

# RESURRECTION NEWS

Unto Us  
a Child is Born



December 2023

# Pastor's Letter

December 2023

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

During the month of December, we begin to celebrate one of the greatest mysteries the world has ever known. Next to the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, humanity has never known a greater mystery than that of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has no beginning or end, who brought the universe into existence by the power of His Word, and who has all power and authority in heaven and on earth, thought it fit to humble Himself and become one of us. The one who upholds the universe by the power of His might laid in a humble manger in Bethlehem.

But, of course, it is not “little baby Jesus in a manger” that makes our Lord’s Incarnation such a mystery. God is able to take upon Himself the form of a man for a time to intervene in creation or to accomplish a task. In fact, He has done this before. In Genesis 18 and 19, the Lord God Himself, along with two angels, appeared to Abraham. When the task of bringing judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah was complete and Abraham’s faith had been strengthened through his interaction with the Lord, the Lord God and His angels returned to their heavenly home because they had only taken the form of a human for a time.

As marvelous as it was for the Lord to converse with Abraham face to face in this way, the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ is far greater because on that first Christmas, our Lord did not take the form of a man temporarily. He came down from heaven and joined Himself to human flesh eternally “*for us men and for our salvation*”, as the Nicene Creed teaches us. Our Lord Jesus Christ is and ever remains the God-Man who has won salvation for His people by His glorious death and resurrection. This is the great mystery of our Lord’s Incarnation—that God would join Himself to human flesh for all eternity so that He might suffer to redeem sinful humanity, and, upon His resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of the Father, rule and reign over all things in heaven and on earth (Daniel 7:13-14; Mark 16:19; Philippians 2:9-11; etc.).

In awe of this understanding of our Lord’s Incarnation, there is an ancient ceremony in the church of genuflecting (dropping to one knee) or profoundly bowing during the words of the Nicene Creed: “*...and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man.*” While this ceremony may seem foreign to some, Martin Luther tells of the long history of honoring our Lord’s Incarnation in this way in his sermon on John 1:14:

Therefore the holy fathers had good reason to contemplate these words so much: “And was made man.” It would not be out of place for us still to weep for joy. Even if I should never be saved – which God forbid! – this thought would still fill me with joy: that Christ, who is of my flesh, blood, and soul, is sitting in heaven at the right hand of God the Father, and that such an honor has been conferred on my frame, flesh, and blood. As St. Bernard further deliberated on these words, he derived some very comforting thoughts from them. He said: “Now I can see that God my Lord is not angry with me; for He is my flesh and blood and sits at the right hand of the heavenly Father as Lord over all creatures. If He were ill-disposed toward me, He would not have taken on my flesh and blood.” We, too, should contemplate these words, “And was made man,” with reverent awe and sing them with long notes as is done in church. This is proper and right, since all our comfort and joy against sin, death, devil, hell, and despair revolve about them and nothing else.

The following tale is told about a coarse and brutal lout. While the words “And was made man” were being sung in church, he remained standing, neither genuflecting nor removing his hat. He showed no reverence, but just stood there like a clod. All the others dropped to their knees when the Nicene Creed was prayed and chanted devoutly. Then the devil stepped up to him and hit him so hard it made his head spin. He cursed him gruesomely and said: “May hell consume you, you boorish ass! If God had become an angel like me and the congregation sang: ‘God was made an angel,’ I would bend not only my knees but my whole body to the ground! Yes, I would crawl ten ells down into the ground. And you vile human creature, you stand there like a stick or a stone. You hear that God did not become an angel but a man like you, and you just stand there like a stick of wood!” Whether this story is true or not, it is nevertheless in accordance with the faith (Rom. 12:6). With this illustrative story the holy fathers wished to admonish the youth to revere the indescribably great miracle of the incarnation; they wanted us to open our eyes wide and ponder these words well.<sup>1</sup>

As the focus of the church year shifts to Advent and Christmas, we fix our gaze upon the one who was made man for us men and for our salvation so that we might see in the person of Jesus of Nazareth the love of God for all mankind. “*For in the mystery of the Word made flesh You have given us a new revelation of Your glory that, seeing You in the person of Your Son, we may know and love those things which are not seen*” (Christmas Proper Preface).

May the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ grant you joy and awe at the depths of our Triune God’s love for you this Advent and Christmas season.

In Christ,  
Pastor Akers

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<sup>1</sup> *Luther’s Works*, Volume 22, pages 105-106.

## *Notes from your Deaconess*

Dear Brothers and Sisters of LCR,

Do you regularly make the sign of the cross to remember your baptism? Last month Pastor Akers wrote about the significance of the crucifix and the cross. I've attempted this past year to show connections between our creator and many things which we daily encounter either concretely or experientially, some created by God, and others more identified with our fallen nature.

