



Acts of Faith

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Kewanee, Illinois



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Christmas 2020: *But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart* – St. Luke 2:19
I am going to suppose that most mothers following the birth of a child, whether it is the first or fifth, do not have a lot of time to ponder many things in their heart. There is just too much going on between visits by nurses and doctors, the adjusting to a different life style and schedule, and the planning for the homecoming. Yet, here in St. Luke, at the end of the familiar Christmas Gospel, we see that Mary treasured and pondered what was going on around her.

In the midst of giving birth in a stable, surrounded by animals and ragged shepherds, Mary takes it all in. She might see Joseph trying to convince the shepherds to come back later, only to let them in anyway at their insistence. She may see a lamb or ox nibbling at the straw that now serves as baby Jesus's crib. She hears thee accounts of angelic hosts proclaiming His birth. Imagine the stories she can tell her friends and family later on about that significant night. Certainly the sights, sounds, and odors were anything but normal.

What did it all mean? How much was happening because this was the Christ child, and how much was happening just due to the circumstances at the time?

We have so many family traditions surrounding the Christmas festival. Everything seems to go by in such a rush that the only memories we retain are those that are repeated year after year, without fail.

The national pandemic has changed everything in 2020. This year, if permitted, is the perfect time to take a moment to treasure what is going on around us and ponder it all in our hearts. Treasure the gathering of family, treasure a church service on Christmas Eve in person or by live streaming, treasure the singing of carols and the lighting of candles, treasure the story of the Christ child's birth, and treasure the Christian fellowship that we have together, even if it is only for a few minutes under stipulations and abnormal restrictions.

Ponder how Christ came and died for all. Ponder how Christ comes to each of us in His gifts of Word and sacrament when we come to church. Ponder how those carols and the hymns that we sing are confessions of the faith that the Holy Spirit has passed down from generation to generation. Treasure these things; ponder them in your heart. Rejoice in what Christ has done for you.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and God's blessings in the New Year.

Christmas Eve Services: Due to restrictions for the COVID-19 virus, our seating is limited to allow for social distancing. To accommodate an anticipated larger attendance on December 24th, we plan to have two services that day. One will be at 3:00 PM and another at 5:30 PM. Both will be traditional candle lighting services with reduced liturgy. Families and friends will be asked to make reservations for their desired service time so that we can observe capacity guidelines with governmental restrictions in place. Instructions will be forthcoming in December.

It is conceivable that if infection numbers continue to rise, a state wide shut down may prohibit worship gathering; so watch for details closer to the Christmas celebration. Pray that God will grant relief from this pestilence in our nation and the world, in order that we may worship and celebrate God sending His son as our Redeemer and Savior this Christmas festival.



Worship Schedule

9:00 AM, Sunday Worship Service

December's Calendar

- Dec. 03** Midweek Advent Service 6:30 PM
- Dec. 06** Second Sunday of Advent
Worship with Holy Communion
- Dec. 08** Elders Mtg. 6:30 PM
Church Council 7:00 PM
- Dec. 10** WOF Christmas Luncheon 12:00 Noon
Midweek Advent Service 6:30 PM
- Dec. 12** Church decoration 9:00 AM
- Dec. 13** Third Sunday of Advent
Worship with Holy Communion
- Dec. 17** Midweek Advent Service 6:30 PM
- Dec. 20** Fourth Sunday of Advent
Worship with Holy Communion
- Dec. 24** Nativity of Our Lord 3:00 & 5:30 PM
Candle Lighting Services
- Dec. 25** Celebration of Christmas
No worship service.
- Dec. 27** First Sunday after Christmas
Worship with Holy Communion

Altar Guild Schedule

- Dec. 06 Kari Tavares Blue
- Dec. 13 Mary Hahn Blue
- Dec. 20 Marilyn Sturtevant Blue
- Dec. 24 Leah Weber White
- Dec. 27 Sharon Larson White

Elders List:

- Wayne Becker: 309-853-8783
- Kevin Hull: 309-852-0801
- Ron Larson: 309-853-5111
- Ted Sturtevant: 309-853-8203

Prayer Requests: Please help to keep this list current by calling the church office or talking with Pastor when a name can be added or removed.

REMEMBER: Please contact the office and inform us of any changes of name, address, marital status, e-mail, phone, and cell phone. E-mail addresses are most important in these changing times to communicate with each other.

December's Council meeting has been moved to December 8th. November's meeting was cancelled do to absenteeism.

Those for Whom We Pray: Please include the following in your thoughts and daily prayers.

Our Faith family: Allison Leezer, Cari Bridgewater, Nancy Tudder, Cheryl Snyder, and Heidi Heinrich.

Friends: Sue Copeland, Ron Pettit, Lacey Hammons, Barbra Kraklow, Kent West, and all military personnel and first responders.

Inactive Members: Pray the Holy Spirit bring them to the understanding of their need to be in regular worship in church on Sunday, and that we as their brothers and sisters in Christ would reach out to them.

CID: Our campus, prison, deaf, and Hispanic missions in the District need your prayers and support.

Our World: That Lord of all will bring healing to those who are sick, comfort to those who mourn, care for those who tend and care for the ill, and bring an end to the spread of this virus.



