

Christ's Messenger

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH The American Association of Lutheran Churches

December 2021



"To know Christ,
and make Him known."



In the Hands of the Refiner

Christ Lutheran Church, We are Connected to Christ!

Connected to Christ in Advent

Advent is upon us! In this season, we look back on all Christ did when He came veiled in flesh. We also look forward to when He will come again in His resurrected body with nail-pierced hands. In this year of continued social-distancing and social unrest, we remember that regardless of circumstance we are connected because of Christ and the life He freely gave for us.

The work of Christ connects us to Him and also to all other Christians. What an encouragement that is. During these times when we feel disconnected and are physically distanced, the reminder that we are connected to Christ is especially sweet.

Connected in Christ through Jesus' Family Tree

Isaiah speaks of a branch that will bear fruit. That branch is Christ. Isaiah 11:1 says: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit."

The verse from Isaiah says that from the stump and roots of Jesse's family tree a new branch will be born, will grow, and will bear much fruit. We are a part of this new growth. We may not share genetic familiarity with Jesse, Abraham, or King David. Because of Christ, we have been grafted into the new growth that finds its roots in the families of these people who came before. We are connected to Abraham, King David, and the people with whom we share church pews not because of genetic familiarity or social proximity but because of Christ.

The book of John talks about Christ being the vine and us the branches that grow directly from the branch. We are a part of this new growth. In Christ, we are grafted into this family. Christ is the vine that holds us all together. We abide in him and we are all connected to Christ and connected to one another. (John 15:4-5)

The Bible speaks in different ways about us being connected. What remains the same is the centrality of Christ. He is what binds us together. He binds us together in Baptism, regardless of the distance. We are connected as heirs in Christ and together we cry out to our heavenly Father. And while we are apart, He is growing us as individuals and as a body of believers.

Connected in Christ through Baptism.

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. . ."

But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as He chose.

But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." (1 Corinthians 12: 12-14; 18; 24-27)

We are all baptized into the same faith because of the work of Christ. We are all a part of the same body. God has put this body of believers together. Nothing, not even death, can permanently separate us from Christ and our fellow believers.

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Connected in Christ regardless of distance.

“For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.” (Colossians 2:1-5)

We are physically distanced yet not completely removed from one another because we are connected in Christ. This is not the first time Christians have felt the discomfort of distance. There is distance and it is painful yet we are still connected. We are knit together by the love of Christ and we look forward to when we can gather together again. Even though Paul has not seen these people face to face he is still encouraging them in their faith. Both Paul and we can do this because our assurance is not in our ability to connect with another but in the hold Christ has on us all.

Connected in Christ as family.

Our family bonds may be strained because we cannot travel, yet because of Christ, all of us as believers are family. We are forever connected and all at once we are crying out to the same Father. We can cry out to him “Abba! Father!” During this time of social distancing and separation, we can remember that we are children of God. We are all crying out at the same time for the same things even when we are apart. We can pray the Lord’s prayer and know others are praying the same words. We can recite the creeds and know that others are declaring those same words.

Connected in Christ and given gifts.

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Ephesians 4:4-7; 15-16)

We may be physically distant from one another, yet the Word of Christ is not taken from us. We can still speak the truth in love to one another. It may not be in the church narthex. It may be via letter instead. Rest assured that Christ is still at work in our lives making the body grow. He is still using each one of us. His gifts to us are still there. He is still using them. He is still building the body in love. He is growing us each as individuals and also as a Church body.

Christ Lutheran Church, We Are Connected through Christ

During this time when our usual ways of connecting may not be possible, we can know that we are connected because of Christ. The physical disconnection is there and it is painful. There may be a disconnection because of death, sickness, wearing masks, social distancing, vaccinated or not vaccinated, or general unrest. Thankfully our hope is not in our own life, health, or peace. Our hope is found in the life of Jesus Christ and the peace He gives.

This Advent, as with all of the Advent seasons that have come before, we look forward to when Christ will come back for us. He will raise His people from the dead, and our relationships with each other will be fully restored. We will, all together, look at the nail pierced hands of Christ in awe. I’m looking forward to that, as we all are.

God bless you, beloved of Christ Lutheran Church!



Pastor Gary DeSha

P.S. Thanks K. K.

