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For
God so
loved the
world He gave
His one and only
Son that whoever
believes in Him shall not
perish but have eternal life
John
3:16

MEMORIAL MESSENGER December 2019

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 as late as it absolutely can, they're worried that it will be a much shorter shopping season with much lower sales. But does that really matter any more with so many people shopping on line for Christmas well before the day after Thanksgiving?

Genuine Christmas children don't let calendars short-circuit their Christmas preparations. Believers who count God's Son as the greatest Gift consistently filter out everything that might 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 – "*the time had fully come*". 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 with the eyes of faith later in December.

Let retail merchants wring their hands about holiday sales; 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 that makes ours a *blessed* Christmas. Let financial experts advise that we can't be sure how the world markets will react to government proceedings in our country and changing events overseas; 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.

The Christmas for which we'll spend the next four weeks preparing is *this*: at just the right time God sent His Son to earth to take on our flesh and blood to forgive the world's sins forever. No snow, no trees, no ribbon or bows, no festive dinners or family gatherings. Just the Savior from sin! Joyfully the Savior from sin! There's nothing wrong with our Christmas traditions – unless any of them get in the way of our Savior from sin.

This Advent, take time daily for quiet reflection on the real Christmas. Our midweek 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 to 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

We welcome to our congregation ***Katie and Cale Pederson***, received by transfer from Emanuel First Ev. Lutheran Church in Lansing.

We pray that the membership of Katie and Cale in our congregation will be a blessing both to them and to our congregation!

OUR THANKSGIVING FESTIVAL SERVICE will be ***Wednesday, November 27 at 7:00***. Join us for a God-pleasing way to begin our Thanksgiving holiday!

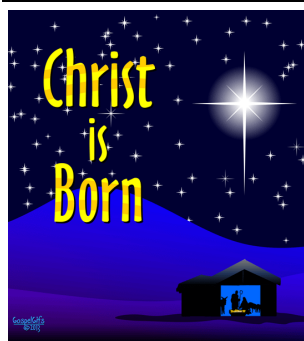
This service provides the opportunity to sing our thanks to God in many hymns, and to hear a number of Scripture passages which remind us how richly He has blessed us for our needs of soul and body.

SUNDAY MORNINGS, DECEMBER 22 AND 29

Because both those dates are so near to the Christmas and New Year holiday celebrations, the Board of Elders has decided that there will be ***one service at 10:00 each of those mornings. There will be no Sunday School or Bible Class sessions either of those Sundays.***

The December 22 morning service will be the choral service, featuring a number of anthems by our choir.

SPECIAL SERVICES:



Wednesday, November 27 - 7:00 PM - Thanksgiving Eve Service

Wednesday, December 4 - 7:00 PM - Midweek Advent Service

Wednesday, December 11 - 7:00 PM - Midweek Advent Service

Wednesday, December 18 - 7:00 PM - Midweek Advent Service

Sunday, December 22 - **10:00** AM – Choral Worship Service

Tuesday, December 24 - **7:00 PM** - Christmas Eve Service

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

Sunday, December 29 - **10:00** AM – Worship service

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

A SUPPER will precede each of our midweek Advent services. Our hosts:

Dec. 4 – Parent – Teacher Organization

Dec. 11 – Ladies Fellowship

Dec. 18 – Two families

The ***December 4*** supper starts at ***5:45*** to give the school children time to go through the song they will sing for the service that evening; please make a note of the earlier start time for that meal. The ***December 11 & 18*** suppers start at ***6:00***.

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

We encourage you to invite non-members to join you for the Advent suppers, then stay with you for the worship service as we get food for both body and soul.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE REHEARSALS The children of our congregation will gather at church on ***Saturdays, December 14 and 21*** from ***9:30 - 11:30 AM***. Parents, for the children to proclaim God's Word on Christmas Eve in word and song effectively, their attendance at these rehearsals is very important. 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.

We expect all children of the congregation to participate in the service (from those who attend the pre-school level of our Sunday School through children who are in 8th grade.)

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.

LUNCH FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES Our Sunday School staff is once again providing a lunch for the children and their families. This year the special lunch will be *after the December 14 rehearsal*. The meal will begin at 11:30. We hope that all the children and their family members will join us!

