



Acts of Faith

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



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The best thing about Christmas is Christ: Christmas is the celebration of a part in the extravagant plan of God for our salvation. When I think about Christmas, and who doesn't this time of year, memories of past Christmas seasons flash across my mind. From the first Christmas I can remember as a child, the wonderful Christmas celebrations with five growing children, and now our Christmas reunions with a full holiday house each with the same old traditions and routines, all based on God's love for us.

Christmas is the celebration of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. We give gifts at Christmastime because God gave The Gift at Christmas. That's how it always works: God acts, and we imitate. That's what it means to grow in faith – to grow more into the image of God in what we think, say, and do. Like so many other children, I could hardly sleep on Christmas Eve with hope and expectations of colorfully wrapped presents waiting for us the next morning. As an adult, I eagerly waited for the smiling faces of our children as they experienced the joy of receiving special gifts. The presents make Christmas delightful for the mind of a child that would not find delight in theology until much later. Our focus needs to be on the Babe of Bethlehem, God's present to the world, that first Christmas. Angels sang about it over the fields outside of Bethlehem that night. God had humbled Himself to become one of us. His love made Him do it!

Our Christmas celebrations have always centered on Christ's Church. There were the children programs depicting the blessed nativity of our Lord, the beautiful choir anthems, and candle lit vigils with the singing of traditional hymns all to celebrate the wonder of the unique thing that God was doing in that manger.

Tradition has it that Martin Luther introduced the custom of the Christmas tree as a symbol of the new life in Christ, and the lights as a reminder of Christ who is the Light of the world. A tree was a must for our Christmas celebration, either real or artificial. While some people had a guiding star at the top, our tree always has an angel appearing to begin praising God saying, "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).



Christmas is the beginning of the Gospel, the good news of God's grace for all who are in Christ. He was born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law. He humbled Himself for us. He would suffer and die to pay for the sins of the world including yours and mine. That is the love of God, deep and wide, it is for us. Christmas gives us that identifiable 'first step' in the Gospel plan, and a season of delight!

A blessed Christmas to you and yours! Celebrate the Christ with us at Faith in church on December 24, at 5:50 PM..

Advent Services: This year's midweek Advent series originally came from a question asked when briefly studying the life of Jesus. There are a lot of hard questions that hardly anybody's asking these days, and for some of those questions there are Advent answers. For, after all, isn't that precisely what Advent is all about?—preparing to celebrate that time "When Heaven Met Earth," when God first took on human flesh in the person of Jesus, and preparing for that ultimate Advent when that same Christ shall come in the fullness of the Godhead..

The Theme for Advent midweek series this year is "Hard questions that hardly anybody's asking, but that have answers in Advent, Christ coming to earth, heaven meets earth. Why was God born? Did the boy Jesus "know?" Did Jesus cry?"

Advent services will be Thursday evenings Dec. 2, 9, & 16 at 6:30 p.m.



December's Calendar

- Dec. 02 Midweek Advent Service 6:30 PM
- Dec. 04 Church decorating 9:00 AM
- Dec. 05 **Second Sunday of Advent
Worship with Holy Communion**
- Dec. 07 WOF Christmas Luncheon 12:00 Noon
- Dec. 09 **Midweek Advent Service 6:30 PM**
- Dec. 12 **Third Sunday of Advent
Worship with Holy Communion**
- Dec. 16 **Midweek Advent Service 6:30 PM**
Church Council 7:30 PM
- Dec. 19 **Fourth Sunday of Advent
Worship with Holy Communion**
- Dec. 24 **Nativity of Our Lord 5:30 PM
Candle Lighting Service**
- Dec. 25 **Festival of Christmas**
No worship service.
- Dec. 26 **First Sunday after Christmas
Worship with Holy Communion**
- Dec. 31 New Years Eve

Worship Schedule
9:00 AM Sunday Worship Service
10:00 AM Bible Study

Altar Guild Schedule

Dec. 05	Leah Weber	Blue
Dec. 12	Sharon Larson	Blue
Dec. 19	Mary Hahn	Blue
Dec. 24	Marilyn Sturtevant	White
Dec. 26	Kari Tavares	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.

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

Our Faith family: Allison Leezer, Cari Bridgewater, Nancy Tudder, and John J. Hernandez.

Friends: Jeff Bowman, Sue Copeland, Ron Pettit, Lacey Hammons, Kent West, Katie Yarger, Jim Tudder, Jaxson Johnson, 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. We pray for the people of Waukesha, WI and thank God for the safety of Rev. Bushre's congregational family.



Welcome: Two new members were added by Holy Baptism on November 14, 2021. They are **Jaxson Ray Johnson**, son of Kaitlin and Matthew Johnson, and **Andrew Luca Peterson**, son of Ashley Phillips and Andrew Peterson. They are the grandsons of Sandra and Nick Phillips. We welcome them in the name of the Lord.

