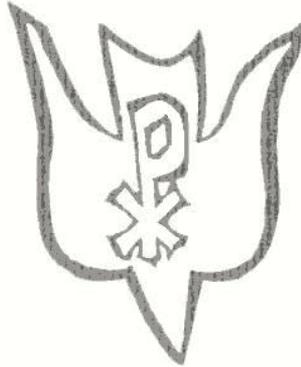


Focus

on Spirit of Christ



Newsletter of

Spirit of Christ Lutheran Church

2749 Bunker Lake Blvd NE

Ham Lake, MN 55304

December 2015

A Member of

The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

(763) 755-7234

secretary@soclc.org

www.soclc.org

Our Mission is to live in love for God and one another, reaching out to all people proclaiming and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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Advent Midweek Worship

December 2nd, 9th, 16th 6:45pm; Soup Supper at 6pm

Choir-led Christmas Worship

December 20th 9:00am

Children's Christmas Program

December 20th 4:00pm; Potluck to follow

Christmas Eve Worship

December 24th 4:00 & 10:00pm

Christmas Day Worship

December 25th 9:00am

Christian Education News

A CHARLIE BROWN. Christmas

Sunday School Christmas Program

December 20th at 4:00pm

Potluck supper to follow:

Last name A-I - side dish, salad, or bread

Last name J-P - main dish

Last name Q-Z - dessert

You are welcome to bring more than one dish as you are able!

Rehearsal for all participating children will be held during Sunday School through the month of December and on Saturday, December 19th at 10:00am.

**We packed 50+ boxes for Operation
Christmas Child this year!**

Thank you for your donations of shoebox items, offerings to support our shoebox shipping, and for helping to pack shoeboxes on November 23rd.

Special thanks to Kati Schoenbauer shopping, setup, and dropping off boxes!

Our project was also supported by a grant from Thrivent Financial.



TRAUMA BONDS

We thank Mick Craig for his powerful and enlightening 6-week class on Trauma Bonds.

Coming in January: Trauma Healing. Watch for more information.

Youth News

Hey YOUth!

Mark your calendars and watch for details.

December

Sunday, 12/6: Bake sale following worship.

Sunday, 12/6: Caroling at Edgewood Senior Living in Blaine. Meet at church at 1:30 p.m. and bring your whole family.

Sunday, 12/13: Christmas party during the Sunday School hour.

January

TBD: Feed My Starving Children

February

Saturday, 2/6: Super Bowl sub sandwich prep from 9 a.m. – noonish.

Sunday, 2/7: Super Bowl sub sandwich sale following worship.

We encourage your participation—the more the merrier! These activities provide an opportunity for you to serve others, work together, encourage one another, and get to know one another better. Please watch the weekly bulletin for details or contact a Youth Board member if you have any questions.

Ben Johnson, Shari Pack, Jody Rose, and Jon Weinhold

Support SOC Youth!

Need a Christmas Gift Idea? The Spirit of Christ Youth Group is again selling beautiful calendars for \$7.00. They make wonderful gifts. Pick one up for yourself too! A sample to view is on a table in the Narthex. They will be on sale most Sundays or you can write your name on the sheet near the sample copy and Sandy Elhardt will make sure you get one. Thanks for your support.

The Youth will also have magnetic notepads available this season. They are practical, fun and uplifting. These notepads would make great stocking stuffers and are perfect when you need a quick small gift. Check them out, they are only \$4 each.

God's Peace Through Strength, Through Weakness

"God never gives you more than you can handle" is a phrase often used to offer encouragement and comfort to someone hurting or dealing with a difficult situation. It's not meant to be cold and superficial but it feels to me as sensitive as a bumper sticker. Persevere, just grin and bear it! Does this mean that when I am overwhelmed and feeling totally lost, totally helpless that I am not bearing my proper burden? Maybe I need more heaped on, then it will be what I can handle. I feel taunted, discouraged and defeated.