LEARNING SONGS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE Parents, the Sunday School session each week begins with music and a brief devotion. In November and December, the music will include songs that the children will sing for the Christmas Eve service.

Bring your children to Sunday School regularly so that they can learn about what God has done to save sinners, while you come upstairs to do the same in our Bible Class! Please have your children here for the start of Sunday School each week so that they can participate in the music portion and hear the devotion.



WELCOME HOME SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15

It happens for a variety of reasons. Christians stop going to church. One of the reasons people cite for not coming back to church is fear. They are afraid they are going to be judged or someone is going to make a joke about their being gone.

Welcome Home Sunday is intended to be a celebration of the blessing of Christian community our God gives us. He intends His church to be just like a home: a safe place where we can live without fear. He intends believers to love and treat one another as family. Our goal is to have many of our members in attendance on *December 15*. Thus, it is the perfect Sunday for someone who has been away from church for a while to come back.

Do you know someone like that? Maybe it's a sister or a son or a friend. They used to come, but for whatever reason, stopped. Reach out to them. Offer to pick them up on that day. If they are afraid, assure them they will be welcomed warmly. We are all sinners. We are all redeemed. We all need the Word of Life regularly. And we are all family. On that day, everyone receives a warm "Welcome home!"



POINSETTIAS Carol Kasischke has made arrangements to order poinsettias to decorate our church for the Christmas services. They will be in 6-inch pots, and you can order either red or white. Cost is **\$8.00 per poinsettia**.

Payment should be placed into the white envelopes placed on the counter beneath the mail slots. Please put your check (made payable to *Carol Kasischke*) or cash in the envelope, and *put your name on the front of the envelope*. Please place your payment in the Kasischke mail slot.

A sign up sheet has posted at church. Last day to **order** poinsettias is **December 8**. We realize this is earlier than most years, but it's the deadline given us by the nursery from which the poinsettias are being ordered. We ask that payment be submitted by **December 18**.

WELS APP Every so often we remind you about the WELS app that our Synod has developed and makes available with a free download. We encourage you to download the WELS app – and use it!

It has a church locator for your travels, daily devotions, Bible reading series, and much more!

WE HAVE REFRESHMENTS the first Sunday of each month. Join us in the church fellowship hall **Sunday, December 1**. Our Sunday School and Bible Class sessions will not begin until **9:25**. The refreshments will be available **in the fellowship hall 9:05-9:23**. Join us!

These monthly gatherings are designed to provide time for our members to greet and visit with each other, much like we do on non-Communion Sundays in the summer months.

The Board of Evangelism & Stewardship will provide the refreshments again this month. If you are willing to provide something simple for future first-Sunday refreshments, please speak to Joe Janecke, Dan Kasischke, Jason Leitz, or Pastor Voss.

LADIES FELLOWSHIP GROUP Our Christmas party is Monday, December 2 at 7:00. Please bring a white elephant gift that is wrapped. We will also share our favorite appetizers or desserts. Join us for lots of fun!

We thank you for visiting our gift table. We are thankful that we can do this to help with our mission projects and we hope you enjoy the gifts.

We continue to remember our prayer partners throughout each month and give them a reveal greeting card at the end of each month.

THE FLOWER CHART FOR 2020 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 two or three Sundays for 2020 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 2020 offering envelopes. They will be ready between Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve.

USHERS We will distribute the 2020 usher schedule, teams, and duties to you in your mail slot at church. New ushers, thank you for your willingness to join our usher teams! New and returning ushers, please take time to read the duties, especially the notes about engaging and disengaging the automatic opener for the door at the top of the church ramp.

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). The plan, for now, is to have installation for these men during the worship services on ***January 5***.

BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION We thank you for sending in the Boxtops for Education labels. Our volunteer member has sent them in and next month we will receive a check for \$153.70.

We remind you that this year there is a new way to collect these credits which earn us \$.10 each. Please add the app for this program to your smart phones and continue to help us when you scan your receipts. You can go to **BTFE.COM** to learn more about these changes. So far since October we have also earned \$184.60 from using the app.

We will remind you here then as well that we are collecting ink/toner cartridges of all sizes and they can be turned in to the box in our narthex. We recycle those and get reward points which we use to get office supplies for church and school.

