



# MEMORIAL MESSENGER DECEMBER 2024

I have a secret. And it's about Christmas.

It might be something you don't want to hear: Christmas doesn't depend on you.

If you don't do another thing between now and Dec. 25, Christmas will still be Christmas. Honestly.

The idea that what we do is what makes Christmas *Christmas* is a lie. The truth of what makes Christmas what it is remains true regardless of how ready we feel or what we've done to prepare. We celebrate Christmas because Jesus, our God, Savior and King, came to earth as a baby. But we often neglect to remember the entire reason he had to come in the first place: Because we could not do what needed to be done.

Read this from Galatians: "*When the set time had fully come*, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship" (4:4,5, emphasis added).

The Bible tells us that the time had fully come for Jesus to be born. But it surely wasn't because Mary and Joseph were ready. It surely wasn't because the most amazing inn had its best room available. And it surely wasn't because the world was a safe place for Jesus. But still, the time had fully come according to God's plan.

This Advent season, I'm using the letters in the word manger to help remind me that it's not about what I've accomplished in my preparations that makes or breaks the holiday.

## **M—Motive**

The Christmas cards are fun. The decorations are beautiful to look at. The cookies are oh-so delicious. But what's the *why* behind your actions? Is it helping to prepare your heart for his coming or is it distracting your focus? Is it enriching the season for your family or is it stressing you and the others in your home out, causing arguments and exhaustion? Are you enjoying your preparations, or do you look at them with a feeling of obligation or dread? "Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ" ([Galatians 1:10](#)).

## **A—Ability**

Not everyone is Martha Stewart or Joanna Gaines. One of my friends has incredible patience to have her kids help her hand make every Christmas card they send. Another makes the most delicious cookies with unbelievably intricate frosting decorations. Yet another has the financial means to purchase great gifts for everyone and anyone. I am none of the above. But I'm learning to accept that. God made you with your own set of talents and abilities. It's only an exercise in frustration if you try to magically become someone that you're not. It's okay to buy—and not make—the cookies. It's okay to say no to sending cards. And it's okay to spend ten meaningful dollars on a gift for someone who you know will spend way more than that on you.

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us" ([Romans 12:6](#)).

## **N—Need**

Consider your needs this year. Has it been a rough one financially? Your family members don't need grandiose gifts to know that you love them. Has work been more stressful than usual? You don't need to put up thousands of outdoor Christmas lights simply because it's what you always do. What about your spiritual needs? Do you need to connect with God and dig deeper into the Word before Christmas arrives? Let that be at the top of your to-do list. " 'Martha, Martha,' the Lord answered, 'you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her' " ([Luke 10:41,42](#)).

## **G—Grace**

Oh, those troubled relationships, and things only get harder at the holidays. The questions of who will host, when will we eat, what will we eat, when will we go to church, whose Christmas program will the grandparents attend this year. The list goes on and on. Not to mention the idle chit-chat at the get-togethers themselves. It can be exhausting. Even the healthiest, friendliest relationships can be strained under the weight of the season.

Let grace be your guide in these situations. Jesus came to graciously forgive you for all your faults, and he asks you to extend that forgiveness to others for their faults at Christmas and the new year.

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you” ([Colossians 3:13](#)).

### **E—Expectations**

I remember my first Christmas after becoming a mother. I offered to host Christmas Eve, thinking it would be easier. I had this picture-perfect first Christmas with my babies in my mind. I got them adorable outfits with matching tights, and I decked out the table like something in a Pottery Barn catalog. The day came, and one of the girls needed to be changed before anyone even arrived. I spent what felt like half of the evening in my bedroom nursing and barely sat at the table that I had so carefully decorated to eat. I went to bed crying that night. It didn't even feel like Christmas because life got in the way. I was expecting a magical day full of lighthearted laughter, great conversation, and babies who followed their schedule perfectly. The celebration of the Savior's birth, which doesn't change, was happening right before my eyes, and I could not join in the way I expected. Evaluate your expectations: Are they realistic? Are you focused on the things of this world that disappoint us time and time again? “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! . . . Do not be anxious about anything. . . . And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” ([Philippians 4:4,6,7](#)).

### **R—Rest**

Find time to rest during this Advent and Christmas season. Schedule it if you have to. Say no to working overtime or to that one last commitment that is going to put you over the edge. Instead sit in a chair, eyes closed, and reflect on what Christmas means to you as a child of God. Soak up just how much the Creator of the world loves you. “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” ([John 14:27](#)).

Don't let the devil's lies replace the truth about Christmas: The King of the world came as a tiny babe at just the right time to do what we were unable to do for ourselves.

No, Christmas doesn't depend on us. And for that we can be eternally grateful.

Melissa Anne Kreuser      Volume 108, Number 12

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**DIVINE CALL** The Holy Spirit, working through the voters of our congregation, has called Pastor Jonathan Werre to serve as pastor of Memorial Ev. Lutheran. Pastor Werre currently serves as pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, SD. We **encourage** members to reach out to Pastor Werre at [jwerre@gswels.org](mailto:jwerre@gswels.org) and also ask the Lord to be with Rev Werre, his wife, and their adult child as he prayerfully considers the two divine calls that he now has.



**TEACHER CALL** Brian Papenfuss, currently serving as a teacher at St. John Lutheran School in Lomira WI has been called to be Memorial's upper grades teacher. Mr. Papenfuss has encouraged our congregation to contact him. Please reach out to him, and keep him and his family in your prayers as he deliberates the 2 calls he now holds. Contact info: 715-412-3969 (cell), [bpapenfuss@stjohnslomira.com](mailto:bpapenfuss@stjohnslomira.com)

**ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT** is a special devotion for women, ages confirmation age and up.

