

MEMORIAL MESSENGER

December 2014



When the time had fully come, God sent His son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.” Galatians 4:4-5

Some suggest that this will be a dismal Christmas. Why? Because Thanksgiving falls almost as late as it possibly can, they’re worried that it will be a much shorter shopping season with much lower sales.

Genuine Christmas children don’t let calendars short-circuit their Christmas preparations. Believers who count God’s Son as the greatest Gift are able to filter out all that would get in the way of that Gift. A *dismal* Christmas? There’s no such thing!

To capture the joy of the true Christmas, picture your family as faithful people of God living in Israel at the time our Savior was born in Bethlehem. Would the news of higher taxes imposed by the Romans cancel your joy at the news of the shepherds, “The Son of God has come to us!”? Would the threat of a collapsing financial market have dampened the glory of knowing that a heavenly visitor was among you in the form of a baby boy? Would anything at all have been able to rob you of the certainty that God’s promises were fulfilled?

Our King came to our world at His own perfect time in history. He came born of an ordinary, sinful woman. He came to live “*under law*” perfectly in order to be our holiness. All of that is wrapped inside the strips of cloth that we will view in faith the end of the month.

Let retail merchants wring their hands about holiday buying; we lift our hands in praise to God that He has come through on His plan to save us. Let stores insist that we need their merchandise to make it a merry Christmas; we will fill ourselves with God’s Word of life to make ours a *blessed* Christmas. Let financial experts advise that we can’t be sure how the world markets will react to terror in the Middle East; we will continue to be the most confident, the most well-adjusted, the most satisfied souls on earth because we know that our inheritance in heaven is guaranteed.

This is the Christmas for which we’ll spend the next three and one-half weeks preparing: at just the right time God sent His Son to earth to take on our flesh and blood so that our sins would be forgiven forever. No snow, no trees, no ribbon or bows, no festive dinners or family gatherings. Above all, the Savior from sin. There’s nothing wrong with our Christmas traditions—unless any of them get in the way of our Redeemer.

This month, take time daily for quiet reflection on the real Christmas. Our midweek Advent services offer an excellent opportunity to do just that. So does reviewing your children’s Bible lessons and memory work and Christmas Eve service parts and songs. All of it is so familiar; yet all of it is so wonderfully gracious and new. For a few minutes each day this Advent make the effort to shut out all that doesn’t matter and ponder these eight great words of Christmas: ***God sent His son, born of a woman.*** That is God’s recipe for a blessed Christmas!

Pastor Voss





NEW MEMBERS *David & Becky Shuler, and sons David, Jr. and Corbin*, have joined our congregation via transfer from Shepherd of the Hills Ev. Lutheran Church in Lansing.

The Shuler family lives in Mason. May their membership be a rich blessing to them, and to our congregation!

SPECIAL SERVICES:

Wednesday, November 26 - 7:00 PM - Thanksgiving Eve Service

Wednesday, December 3 - 7:00 PM - Midweek Advent Service

Wednesday, December 10 - 7:00 PM - Midweek Advent Service

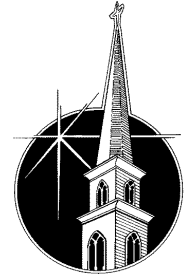
Wednesday, December 17 - 7:00 PM - Midweek Advent Service

Sunday, December 21 – 8:00 & 10:30 AM – Choral Worship Services

Wednesday, December 24 - 7:00 PM - Christmas Eve Service

Wednesday, December 25 - **10:00** AM - Christmas Day Service

Wednesday, December 31- 7:00 PM - New Year's Eve Service with Holy Communion



There will be no Sunday School or Bible Class sessions on Sunday, December 29.

A SUPPER will precede each of our midweek Advent services. The meals will begin at 6:00. Our hosts:

Dec. 4 – our school's Parent-Teacher Organization;

Dec. 11 – Several Church Councilmen and their families;

Dec. 18 – Ladies Fellowship.

