January 2022

GOOD NEWS

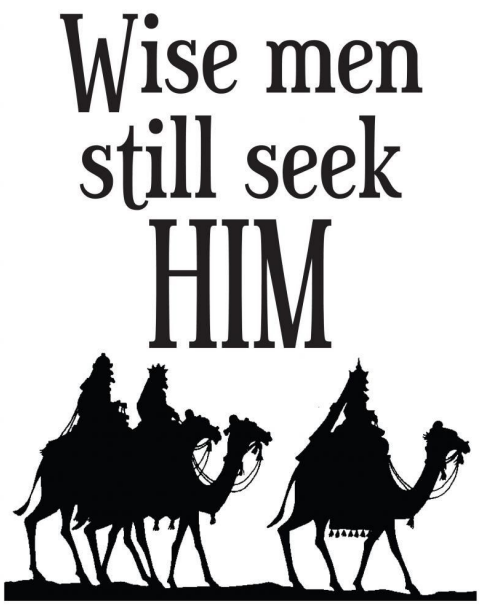
From Christ Lutheran Church

Christ Lutheran Church
4801 E. 6th St.
Sioux Falls, SD 57110
Phone: 605-338-3769
Web: christsiouxfalls.org
Member: Issues, Etc., 300
Pastor: Matthew Nix

FROM THE PASTOR

As we enter a new year, it would be nice to think that all the challenges and problems of the prior year would just disappear. Short of Jesus coming, we know that that will not happen. Jesus tells us that everything negative happening in this world stands as a reminder that the final judgement is coming. So as the new year comes we stay ready. We attend church, receive the sacrament and bear witness to our merciful God.

Having said that, with everything that has been happening these past years, I want you to know that I truly feel blessed being your pastor. In a year that it would have been easy to pack it up and give up, the members of Christ Lutheran have done amazing things. They have continued to gather for worship. They have continued to be supportive of each other and their Pastor. And, they have continued to share they message of Jesus with the world around them.



As I visit with pastors (both local and abroad) one thing has become very obvious, not all pastors enjoy the support you show me here. For many making any major discission had become either a challenge at every corner or it meant giving up at most corners. That has not been the feeling or reality here. I believe we have worked well together in allowing God's Church to be God's Church. So, thank you for all that you have done. The other thing that is obvious, is that even much larger churches are having a hard time finding members willing to serve in offices to help guide their churches in a an orderly, God pleasing way. For the first time in a long time, we were able to elect men to every office. For that I thank God, that He has raised members willing to accept those offices along with people willing to encourage them to consider serving.

Though the world will have problems this year, I look forward to serving God and you here at Christ Lutheran.

In Christ, Pastor Nix

Voters Meeting, Jan 3, 2022 after Divine Service

CONTENTS

January Birthdays 2
Installation of Church Officers 2
Life Quotes 2
LCMS Stewardship Ministry 3
Treasurer's Report 4
In Our Prayers 4
O Morning Star 5
Foundation The Gift of Stuff 6
Upcoming & Kids in Worship 7
Continuation of Foundations study *8*
Calendars ..... *Insert*

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

05 Grant Holtz
05 Simion Meyer
06 Dane Digatono
09 Jaenine Na Kirindo
09 Oliver Ruguruza
10 Michael Grooms
10 Paul Schilf
11 Terry Englemann
18 Vickie Britson
19 Addie Wetzel
20 James Reynolds
26 Samuel Counts
26 Kirk Meyer
26 Jake Wehking

INSTALLATION OF CHURCH OFFICERS

Installation of Church Officers will be held Sunday, January 03, 2020. The officers are:

President: Jay Holtz
Secretary: Les Britson
Finance Secretary: Pastor Phil Andreasen,
Assistants: Luther Brack & Dustin Preheim
Treasurer: Marty Johnson
Elders: Tom Clauson, Paul Schilf, & Kirk Meyer
Trustees: Andrew Brack, Steve Counts, & Karl Deardoff