We are in the season of Advent, which means “coming.” So, is Advent a big deal? It depends on who is coming and why they are coming. During Advent, we get the answer to that question. We see that our King, Jesus, is coming. We see why King Jesus came on that first Christmas and why he will come again on judgment day. In this season of Advent, we also cherish the way King Jesus comes to us today in his Word, establishing his reign in our hearts.

On Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 1:30pm in the fellowship hall, we will be studying prophecies foretelling the coming of King Jesus and how he is the perfect fulfillment of those prophecies.

Please join us! There is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board. Please indicate if you are able to bring a dessert to enjoy after the devotion.

**LADIES FELLOWSHIP MISSION TABLE** The ladies group have once again provided a table of goodies available for purchase. The Ladies Fellowship have many *handcrafted* items: baby blankets and scarves, gift giving items including: cookie and soup mixes, spice mixes, decorated boxes filled with candies, and the ever popular jams & jellies. The Ladies Fellowship group volunteer their time and money to provide this table and **support three missions each year**; one global mission, one located in the USA, and a home mission.

If you would like to help in the future with our mission table, please let one of the ladies know.

***Take a look and support our mission work!***



### **CHRISTMAS EVE**

All children of Memorial Lutheran Church and School, ages preschool through high school, are invited to attend practices on December 7, 14, and 21 to prepare for our Savior's birthday celebration.

We will practice at church from 9:30- 11:30 each Saturday. We will include beautiful Christmas carols, Bible verses. Please speak to any of the Sunday School staff if you have any questions (Kathy Fedewa, Nora Stanton, Karla Leitz, Hannah Domke & Judy Domke).

All children and families are also invited to a luncheon after our Christmas Eve practice on *December 14*. This will be a fun way to celebrate the absolute joy of Jesus' birth.

**MUSICIANS!** We are looking for children and adults to play sacred Christmas music before the Christmas Eve and maybe the Christmas Day services at Memorial this year. *You don't have to play at both.* Please speak to Judy Domke if you are interested. We encourage everyone at all skill levels to give it a try.

**HOLIDAY WORSHIP SERVICES** listed are the upcoming special worship services: Midweek Advent Service (12/4) at 7:00pm; Midweek Advent Joint Service (12/18) @ Emanuel First at 6:30pm; Christmas Eve (12/24) at 6:30pm; Christmas Day (12/25) at 10:30am; New Year's Eve Joint Service (12/31) @ Zion at 6:30pm.

**THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS** *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone, it is the same God at work.* Thank you to each of the volunteers who use their time and talent in service of our congregation. Thanks to the greeters, the counters, the Altar Guild, the ushers and cleaners. Thank you to the hosts for fellowship refreshments, those who shovel snow, have learned playlist, mow grass and fix items that need fixing. Sincerest appreciation for the flowers that beautify our sanctuary, and for the many hours the Ladies Fellowship and Church Council members have given in service of the Lord.

## **Church Council Reports**

### **BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP AND EVANGELISM**

Will continue to have the smaller 1 Sunday a month refreshment after the service. We would like to thank all those that help/helped out with the once-a-month refreshment.

We are thankful for all our thankoffering counters and all their work

Slate of candidates elected at October voter's meeting:

Vice President--Joe Janecke 2-yr. term

Treasurer-- Kim Fedewa 2-yr.-term

Board of Elders--Steve Houser 3-yr. term

Board of Elders--1 Position Vacant 1 year left on 3-yr. term

Board of Christian Education--Dan Miller 3-yr. term

Board of Trustees--Todd Loeffler 3-yr. term

Board of Trustees--Dennis Rector 3-yr. term

Board of Evangelism & Stewardship--Jason Leitz 2-yr. term

### **BOARD OF ELDERS**

Initial meeting of the Young People's Group is forming went well. Meetings to be held 4 times per year rotating between the congregations.

The Elders thank our voice choir for using their God given talents to beautify our services

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Two parking spots at church that are close to the ramp were painted blue. These are to be used for handicap/ elderly parking.



# BADGER NEWS from SCHOOL

## FROM THE DESK OF MRS. DOMKE

We've had a busy month at school in grades 1-5! In our Bible studies we are learning about Jesus' early ministry. Our Savior was an expert (of course) at preaching and teaching so people understood the truth and were comforted by the message of grace. He also helped countless people through miracles.

We have had some fun both counting our blessings this season of Thanksgiving as well as decorating with pilgrims and turkeys. After break we'll start over for Christmas.

Right now we are also gearing up for Christmas Eve with recitations and many Christmas carols. Those songs will do double duty as we will sing them at the Williamston Senior Center on December 18.

This past week besides our usual work we prepared posters for the Red Cedar Garden Club Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl poster contest.

## SERVING OUR LORD FOR OUR DECEMBER SERVICES:

### Ushers

- 12/01--Loeffler, Zoran
- 12/08--Rector, Remus
- 12/15--Briggs, Miller
- 12/22--Clark, Fortin
- 12/24-- Domke, Hoag
- 12/25--Joe Janecke, Vogt
- 12/29--Jim Janecke, Schlicker

### Altar Guild

- Karla Leitz
- Karen Unruh
- Shelly Unruh
- Ruth Hoag
- Ruth Hoag
- Ruth Hoag
- Kathy Ward

### Playlist

- J. Leitz
- K. Remus
- Nancy Hart
- J. Leitz
- Nancy Hart
- K. Rems
- J. Domke

### Cleaners

- Engman (done by 11/30)
- Fedewa (done by 12/07)
- Fisher (done by 12/14)
- Fortin (done by 12/21)
- Hoag (done by 12/28)