The Greek word *sphragis* refers to an object—a signet or seal—which marks, imprints, or stamps a sign, brand, tattoo, or seal, as well as to the mark, imprint or seal made by such an object. Two church fathers, Cyril of Jerusalem and Gregory of Nazianzen (both in the 4<sup>th</sup> century) used this word in describing both baptism and its consequences to the baptized individual.

An imprint created by the *sphragis* of the Greek and Roman world indicated ownership by a particular individual, allegiance to a particular god, or affiliation with an army unit. All these traditional understandings come together in baptism where we enter the Good Shepherd's flock, become servants of the Master who has paid for our lives, enlist in the Lord's army, as well as members of the Bride of Jesus Christ who promises to protect us, remember and be faithful to us. We also recall the signet rings given by Pharaoh to Joseph (Exodus 41:42), and by Ahasuerus to Mordecai (Esther 8:2) which imparted authority of the ruler to the one now holding the signet. The gospel of John notes that "The Father has set his seal" on his son, Jesus (John 6:27).

I plan to hold women's Bible studies on December 9, 16, and perhaps on the 30th. This is a bit of a change from the usual alternating Saturdays schedule, but I thought we'd skip the Christmas weekend—and other family responsibilities may affect the schedule. We'll continue our discussions of identity using St. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians "Whose are we?" I can add you to my email list if you let me know. I send an email during the week prior to each meeting. I also can provide a Zoom link if you'd like to join that way instead of in person. We meet downstairs in classroom 104 at 8:30am for a time of fellowship, Bible study, and sharing of prayer concerns.

Under his mercy,  
Sharon M. Conover

*In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13*

*And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22*

### **Sunday Morning Bible Class**

Sunday morning Bible Class meets weekly at 8:45 a.m. in Room 201. Each week, Pastor will lead a deeper study of the Epistle Reading to help us prepare for the Divine Service. We will also have time to discuss your questions from the Read the Bible in Two Years readings.

### **Thursday Bible Class**

Thursday Bible class continues to meet weekly at 10:30 a.m. in Room 201. We are studying 1 Corinthians.

### **Midweek Advent Divine Services**

Midweek Advent Divine Services will be held on the Wednesdays in Advent (12/6, 12/13, & 12/20) at noon and 7 p.m.

### **Christmas Service Schedule**

#### **Sunday, December 24**

10:00 a.m. **Divine Service** (*Fourth Sunday in Advent*)

7:00 p.m. **Divine Service** (*Christmas Eve candlelight service*)

#### **Monday, December 25**

10:00 a.m. **Divine Service** (*Christmas Day service*)

### **Christmas Poinsettias**

Every year, we grace the chancel with poinsettias during the Christmas season. If you would like to purchase a poinsettia, please include \$20 per plant with your offering envelope marked – “flowers” with the poinsettia insert. The deadline to order is December 10. You may also provide your own poinsettia for the chancel. If you provide your own, please have to the church by December 22.

### **Annual Congregational Meeting**

The annual congregational Voters' Assembly meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, December 10** (snow date—12/17), during the fellowship hour. Please plan to join us for a pizza lunch as we set the 2024 budget, elect officers, and discuss congregational business. Talk to Mark Larsen with questions about the meeting. Talk to Amber Akers with questions about the meal.

### **LWML**

Thank you for your mites and eyeglass donations. In October we were able to send \$272.93 to LWML New England District in which 10% of that is sent to the National LWML. This is used for grants to spread God's word. So far 53 pairs of glasses have been mailed to MOST ministries. We have more to be mailed. Please ask friends and family if they have eyeglasses to donate.

Christmas Fair is December 2nd. Please see signup sheet on bulletin board to help with set up, help during the fair, and clean up. Also looking for cookies, baked goods, homemade craft items, and small white elephant items. Any questions please see Becky Cote or any member of LWML.

### **Thank You's**

To all the brothers and sisters of Resurrection Lutheran Church!

Thank you so much for your continued generosity to my mission work here in Italy! I am always giving thanks to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the amazing generosity that I have received from my brothers and sisters all over the world! To Him be all the glory!

Rev. Tyler McMiller, Church Planter/Theological Educator in Italy through LCMS OIM

Thank you for your wonderful gift. Your thoughtful donation is a special blessing to Concordia Seminary to our students. You make our mission possible.

In Christ,

Vicki Biggs, Sr. VP Seminary Advancement Concordia Seminary

## Defending the Faith

### Sometimes the Best Defense is a Good Defense.

This month, I'm starting a series on what other faiths and other Christian denominations believe. My goal is to equip you with knowledge so that when you're in discussions, you'll be better prepared. I do not intend so much to criticize, but will point out where they deviate from God's Word as revealed in Sacred Scripture and offer a few thoughts on talking with them.