Life Quotes

January 2 Second Sunday after Christmas "Friend of Jesus, no matter what painful or wonderful endings you marked in the past year, please watch for the early signs of new beginnings. Seize them as opportunities for you and God to develop together. Think about what the Bible teaches about life, appreciate God's love for you, gather up bits and pieces of experience, and put them in a file named 'lessons learned.' Then keep it handy." *Jason Nelson, Time of Grace – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

January 9 Baptism of Our Lord "[E]very human life, no matter the size, level of development, environment, or degree of dependency, is indispensable in fulfilling God's plans." *Lynette Auch, president of Lutherans For Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

January 16 Second Sunday after the Epiphany "You are not and never have been simply a number, a blob of tissue, or an invisible nobody. Rather, you are now and always have been God's handcrafted gift to the world." *Michelle Bauman, director of Y4Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

January 23 Third Sunday after the Epiphany "The Lord called all things into being, from the greatest to the least, with His mighty mere Word. But He formed the human bodies with His own fingers and His very breath. He lovingly, intimately, and meticulously knits us together in our mothers' wombs." *Pastor Michael Salemink, Lutherans For Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

January 30 Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany "Because of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, our Father now holds His hand out to each and every human being: perfect inclusion, perfection belonging—no exceptions! You are chosen! You are a branch who has received the Life of the Vine!" *Marie MacPherson, author – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

Issues, Etc.
Talk Radio for the Thinking Christian
www.issuesetc.org

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MEMBER OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
MEMBER: ISSUES ETC 300
PASTOR: MATTHEW NIX

Lutheran Doctrine: Christ-Centered, Cross-Focused

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
LCMS Stewardship Ministry
Newsletter Article ~ January 2022

'Tis More Blessed to Give Than to Receive

"In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way 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 joy is multiplied in giving. The one who receives and the one who gives both rejoice in what is given and received. And, what is more, the one who receives only wants to give back to the one who gave so generously in thanksgiving.

So it is 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 His gift of His Son, given through Word and Sacrament. Thus, we are made free from the compulsion of giving so that 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 when it is the place where God continually gives us His forgiveness of sins? Why does the church struggle when God, out of love for us, generously pours out His grace and mercy?

It is because we are sinners. 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 God's grace and mercy; we want His blessings of body and soul. But we don't want to share it 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 to press His eternal and temporal blessings into service to your neighbor.

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, heat, and air-conditioning are working. They ensure there is water for Holy Baptism as well as bread and wine for Holy Communion. They even ensure that your pastor has food and clothing and presents for his own family. The gifts of God are immeasurable. They multiply and redound to everyone's good as the fish and loaves in the feeding of the five thousand.

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.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
TREASURER'S REPORT
December 20, 2021

	10/2021	11/2021	12/2021
Deposits:	$ 31,698.73	$ 20,097.54	$ 25,165.08
Disbursements:	$ 11,005.99	$ 11,891.90	$- 5,878.04
Deposit Breakdown:			
General Fund:	$ 23,165.73	$ 20,068.54	$ 22,396.08
Designated Funds:	$ 8,533.00	$ 29.00	$ 2,769.00
Interest:	$ 0.56	$ 0.66	
Monthly Budget Requirement:	$ 15,628.60	$ $12,502.88	$ 12,502.88
Mortgage Balance as of 12/31/2021			$281,954.09



IN OUR PRAYERS

Helen Kriz, in Hospital/Recovery Covid
Rev. Peter Lange, LCMS 1st VP, in hospital w/ Covid & pneumonia
Lisa Johnson, knee replacement surgery recovery
Susan Powell, at home
Vern Maurer, living with his daughter in Colorado
Mildred Peters at Lyon Specialty Center in Rock Rapids, IA
Leslie & Constance Bartlett at Colonial Village Apartments, Canton, SD
Elva Clauson at home
Irene Olson at Dow Rummel

HYMN OF THE MONTH:

The Only Son from Heaven LSB 402

Elisabeth Cruciger was the wife of one of Martin Luther's most beloved students, Pastor Caspar Cruciger. She wrote many hymns, but we only have one extant hymn, *The Only Son from Heaven* (LSB 402). This Christ Whose manifestation we celebrate is One with the Father but also in human flesh, born of the virgin Mary. Thus, He is not confined as mortal man is. As we keep the feast we pray that God would bring forth more love and faith in Christ. We pray that God's love would move us to prove our faith in works to our neighbor, bringing His Light to those who don't know Him, until in heaven we reap the fullness of His Epiphany.

