



MEMORIAL MESSENGER DECEMBER 2023

A Forward in Christ article by Pastor Michael A. Woldt (Vol 102, Number 12)

Believe the Christmas Miracles

Can you imagine the reaction as people from Nazareth listened to Joseph tell his story? No, he wasn't going to divorce Mary. Yes, he remained committed to her. She hadn't been unfaithful after all! Her pregnancy was a miracle! The child in her womb had been conceived by the Holy Spirit! An angel told him!

Were there looks of pity in the eyes of Joseph's friends as they walked away? Did they shake their heads in disbelief? Did they think to themselves, "Joseph might be a good carpenter, but how can he be such a fool? Everyone knows how a woman gets pregnant. Mary must have cheated on him."

Despite what others may have thought, Joseph believed. He believed, not because he was delusional or a romantic fool. Joseph believed, not because the angel's message made logical sense. Joseph believed because the same Holy Spirit who caused Mary to conceive had created faith in his heart.

People today still shake their heads in disbelief at Christians who confess that a virgin gave birth to a son in Bethlehem on that first Christmas night. The proud human mind sits in judgment over God's message and declares, "It just doesn't make sense. You'd have to be a fool to believe that ancient myth."

Yet, contrary to all logic, we continue to proclaim each Christmas that a virgin gave birth. We believe, not because it makes sense. We believe because God has spoken to us through the pages of Holy Scripture. We believe because the Holy Spirit has worked the miracle of faith in our hearts too.

We also believe the most astonishing part of the angel's message. The real mystery is not the virgin birth itself. The truly incredible revelation in the angel's message is found in the child himself, the son who was to be given the name Jesus.

Why should the holy God care about a world of sinful people who rebel against him? Why would Jesus, true God, humble himself and be born into a world that despises and rejects him? Why would Jesus willingly live under the law knowing that his whole life on earth was leading to the agony of the cross? Would God really do all that to save people from sin? It just doesn't make sense! But it's true! Jesus did come to save people from sin! Jesus came to save you and me from sin. Our Christmas hope and joy is wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.

Let the rest of the world scoff at our celebration of Christmas. Let people shake their heads and call us fools. We acknowledge that the Christmas story is incredible, but we also know that it's true. We have God's word on it. A virgin did give birth to a son. His name is Jesus. Jesus is our Joy. Jesus is our Peace. Jesus is the One who came from the Father, full of grace and truth!

NEW WORSHIP SERVICE TIME Memorial's worship service time is Sundays at 10:30 AM, with Sunday School and Bible class sessions beginning at 9:15 AM.



DIVINE CALL On November 9, 2023, at the special voter's meeting, the Holy Spirit, working through the voters of our congregation, has called Pastor Andrew Frey to serve as pastor of Memorial Ev. Lutheran Church. Currently, Pastor Frey is the Campus Pastor at Nebraska Ev. Lutheran High School in Waco, Nebraska. Please keep Pastor Frey in your prayers as he carefully considers his two divine calls.

SPECIAL VOTERS MEETING is called for December 3, immediately after the service, to vote on a decision to extend a call for an upper grade teacher and principal.

FIRST SUNDAY REFRESHMENTS TO CONTINUE The Board of Evangelism & Stewardship is committed to scheduling a time for the 1st-Sunday-of-the-month refreshments. We will start refreshments December 3rd, preceding Sunday School and Bible Class

LADIES FELLOWSHIP will meet ***Saturday morning (12/02)*** at 11:30am to decorate the church, and for their annual Christmas Party, please join us!

MISSION FUNDRAISER The Ladies Fellowship have many handcrafted items available for décor, gift giving and *stocking stuffers*, including: decorated pots with goodies, *hot chocolate kits*, hand stitched items, and the ever popular jams & jellies. The Ladies Fellowship group supports three missions each year; one global mission, one located in the USA, and a home mission. In the past, we have supported missions in Africa and Latin America, Inner city, and Native American missions, as well as installed the floor in the kitchen downstairs and the beautiful flowering trees you see blooming in the Spring in the front of the church. We have an array of items, please support us in our mission work.



CHRISTMAS EVE The Sunday School ladies are ready to get going on our Christmas Eve service! All children of Memorial Lutheran Church and School, ages preschool through high school, are invited to attend practices on December 2, 9, and 16 (and maybe 23) 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, and historical narration. We will also include costuming this year! 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 9*. This will be a fun way to celebrate the absolute joy of Jesus' birth.

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.

INVITATION FROM EMANUEL Emanuel Lutheran (Lansing) has invited Memorial to their upcoming events:

Attention Parents!