A free will offering to help with meal expenses will be received each evening.

By having a supper before the service, we hope that more members will come here for a meal and then to be fed with God's Word as we prepare to celebrate our Savior's birth.



BAPTISM *Serena Kaylyn Jeanette Albany*, infant daughter born to Amber Crandall on November 7, became a believer child of God through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism administered after our services on November 16. May the Triune God keep Serena in her baptismal grace.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE REHEARSALS will be held on the two Saturdays before Christmas: *December 13 and 20* from 9:30 - 11:30 AM.

Parents, we need you to review at home with your children their respective speaking parts and the words for the songs that they will sing. ***Our Saturday rehearsals are for organization and flow of the service; the recitation needs to be done at home.*** Please plan now to have your children here those two mornings. If your child must miss a rehearsal, please speak with Pastor Voss ahead of time.

If travel plans will keep your child from being here Christmas Eve, please mention it to Pastor Voss as soon as you are aware of the conflict so that the necessary changes can be made in service assignments.

The Sunday School staff has once again graciously consented to provide a meal for the students and their families after the *December 13* rehearsal. We thank them for their generosity. We thank them especially for their faithful service in teaching Christ's saving truth to His precious lambs!

THE BOARD OF ELDERS urges you to be considerate of others when reserving seating for the Christmas Eve service. Please remember that it is not a performance, but a worship service.

If you or relatives have special seating needs, please inform Pastor Voss before December 24 and we will reserve room for you. However, we respectfully request that you not reserve multiple pews for relatives or friends who will be arriving later than you.



PARADE HELP We urge members to speak to Joe Janecke, Andy Rusnak, Clark Collins, Jason Leitz, or Pastor Voss to volunteer to walk in costume alongside our float in the Williamston Light Parade ***Saturday, December 6 at 6:00***. The volunteers will pass out invitations about our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship services and Live Nativity event.

THE LOCAL FOOD BANK CONDUCTS A TOY DRIVE each December. We plan to participate once again.

The Food Bank is looking for new or unused toys and games for children in our area who might not receive gifts for Christmas. The gifts are distributed to infants and children through age 10. You may bring your donations to the church narthex through December 7.

As we celebrate the birth of the Christ-child, your gift to a less fortunate child could make this a special Christmas not only for that child, but for you as well.



LIVE NATIVITY Many of our members continue to work on various aspects of our 3rd annual Live Nativity. This year's event will be in our church parking lot on ***Saturday, December 13 from 5:30 until 7:30***. Invite friends and neighbors to drive through or walk through that evening. A few new details are being added to this year's event.

OUTREACH MATERIALS The Board of Evangelism & Stewardship reminds members that we have copies of the DVDs *Come Follow Me* and *Road to Emmaus* available for purchase (\$3 per copy; 2 for \$5). These are excellent WELS productions that summarize the Savior's coming in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and to save the world by His work for us sinners. As the Christmas season approaches, consider purchasing copies for your family and friends to show them why the birth of the Savior is so important for everyone on earth.

WE REMIND the re-elected and newly elected board members and officers that their terms begin January 1 (their first official meetings will be in early January), and that they will be installed to office during the ***services on January 4***.

YOUNG MUSICIANS We are inviting our teens and young people who are trained in keyboard or other musical instruments to consider using their gifts to serve our Savior and His Church by playing pre-service music or music during thankofferings. Children even younger are invited to play Christmas anthems before the Christmas Eve service. Please speak with Pastor Voss about doing so!

OUR GRAYCE GROUP will hold their Christmas party on ***Monday, December 1***. Please bring a dish to pass and a children's toy to be given to the Williamston Christmas Toy Drive. We plan to sing Christmas carols, play various games, and more. Everyone is welcome!



THE FLOWER CHART FOR 2015 will soon be posted on the bulletin board. You are invited to sign up to place flowers on the altar for any Sunday. If you wish, you may also indicate the occasion for which the flowers are being donated.