Kantor Thomas Lock,

Trinity Lutheran Church, Denver, CO



O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright

Lutheran Service Book 395 The Epiphany of Our Lord

study by Todd A. Peperkorn

Introduction

Philipp Nicolai looked out his window at the parsonage in Unna, where he served as a pastor in Germany. The year was 1597. It was August, a hot month, and a terrible time for the plague to hit their little village. Just the week before, he had buried 170 members of his flock. The number seems staggering to think about even now. He looked out of the window, longing to give his people hope in the midst of their suffering. Perhaps this was the time he began to pen the words, "O Morning Star, how fair and bright …"

- Why might Nicolai have used a wedding analogy to comfort his flock in the midst of such sorrow?
- What tools does God give His people today to comfort those in distress?

Exploring the Scriptures

Nicolai's hymn is based to a large degree on Psalm 45. He subtitled the hymn as follows: "A spiritual bridal song of the believing soul concerning Jesus Christ her heavenly bridegroom: founded on the 45th Psalm of the prophet David." Psalm 45 is called a "love song" in the Hebrew introduction to the hymn. Take a minute and read Psalm 45.

- Who is the psalm speaking to? Is it addressed to more than one person?
- What is the basic point of Psalm 45?
- How might this psalm tie in with our Lord's Epiphany?
- Where do you see echoes of Psalm 45 in our hymn, "O Morning Star"?

Exploring the Hymn

Background Philipp Nicolai (1556–1608) was a pastor, poet and composer. He was a part of what is called the Meistersinger tradition, where both the text and the melody stem from the same artist. We know Nicolai best for his two hymns, "O Morning Star" and "Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying" (LSB 516). These two hymns are known as the Queen and King of Chorales. Nicolai's work has inspired many of the world's greatest musicians, especially J. S. Bach, who wrote famous cantatas based on these two hymns (BWV 1 and BWV 140).

Nicolai lived and served at a time when sickness and disease were rampant, especially in the heat of a German summer. One of the roles that the pastor often played in these circumstances was to help his flock to realize that there is hope, that God has not abandoned them, and that they have a bright future in Christ. Nicolai did this well through his hymns and poetry.

- What does our culture do spiritually in the midst of disaster? Where do we turn and why?
- What can we as a church learn from pastors like Philipp Nicolai?

Text

Stanzas 1–3 of this hymn are addressed to Jesus as Morning Star (Rev. 22:16), heavenly Bridegroom (Matt. 25:1–13), and Lord (Matt. 17:4). Then God the Father is addressed in stanza 4 as "Almighty Father." Stanza 5 is addressed to the Church, His holy bride. The final stanza extols how our Lord is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end (Rev. 22:13). It concludes by praying to Jesus that He would return quickly as we yearn for His returning (Rev. 22:20).

- How do the names that are used to address God give us a sense of the author of the hymn and of his basic point?
- If there is such an emphasis in this hymn on Jesus' coming and His return, why do we usually consider it an Epiphany hymn?

The end of the second stanza also references the paradox of life in Christ under the cross: "Now, though daily Earth's deep sadness May perplex us And distress us, Yet with heav'nly joy You bless us." Then stanza 6 points us beyond this paradox to the joys of heaven: "He will one day, oh, glorious grace, Transport us to that happy place Beyond all tears and sinning!"

- Why does "earth's deep sadness" perplex us?
- How could a hymn with stanzas like this be used to comfort those in the midst of sickness, sorrow or death?