Christ Lutheran Church

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 Christ Lutheran
Church Duluth

 Christ Lutheran
Church Duluth

President:
Quitdee Carson

Vice President:
Carolyn Lofald

Treasurer:
Sandy Carlson

Every Month:
Wednesdays:
10 AM Ladies' Bible Study
6:30 PM Adult Bible Study

Esther & Dorcas Circle
First Thursday of each
month at 10:00 AM

Council Meeting
Second Thursday of each
month at 6:30 PM

AA meets at the church
every Monday at 6:30 PM



December Mission of the Month

Fellowship of Christian Athletes

Fellowship of Christian Athletes focuses on serving local communities around the globe by engaging, equipping and empowering coaches and athletes to unite, inspire and change the world through the gospel.

OUR VISION: To see the world transformed by Jesus Christ through the influence of coaches and athletes.

OUR MISSION: To lead every coach and athlete into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His church.

OUR VALUES: Our relationships will demonstrate steadfast commitment to Jesus Christ and His Word through Integrity, Serving, Teamwork and Excellence.

- Engage (1 Thessalonians 2:8)

We engage relationally by connecting with individuals and through events in many different environments by building genuine trust, sharing our lives and sharing the gospel. We strive to connect with coaches and athletes where they are on their spiritual journey.

- Equip (Ephesians 4:12)

After cultivating relationships and once coaches and athletes come to faith in Christ, we want to equip them with Christ-centered training, events, resources and on-going support in what it means to be a follower of Christ, growing in God's Word and applying it to life.

- Empower (2 Timothy 2:2)

Once equipped, we empower faithful leaders who desire to use their time, talents and treasures to help other coaches and athletes experience the gospel, grow in their faith and share Him with others. We desire to develop disciples who make disciples, assisting them so that they can in turn engage, equip and empower others to know and grow in Christ and lead others to do the same.

You may make checks payable to Christ Lutheran Church. Thank you for your continued support in our mission *"To know Christ and to make Him known."*

*Thank
you!*



WITTENBERG DOOR
---CAMPUS MINISTRY---

Dear friends at Christ Lutheran,

Thank you so much for continuing to remember my work with Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry in your giving, your encouragement, and your prayers. Though much of our public ministry work came to a halt during the pandemic, we have been able to re-start almost everything. In the past few months we have been providing on-campus, face-to-face pastoral care to old and new participants alike. The Lord is creating interest in His Word and the historic nature of Christian ministry!

Thanks for being a part of this work!

Pastor Spotts

The Meaning of the Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is a Christian tradition that symbolizes the passage of the four weeks of Advent. It is a circular candle holder that typically holds five candles. During the season of Advent one candle on the wreath is lit each Sunday until all the candles, including the fifth candle, are lit on Christmas Day. Each candle represents an aspect of the spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Most Advent wreaths use three colors of candles – purple, pink, and white. However, some may use blue in place of the purple.

Advent Wreath 1

1st CANDLE – (purple) THE PROPHECY CANDLE or CANDLE OF HOPE

We can have hope because God is faithful and will keep the promises made to us. Our hope comes from God. “And again, Isaiah says, ‘The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him.’ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:12-13)

2nd CANDLE – (purple) THE BETHLEHEM CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF PREPARATION

God kept his promise of a Savior who would be born in Bethlehem. Preparation means to “get ready”. Help us to be ready to welcome YOU, O GOD! “As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: ‘A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God’s salvation.’ (Luke 3:4-6)

Advent Wreath 2

3rd CANDLE – (pink) THE SHEPHERD CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF JOY

The angels sang a message of JOY! “...and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.’ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’ (Luke 2:7-15)

4th CANDLE – (purple) THE ANGEL CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF LOVE

The angels announced the good news of a Savior. “...I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord” (Luke 2:10b-11). God sent his only Son to earth to save us, because he loves us! “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” (John 3:16-17)

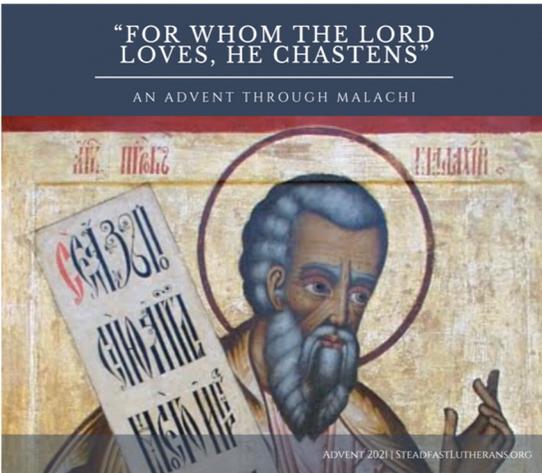


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5th CANDLE – (white) CHRIST CANDLE

