



Trinity Lutheran Church of Exeter & Little Lambs Preschool

Dedicated to *knowing, sharing and proclaiming the saving Grace of Jesus Christ* .

A note of Encouragement

Happy New Year!

It's that time that happens every year when you hear about resolutions for the new year in ads and in conversations. My mother-in-law asked me what my resolution was this year. I really didn't know what to say. I've been going to the gym, but I could stand to eat a little better. While I have shed some of the weight that I put on at the seminary I could certainly stand to shed some more. I've even thought about taking on a new hobby like fishing so that I can teach Jeremy when he is old enough.

But the question that has crossed my mind has been: *When was the last time I made a New Year's resolution and actually kept it?* A constant desire of mine has been to grow in wisdom and discernment through prayer and devotion. Yet, I know my thoughts. I know failings. I know my doubts. I know my fears. From time to time my good intentions fall short for one reason or another.

Thank God for grace and mercies that are new every day! We have been baptized into Christ's death which means that we are also baptized into His resurrection. God is pleased with us because of what Christ Has done for us. As Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:10, "We are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Every day that the Lord gives us is a new day of grace to start over and love our neighbors as we seek God's glory in what he has given us.

Happy New Year and more importantly, happy new day!

In Christ's love,

Pastor Joel

Little Lambs Preschool

Happy New Year and God's Blessings

January Newsletter 2017

January 2 ~ **Closed New Year Observed**

January~ New Year/Winter

Hibernating Animals
Martin Luther King Jr.
Lincoln's Life

Jan. 4~ Wed. Chapel The Temptation of Jesus Matthew 4:1-12

Jan. 11~ Wed. Chapel Jesus Calls His Disciples Luke 5:1-11

January 16~ **Closed Martin Luther King Jr.**

Jan. 18~ Wed. Chapel Jesus Turns Water into Wine John 2:1-12

Jan. 25~ Wed. Chapel Jesus Calms a Storm Luke 8:22-25

We have a busy month ahead. The pre-k class will be starting homework packets in a couple of weeks. The teachers will be focusing on academics in preparation for Kindergarten.

We will also have a vision screening on Wednesday, January 18th at 10AM. Please check your child's file or talk to Ms. Laura about the form needed.

February 21-24 we will participate in The St. Jude Trike-A-Thon. All money raised goes back to St. Jude's Research Hospital. Information will be sent home as soon as it becomes available.

In Christ,
Ms. Laura





Christmas Program





Stewardship

A way of living

“In all things I have shown you that . . . we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35). And indeed it is. Does this not strike a chord that resonates in us all? Which of us can’t recall the look of surprise and thanks for the Christmas gifts that we labored to give to those whom we love? And the joy written on their face when that gift is received with thanksgiving means more than all the gifts we have received. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Our Lord knew this because He practiced it. He gave of Himself, sparing not even His life in death, in order to give us back to our Father in heaven. He knew that in giving, you get more because in giving joy is multiplied: the one who receives and the one who gives both rejoice in what is given and received. What is more the one who receives is thankful and only wants to give back to the one who gave so generously.

So also with our tithes and offerings in church. We want to give because we have received from God all that we are and all that we have. Our giving does not originate in what we must do to earn God’s favor. We have God’s favor because of the gift of His Son which we receive through Word and Sacrament. Thus, we are made free from the compulsion of giving. Now our tithes and offering are freely given *in thanksgiving* for what God has so generously given to us.

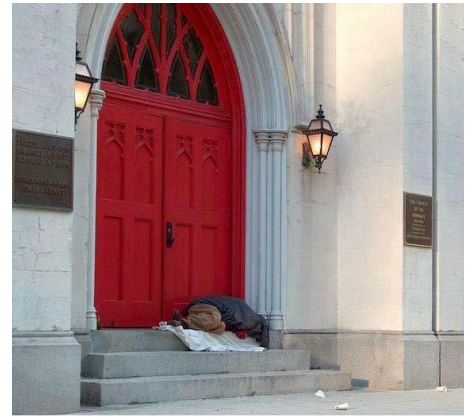
Why then does the church struggle to make budgets? Why does the church always seem stretched so thin? After all the Church is the place where God not only gives to us once, but continually again and again. And what gifts He gives! He gives us the forgiveness of sins, generously pouring out His grace and mercy because He loves us. So why does the church struggle?

It is because sin still clings to us. Our fallen nature makes us selfish and miserly. It leads us to believe that we can have our cake and eat it too. Because of sin we want to receive, but not give. We want God’s blessings, but we don’t want to share them with those around us. We want to remain comfortable in our own self-contained, neat, and tidy lives, without the headaches of loving those around us by helping them in their time of need.

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” Remember that God has placed you in a church, not only to receive His grace and mercy, but also to use you to bless others. Your tithes and offerings ensure that those around you have a pastor to preach the life-saving and life-giving Word of God. They ensure that the lights and heat and air-conditioning are working. They ensure there is water for Holy Baptism and bread and wine for the Holy Communion. Everything the Church does, she is able to do by and through the generosity of the members of the Church.

So remember the words of the Lord Jesus. It is more blessed to give than to receive. And remember the joy that attended the gifts you gave at Christmas. This same joy attends your gifts to the church.

Evangelism - Must Read



A pastor transformed himself into a homeless person and went to the church that he was to be introduced as the head pastor at that morning. He walked around his soon to be church for 30 minutes while it was filling with people for service. Only 3 people said hello to him, most looked the other way. He asked people for change to buy food because he was hungry. Not one gave him anything.

He went into the sanctuary to sit down in the front of the church and was told by the ushers that he would need to get up and go sit in the back of the church. He said hello to people as they walked in but was greeted with cold stares and dirty looks from people looking down on him and judging him.

He sat in the back of the church and listened to the church announcements for the week. He listened as new visitors were welcomed into the church that morning but no one acknowledged that he was new. He watched people around him continue to look his way with stares that said you are not welcome here.

Then the elders of the church went to the podium to make the announcement. They said they were excited to introduce the new pastor of the church to the congregation. "We would like to introduce you to our new Pastor." The congregation stood up and looked around clapping with joy and anticipation. The homeless man sitting in the back stood up and started walking down the aisle.

That's when all the clapping stopped and the church was silent. With all eyes on him, he walked up the altar and reached for the microphone. He stood there for a moment and then recited so elegantly, a verse from the bible.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?';

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for the least of my brothers and sisters, you did for me.';

After he recited this, he introduced himself as their new pastor and told the congregation what he had experienced that morning. Many began to cry and bow their heads in shame. "Today I see a gathering of people here but I do not see a church of Jesus. The world has enough people that look the other way. What the world needs is disciples of Jesus that can follow his teachings and live as he did. When will YOU decide to become disciples?

He then dismissed service until the following Sunday as his sermon had been given.