This final stanza is considered by many to be one of the most beautiful hymn stanzas ever written. It points us to the source of our joy (Jesus), and the fact that He encompasses all things. It ends with our yearning for His coming back to take us home.

- Where is the place "beyond all tears and sinning"?
- Why does Nicolai tie tears and sinning together here?
- How does this comfort us in our troubles of today?

Making the Connection

The link between the main text behind this hymn (Ps. 45) and the text of the hymn itself lies in Nicolai's sacramental imagery. In the Scriptures, nearly every

Continues on page 6

time a wedding is discussed, it is in the context of a wedding banquet. Furthermore, the way that God reveals Himself as the God of love (stanza 3) is by His ongoing, forgiving presence with His people by His Word and Sacrament. Just as wine and music make the heart glad, so we rejoice and celebrate in Him at His holy wedding feast. This heavenly meal ties the presence of God here and now to our "happy place" with Him in eternity.

- How do we as a congregation and as individuals make this connection between the life of the believer, the Sacraments, and our eternal life in heaven?
- Why does this connection provide comfort to the Christian?

In Closing

Pastor Nicolai looked out of his study at the graves of so many of his flock whom he loved. What his eyes told him is that they were dead and gone. But with the eyes of faith, he saw their resurrection and the bright Morning Star that keeps them in His bosom until the Last Day.

- Sing or read together LSB 395, "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright."

Prayer

O God, by the leading of a star You made known Your only-begotten Son to the Gentiles. Lead us, who know You by faith, to enjoy in heaven the fullness of Your divine presence; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen (Collect for the Epiphany of Our Lord)

FOUNDATIONS: THE GIFT OF STUFF

By William M. Cwirla

You shall not steal. What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income. (Small Catechism, *Seventh Commandment*)

I still remember the day someone stole my bicycle. It happened years ago. I was a graduate student at Berkeley pulling an all-nighter in the chemistry lab. In the morning, bleary-eyed from a night of work, I walked home, forgetting that I had ridden my bicycle to campus the day before. When I returned to campus later that day, my bike was gone.

That bike was nothing particularly special, but I loved it anyway. It was a bright yellow Schwinn Varsity I purchased in high school with allowance money I saved for over a year. I'd ridden it on all sorts of great adventures. I had just torn it down to its frame and rebuilt it. And then someone had the audacity to steal it. I was mad! "Next to our own person and our spouse, our temporal property is dearest to us" (*Large Catechism*). That's for sure! And boy, do I get angry when people steal my stuff! How dare they!

Stealing: More Than Meets the Eye

Usually, when we think of "stealing" we think of various crimes and misdemeanors: burglary, armed robbery, breaking and entering, larceny, fraud, shoplifting, and bicycle theft. The *Large Catechism* expands our view to include being lazy at work, dishonest in business, overcharging for goods and services, underpaying workers, etc. The student who wastes the teacher's and class' time, the government that wastes taxpayers' money, the company that sells shoddy products, the employer who takes advantage of his workers are all thieves in their own way. That includes you and me, too. "If we look at mankind in all its conditions, it is nothing but a vast, wide stable full of great thieves" (*Large Catechism*).

Why is that? What is it that makes us all thieves at heart? There are many reasons for stealing–poverty, financial problems, drug addiction, or maybe just the rush that comes from getting away with something. But the deep down reason is that our old Adam's heart is unbuckled from God. We do not fear, love, and trust in God above all things, and so we steal other people's stuff, and they steal from us. Our hearts are always hungry for more, and they will stop at nothing, including theft, to get it. Thieves are sneaky and often get away with their crimes. The person who stole my bicycle probably never got caught.

Jesus Became "the" Thief for You

The *Large Catechism* warns that God may let the thief "get away with it" for a time. He may become wealthy and acquire great riches and possessions, all to his ruin. "For every penny you have taken and for every penny's damage you have done you will have to pay back thirty-fold."