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORTS

PASTOR'S REPORT – WELS news: Through the end of October, WELS CMO is more than \$16.3 million – about \$400,000 ahead of this time last year and almost \$500,000 ahead of prorated CMO subscriptions for 2019. Michigan District congregations have sent more than \$1.7 million dollars (almost \$100,000 more than the amount through October 2018; and more than \$200,000 ahead of district prorated CMO subscriptions).

The WELS Conference of Presidents, at its October meeting, adopted a document entitled “Human sexuality, Personhood, Identity, and the Historic Christian Faith: A Confession on Human Sexuality.” This document was written to address the current controversy and unbiblical views of the transgender issue. A shorter

pastoral brief on the issue is also being prepared to help pastors as they address this issue in their ministry. These documents will be ready for publication as soon as they are placed into final form.

Another major decision of the COP was to accept the work of a committee that has produced a restatement of our synod's doctrinal position on the God-given roles of man and women. "Male and Female in God's Word" does not represent any change in our synod's position; rather it is intended to clarify and expand on several aspects of the issue that are not fully addressed in the current WELS doctrinal statement. An accompanying Bible study has also been produced. These materials will be available later for study and discussion at pastor and teacher conferences, and the statement will be presented to the 2021 WELS Convention for approval.

The WELS Board for World Missions reports that recent unrest in Ethiopia resulted in tense situations for missionaries and pastors of our sister congregations in parts of Africa. Several church body meetings and a church dedication had to be canceled. WELS leaders who were there for the meetings and dedication had to leave Africa in a hurry, but did so safely. Please keep the members of our sister congregations there in your prayers during this unsettling time for them and their fellow Ethiopians.

I will be exchanging pulpits with area WELS pastors for midweek advent services.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – Some students have missed a few days due to illness.

Mrs. Labadie is serving as an aide in the preschool room for 3 mornings. It is working well.

Volunteer school cleaners are performing their duties faithfully and doing what we have asked them to do.

There was no heat in the computer room and school office. The Board of Trustees contacted a heating company and the heat was on in a few days. We thank the trustees for their prompt attention to this issue.

The PTO will host the Advent supper on December 4. Their next meeting will be Wednesday, January 15 at 7:00 PM with another possible meeting in April.

There will be no Sunday School classes on December 22 and December 29. Sunday School children will sing occasionally as they did on November 3.

New playground equipment was ordered for about \$3,800.00, shipping included. PTO paid for this. We thank the volunteers who helped unload the shipment November 1. The items are stored in the school shed. The board will coordinate a work bee for this spring to erect the new playground

Our board handled the first week's supplies and start up cash for the weekend basketball games. We have a volunteer in place to purchase needed concession items each week.

We will have a narrator from the board for the Christmas Eve service.

BOARD OF ELDERS – The Elders discussed with Pastor that area WELS pastors will switch pulpits for the midweek Advent services.

Sunday, December 22 will be our choral service. On that day and on Sunday, December 29 we will have only one service at 10:00 AM.

As we have done the last few years, we will again have a candlelit service on Christmas Eve.

Two new men have agreed to become ushers. A couple of the usher teams will be realigned to help even out some teams that are short-handed. The new usher teams, schedule, and revised usher guidelines will be distributed in December.

Our annual December door offering will be received December 15 and 22. The Elders have not yet selected a recipient to recommend receive the offering. The board will do that at next month's meeting.

BOARD OF EVANGELISM AND STEWARDSHIP – The Sign Up Genius link for basketball games is posted on our web site.

The Trunk or Treat event took place on October 26. Around 100 came despite it being cut short after the first hour because of rain. We thank all who participated and donated items.

We thank the Ladies Fellowship for putting on the pancake meal on October 20.

We will get the 2020 thankoffering envelopes ready; perhaps by December 1 but definitely by December 21.

We continue to look at a date in January, or early February, for the 10-for-10 stewardship emphasis. The board will discuss further next month whether we should have a Bible study about stewardship leading up to the

10-for-10 service emphasis – or to have the emphasis first, followed by the study.

Midweek Advent supper: December 4 by PTO; December 11 by Ladies Fellowship; December 18 by two families. We urge our members to invite friends and family to join us for the meals, and to stay for the worship service those evenings.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES – Parsonage furnace was serviced on October 14th. School furnaces have new filters in. Boiler is being serviced on November 6th and 7th for no heat, the pump and wall switch need to be replaced.