There are times in life when we have been given more than we can handle. There are situations and circumstances that absolutely overwhelm us. Suffering and pain become so great we could break under the weight. Psalm 88, a mighty lament, says darkness is my closest friend. (Read it in its entirety.) Does this mean God doesn't love us? No! To the contrary this is exactly when God wants us to turn over our worries and despairs to Him because He does love and care for us. He knows life is more than we can handle; thankfully, there is nothing He can't handle. Our burden is heavy but with Him it is light. He suffers with us and bears all our pain. That old paradox again: strength comes in weakness; victory comes in surrender.

God doesn't give us pain and suffering. He does allow trials to test us so we rely on him. He, himself, called on His father when He felt forsaken. He doesn't tempt us. He leads us out of temptation. Hell is an unimaginable place, a pit of unimaginable darkness and evil. God doesn't want us to experience it so He went there himself. Thank you, Christ Jesus!

Listen, again, to "A Bridge over Troubled Water". It's a song with lovely music and words that are like a prayer, a promise to be believed - a promise that will be kept. "Be Not Afraid", is another beautiful hymn of promise that sings "know that I am with you through it all".

These are words to ponder. If God is our strength and our bridge to peace then we can, in His service, minister to others in need. We can be the yoke to bear another's burden. We bear God's peace and model the peace that passes all understanding. We can be a bridge to peace.

We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. 2 Corinthians 1: 8-10

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Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Matthew 11: 28-30

Linda McCarty, RN, FCN

May my prayer come before you;
turn your ear to my cry.



Psalm 88:2

LCMS Stewardship Minute

Our Lord Jesus Christ healed the man with dropsy by His Word on the Sabbath (Luke 14:1–6). He is the great physician of both body and soul. The paradoxical symptom of dropsy was an unquenchable craving for drink even though the body was 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 ten, or the owner of ten 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, but 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*, Vol. 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.

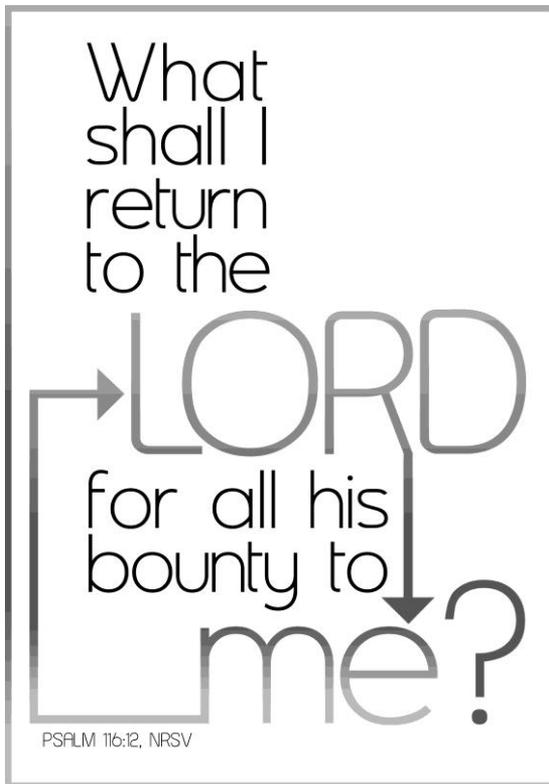
This is why our Lord instructs us on taking care not to be overmuch consumed by money. “No one can serve two masters . . . You cannot serve God and money” (Matt 6:24; Luke 16:13). The point is that our desire for money, like the disease dropsy, is never satisfied. We always desire more. We always think, if I just had this much then I would be happy. But even when that much comes, which God gladly gives, that happiness evades us. For the desire for more of these things 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, like the man healed of dropsy, applies His Word to us. He shows us how we have put our fear, our love, and our trust in our money and not feared, loved, and trusted in Him above all things. In essence, He says, “Stop it! Stop chasing after

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these fleeting things. They are vanity. They are the things that moth and rust destroy. For 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 live.