Advent Services: This years Advent theme is Fathers to Jesus: David, Abraham, and Joseph. Three men who were called fathers to Jesus, the true Son of God who was begotten of the heavenly Father from all eternity. They all had a roll to play in bringing Jesus to us in God's beautiful plan. These men were not perfect. They were all sinners saved by grace through faith in this Christ child. We look forward to celebrating Jesus' birth with 2020 vision by looking back at those blessed to be called Fathers of Jesus. Advent services will be Thursday evenings Dec. 3, 10, & 17 at 6:30 p.m.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Joy Hernandez Butler	12/02
Carol Cook	12/03
Sandra Phillips	12/05
Madison Carpenter	12/07
Lisa Huseby	12/08
Cheryl Snyder	12/13
Corey Tavaras	12/13
Ashley Phillips	12/15
Ernst Heinrich	12/16
Nicholas Leezer	12/16
Kaitlin Phillips	12/22
Alyssa Croegaert	12/31

Baptism Dates

Judy Bridgewater	12/19
Justin Carper	12/05
Alyssa Croegaert	12/31
Marcelene Godke	12/21
Jacob Hernandez	12/18
Linda Jacobs	12/23
Corey Tavaras	12/22
Micah Tavaras	12/23
Mallery Tudder	12/17
Kim Tudder	12/29

Wedding Anniversaries

Lorie & Brian Elgin	12/13
Mary & Meredith Duncan	12/30

Women of Faith: The ladies will hold their annual Christmas luncheon at noon on December 10th. Marilyn is the hostess. Bring a dish to pass; a meat entrée will be provided along with games and prizes. Ladies of Faith who would like to join us for fellowship, Bible study and the furthering of gospel missions are always welcome.

The ladies **Dandy Diaper Drive** in conjunction with a Thrivent Financial Action Team brought in 2313 children's diapers, 108 adult size diapers, and 1372 wipes. These were donated to the Henry/Stark County Health Departments for distribution to needy families in the area in November. WOF thank the congregation for your support in this mission effort.

This month our mites support the LWML Mission Grant #17 for the 2019-2021 biennium is **"Christ for You, Anytime, Anywhere."** This grant will assist radio station KFUD to reach people far and wide with the message of Jesus Christ. The station utilizes the latest technology so it can stay connected with listeners of all ages in locations around the world. Women of Faith thank you for your continued contributions to spread God's Word across the world.



Red poinsettias will once again be used to decorate our Sanctuary to enhance the beauty of God's house this Christmas. It is a wonderful opportunity to remember loved ones in memorial or tribute by dedicating one or more of these plants.

The price will be approximately \$10 each, and you may take them home following the January 2nd worship service. Please sign the sheet in the Narthex or call the church office by Sunday, December 13, if you would like to purchase one. You may use a general offering envelope, but please include your name, amount, and indicate it is for the Poinsettia purchase.

2020 Operation Thankful is a program sponsored by Faith congregation this Advent season to assist the Kewanee Food Pantry. Members are encouraged to bring donations of non-perishable food items or dollars to worship services during this season. The Women of Faith are coordinating this project as a Thrivent Financial Action Team. A Reverse Advent calendar is available with suggested items to set apart each day. What a wonderful way for us to show our love for the fellow citizens in our community.



Faith's 20th Anniversary: In March 2021, Faith will have been a LCMS congregation for 20 years. We would like to form a Anniversary Committee to plan and celebrate this event after the Easter season next April, if the COVID-19 environment allows. Anyone desiring to have input and serve the congregation in this mission should notify Gary Hahn. We would like to begin working together soon.

HELP WANTED: The congregation will be decorating the Narthex and Sanctuary on Saturday, December 12th, beginning at 9:00 AM. All volunteers are welcome to help adorn our church for the upcoming Advent and Christmas season.



Veterans Recognized: Pastor Weber presented six former and one active military force members from Faith with a Certificate of Appreciation at the worship service on November 5th. These included Marvin Newman, James Nudding, Wendell Hier, Wayne Becker, Kevin Hull, and James Cook. Jacob Hernandez is presently serving in the U.S. Air Force. Thank you all for your service. If anyone knows additional members who served please let Pastor know.



Christmas is coming. It is a joyous time of feasting. The Church feasts upon the Word of God in sermon, song, and sacrament.

We hear the proclamation of the message of the angels: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). We mingle our voices with theirs as we sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased" (Luke 2:14)! We receive the proclaimed Savior, Christ the Lord, not wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in manger but wrapped in bread and wine placed into our mouths for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. We feast in great joy indeed because of this great blessing from our Lord and God. God's people in ancient Israel also feasted with great joy. The Lord showered His abundant blessing on His people.

And He commanded them to feast upon it (Deuteronomy 16). The people were to go to the place appointed, where the Lord would make His name dwell, and give offerings, each man as he was able, according to the blessing of the Lord that He had given them (Deut. 16:10, 15, 17).

And there the Lord would bless them with joy as they feasted upon what the Lord had provided. They ate of the choice parts of their offerings. They enjoyed the company of all the people of God as they together heard His promises of blessing, sang of His bountiful goodness, and partook of what He gave.

We feast on the Word who became flesh to dwell among us, not just during Christmas but throughout all the year. We feast not just on the salvation He has wrought for us in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, but we feast also on all the temporal blessings that God gives out of His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us. We enjoy the rich bounty that God provides, not only in Word and Sacrament, but also in house and home, property and income, family and friends.

Let us then, as did our brothers in the faith from ancient Israel, give as we are able, according to the blessing of the Lord our God that He has given us. Let us, like them, give generously of the first fruits of our income, which He gives, so that all may know and enjoy the salvation He gives and the joy we have in the Savior born in the city of David, who is Christ the Lord. LCMS Stewardship Newsletter 12/2020

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2021