



# Acts of Faith

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



December 2023

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Pastor Paul Weber    home: 309-764-3144    cell: 309-716-4759    email: chapemcc@gmail.com

**Advent** is the season of waiting and preparing for the coming of Christ both in the past as a human child, and also in the future as Christ Triumphant. As Israel waited for the first coming of the Savior, we wait and prepare for His second coming, which is the end of this world and Judgment Day.

Now most of us are waiting for Christmas, the finality of Advent. Advent is a time for repentant preparation of our hearts awaiting that festive celebration of the birth of our Savior. Unfortunately, we get kind of antsy about waiting and letting Advent be Advent. We must get the Christmas tree up and decorate the house inside and out. Don't forget the gift buying and parties. How easy it is to get caught up in the chaotic things to do and places to go. How hard it is for us to be patient and wait. If it's hard enough for us in the church to wait for Christmas, it's nearly impossible out there in the world with merchandise ads starting in October, and Christmas music playing in early November.

Often waiting can be fearful. We worry while waiting to hear from the doctor after lab tests and medical imaging. What will be the future of our finances as markets fluctuate and inflation rises? The people of Israel suffered for centuries in fear. Isaiah had warned them that God would allow their cities to be destroyed, but then God directs him to give them a hope of salvation. In Isaiah 12:2 we hear "*Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.*" We get tired of all the hardship, heartache, and disappointment along the way. Sometimes we fearfully cry out, "How long, O Lord, how long?"

Waiting calls for patience. We need patience in order to wait and keep the faith and bear up under suffering and keep our eyes focused on the joy that lies before us. "*Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord.*" Psalm 27:14 Waiting for the Lord is trusting Him above all things. Romans chapter five tells us that patient endurance is produced by suffering.

Of course suffering by itself doesn't give us hope. We need the encouragement of the Holy Scriptures. Suffering by itself only produces bitterness and anger as we can witness in the world around us. It is the encouragement of God's Word that we need to have this hope. We know a Savior, who went to the cross, who forgives our sins and promises us eternal life. And we know that our risen Lord is coming again to take us home and make everything right. The joy of eternal life which is set before us is what encourages us to patiently endure while we wait for Jesus to return. In the meantime we wait. The coming of the Lord is at hand, and the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

This Advent season wait and prepare. Be in the Word to strengthen your hope of salvation. Since Faith is not holding weekday Advent services, we strongly suggest you find an Advent daily devotion, and/or worship with another LCMS congregation in person, or via live streaming. Concordia-Geneseo and St. John-Geneseo will have three Wednesday Advent services starting at 7:00 PM, but will not be live streamed.



*And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. Luke 2:4-7*

**Worship Schedule**  
**9:00 AM Sunday Worship Services**  
**4:00 PM Christmas Eve**



***December's Calendar***

<b>Dec. 03</b>	<b>First Sunday of Advent</b> <b>Worship with Holy Communion</b>
<b>Dec. 09</b>	Decorating the Church 9:00 AM CLA Baked Potato & Chili Dinner 3-7PM
<b>Dec. 10</b>	<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b> <b>Worship with Holy Communion</b>
<b>Dec. 14</b>	WOF Christmas Luncheon 12:00 Noon Elder and Church Council 6:30/7:00 PM*
<b>Dec. 17</b>	<b>Third Sunday of Advent</b> <b>Worship with Holy Communion</b>
<b>Dec. 24</b>	<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent 9:00AM</b> <b>Worship with Holy Communion</b> <b>Nativity of Our Lord 4:00 PM</b> <b>Candle Lighting Service</b>
<b>Dec. 25</b>	<b>Festival of Christmas</b> (No Service)
<b>Dec. 31</b>	<b>First Sunday after Christmas</b> No Communion New Years Eve

Dec. 03	Mary Hahn	Blue
Dec. 10	Leah Weber	Blue
Dec. 17	Sharon Larson	Blue
Dec. 24	Marilyn Sturtevant	Blue/White
Dec. 31	Kari Tavares	White

**Elders List:**

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

**USHER'S LIST**

- 1st Sunday: Ted Sturtevant
- 2nd Sunday: Nick Phillips
- 3rd Sunday: Gary Hahn
- 4th Sunday: Kevin Hull
- 5th Sunday: Jim Cook



**Concordia Lutheran Academy** 2nd Annual Baked Potato & Chili Dinner will be during the Concordia's Cookie Walk at Concordia Lutheran Church from 3-7pm on December 9! Come get your baked potato with all your favorite toppings and hot, delicious chili either on the side or on top! Free will donations will be accepted! ALL proceeds will go back to the school in support of our future growth!

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

**Our Faith family:** Allison Leezer, Cari Bridgewater, Nancy Tudder, JoAnne Behnke, Peggy Faber, Vanda Hallock, Glen and Betty Godke, and Wayne Becker

**Friends:** Lacey Hammons, Jim Tudder, Steve Faber, and all military personnel and first responders.

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

**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.

**Our World:** Citizens of Ukraine and Israel that peace may come to their lands.

***Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy***



**Prayer Requests:** Have someone or something that you would like Pastor Weber to include in either his personal prayers or in our public Prayer of the Church, please notify Pastor Weber via e-mail or phone.