But then what? What do we do with this healing balm and care that our great physician has done? 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. That way is dead to us and leads 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 round. It serves us because it is a gift from our Father in heaven.



December Celebrations

Birthdays

1	Pam Birkholz	16	Sue Anderson
1	Sara Neel	18	Dixie Kolk
2	Gwen Mikish	19	Doug Meyers
3	Georgia Kedrowski	23	Elise Dupre
3	Lynne Yarbrough	24	Judy Waterman
4	Steve Johnson	27	Collin Mathiason
4	Betty Meyers	28	Carole Kampf
4	Deb Parson	29	Chris Elhardt
7	Jeff Parson	30	Max Gerard
7	Jennifer Dangers	31	Larry Waterman
10	Josh Kretsch		
11	Amy Fuhry		
11	Pete Welle	2	Jesse & Kristy Johnson
11	Tim Welle	9	Art & Elaine Hayden
14	Grace Kurvers	18	Charles & Dixie Kolk
15	Jerry Berg	30	Dan & Kari Pawlik

Anniversaries

Items available for Senior Apartment or Assisted Living Unit:

- Door wreaths
 - Winter – flocked Christmas wreath
 - Spring – pastel flowers and pastel eggs
 - Summer – greenery and roses
 - Fall – autumn theme
- Reaching tool
- Two shower curtains with rings
 - White background with large blue butterflies – no liners.
- Toaster
- Electric heated blanket
- Lap robe/blanket
- Small, apartment-sized vacuum cleaner
- Mattress pad for single bed, moisture resistant
- Mattress pad for hospital bed, moisture resistant, long zipper
- Chux
- Audio/baby monitor

Contact Linda Riebe if you can use any of these items. 763-753-7574

Serving the Lord in December

Elder

- 2 Ralph Fuerst (6:45pm)
- 6 Gerry Anderson
- 9 Chris Schoenbauer (6:45pm)
- 13 Wes Spadgenske
- 16 Open (6:45pm)
- 20 Dan Mathiason
- 24 Ralph Fuerst (4:00pm)
Gerry Anderson (10:00pm)
- 25 Chris Schoenbauer (9:00am)
- 27 Wes Spadgenske

Reader

- 6 Peggy Peterson
- 13 Shari Pack
- 20 Larry Waterman
- 24 Heather Kurvers (4:00pm)
Rita Matheson (10:00pm)
- 25 Judah Neel (9:00am)
- 27 Terry Elhardt

Greeters

- 6 Elaine Hayden & Pam Birkholz
- 13 Cindy Johnson & Judy Waterman
- 20 Johnson family
- 27 Fuhry family

Nursery

- 6 Jennifer Williams
- 13 Sara Neel
- 20 Sue Anderson
- 27 Louella Garland

Acolyte

- 2 Carter Lease (6:45pm)
- 6 Richard Pawlik
- 9 Kenneth Schieffer (6:45pm)
- 13 Mandy Sillman
- 16 Savannah Hofman (6:45pm)
- 20 Gabriel Jauch
- 24 McKenzie Williams (4:00pm)
Anna Brynteson (10:00pm)
- 25 Carter Lease (9:00am)
- 27 Richard Pawlik

Altar Guild

- 6 Jan Berg
- 13 Nancy Anderson
- 20 Jan Fuerst
- 27 Natalie Hofman

Trustee

- 12/2-12/8 Justin Zimmerman
- 12/9-12/15 Adam Garland
- 12/16-12/22 Doug Hofman
- 12/23-12/29 Doug Degler

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST CHOIR
INVITES YOU TO....

BELIEVE

THE TRUTH OF CHRISTMAS

CREATED BY MARTY PARKS
PRODUCED BY RANDY VADER & JAY ROUSE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20TH AT 9:00AM