We'll start with the Unitarian Universalist Church, abbreviated "UU". Their polity is autonomous, meaning that each congregation chooses their own priorities and choose their own ministers and staff. They ordain both women and openly practicing homosexual ministers. They also perform same-sex "weddings".

UUs are not Christian. Nor do they adhere to any of the other world religions. Rather, they claim to derive wisdom from all of them and promote "the right to choose one's own beliefs". In fact, they outright reject the doctrine of the Trinity.

The UU church is best described as intensely liberal. They state that they have no shared creed, but have "seven principles" that define them (which seem like a creed). From UUA.org, those are:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within congregations and society.
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

They adhere to "six sources" that they claim and promote (which again, seem like a creed):

1. Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
2. Words and deeds of prophetic people which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
3. Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
4. Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
5. Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
6. Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

As I searched the official website for the term "forgiveness", all I could find were calls to forgive others. Nothing about having your sins forgiven by God or even some indeterminate "higher power". There seems to be no sense of payment for earthly transgressions at all.

If you find yourself in a discussion with a UU and want to at least point them in the direction of Christianity, I suggest one question. *"Who do you say that Jesus is?"*

Again, from the UU.org website, beliefs vary widely. Some say He was a great teacher, a moral exemplar, a prophetic leader, a reformer, a dissident, and underdog and an ally.

I would ask them whether a "great teacher" would teach lies. Assuming that they answer honestly, I would confront them (gently) with John 14:6. *"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father, but through Me."* And John 10:30 *"I and the Father are One."*

In these two verses, this "great teacher" not only claims to be God Himself, but that he is the only way to Heaven.

Also ask the UU if they believe that Jesus was a great teacher, why don't they believe Him?

Dislodging a UU from their wildly liberal views of "all religions are true" and "anything goes" stance will take time, patience and love on your part. It will be frustrating at times but remember that converting someone to be a Christ-follower isn't your job. It's the Holy Spirit's job.

Whether we're talking with an atheist, a Muslim, a Jew, a Hindu or a UU, we are to do the gardening.

The Holy Spirit reaps the harvest.

As always, I'm open to comments, suggestions and especially criticisms at [charles.j.macpherson@gmail.com](mailto:charles.j.macpherson@gmail.com).

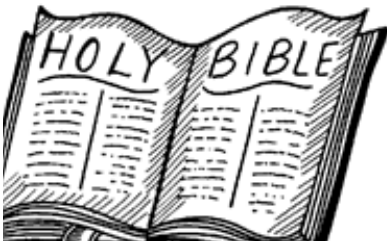
Charlie MacPherson, SDG

# December Stewardship

	<b><u>December 3</u></b> <b>(10 a.m.)</b>	<b><u>December 10</u></b> <b>(10 a.m.)</b>	<b><u>December 17</u></b> <b>(10 a.m.)</b>	<b><u>December 24</u></b> <b>(10 a.m.)</b>	<b><u>December 31</u></b> <b>(10 a.m.)</b>
<u>Acolyte</u>	Hayley Farr	Callum Goldsmith	Elizabeth Akers	Evan Farr	Matthew Akers
<u>Worship Assistant</u>	Steve Farr	Charlie MacPherson	Brad Fitzpatrick	Chris Batson	Brian Watson
<u>Primary Usher</u> <u>Additional</u>	John Ayotte Jeff Sammons	Dan Callahan Mo Cote	Rick Drageland Mike Hein	Jeff Sammons Steve Applebee	Glenn Carlson Jr. Rick Kubeck
<u>Greeters</u>	Kemp & Rachel Anderson	Glenn Jr. & Krista Carlson	Rick & Marie Kubeck	Mark & LeeAnne Larsen	James Breslin & Adolph Galonski
<u>Altar Care</u>	Sasha Fitzpatrick	Kitty Carlson	LeeAnne Larsen	Lydia Bendas	Amber Akers
<u>Flowers</u>	The Akers Family	The Akers Family	Sharon Klipp	Sharon Klipp	The MacPhersons
<u>Fellowship</u>	Katie Huesers & Avis Grant	Congregational Meeting (Pizza)	Open	-----	Open

	<b>December 24</b> <b>Christmas Eve 7 p.m.</b>	<b>December 25</b> <b>Christmas Day 10 a.m.</b>
Acolyte	Evan Farr	Hayley Farr
Worship Assistant	Chris Batson	Charlie MacPherson
Primary Usher	Jeff Sammons	Chris Batson
Add'l Usher	Steve Applebee	Open
Greeters	Mark & LeeAnne Larsen	The Akers Family
Altar Care	Lydia Bendas	Avis Grant

	<b>Altar Care</b> <b>Advent Midweek</b> <b>Services at Noon &amp; 7 p.m.</b>
December 6	Krista Carlson
December 13	Andrea Watson
December 20	Julie Kohl