### 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 Tavares	12/13
Ashley Phillips	12/15
Ernst Heinrich	12/16
Nicholas Leezer	12/16
Kaitlin Johnson	12/22
Oliver Blume	12/27

### Baptism Dates

Judy Bridgewater	12/19
Justin Carper	12/05
Jacob Hernandez	12/18
Linda Jacobs	12/23
Corey Tavaras	12/22
Micah Tavaras	12/23
Kim Tudder	12/29



### Wedding Anniversaries

Lorie & Brian Elgin	12/13
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*Wishing you a Blessed Christmas  
And Prosperous New Year*

**Women of Faith:** The ladies will hold their annual Christmas luncheon at noon on December 14th at the home of Marilyn Sturtevant. Bring a dish to pass and a white elephant gift; a meat entrée will be provided along with Christmas games and fellowship. Let Marilyn know if you will be attending.

In December your mites go for the mission of Journeys Lutheran School-Milwaukee to serve God's children ages 8 to 21 with special needs such as attention deficit disorder, learning disabilities, autism, anxiety, trauma, emotional behavior disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. For 60 years the school has prepared students to maximize their spiritual, academic, physical, emotional, and social potential to become successful Christian members of society. This grant will help purchase two vans to transport high school students enrolled in the School-to-Work Internship Program and students taking classes at nearby Martin Luther High School. Thank you for your mites and your prayers for this Mission Grant.

**Christmas 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 1st worship service. Please sign the sheet in the Narthex by Sunday, December 17, 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.



Portals of Prayer devotional booklets are now available for the first quarter of the 2024 (January to March) in small, medium, and large sizes. Please pick up a copy for yourself and others you might know.

*"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



**Christmas Decorating** The congregation will be decorating the Narthex and Sanctuary on Saturday, **December 9th, at 9:00 AM.** Please join us to help adorn our church for the up coming Advent and Christmas season and enjoy the fellowship.

**Church Council Report:** The treasurer reported that the General Fund balance is \$36,088.80, the Memorial/Dedicated Fund is \$18,939.57 for a total of \$55,028.37. The Church Extension Fund Balance is \$139,395.09. Glen and Betty Godke have donated \$3700 to upgrade the sound system for their 70 year anniversary. The church insurance has increased by \$308/year. Budget needs and officer nominations are due in December.

**2023 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. Soup and cereal is most needed at this time. This has been approved as a Thrivent Action project and \$250 has been received. This is a wonderful way for us to show our Christian love for the fellow citizens in our community.



**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 important in these changing times to communicate with each other.

**A DOLLAR FOR MISSIONS UPDATE** It is with exceedingly great joy that Central Illinois District President Rev. Michael Mohr announces that not only has our current Dollars for Missions Project (the purchase of a 15-passenger van for University Lutheran Church in Champaign) been fully funded, but July contributions towards Dollars for Missions have been robust enough to fully fund the next project on the list – Augment pay for Prison Ministry at Lincoln and Logan Correctional Centers. Therefore, our current Dollars for Missions Project is to raise \$20k for stipends to pastors to begin visiting four new prisons or jails in 2024. Additional information regarding the Dollars for Missions Projects can be found on the district website.



**Josh Bieri Bulletin:** Joshua with wife, Chrystal, and sons, Jake and Isaac send greetings from Concordia, Fort Wayne Seminary. Josh finished up the fall quarter on November 10th. It was a challenging quarter getting settled into academic life and figuring out how to balance family and school. With the quarter coming to end at the seminary, Josh was pretty busy with papers and tests. The whole family was ready for a break! They have decided to go on a bit of a tour of some churches that are helping to financially support them and visit family and friends for these 2 weeks. Josh was able to serve as lector for Zion and Bethlehem churches in Altamont, IL on November 12th. He also was able to speak and visit with the LWML of Concordia in Geneseo, IL. Josh also served as lector for Trinity in Coal Valley, IL for their Saturday evening service. He then had the honor of serving his home congregation of Zion in Taylor Ridge, IL as liturgist for Matins.

We can't thank you all enough for your continued prayers and support! It has been a pleasure to get to thank some of you in person, and we can't wait to get more opportunities in the future to personally show our gratitude to all of our supporters that we can! Without all of you, we would not be able to continue to do the task that God has laid out for us to do. We pray that God would continue to bless you, and that you have a wonderful Advent as we await the coming of our LORD! To God be the glory!

**Q: When was Jesus Christ born?**

**A:** The Bible does not provide the exact day or even the exact year in which Jesus was born in Bethlehem. But a close examination of the chronological details of history narrows the possibilities to a reasonable window of time. Matthew 2:1 states that Jesus was born during the days of Herod the king. Since Herod died in 4 B.C. Further, Joseph and Mary fled Bethlehem with Jesus because Herod ordered all the boys 2 years old and younger in that vicinity killed. This indicates that Jesus could have been as old as 2 before Herod's death. Luke provides several other facts to ponder: "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria." Quirinius governed Syria during this same time period, with records of a census that included Judea in approximately 6 B.C. This places the date of His birth between 6 and 4 B.C. The tradition of December 25 was developed long after the New Testament period. It's the day Christians have agreed to celebrate the birth of Jesus, but the exact day of His birth is unknown.