The white candle reminds us that Jesus is the spotless lamb of God, sent to wash away our sins! His birth was for his death, his death was for our birth! “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’” (John 1:29)

“Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, ‘Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.’ In reply Jesus declared, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.’ ‘How can a man be born when he is old?’ Nicodemus asked. ‘Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.’” (John 3:1-8)



Every Wednesday evening beginning December 1st, we will have our Advent Devotional Services at 6:30 PM. There are four Wednesday evening Advent devotional services, December 1, 8, 15, 22.

Please bring your Bible, and join with us as we study the prophet Malachi. The theme for our devotions is "For whom the Lord loves, He chastens."

Our time of devotion will include singing and prayer. Please join us for these special services during Advent.



*Join us for our Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service at 5:00
PM Friday, December 24*



Calendars are available to purchase for \$10. Proceeds will be directed to the CLC Food Share program. Please see Carolyn Lofald or Sue DeSha if you would like to purchase a calendar.

Mother and Child

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14

I don't often ponder the virgin birth in all its miraculous, mysterious, and utterly one-of-a-kind circumstances. It is spoken of by the Old Testament prophets, addressed right after the lineage of Christ in Matthew, emphasized in the Christmas story in Luke, hinted at in the first chapter of John, and part of John's visions in Revelation.

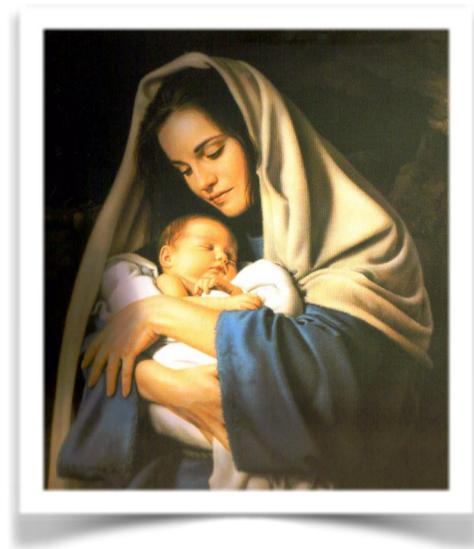
As a youthful teenager (most scholars agree she was about 14 years old), Mary received the angelic visitation and message with humble faithfulness saying, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38 ESV). Gabriel told her that she had found favor with God, that the Holy Spirit will overshadow her, that she will conceive a son even though she is a virgin, and he will be called Jesus, the "Son of the Most High."

Mary in her third month visited Elizabeth, a relative who was also miraculously pregnant with John the Baptist. As they greeted each other, Elizabeth's baby leaped inside her as he recognized the Son of God inside Mary, and Mary rejoiced in the Lord. Every detail of the Christmas story is brimming with the wonder of his birth.

Prepare a special space in your heart and mind for the Mother and Child this December. Ponder the miracle of her faith and trust. Consider how the birth of Christ is simply unbelievable without the gift of faith. Remember your children and grandchildren, each a priceless gift. Don't forget barren Elizabeth whom God filled with a life that would prepare the way of the Lord. Believe that God will complete the good work He started in you. Read the first chapter of Luke and rest in your Father's goodness. And sing...

Silent Night

Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
'Round yon virgin, mother and child
Holy Infant, so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace



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CLC YOUTH

Confirmation Class on Wednesdays at 9:00 am with Pastor Gary.

2022 Calendar Fundraiser - purchase a beautiful, quality calendar for \$10 to support our food share!

BELOVED APPRENTICE

I am so thankful for our times of Bible Study, friendship and prayer each week with "Beloved Apprentice." All women are invited and you can join in anytime.

ONLINE Tuesdays at 6:30pm

IN PERSON Wednesdays at 10:00am in Fellowship Hall

CLC FOOD SHARE

The Food Share needs some financial help this month!