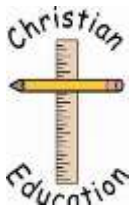
Are you looking for a few hours away from the kids to get some Christmas shopping done?? Then we have the answer for you! Friday, December 15th from 5:30p -9pm you can bring your kids, ages 2 years and older, over to Emanuel Lutheran where parent volunteers will watch them so you can get some Christmas preparations done! The cost is \$10 a child, which includes pizza and popcorn. Please have them bring a labeled water bottle, any additional snacks, or items they may need and a good attitude! Reserve your spot by December 11th. Direct any questions to Shelby Stiefel @ 770.558.5452 (call or text).

They are also holding a Men's 18+ 3 on 3 basketball tournament on Jan 20th. You can join as a team or as an individual. There will be a flyer with additional information coming soon and will be posted on the bulletin board.

USE OF CHURCH/SCHOOL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT: We remind you that members of the congregation may make use of our spacious school grounds, our tables and chairs, and our fellowship hall for picnic and family gatherings.

Please contact Todd Loeffler (517-243-7349) to request a reservation of a facility and/or equipment.

IF YOU HAVE ACCESS to the internet and get the *Memorial Messenger* that way, please let us know and we will no longer print a copy for you.



BADGER NEWS from SCHOOL

FROM MRS. LEITZ AND PRESCHOOL-KINDERGARTEN

Dear Memorial Members,

Praying the Lord has blessed your thanksgiving celebrations. This past month we have been learning about Moses being chosen to be the leader of the Israelites out of the land of Egypt. The common theme throughout is to trust in God and do what He commands. He knows what is best so we need to trust that He will always take care of us and work things out for our good. We also want to do the things that God calls us to do or commands us to do. We do not want to harden our hearts against God like the King of Egypt. We also focused on thanking Jesus for all He has done helping us with our biggest trouble of sin, death, and the devil.

We learned alot about the first Thanksgiving by having fun in our dramatic play center, our "Pilgrim House". We made our own butter, did a ribbon dance around the "fire", and made Pilgrim and wampanoag hats. The three's have been working on shapes and colors and have now started learning our letters. The four's have been working on the alphabet up to letter F. The Kindergarten have been blending letters together to start reading! In math we have been working towards addition and have pretty much wrapped up the review units. We will start working on the Christmas service parts and songs and turn our minds to the reason for the season, Jesus Birth of course!

Praying you all have a wonderful Advent season as we reflect again on our Savior's birth.

FROM MRS. DOMKE AND GRADES 1-5

This month in our study of God's Word we have moved past the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and are traveling with Moses and the children of Israel to the promised land. These people had learned that they needed to place all of their trust in the LORD to save them from slavery in Egypt to the land where the Savior would be born. We have learned that same fact, too! We need to trust in the LORD for our full and free salvation. Thank you, Jesus, for giving us all we need to live eternally in heaven with you!

The fifth grade were invited to MLS earlier this month to enjoy the musical, Oklahoma! A big thank you to the moms who took the kids and chaperoned the trip.

We also enjoyed decorating our lockers and entrance for thanksgiving this past month. We had turkeys all over the place! Now it'll be time to get going on our Christmas decorations.

We are also preparing for singing at the Williamston Senior Center in mid-December. We will be singing our usual Christmas hymns and The 12 Days of Christmas. We are very grateful for the opportunity to reach out to the community.

We have also begun our preparations for Christmas Eve at Memorial. We are mixing things up a little bit this year and are excited. Stay tuned for more details.

A big thank you to all of our volunteers that have helped make the first months of school great! We thank God for your work and praise him for your gifts of time and treasures.

Please keep praying for our school and our mission to reach others with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

SERVING OUR LORD FOR OUR DECEMBER SERVICES:

<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Altar Guild</u>	<u>Playlist</u>	<u>Greeter(s)</u>	<u>Cleaners</u>
12/03 -Domke, Hoag	Groop	Lycos	M. Bennett	Arnston (done by 12/9)
12/10 -Marion, Clark, Fortin	Arnston	J. Leitz	C & K Collins	Briggs (done by 12/16)
12/17- Houser, Pederson	K. Leitz		K & A Remus	Clark (done by 12/23)
12/24- Loeffler	Ward	Remus	H & M Surtman	Coulter (done by 12/30)
12/24- Domke, Hoag		J. Leitz		
12/25-Fisher, Crandall, B. Janecke	Ward	J. Collins		
12/31-Joe Janecke, Schlicker	Ward	B. Janecke	D & S Fisher	Crandall (done by 01/06)