A new garage door and opener was installed at the parsonage, on October 25th

We reviewed the *Opportunity to Serve* information that was provided for our board, will keep this on file, for contacting individuals when needed.

Snow blowers are ready for winter use.

Basketball games began November 9th for the girls' 7th and 8th graders. Fourth grade through sixth grade boys and girls games begin on December 7th and run through March.



BADGER NEWS from SCHOOL

FROM MRS. LEITZ AND PRESCHOOL-KINDERGARTEN: The month of November has been a lot of fun for our Preschool and Kindergarten. In our Bible lessons we have been learning about forgiveness through Joseph and also that God has a plan for all of us. We learn that His plan happens in His timing and sometimes we may be called to do something that we feel unequal to perform. We learned to trust Him always and that He will always help us along the way.

We have spent a lot of time learning about the pilgrims and Wampanoags and the way they lived. We have a pilgrim house in our dramatic play center which prompted our students to think about living as a family unit. They had fun performing wedding ceremonies and then taking care of their babies. They gathered wood for the fire and collected nuts and berries to eat. The boys also went to hunt for their families. As a teacher it's fun to see the students immerse themselves in their learning making it come to life! We also have been reflecting on all the wonderful things that God has blessed us with especially our Savior Jesus.

We have been working on all the usual things in Preschool such as classification for math, writing and recognizing letters, shapes, and colors. Kindergarten has been blending three letter words together. They are so proud that they are now reading some words.

As a culmination of all that has been learned we invited the parents of our students to join us in a thankful celebration where their children entertained them with songs, enjoyed some snacks, made crafts, and played games.

Next month we will have special dress up days and then a party celebrating His birth!

May you all have a wonderful month getting ready to celebrate Christ's birth!

FROM MRS. DOMKE AND GRADES 1-5: This month in our study of God's Word we have been learning about the family of Jacob, the years in Egypt, and the Exodus. In these stories we remember how God kept His people safe so they could return to Canaan, the place where the Savior would be born. It is so amazing to think that God directed all things to ensure our salvation! Remember, He knew each and every one of us before creation and made sure that we would hear the Word! How loving our God is!

The third, fourth and fifth graders are finishing a chapter about matter in science. We have finished a

rather long experiment dealing with the scientific method and dependent and independent variables. After Thanksgiving we will do another experiment varying the amounts of yeast used to make dinner rolls. It is so much fun to do experiments that can be eaten!

The same group just finished a book called *The Most Beautiful Place in the World*. We made arroz con leche (rice milk) and enjoyed it very much.

The first and second graders are working on blending and digraphs, reading tons, and adding and subtracting bigger numbers. The second graders are also regrouping with greater ease. All are fantastic workers and so much fun to have in class.

We are looking forward to singing at the Williamston Senior Center on December 12. The group has been so kind, inviting us to come and sing for them twice last year.

All of the kids in grades 1-5 recently made posters for the Woodsy Owl/Smokey Bear poster contest sponsored by the Red Cedar Garden Club. We won't know until later if anyone is a winner, but we're sure hoping!

Let us worship the Lord our Savior!

SERVING OUR LORD FOR OUR DECEMBER SERVICES:

<u>8:00</u>	<u>10:30</u>	<u>Altar Guild</u>	<u>Greeter(s)</u>	<u>Cleaners</u>
12/01 – #2 V. Domke	#9 D. Fisher	L. Voss	L&K Ward	H&S Clark
12/04 – #1 T. Marion		L. Voss		
12/08 – #5 S. Houser	#8 D. Rector	R. Olin	P&S Crandall	J. Coulter
12/11 – #2 V. Domke		R. Olin		
12/15 – #6 E. Ruhlig	#3 J. Janecke	T. Wood	A&J Rusnak	P&S Crandall
12/18 – #5 S. Houser		T. Wood		
12/22 – #4 B. Grinnell		C. Kasischke	G. Withey	V&J Domke
12/24 – #2 V. Domke		C. Kasischke		
12/25 – #6 E. Ruhlig		C. Kasischke		
12/29 – #5 S. Houser		K. Ward	D&T Wood	D&L Fortin
12/31 – #8 D. Rector		K. Ward		



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

