can put it out.

This Advent, we gather in the name of Jesus and consider His great story anew. The Jesse Tree is filled with symbols telling the story of Jesus from creation to His second coming. The story of the Bible, Old & New Testaments alike, is the story of Jesus. He is the Seed & the Root of Jesse’s tree. He is the Life and First-fruit of Jesse’s tree. As the Church will sing with the angels on Christmas Day, “To God on high be glory and peace to all the earth.”

## ODDS AND ENDS

**SCHEDULED COMMUNION APPOINTMENTS** Upon the request of the Board of Elders, the pastors will be making time available for family units to receive Holy Communion at church. Family units who are not comfortable coming to church on account of COVID-19 can schedule a 30-minute appointment to receive the Sacrament. A schedule will be given to Grace by the pastors of availability. If masks are an issue, please let Grace know so she can note that on the appointment schedule. The pastors will be masked. Please call Grace to make an appointment.

If a visit to the home is most preferred, the pastors will try to set up an appointment to come to your home. (If you are in a nursing home or assisted living situation, the pastors may not be able to come and serve you.) If this is your desire, please call Grace, and she will forward your request to the pastors. One of the pastors will call to arrange a time to bring the Sacrament.



**TUESDAY MORNING MEN'S BREAKFAST BIBLE CLASS** We will resume meeting at Four Seasons on Commercial St. in Neenah in January 2021. Please watch the newsletter and bulletin news for date and time of start up.

**SATURDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS** This class will resume in January 2021.

**MEN @ PEACE** We have suspended our meetings and will resume in January 2021.

## VITAL STATISTICS

**Number of Baptized Souls: 461      Number of Confirmed Souls: 386**

**Number of Families: 240**



**MIDWEEK ADVENT SUPPERS** will not be taking place this year as has been our custom. However, many special services are planned. A schedule of these services is found in this newsletter.



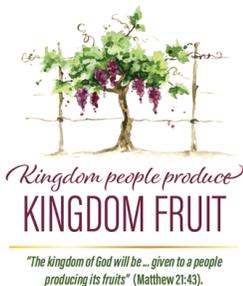
### The Giving Tree

As is our tradition, we will again have our annual Christmas Giving Tree. This year we will be giving to The Boys and Girls Brigade in Neenah. The Brigade's Christmas Giving Program serves over 1,000 financially disadvantaged families in Neenah and Menasha. You will find tags of various items on the tree. After taking a tag, please purchase the item and place it under the tree.

**Please do not wrap the gifts.**

Gifts must be delivered to the Brigade before Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. Please bring gifts in prior to that date. Your generosity is much appreciated this time of year.





**January 2 and 3-** Lutheran Women's Missionary League Mite Collection. Your contributions will make it possible for the Good News of God's love and promise of salvation, to be taught to people around the world.

**Mission Moment-** The Fort Wayne Seminary Food and Clothing Co-op will utilize the \$10,000 grant money to provide food for students preparing for full-time church work, to reduce their financial need during this time of preparation.

## **DECEMBER** Birthdays

Lori Kleinschmidt	12/3
Monica Jeske	12/4
Marise Bailey	12/21
Carol Zuberbier	12/21
Carol Brandt	12/30



### ***Don't forget about Scrip during the Christmas Shopping season!***

**YES!! Peace Lutheran still has our SCRIP fundraising program.** Just like some small business our Scrip program has been hit with the lack of sales during this most peculiar time. We are continuing to try to keep this a viable fundraising option.

#### ***Are you making your list? Are you checking it twice for Shop with Scrip options?***

Find gifts for everyone on your list while raising funds for our organization. Whether you buy the gift cards to give as presents to family and friends, or to use them to buy your gifts—our organization earns with every gift card purchased. The deadline for Christmas ordering is **December 13, 2020** in order to receive the cards in time for your Christmas gift giving.

We have some in stock Scrip cards like Subway, Taco Bell, Papa Murphy's as well as Fleet Farm and Menards. We still have the usual Kwik Trip, Kohl's, Culvers, Dairy Queen, McDonalds, Pick N' Save, Festival Foods, Wal-Mart and assorted other Scrip Cards available for purchase. **If we don't have what you want, we can check into ordering it for pick up the following weekend.**

There are many vendors to choose from listed in our *Look Book* located at the Visitors desk or you can visit ShopWithScrip online to see participating retailers.

**Thank you** to all who have supported SCRIP regularly and to those who have given it a try! If you haven't, please consider using SCRIP for your shopping, dining and other needs. See us at the visitor's desk or the church office if you are interested in purchasing SCRIP. Profits, at this time, are divided between our Youth Group and the Lutheran School Scholarship Fund.





# WHITE AS SNOW

Jesus, our Savior, came to earth to purify sinners.

*Directions: Figure out which path through the puzzle is correct. Choose one to try, starting at the first picture under the "Path" box. Follow each picture's directional cues to see if the words make sense when placed in order in the blanks below. If not, try a different path until you figure out the Bible verse.*



PATH 1	PATH 2	PATH 3	PATH 4	PATH 5	PATH 6
for	give	come	together	around	after
self	into	settle	eternal	thanks	forgive
God	LORD	says	without	Christ	warmth
love	sins	scarlet	other	light	praise
red	star	white	snow	winter	peace



“ \_\_\_\_\_ now, let us \_\_\_\_\_ the matter,” \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ . “Though your \_\_\_\_\_ are like \_\_\_\_\_ , they shall be as \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_ ....”