We ask your cooperation in filling only one or two Sundays for 2015 per family for now, allowing more of our families to sign up. In January please feel free to take as many Sundays as are still open.

If you have questions about how to use the chart or order flowers to be presented here in church, please speak to Pastor Voss.

WATCH FOR YOUR 2015 offering envelopes. They will be placed in the mail slots by December 20.

USHERS We will distribute the 2015 usher schedule, teams, and duties to you in your mail slot at church.

SCHOOL HOT LUNCH HELP: Denis & Nancy Hart are again organizing hot lunches for our school students once per month. We are looking for volunteers to help serve the meals and/or to help supply food for the meals. A sign up sheet is posted on the main bulletin board at church. The next school hot lunch is ***Friday, December 12.***

PIANOS Several pianos that we are no longer using may soon be made available to members who can use one.

First, we ask members who have donated a piano to our church or school to let us know if they would like one of the pianos we are no longer using—or to tell us what they want done with the piano they donated. When we've heard from those members, our Board of Christian Education and our Board of Elders will determine who gets the pianos we no longer need. Please speak to Pastor Voss by December 1—either to let him know what you want done with the piano you donated or to let him know that you want one of the pianos.

INK CARTRIDGES Because of a different printer being used in the school office, we no longer need the printer cartridges that we had for the old printer. If you can use HP print cartridges ***C4906A***, please speak to Pastor Voss. We have one each of the following colors: black, yellow, pink, and blue. These are new cartridges.



Ladies Fellowship

Gals, don't forget we will decorate the church for Advent and Christmas December 1st. We will meet at 9:00 AM.

Our annual Christmas Party/Ornament Exchange will be held December 8th at 7:00. (This is a week later than our usual schedule.) Please bring one, wrapped ornament. (\$5.00 limit please.) We have great fun exchanging these ornaments—in fact we sometimes exchange them more than once. ☺

We will also reveal our 2014 secret pals at the Christmas party, and then draw names for our 2015 secret pal. If you cannot make it to the party but would like to be part of the secret pal program, please speak with Laurie Voss before the party. We are always looking for more women to join in this fun activity. The program has changed the last couple years. Now we only send cards to our secret pal during the year (at least once a month). Then at our Christmas party we will give a gift to our secret pal as we reveal our names. This past year was the 26th year of our secret pal program.

Our hostesses for our Christmas party are Gail Houser and Kathy Ward. They will provide the beverage and paper products. We are asking everyone to bring their favorite appetizer, treat, or dessert for our snack table. It sure is a lot of fun sampling all these fun foods.

Our next meeting will be January 12. We will discuss our agenda for 2015, decide where to send our mission offerings, and talk about special activities and projects which we might do.

Come to the Christmas party and have some fun with us! Learn more about our activities and join in the wonderful Christian fellowship we share.

COOKIES AND CANDIES IN TINS: The Ladies' Fellowship group has available at church tins filled with homemade cookies and candies. We haven't done this for quite a few years and are bringing back what seemed to be a very popular gift idea. We will also have some other handmade gift items available. We will have the prices listed. All proceeds from these items will go to our Ladies' Fellowship mission projects.



REMINDERS FOR THE SEASONS: Please remember to ask for church library stamps when you purchase something from either the Christian Family Bookstore or the Gift and Bible Store. We use these stamps to purchase books, videos, and CD's for our church library.

Religious Christmas cards will be available at church in the narthex. Prices are marked on the boxes. We use our profit from the cards to purchase books and videos for the church library.

MORNINGS WITH MOMMY: This month we will be having *Mornings with Mommy* on Thursday December 18th at 10:00 A.M. The theme will be birthday party for Jesus of course! We will be doing some fun things such as playing with play dough, making ornaments, and decorating a "Christmas tree." We will also have a tasty snack and learn about the birth of Jesus!

Please come and bring a friend! I look forward to seeing you there! Contact me if you have any questions or would like to register for our next session at kleitz25@gmail.com. *Karla Leitz*

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORTS

PASTOR'S REPORT – We have decided to try two Christmas Eve service rehearsals this December. (See more elsewhere in the newsletter.)