December grocery packing is Tuesday 12/14 at 1:30pm

Our Christmas Food Share is Thursday 12/16 from 11:30am - 12:30pm

In Christ's love,

Sue

320-815-1561

suedesha@gmail.com



Thanks A Bunch

Dear Church Family,

We are so thankful for your continued support, care, prayers, and generosity. We carry your hearts in ours and prayers for you to grow deep in God's love and truth!

Love,

Pastor Gary & Sue DeSha

*Esther Circle Hat and Mitten Drive
for Piedmont Elementary.*

*Bring your hats, mittens, & gloves and
decorate the tree in the narthex!*



COOKIES

*The Sunshine Bakers will
be making cookies
Wednesday, December 8 &
Thursday, December 9.
The last date to order your
cookies is Sunday, December 5.
If you can help with cookie
making, please contact
Carolyn Lofald.*

December Ushers & Trustees

December 5

Ushers: Mike & Wendy Pickar

Trustees: Grace & Bill

December 12

Ushers: Grace Wells; Jim Carlson

Trustees: Wendy & Jim

December 19

Ushers: Bill & Jan Arezzo

Trustees: Laurie & Laura

December 24 Christmas Eve Service

5:00 PM Ushers: Mike & Wendy Pickar;
Bill & Jan Arezzo

Trustees: Laurie & Jim

December 26

Ushers: Keith Youngren; Mark Youngren

Trustees: Laurie & Jim

*If you have a conflict with these dates,
please contact Jim Carlson at 343-6755*

Financial Update

October Income: \$13,463
October Expenses: \$13,074.09

*Monthly income was over
expenses by \$388.91*

YTD Income \$130,969.41
YTD Expenses \$112,937.04

*YTD income was over
expenses by \$18,032.37*

October Missions: MN Teen Challenge:
\$1,965



The 26th Annual
Father /Daughter Ball
is scheduled for
January 29 and
February 5, 2022!

We are so pleased to be able to schedule our
26th annual Father/Daughter Ball at the DECC!

Tickets will be on sale soon!

Please pray for this event that it will strengthen the relationships between all the fathers and daughters that attend. Pray also that when they hear the Godly message it will not only reach their ears, but that it will touch their hearts and minds as well.

Thank you - bless you!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!

The Father Daughter Ball Committee will be looking for volunteers to help again this year at our events. Watch for the sign-up sheet in early January!

CLC Food Share

The next food packing date is Tuesday, December 14 at 1:30 PM

December distribution is Thursday, December 16 from 11:30-12:30.

Thank you so much for all of your prayers and support of this ministry!

To date, we have recorded 183 people served in the food share program!



PLEASE PRAY FOR....

*Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.
James 5:14*

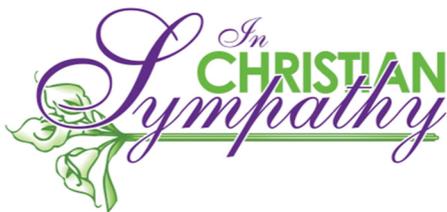
Our Pastor & the Leadership of the Church
All of our students from pre-school to college
Our Country, Military & Police
The teachers and students at all schools
Mission of the Month:
Fellowship of Christian Athletes

Persecuted Christians throughout the world
The steadfastness of our faith
Lutheran Vicar Mwavu Ronald and his 2 churches:
St. John's Lutheran Church,
Nankandulo, Kamuli, Uganda
St. Paul's Lutheran Church,

THOSE WITH HEALTH NEEDS:

Ruth Dahl	Barb Hanson	Mary Jenny
Carol Johnson	Evelyn Johnson	Mark Malander
Florence Kubiak	The Lund Family	Donna Swanson
Brian McDonald	Carol Schramm	Eli Miletich
Judy Stocke	Carol Sogard	Darlene Saaf
Del Sandberg	Tom & Marlene Stauber	Jane McLean
Kathy Stevens	Carol Schneeberger	Maggie Kaptonak
Linda Anthony (Dick McLean's Daughter)		

If there are any people who have been accidently overlooked, please contact the church office. We apologize for any oversights.



Please pray for the family and friends of Ruth Peterson who passed away Sunday, November 28.

Happy Birthday!

*All the days ordained for me were written
in your book before one of them came to be.
How precious to me are your thoughts,
O God! How vast is the sum of them!*

Psalms 139:16,17

Andrea Allen	December 5
Sharon Super	December 5
Carol Johnson	December 24
Carol Miletich	December 28
Dick Kern	December 29