ISAIAH 1:18, NIV

Answer: Path 3; come, settle, says, LORD, sins, scarlet, white, snow

# LET IT SNOW!

Create a winter wonderland with this fun craft.



### What you need:

- Glass jar with lid but no label
- Laminated photo (that will fit in the jar)
- Small plastic Christmas trinkets
- Hot or waterproof glue
- Container with spout
- 1 cup distilled water
- 3 tsp. glycerin
- Glitter



### What you do:

1. Unscrew lid and flip jar upside down. Glue the photo and trinkets to the inside of the lid, standing upright.
2. In a container, mix water and glycerin. Pour the mixture into the jar, leaving space at the top.
3. Spoon in some glitter.
4. When glue is dry, attach the decorated lid tightly. Shake the jar to see “snow” swirl and settle.

Which of the four Gospels name(s) Bethlehem as the place of Jesus’ birth?

- A. Only Luke
- B. Matthew and Luke
- C. Mark and John
- D. All four

Answer: B (See Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:1-7.)

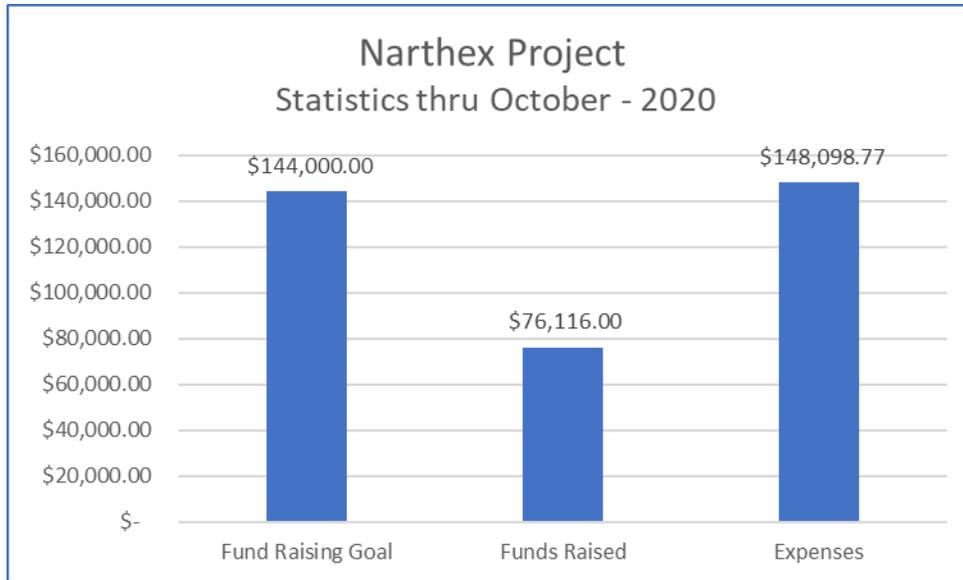


## Financial Update - 2020 Year to Date through October

Operating Expenses	\$		323,897
Contributions	\$		301,578
Difference	<b>\$</b>		<b>(22,319)</b>

In addition to the Contributions received for the Operating Budget above, an additional \$17,480 was given in support of the Narthex project (Foundation for the Future Fund) and another \$18,901 for other designated funds.

Endowment Fund Balance: \$ 316,484



*Expenses above do not include \$7,204 for painting of the Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall in 2018.*

### Foundation for the Future Fund (Narthex Project) Balance

	<b>\$</b>		<b>9,472</b>
Old National Bank Checking Account	\$		3,642
LCEF Money Market (Loan Proceeds)	\$		5,830
<i>Money Market includes proceeds from \$100,000 Loan.</i>			
<b>LCEF Loan Balance is</b>			<b>\$ 61,997</b>

*Monthly Loan Payment is \$931:*

**In 2020:**

\$ 1,490	was paid as Interest (continuing Expense for the Foundation for the Future Fund)
\$ 7,823	was applied to reducing the Loan Principal



The Church Office will be closed on Nov. 26 & 27, Dec. 24 & 25, 30 at 11:30 a.m. & 31st

**Peace Lutheran Church**

Missouri Synod  
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Rev. Ricky P. Schroeder  
Pastor  
Rev. Josiah Fitch  
Associate Pastor



**Peace  
Lutheran Church**  
NEENAH, WISCONSIN – LCMS

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*Reaching Out . . . Serving Jesus . . . Celebrating His Love*



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**(920) 725-0625**

**e-mails**  
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assocpastor@peaceneenah.com

**Web site:**  
www.peaceneenah.com

**Worship Services**  
**Sat. 5:00 p.m.**  
**Sun. 8:00 a.m.**  
**10:45 a.m.**

Bible Study/Sunday School  
9:30 a.m. Sundays



**Peace Lutheran Church**  
**1228 S. Park Avenue, Neenah, WI**

*Step back in time and  
experience the Live Nativity!*  
**Friday, December 11, 2020**  
**6:00 – 7:30 P.M.**