I will be here for the first Advent service on December 3, then travel the next two Wednesdays to conduct the services at area WELS churches while the pastors of those congregations conduct the services here.

WELS update: The Synodical Council (SC) meets this month. The SC had directed the areas of ministry to plan for a "no increase" budget earlier this year. The president's office, along with the President's Advisory Council, then adopted an overall plan last month. That plan will be presented to the SC for consideration at this meeting. The plan still will be able to be adjusted in the coming months (depending on funding available from Congregation Mission Offerings and other sources). A final recommendation will be adopted by the SC in February.

There is more good news about Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO). Mission offerings from congregations are continuing at a strong and encouraging pace. October offerings were very strong with an increase of 8.4% over 2013 and \$321,000 more than projected for the month of October. Year-to-date CMO is up 3.1% over 2013 and \$451,000 over projections. Once again, the Lord has moved His people to respond to His grace with generous thank offerings. We thank Him, and we thank God's people for their faithfulness in supporting our work as a synod.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – *Mornings with Mommy* was not held in October or November due to Karla's maternity leave. The next one is scheduled for December 18.

We had an inquiry about preschool in September for a child to start in January. Karla and Pastor Voss will follow up.

Background checks have been completed for our aides.

We thank Laurie Voss for substitute teaching while Judy was away for a family funeral.

A Williamston public school speech therapist has been working with one of our students at our school. We appreciate the working relationship we have with them for special situations.

Mrs. Bater's last day teaching at our school was November 6. We are very appreciative of her hard work keeping Karla's class running smoothly in Karla's absence. She has been a blessing to our school. We welcome Mrs. Leitz back!

The next PTO meeting is January 21, 2015.

Board discussion took place based on comments at the last voters meeting concerning closing the school due to declining enrollment. The Board of Christian Education remains committed to keeping the school open and providing the best possible Christ centered education. We continue to promote the school and look for ways to increase the enrollment.

BOARD OF ELDERS – The Board of Elders recommends the transfer of membership of David and Becky Shuler, David Jr., and Corbin from Shepherd of the Hills Ev. Lutheran Church in Lansing to Memorial Ev. Lutheran Church.

The Elders continue to seek alternatives when a guest preacher cannot be secured. Our first choice would be the possibility of getting a recorded sermon on DVD from a sister congregation. Utilizing a smart phone to live stream a sermon would likely be very costly (data usage) and could have buffering issues.

Nancy Hart presented good information to the Board of Elders from her attendance at the WELS National Worship Conference.

BOARD OF EVANGELISM AND STEWARDSHIP – Website issues: Internet reliability at school remains an issue. Frontier was at school in mid-October and could not find a problem. Laurie Voss will keep a log of when internet goes out or has troubles.

We discussed live streaming sermons at church if Pastor is not available. We will look into the issue and determine if we have the capability.

The Williamston Light Parade is December 6th. Work has been done on the float entry. We are looking for volunteers to walk along with the float and hand out invitations for our Christmas services and the Live Nativity.

We thank Clark Collins for work on the third quarter thankoffering statements. The 2015 counter schedule will be prepared soon. 2015 thankoffering envelopes have been delivered.

We will renew the WELS Connection videos for 2015 and will purchase DVDs. The cost has not yet been announced, but for 2014 it was \$105.

We have been asked to add Debt Retirement to the special gift fund list.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES – We will contact Dave Wood to check the snow blowers and have them ready for the winter.

We prioritized the deferred maintenance/wish list as directed:

- a) Replacing or rebuilding the heating units at school; contacted Myers Plumbing and Heating to inspect and provide a proposal based on their recommendations.
- b) Replace the shingled roof at school with a new metal roof. Replace roof on garage and pavilion with either metal roof or shingles.
- c) Snow blower for church and parsonage
- d) Replace the driveway at the church parsonage. Our board feels with the small size of the driveway, our church members should be able to complete this project in the spring/summer of 2015.
- e) Spartan glass is getting us a proposal for replacing the doors at the north end of the school.