Think about it. A thief never has a moment's peace or joy with his plunder. He's always afraid that someone will steal his stuff from him. After all, he's a thief, so everyone else must be, too. It's especially bad to steal from the poor. We steal from the poor by failing to help them, by taking advantage of them, or by pretending to be poor when we aren't. God, who hears

KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE



What is a "hymn"?

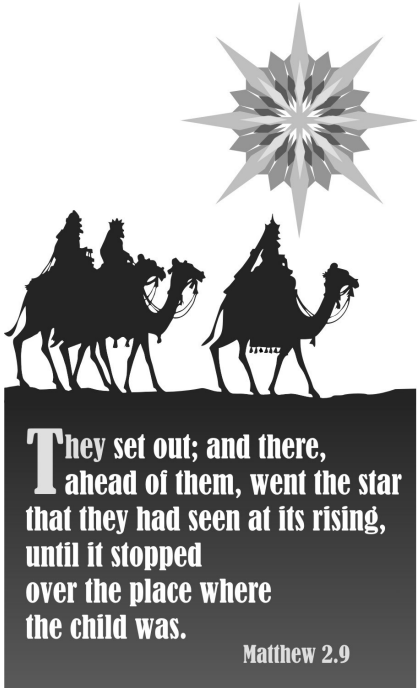
The word "hymn" comes from a Greek word which means "song of praise." Webster's Dictionary tells us that a hymn is "a song of praise especially in honor of God." In the Church, we sing hymns because they are God's Word put to music. What an awesome way to praise our Lord!

Why do we sing hymns?

During the early years of the Christian Church, its music came from the Psalms. As new people came into the Church, they added new hymns. The Church's hymns have stood the test of time, never failing God's people as generations change. When we sing hymns, we are praising God with the words He has already put on our tongues! There is no better way to pray, praise, and give thanks to God than with the words He has given us.

Parents: In order to answer questions as to why we do what we do as Lutherans, including utilizing the hymnody, read the introduction on pages 6 and 7 in *Lutheran Worship*. Here you will find a brief summary of what Lutheran worship and hymnody are all about.

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UPCOMING

2022

- Jan 03 Installation of Officers, and Voter's Mtg
- Jan 06, Epiphany Divine Service 7pm
- Mar 02 Ash Wednesday Divine Service, 7pm
- Mar 09, 16, 23, 30, Apr 6 Midweek Lenten service, 7pm (Dinner prior)
- Mar 13 Daylight Savings Time Begins, 2am
- Mar 13 Voters Meeting
- Apr 14 Maundy Thursday Divine Service, 7pm
- Apr 15 Good Friday Tenebrae Service, 7pm
- Apr 17 Easter Sunrise Matins Service, 7am
- Apr 17 Easter Breakfast, 8am
- Apr 17 Easter Festival Divine Service, 9:30am
- May 8 Mothers' Day Breakfast
- May 26 Ascension Day Divine Service 7pm
- June 12 Voters Meeting
- July 24-28 VBS
- Sept 11 Voters Meeting
- Nov 24 Thanksgiving Day Divine Service, 9:30 am
- Nov 30, Dec 07, 14, Advent Services, 7pm
- Dec 21 Children's Christmas Service 7pm
- December 24 Christmas Eve service, 5pm
- December 25 Christmas Day Service 9:30 am
- No New Year's Eve/Day Service



And having come into the house, they saw the Child with His mother Mary. And falling down, they worshiped Him. And opening their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold and frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11)

Continuation of Foundations from page 6

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There is great satisfaction in an honest day's work for an honest wage. And there is joy in sharing the fruits of your labors freely with others. "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need" (Ephesians 4:28).

Your stuff is God's First Article gift to you. Enjoy it, share it, and help your neighbor keep his or her stuff, too. And if you spot an old yellow Schwinn Varsity, think of mine. I hope it's still running.

Rev. William M. Cwirla is the pastor at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Hacienda Heights, CA. He is also a president emeritus of Higher Things.

This article was originally published in the Fall 2016 issue of *Higher Things Magazine*.