Jesus commanded us in Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"





Birthdays of the Month

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 Tavares	12/13
Ashley Phillips	12/15
Ernst Heinrich	12/16
Nicholas Leezer	12/16
Kaitlin Johnson	12/22
Alyssa Croegaert	12/31

Baptism Dates

Judy Bridgewater	12/19
Justin Carper	12/05
Alyssa Croegaert	12/31
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

Women of Faith: The ladies will hold their annual Christmas luncheon at noon on December 7th at the home of Mary Hahn. Bring a dish to pass and a white elephant gift; 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.

LWML's Making the Next Generation Disciples for Life mission grant's goal is for millions of children to understand God formed each of them in their mother's womb (Jeremiah 1:5) and that He is the author and creator of life, marriage, and the family. With your mission offerings, resources will be made available to LCMS congregations, school ministries, church workers, LCMS member families, and international missionaries and partner church bodies. This important mission of the church needs your prayers, and your mites, to reach out to the children. Women of Faith thank you for your generous support of the Mission Grants. This year the WOF and this congregation has contributed \$700 to LWML mission efforts.



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 \$8 each, and you may take them home following the January 2nd worship service. Please sign the sheet in the Narthex by Sunday, December 19, if you would like to purchase one. You may use a general offering envelope, but please include your name, amount, and indicate that it is for the Poinsettia list.

2021 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.



Thank You: Our appreciation goes out to Ted Sturtevant, Kevin Hull, Gary Hahn, and Glen Godke for their work on our property and landscaping this past year. Outstanding efforts gentlemen.



HELP WANTED:

The congregation will be decorating the Narthex and Sanctuary on Saturday, December 4th, beginning at 9:00 AM. All volunteers are welcome to help adorn our church for the upcoming Advent and Christmas season.



Council News: The November Council meeting was held on November 18th. Sue Cervantez reported current balances: general fund = \$43,332.57 and dedicated fund = \$18,561.87. The CID-CEF was sent \$1393 from the proceeds from the Oktoberfest. The church's mortgage balance is \$178,276.93.

The usher list has been revised to include only one usher per Sunday. The Christmas Eve service will be at 5:30 PM on Dec. 24th..

The January Voters' meeting has been set for January 9th after the service.

Remaining Oktoberfest monies will be distributed with \$400 sent to the Rev. Brian Homann Memorial at St. John, Beardstown, IL and \$993 to the Lutheran Church Charities general fund. Rev Homann died at the age of 30 yrs. leaving a wife and two daughters.

LCC ministers to victims of disasters and crisis situations in the US and internationally. Their programs include K-9 comfort dogs, Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT), and Hearts of Mercy and Compassion.

John 1:12 – “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” In the beginning, we were made in God's image. Then Adam and Eve sinned, and the image was tarnished. In some ways, it was even lost. But Christ has come to restore us, to make us God's children again, and to restore the image of God within us. The Christian life is a life of growing into that image, of struggling against sin, and striving to imitate our Lord in His mercy, generosity, love, faithfulness, and kindness.

Ushers List: With reduced numbers, we have gone down to one usher a service, so USHERS, it is important that you notify someone when you aren't able to be there on your designated Sunday to usher. People are usually ready to help out or switch when necessary. And, USHERS if you notice on a given Sunday that the usher appointed (see that Sunday's Bulletin) is not present and no one else seems to be covering, please step up if necessary.

1st Sunday: Ted Sturtevant 309 853-8203

2nd Sunday: Nick Phillips 309 286-2073

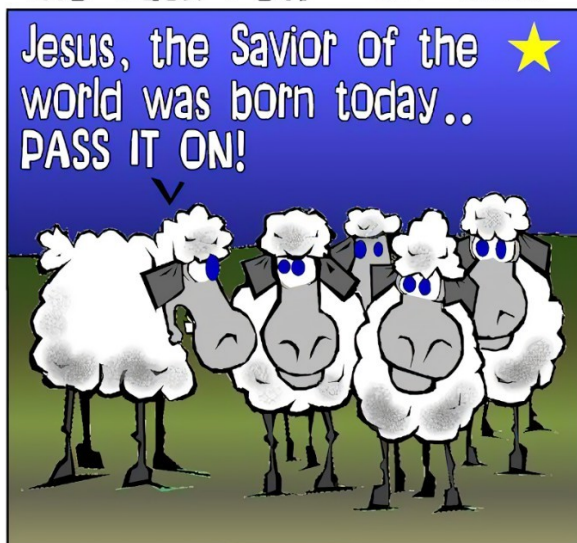
3rd Sunday: Wayne Becker 309 853-8783

4th Sunday: Kevin Hull 309 852-0801

5th Sunday: Jim Cook 309 525-0738

Extras: Gary Hahn (309 852-2318) and Bill Croegaert (309 525-4045) when needed or available

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



and.. the flock was all a-buzz that first Christmas night.

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2022