BADGER NEWS from SCHOOL -

FROM OUR KINDERGARTEN ROOM: I would like to start by saying thank you to all in the Memorial Church family for the love and support that has been expressed to our family and especially our daughter Zoey in the past months. We are truly touched and appreciate all the gifts, cards, kind words, and love given to us and her since her birth. She has been such a wonderful addition to our family and I cherished the time I was able to spend with her during maternity leave.

In kindergarten we have made the transition back to me from Mrs. Bater. I believe it has gone very well. We had a lot of fun on Grandparents' Day. We sang songs, went on a treasure hunt, played games, made cookie turkeys, and the highlight of the day was their Veterans Day tribute when they played instruments with the song "Stars and Stripes Forever". Some of the grandparents even played along.

For Super Kids they have recently finished letter L and started letter I. They will also be learning letter T, and F in December. In math we have been studying sets of numbers and adding 1 and writing the numbers 8, 9, and 10. In science we just started a new unit on Senses that will carry us through the month of December. In music we

are going to be learning some classic Christmas songs and playing instruments with the songs.

We also will be preparing for the Christmas Eve service during this next month.

May the Lord bless your holiday season! Even with all the different gatherings and events may we never forget that the true reason for all the celebration is the birth of our Savior Jesus! Mrs. Leitz

FROM OUR GRADES 1-5 ROOM:

This past month we have traveled with Jesus during his early ministry. We have heard His preaching, learned from His teaching, and seen His miracles. He must be who He says He is: the Son of God! Believers are still hearing the message of the Savior today. He must be who he says he is! Because he is the Savior, our earthly lives are better than they could ever be without Him. And, our eternal destiny is sealed, too. We go into the holiday season happy and thankful for all our Savior has done for us.

We had a great Grandparents Day on November 14. We presented our skit, "The Elves and the Shoemaker," played Bible Jeopardy, and took part in a Veterans Day celebration. Many grandparents were able to attend. Many thanks, also, to the Memorial members who served as "adopted grandparents." We warmly thank Pat and Sueanne Crandall, Linda Janecke, Ron and Jan Mosher, Joan Vogt, and Kathy Ward.

Thanks to Denis and Nancy Hart for planning our Thanksgiving feast! We had fun getting decorations ready and eating the wonderful food Denis and his gang of member volunteers donated and prepared for us.

We are eager to dive into Christmas and all the fun that brings. The kids have been excited about the snow and playing outside.

SERVING OUR LORD FOR OUR DECEMBER SERVICES:

| <i>Ushers</i> | | <i>Altar Guild</i> | | <i>Greeter(s)</i> | <i>Cleaners</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------|--------------------|--|-------------------|-----------------|
| <i>8:00</i> | <i>10:30</i> | | | | |
| 12/03 - #6 E. Ruhlig | | C. Burris | | | |
| 12/07 - #2 V. Domke | #8 D. Rector | T. Wood | | R&J Mosher | B. Janecke |
| 12/10 - #1 T. Marion | | T. Wood | | | |
| 12/14 - #5 S. Houser | #9 D. Fisher | K. Unruh | | L. Voss | Domke |
| 12/17 - #2 V. Domke | | K. Unruh | | | |
| 12/21 - #6 E. Ruhlig | #1 T. Marion | S. Unruh | | F&N Mills | J. Douglas |
| 12/24 - #4 B. Grinnell | | S. Unruh | | | |
| 12/25 - #5 S. Houser | | S. Unruh | | | |
| 12/28 - #7 D. Kasischke | #3 J. Janecke | K. Ward | | D. Steiner | Every |
| 12/31 - #9 D. Fisher | | K. Ward | | | |

Let us worship the Lord our Savior!



***May you have a
blessed Christmas
in the joy of our
Savior's birth.***