### **Monthly Worship**

December 3

First Sunday in Advent

Psalm: 25

Old Testament: Jeremiah 23:5-8

Epistle: Romans 13:11-14

Holy Gospel: Matthew 21:1-9

December 10

Second Sunday in Advent

Psalm: 80

Old Testament: Song of Songs 2:8B-14

Epistle: Romans 15:4-13

Holy Gospel: Luke 21:25-33

December 18

Third Sunday in Advent

Psalm: 85

Old Testament: Isaiah 40:1-8

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

Holy Gospel: Matthew 11:2-10

December 24

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Psalm: 111

Old Testament: Deuteronomy 18:15-19

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-7

Holy Gospel: John 1:19-28

December 24

The Nativity of Our Lord  
(Christmas Eve)

Psalm: 2

Old Testament: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7a

Epistle: Titus 2:11-15a

Holy Gospel: Luke 2:1-20

December 25

The Nativity of Our Lord  
(Christmas Day)

Psalm: 98

Old Testament: Isaiah 52:6-10

Epistle: Hebrews 1:1-12

Holy Gospel: John 1:1-14

December 31

Sunday after Christmas

Psalm: 93

Old Testament: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Epistle: Galatians 4:1-7

Holy Gospel: Luke 2:33-40

## **ADVENT QUIZ**

1. Which of these events does Advent NOT anticipate?
  - A. The reception of Christ in the heart of the believer
  - B. The second coming of Christ
  - C. The resurrection of Jesus
  - D. The birth of Christ in Bethlehem
2. On which day of the week does Advent always begin?
  - A. Wednesday
  - B. Sunday
  - C. Thursday
  - D. Friday
3. What does the pink (or rose) candle symbolize in the Advent wreath?
  - A. Joy
  - B. Love
  - C. Peace
  - D. Death
4. Which of these is the best example of an Advent hymn?
  - A. Come, O Come Emmanuel
  - B. The Old Rugged Cross
  - C. We Three Kings
  - D. Breathe Upon Us, Holy Spirit
5. What is the last day in Advent?
  - A. Christmas
  - B. Christmas Eve
  - C. Epiphany
  - D. Easter
6. A common scripture reading during the Advent season is, "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." In which book of the Bible is this verse found?
  - A. Isaiah
  - B. Luke
  - C. Jeremiah
  - D. Psalms



12/2 Dorthy McAllister  
 12/3 Ruth Milhous  
 12/10 Elizabeth Akers  
 12/12 Maira Goldsmith  
 12/13 Sharon Conover  
 Allison Farr  
 12/15 Ethan Carlson  
 12/18 Steven Bendas  
 12/20 Benjamin Schiebel  
 12/23 Dan Callahan  
 12/25 Evelyn Gilbert  
 12/30 Matthew Esculano



12/2 Lydia Bendas  
 12/10 Gail Maestas  
 12/21 Evan Farr  
 Hayley Farr  
 12/25 Dottie Evertsen



12/16 Fernando & Mari Gouvea  
 12/20 Peter & Lois Doran  
 12/27 Dan & Sharon Callahan



12/17 Esther Gould  
 John Gould  
 12/19 Rick Dostie



Thanks to Nadine Fafard (See Luke 2:1-16)

12-24-2001

THAT'S THE BEST ONE-STAR HOTEL THAT I'VE EVER SEEN

An overweight colleague of mine decided it was time to shed some excess pounds. He took his new diet seriously, even changing his driving route to avoid his favorite bakery. One morning, however, he arrived at work carrying a gigantic coffeecake. We all scolded him, but his smile remained cherubic. "This is a very special coffeecake," he explained. "I accidentally drove by the bakery this morning and there in the window were a host of goodies. I felt this was no accident, so I prayed, 'Lord, if you want me to have one of those delicious coffeecakes, let me have a parking place directly in front of the bakery.' And sure enough," he continued, "the eighth time around the block, there it was!"

~ ~ ~

A young boy had just gotten his driving permit. He asked his father who was a minister, if they could discuss the use of the car. His father took him to his study and said to him, "I'll make a deal with you. You bring your grades up, study your bible a little and get your hair cut and we'll talk about it." After about a month the boy came back and again asked his father if they could discuss use of the car. They again went to the father's study where his father said, "Son, I've been real proud of you. You have brought your grades up, you've studied your bible diligently, but you didn't get your hair cut." The young man waited a moment and replied, "You know Dad, I've been thinking about that. You know, Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, Noah had long hair, and even Jesus had long hair!", to which is father replied, "Yes, you're right, and they also WALKED everywhere they went!"

#### BIBLE QUIZ ANSWERS

1. C
2. B
3. A
4. A
5. B
6. A